Narrator: Fay E. Williams

Interviewer: Natalie Fousekis

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**TAPE 1, SIDE A BEGINS**

Fay Williams (FW): June twenty-fifth, 1935.

Natalie Fousekis (NF): Okay and where were your parents from?

FW: The same place.

NF: Arkansas?

FW: No, it’s Arkansas.

NF: What kind of work did they do?

FW: My dad was a produce farmer and my mother was housewife.

NF: And where did you all live? Did you live on the farm?

FW: Yes. Yes.

NF: And what do you remember about life in Arkansas?

FW: Oh the best.

NF: Yeah?

FW: It was the best. I had great peers. I was the youngest of the girls in the family and they taught me--- I did more than I learned in college. They were great. My mother knew how to do everything and my father was brilliant. This is how we survived. He was a very smart man.

NF: Smart like how?

FW: He knew how to survive. He worked real hard. If he decided, for instance his produce. No one has to tell him how to harvest his produce. And his produce was taken out of the field by big, I guess you can call them trucks. They were trucks. And nobody taught him this. He learned all this on his own; how to survive.

NF: Wow. Now his parents, had they---

FW: I knew nothing about his parents.

NF: You knew nothing. Of your mom’s parents, could you---?

FW: No.

NF: No?

FW: They were, I understand my mother--- my grandmother, my maternal grandmother passed at the age of forty-five I think.

NF: Oh, wow.

FW: And my grandfather even younger and I didn’t know anyone then.

NF: Did you have other family that lived in Shaw with you guys?

FW: My daddy’s brothers. My mother’s cousins. My mother was an only child.

NF: Wow.

FW: And my parents had thirteen children. Two sets of twins. There were nine girls and four boys.

NF: Wow, your dad had some good help on the farm.

FW: My dad was very smart. Only few---I and my two brothers, the only ones who worked as far as the farm. When my sisters graduated from high school, they all went away to either work or go to college. I learned how to do the produce stuff because I always did things with my dad. Yes. Because I knew. I never thought of presidents and senators and none of those people. My dad was the president of everything as far as I was concerned. That’s the way it was growing up.

NF: And what was life like in the house?

FW: It was wonderful. It was wonderful. We had games we could play. My mother read to us and my mother was more religious than my dad and naturally, she read the bible to us. We had to do Sunday school. There was Sunday school lessons and we had to do our homework. And we all graduated. I graduated from high school at sixteen and so did my older brother. My brother just older than I am because my mom and my dad. He said an education is something you get on your own. Don’t care who it is, who you meet, they can’t take it from you. And he instilled you enough. Because he wasn’t able to do all the schooling himself.

NF: Right, right right. Wow.

FW: That’s the way it was.

NF: Did you experience discrimination in---?

FW: Not until I came to California.

NF: Interesting.

FW: Our closest neighbors were Caucasian and they were the family that the town was named after. Their name was Shaw. And I can go there now and if there is one or two living, if we go, they know we’re there and they go to see us.

NF: What was your father’s full name?

FW: Ed Turner.

NF: And your mother?

FW: Lubretha White Turner.

NF: Okay. That’s good because I can put that in the book that you’ll be in. Do you remember the first time you became aware of color difference?

FW: More so in San Francisco.

NF: Interesting.

FW: Than in Arkansas. We knew---there were restaurants. The thing about there, the people was very honest with you. We know we could not go into the front of the restaurant. We know where the sign said, “colored.” But we were served the same food. At least when we looked through the window, we could see what we got in the back. Not that we ate out that much. But as far as the stores and things are concerned, there was no problem. There was no problem. Like there was a train that was near our home in a place called Nashville. You had your section. Like I said, in those days it said “colored.” But by the time I started doing things like this, it wasn’t quite as bad. Now my biggest experience, well I said California, maybe in Little Rock. I went to college in Little Rock.

NF: I was just going to ask you, where did you---

FW: I went to Philander Smith College. So I ran into a few problems there. But it wasn’t serious.

NF: What year did you start college.

FW: Like I said, I came here in fifty-two. I went back, fifty-three. Because I came here first. In California first. Upon graduation, you know, you get the gift.

NF: Ahhh.

FW: A trip to California. Because all my oldest sisters were here.

NF: Now how did your family have this connection of people going to California?

FW: From a very good friend. There was a friend who lived in Oakland. And when my sister, not my oldest sister, the second oldest sister graduated from high school, this lady was there on vacation. And she asked my mom and dad if she could come back home with her because they knew how mom and dad really wanted us to move forward, to get the best that we could get. And this was one of the ways of doing it. And my sister came with her. Then another sister came. Then another sister and this is how we got here. I lived with her.

NF: With your sister?

FW: I lived with my sister after I left for Philander and got married. I got married from my sister’s house in Oakland.

NF: And how did you meet your husband.

FW: Through cousins who lived here. When I came in 1952, I met my husband. And I had cousins who lived here who graduated from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_High School. And they were dating friends and this is how I met him. And he went into the service. What was that---Korean? That was the Korean War. In 1955, we got married when he came back.

NF: And the whole time he was in Korea, you were in college?

FW: Yeah.

NF: What was your major in college?

FW: Believe it or not, communications.

NF: Communications. Did you have any kind of what you wanted to be when you grew up?

FW: A mother.

NF: A mother.

FW: A mother. I wanted six children.

NF: Wow.

FW: I wanted six children. I just always admired my mother. And I always thought, if she can do it with twelve, well actually eleven survived. Because two died at young ages. And I said, if she could do it, I can do it with six. But it didn’t work out that way. I had medical problems but I had the two.

NF: And who were your role models growing up?

FW: My mom and dad.

NF: Yeah.

FW: And after that, my sisters and my brothers. I had two brothers older, and one younger. I grew up with the boys. So I know every ball you could name. I knew it because I had to play with the boys. No girls, my sisters were older.

NF: So your first husband, what was his name?

FW: Sam Love.

NF: Sam Love. And what drew you to Sam Love?

FW: My cousins. They introduced me and I was new here. And I was very young. I was much younger than they were.

NF: Oh, that’s right.

FW: I’m sixteen and they are like eighteen and eighteen and he looked like twenty-something. So we just started going out. And he went into the service and I left and went back to Little Rock to go back to school.

NF: Did you write letters as well?

FW: Oh every day. We wrote everyday.

NF: Wonderful.

FW: He was a great husband for quite a few years. You know he decided that you know being a father---he didn’t understand being a father. You know we were married three years before we had the first child. And you know you are free to do so many things. But once a child comes into the picture, you can’t do those things anymore. And if you plan to do those, don’t have the children. And believe it or not even in those days, we planned, you know. This was our thing. We were going to be married three years before we had a---we planned it.

NF: So you could enjoy it you know.

FW: Yeah, yeah. Because we were still young, you know. But after about four or five years, he decided he still wanted to go and do the things, you know. You just can’t do it.

NF: What was his career?

FW: He was, let’s see, I don’t know how you would title it but he worked you know he worked for the railroad. I don’t know what his title was.

NF: And where did you all settle when you were first married?

FW: In San Francisco.

NF: In San Francisco.

FW: Yeah. In fact, he was buying a two-flat house. We were doing quite well.

NF: Wow.

FW: Yeah.

NF: So where was the house that you all lived in.

FW: In a street called Ferin in San Francisco which is unclear word.

NF: What neighborhood?

FW: This was---you would call it the Fillmore.

NF: Okay, yeah, yeah. Sure.

FW: Between Eddy and Ellis on Ferin which was a short street. Very nice place. Beautiful place.

NF: And when was your first daughter born?

FW: October twenty-seven 1957.

NF: Okay. And your second daughter?

FW: June eighteenth, 1959. Both born in San Francisco in St. Mary’s hospital.

NF: I was born at Children’s Hospital in San Francisco.

FW: Well they have spent a lot of time at Children’s. She had this eye problem. She had to have surgery several times.

NF: Yeah I had eye problems. I was out there too as a teenager.

FW: It wouldn’t be Dr. Paryear?

NF: No that would have been funny.

FW: Yes because he was great.

NF: Did you work when they were first---?

FW: Oh sure. I worked at the post office.

NF: Oh, wow.

FW: I worked at the post office. My first job before I had children was Ansel Debbie Robinson’s Pet food Company. I ran a machine that was filling up the pet food. You know, I had this machine that dropped in and go down.

NF: And what kind of people were working at the pet food company with you? Was it women? Men?

FW: Both. In fact, my supervisor was a man from North Carolina. But he was nice. He was very nice. And wanted me back, I got pregnant then. After that, I got pregnant and I didn’t want to go back to that kind of work.

NF: And how long did you work for the post office?

FW: I worked there quite some time. I was even---I worked after Beth was born so that was quite a few years. I don’t even remember when I actually left because I worked two jobs also with hairdressing. So all day Saturday, I did hair. All day Saturday. Sometimes ten or twelve people.

NF: Wow.

FW: Oh, I had to. I had to work. I liked things and I liked my kids to have things. I liked vacation; I loved taking them to the park. And I took my nieces. And by that time, I was alone. I had left my husband.

NF: What year did you leave your husband?

FW: 1962. Sixty-two.

NF: Before you left him and you all worked together, were your kids in childcare at that point?

FW: No. No.

NF: Who took care of them when you were working?

FW: A neighbor lady. And once I had a teenager from the neighborhood would come over. Because my shift was six to two thirty. And he would pick the kids up at two---No, he would drop them off because he went to work later than I did. Because he went to work later than I did. And then I would pick them up when I got off work because I got home before he did. Then it just kind of worked a hardship on the kids. They were babies and I got a neighbor girl to come in. She wasn’t working and a teenager. So she would come in and stay.

NF: And was it hard for you to leave them when you went back to work?

FW: Not really, not really, because I made sure I had good people and they were happy. And then after I left him, there was a lady. She had nine children that her husband was a bus driver. She was very good. She would take the kids to the park or to the playground. So my kids were happy. And then I sent and got a niece to live with me because it was hard getting them--- I could get a place for Debbie because she was older but no place for Beverly because she was a baby and she wasn’t potty trained. They didn’t have the [infant] daycare then. You had to---yeah. So then my niece stayed until she got a job. Then we got her, Bev got a place and then Debbie got a place. They were in two separate schools.

NF: And where were you all living at this point?

FW: At this point, I was still in San Francisco. I was on Page Street.

NF: Did where you in an apartment?

FW: No. Flat. I always had a flat. More space. I always made sure they had their own bedroom. Yeah.

NF: That’s good.

FW: Yeah. They always---I worked hard for my kids.

NF: Sounds like it.

FW: And I don’t regret it.

NF: So what year do you remember was the first year that you heard about the children’s centers?

FW: Oh I heard about them probably, let’s see Beth went in in sixty-two---I knew about the centers probably sixties because I’ve always been interested in what’s going on in the schools after I had my children. I wanted to know what was going on. And so that’s how I started looking for school-affiliated facility. I didn’t, babysitters were great but I just kind of like, as they were growing older, I wanted something a little more constructive. And so this is when I started looking into that. And every time I would call or go there, there was a place for one but not the other. So this is what---So Debbie was six by the time she was placed in one, John Muir. And Bev went into, what was it Ar---not Argon, Missions and I saw it listed somewhere in the paper. She wasn’t even three yet.

NF: Oh, wow.

FW: My girls were smart. They were smart.

NF: What was their experience in the children’s centers?

FW: Beverly didn’t like being away from her sister. Because when I had a babysitter, they were always together.

NF: Right.

FW: When my niece was there, they were always together. And the teacher said she would cry. She cried because she was so delicate. She would cry. And she finally settled down. She finally settled down but she would cry every, every morning. She didn’t want to be left there. She wanted her sister. So that was the hardest part for me because when I would leave her and go on my way to the bus stop, I couldn’t even look back. It was just one of those things I had to do.

NF: So at this point were you no longer working at the post office or---?

FW: I was still there. I was still at the post office but I still had another part-time job. This is when I got interesting in catering. Because you can set your hours and you can set the day and you can set the time and you can set your price. And I knew what it took. I knew how much my rent was. I knew how much my daycare was. You know, I knew how all of this was. So then, I stopped working at the post office.

NF: Did you have training as a chef?

FW: No.

NF: No?

FW: No. My mother. My mother was my trainer. My mother was a great cook and she knew--- her presentation wasn’t bad either. You know, she can drop a little green here or there and you know---

NF: Oh, that’s great.

FW: Because she did a lot for the church and for the schools. My mother served as the PTA treasurer for forty years. Because she took care of some grants here. So at that time---and I took books. I learned from books. I library a cookbook. And you know you take on this client and they want you to do certain things. If you don’t know how to do it, you go to your book. And they don’t have to know, you didn’t know. All you have to do is be able to serve it up and yeah.

NF: So when did you start dabbling and what year was that that you started doing catering?

FW: That was in the seventies, I’m sure. Okay. Oh---

NF: That’s okay.

FW: You’re going to forgive me. But it went on and on and on.

NF: So did that become a full time---?

FW: Oh yeah.

NF: And was your own business?

FW: Oh yeah.

NF: What was the business called?

FW: FEW.

NF: FEW?

FW: Uh huh. Catering. And there made my cards, he made my cards and stuff. And you know, I didn’t have to solicit very much. It was from client to client. Such as, you mentioned, Barbara Boxer, Sissy Swig. This one person that I did, she knew all these people. She was very---well I wouldn’t say political. She was very active and she did a lot of volunteer work and stuff and she knew people. And so it got around you know. My name just started floating around and I did receptions. I loved to do wedding receptions and stuff like that.

NF: Wonderful.

FW: Yeah. So it helped me get through the really tough---And my girls started to work at fifteen with being in my you know, position I was in, they could get a job. And they have worked since. And one of their friends is on the same job that they took when they were fifteen. And Bev moved on because she went to law school and all this stuff. Debbie was pre-med so she went to Arizona to college and they kind of like you know---And Julie still with Buyers, Buyers of California. You know the clothing? That’s where the Bev worked for a while.

NF: Wonderful.

FW: And then Debbie worked for Mascone, the late Mascone until he was elected mayor. She worked for him as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, senator. And when he was elected mayor, he naturally became different people. But they always worked. Just like me, they’ve always been independent. I even did home making for a while.

NF: Really.

FW: Oh sure. Oh sure. I did it for a while. I just needed those extra dollars. I needed those extra dollars and when something came up, I took it. My kids’ grandmother was good at finding jobs for me. Their father’s mother.

NF: Really?

FW: Oh yes she was good.

NF: And was she from the Bay area?

FW: Well she lived in Oakland but she was originally from Texas.

NF: Okay.

FW: And she was good. She was good. And bless her heart may she rest in peace. She was a good person.

NF: I had another question to ask you. So what was it like raising the kids just solo as opposed to---?

FW: It was great.

NF: Yeah?

FW: It was good. I’m like this. It’s better to have one good parent then to have two that’s fighting and arguing and---my kids’ father would blow the money. If that’s a good term. I don’t know if that’s a good term. He would always spend. He didn’t care about tomorrow. He liked the great weekend. Like we were doing when we didn’t have children. And you know I couldn’t handle that. I couldn’t handle---he wasn’t abusive or any of that kind of stuff. It’s just that we was at a stand still. And with children you know, I mean my dad and my mom had very little but they made the best of what they had and that was taking care of their children. All of us went to some type of college or some type of school that we could get a decent job and two kids you got, you know no excuse for not to be able. And he didn’t see it that way. And now he says we did a good job with the girls.

NF: He’s taking credit huh?

FW: Uh huh. We. But that’s okay. We did a good job getting them. They’re beautiful girls.

NF: Right.

FW: But we didn’t do a good job taking care of them so anyway because he didn’t contribute at all financially. When I moved, I had three dollars and sixteen cents. When I moved [away] from him. When I paid the moving van, I had three dollars and sixteen cents. But my kids were happy. I was happy and we still are. Because I had made up my mind. I can do this. My mom would have taken my girls until I got fairly situated. MmmHm. No, I kept my girls with me and I survived. Yeah. You can do it. It’s not easy. And then I tell you children’s centers.

NF: Hold on. Let me--- We have plenty of time left on tape.

FW: Children’s centers and Mrs. Mahler, give her a---my head teacher, which I can’t remember all their names but Betsy Wright and all those teachers. They just, they helped me out so much. Because they worked with me with an understanding. This woman is trying. She’s trying. They gave me a lot of breaks, you know. And---

NF: Like what?

FW: The perks were like maybe I could be fifteen minutes----Because I had to ride the bus. I had no car. And maybe it took me a little long. You know you think you are going to do something in twenty minutes. It maybe takes you thirty minutes. So that’s throwing you off. All the buses were late. You know because sometimes, I had to ride three different buses. And they were there for me. They were there for me. They never---and when I had the accident, the fire, when the kids and I was in the fire, Mrs. Mahler called me and she said, “I know that you are not working at this time. You’re on disability and there should be some adjustments made in your fee or either the girls would have to come out.” They were together at that time. The girls were. And she said, “But I’m going to make ---you’re one of my best parents,” she said, “And I’m going to make an adjustment in your fee.” And that was during the summer. This fire happened on the eighteenth of June which was my baby’s birthday. She made six. And she did. They were able to stay.

NF: Were the kids at home with you when the fire?

FW: Sure. Some man was passing my house. That’s when we lived in the flat. That’s where we moved when he left the father. And I was---they called the name, my kids out of the window from their bedroom. Well it’s actually my bedroom but they slept, the kids started to go to my bedroom. And when I went out and they tried to catch me and I went over to the side and that’s when I cut up my knee and stuff. Yeah I was home almost a year.

NF: Oh my. And that was jumping from a second floor?

FW: Uhuu. Uhuu.

NF: Wow. Was it late at night or---?

FW: It was at two, three o’clock in the morning.

NF: That must have been scary.

FW: It was. It was very frightening because there had just been a big fire in the church where these people were performing and some kind of dance or something. And I kept seeing this. I said, “I can’t see my baby coming down through the floor.” Because it started down stairs.

NF: Oh, okay.

FW: And we had the woman telling us something but I was half-asleep and my niece was with me at that time. And she'd never wake up. I mean you could run a train through her. Phones would ring and when--- she woke up that morning. She woke up that morning. So the girls weren’t hurt at all. And neither was she. She got a little scratch. But I was the last one to go out.

NF: Right. Right. Of course. Because all the young ones had to go out first.

FW: And it’s just that, my niece went first because she’s tall, beautiful, small girl. And then some man walked up and he helped catch the girls. And we never thought of putting a mattress out the window. We probably could have put one of the mattresses from the twin bed. We never thought of that. We just wanted to get out. I was in the hospital quite some time from that. UNCLEAR SENTENCE. We got through that but thank God fro the children centers. Because my niece had to work. And I couldn’t go up in---I was, okay we were placed----the owner where I was renting had another place. And it wasn’t good for the girls. It was a big building with elevators and stuff. And so, well my niece found--and a friend, found another place. But I had to go up some stairs. So I couldn’t go up and down on crutches---after the casts to the crutches. But it’s you know, that’s squatter living.

NF: Great.

FW: And I’ve had some experiences.

NF: So what did you feel like about the care that the children’s centers provided for your kids? How did you feel about it at the time?

FW: I thought it was great. I thought it was great. There were women. We had one teacher. My oldest girl used to say, “Oh mom. She wants us to do this and she wants us to do that.” But it was good. It was good. We had very good care in those days. Because my girls was in--- one, two, three. Three different centers. And I have no complaints about either of the three centers. We had a young, bless her heart, may she rest in peace, she died very young. She taught them cooking. She took time. She taught them sewing and my girls still do these things. I probably could come up with the weeble? Step that looks like that.

NF: Right. Right. Right. Wonderful.

FW: The head, we call them, head teachers then. They were great. The parents had to meet once a month and you put things on the table. You didn’t talk amongst yourselves about what you liked or didn’t like. You put it in the table and we discussed that at meetings.

NF: Right. At these parents’ meetings?

FW: Yes. Yes. And we had dinner. We would have dinner and one of the teachers stayed and kept our children in another room. So the parents could have their meeting.

NF: And what do you remember about these parents’ meetings?

FW: I think constructive. We had some parents who were a little difficult you know because---

NF: Define difficult.

FW: They were difficult because some of the things maybe I thought was great they didn’t think was so. I wanted my children taught and some just wanted some place to leave them. You know, just some place to leave their, you know. Then when some of the teachers would say somebody came an hour late. You know you can’t come an hour late to pick up your children and stuff like this. Well they felt that this should be okay because they are paying. But there was more to it than that. The teachers also had a life. Yeah. But I felt that we the parents sometimes had a good meeting. A well-attended meeting and sometimes they’d pick up the kids and go on home. Especially in my last school, Sutro. Yeah that was a great center. It was Johnson. Darton, and Ms. ---oh what was her name our head teacher? She was great. Yeah very firm but great.

NF: Where was the Sutro Center located?

FW: Between Clement---on Eleventh Avenue between Clement and California. Yeah. And they went from there. That’s when they say that UNCLEAR.

NF: Right. Is that where you were when you were living out on what’s your long-time address on Hayes Street?

FW: Hayes Street.

NF: Right. Yeah.

FW: Because they were in Frank McCophin and the principal in the school found out that I was out of district and I had to take my kids out of that school. Oh, my head teacher was so upset. She was upset. She said, “Not only am I loosing two good kids, I’m loosing a good parent.” Then that’s when they went to Sutro. That’s when----oh, I can’t remember her name. She said, “Oh yeah bring them, you know. That’s fine with me.” And we worked it out with the principal.

NF: That’s wonderful.

FW: You know, if I wanted to take my kids across town, I don’t think it should have been a problem. You know but some people you know, they just got to be so, so firm, so strict.

NF: How did you first really get involved more in the leadership of the parents’ groups?

FW: The head teacher at John Muir. I went to my first meeting. It was election night and that present president was leaving or didn’t want to serve anymore. And no, you know, they couldn’t elect anyone because we were all so new. We didn’t know each other. And what was her name? She pointed. She said, “She’ll do it.” And that’s how it happened. And I said, “I will do what?” She said, “You can do it.” And that’s how it happened.

NF: And you became the president of the---?

FW: I became the---of my school which was John Muir. Which was Debbie’s school at the time because Bev was still in the nursery school, well pre-school. And it just stuck with from there and I grew interested in all the different programs. I met really nice people. You know because we all had so much in common. And it was nice seeing men involved with their children. Especially since mine wasn’t. And we had quite a few men who was taking care of their children.

NF: These were men who were single fathers correct?

FW: Yes yes, whose wife had disappeared or he had just taken the kids or whichever way it went. And they would bring, like we would prepare the meals for our dinner meetings. And these men would bring in salads or spaghetti or whatever just like some of the women. Because some of the men could not cook so, we was happy to see that.

NF: Right. To see men cook.

FW: Yeah and it was only decent food. And this is how I got started.

NF: Wonderful.

FW: That’s how I got started. And I just went on from year to year and that’s when I met my second husband during probably about my tenth year or so. And I was so involved. I didn’t even realize he was a good person. That I should have married him long before I did.

NF: You met him at the childcare center?

FW: No. no.

NF: Okay.

FW: No, I met him in a meat market. I was getting ready---I went to the market to get a roast. I was going to a NAACP style show and dance. And I wanted to make this roast beef so I wouldn’t have to cook. It was on a Sunday afternoon, so I wouldn’t have to cook.Yeah yeah. UNCLEAR

NF: So you were in the NAACP?

FW: No. I just attended some of the---yeah, yeah.

NF: Was it active in San Francisco?

NF: Yeah. That’s where I was. Used to have some beautiful program. I enjoyed the programs but anyways, there’s money involved there. At that time, I couldn’t join anything except the PTA. You know, I couldn’t. You know, every penny counted. Every penny counted. And I think about this now and my girls say to me, “Mom aren’t you glad you did the things you did? Because you know how to do so many things.” Like I go to the store and I say, “I’m not paying a dollar and twenty-nine cents a pound for grapes. No.” And I learned it because I didn’t have it. Tooth men. So now, I still won’t do it. So they tell me all the time, and they tell me they are happy that I kept them in the daycare program as long as I did. They was going to dance classes. The studio sent out the bus to pick them up. They did other things. They bowled. They did ice-skating. But they also stayed in children’s centers.

NF: Until they were how old?

FW: Debbie was twelve going in to junior high school. Until they went into junior high school.

NF: And at the time, were they happy about that?

FW: No. Debbie said, “I’m the oldest one. I’m almost as old as some of the teachers.” Yeah she was being, yeah you know. But they had to do this because I didn’t anyone to supervise them. And I don’t know exactly what I was doing then because most of my catering was night. I had some daytime stuff. But most of it was night. That’s when I started taking on more and more after they were old, enough to you know---

NF: Take care of themselves. When they were in school.

FW: Yeah. Yeah.

NF: How did---do you remember when you first, you know, your first trip to Sacramento?

FW: My first trip to Sacramento was when Ms. Mahler called and she said, “I know you don’t have a car. I can’t take you. But do you have another parent that you can call?” Because she didn’t know the parents as well as I did. You know, she saw their names and stuff and I knew this one person. And that had to have been, I don’t even know when I left children’s centers. That was late sixties, I’m sure. Oh sure it was. It was like sixty-eight or sixty-nine. I wasn’t involved with the program too long before these bills started being passed around. And this is what it was all about. You go when the hearings and support the legislator. Whoever introduced it. That’s how I met---I mean Masconi was right there in San Francisco. And I had been there since fifty-five and I had never met him. But I met him in---

NF: Sacramento.

FW: I met Willie Brown because he was my attorney for my divorce. And that’s how I met him. But at that time, he wasn’t a legislator. You know he was just an attorney. He and Terry Francoise was partners.

NF: Oh wow. That’s amazing.

FW: So that’s how. And it had to been---because I went into the program in sixty-two I guess. Sixty-two or sixty-three when I first went in and it wasn’t long after that, we were going to Sacramento.

NF: What do you remember? Must have been when Mary Young was the legislative advocate when you started.

FW: Right. Right. Mary.

NF: Do you remember anything about Mary?

FW: Oh Mary. She was a wiz. She was a great lady and she used to host a lot of our meetings. Like if we had to have a board meeting or something, Mary would open her home up to us and we would go there and she was the one who taught us about the bills. And what bills we should support and what bills that we don’t support. And she taught us about---she introduced us to a lot of legislators. And then she taught us letter writing. You know, because you didn’t only go to Sacramento. Then you also had to write letters and spread among your parents so they would know what was going on. And that’s one of the reasons our centers were so great in those days because of people like Mary and Theresa and Betsy Wright and a lot of other head teachers. I can’t remember their names. Yeah but Mary was our---she was our teacher. She was good.

NF: Well she had her teachers and then she taught you.

FW: And we all loved and respected Mary. And we all missed her when she had to retire.

NF: I know her---I’m trying to not talk on the tapes too much when I am doing there interviews. But her daughter tells this great---just basically said her mom kept wanted to retire from that job but nobody else wanted to do it for the longest time. And she stayed, I mean her \_\_\_\_ was long at the child\_\_\_\_.

FW: Oh sure. Because even I stayed on after care throughout. And because I saw it coming and Mrs. Mahler saw it coming---the new parents. They weren’t going to be like we were. Because they weren’t interested in how to keep the program going. Just as long as they had some place to drop their children and pick them up.

NF: What do you think accounted for that difference between this new wave of parents and the sort of older?

FW: I think the upbringing.

NF: Yeah?

FW: You know, I think it had a lot to do with their home life. You know because a lot of parents, you know, “I give my child something to eat. I turn on the television.” And you know a lot of parents feel, that’s taking care of your child. And where we, we were concerned about not only ours but the ones coming along behind us. Because we knew it was a good program and we knew the kids could benefit from it. I know mine did. I wish they could have made it today. She said maybe one day she’ll meet you.

NF: Well maybe we can all get together for lunch or something next time I’m here.

FW: [Addresses her dog] Hey where did you come from? You want to go out? TAPE IS TURNED OFF

**TAPE 1, SIDE A ENDS**

**TAPE 1, SIDE B BEGINS**

FW: And one lady, she---every meeting she had a complaint about what her son had said. And I felt so sorry for some of the teachers because you know, our kids had been with them for a couple or three years and we knew it wasn’t true. So you know you have to listen to your children but you also have to say, “Well okay now Johnny are you sure?” And we have to question them too not just take their word or whatever. But all in all, you know it was a good thing.

NF: How much did you know about the legislature, politics, before you became part of the parent’s association?

FW: None.

NF: None?

FW: Not a single thing. All I know: politics was voting for a president. You know what I mean? Because back in those days, you had to be twenty-one to vote. So there was even times, you know, I wasn’t even interested in politics that much. And then I started reading about---I started reading the local paper about such people as Diane Feinstein and I got interested in the women. Because the first lady---the first ladies never showed me anything hardly because they were always more interested in what the first lady was wearing, what she did, and who she---and so when I started with working with children’s centers and started reading things about Mascone, and Marks, and Vasconcellos, and Dymally and all these people, I said, “You know? This is interesting. Here they write these bills, they introduce these bills, and they are trying to help people in the state, you know?” and I said, “And this is very interesting.” And we would go there and we’d watch as some of the legislators sit there and go to sleep. You know, they weren’t interested in what was going on. They weren’t. They would sit there and go to sleep and—so that’s how I, you know. And then after that, I mean I could have run somebody’s campaign.

NF: How hard was it to get other parents, you know, mobilized writing letters, paying attention to what they needed to be doing?

FW: Not too hard. Because like I said, we were a group of parents who we needed the centers. Our children needed the centers. So therefore, we know it took us to keep the centers going and we had---sometimes we would have meetings and practically every parent who had a child in the center would attend. And I thought that was great. Now in some, some parents jobs would not allow them to be. Because the shift they worked would not allow them to attend a lot of meetings. But other than that they had---when you go to Sacramento, sometimes it would be at least eight people from our area would attend these hearings. It’ll be like two cars or three cars that would go. Yeah.

NF: Were you all speak at the hearings or just listen?

FW: If it was a reason, if they wanted like they said a witness or whatever, we would speak. Someone would speak.

NF: Did you ever speak in front of a hearing.

FW: I’m trying to remember. I think maybe one of Willie Brown’s bills. And I was asked from the San Francisco area. Because it would be a state, you know it’s a statewide thing. And once Willie Mae, I remember Willie Mae. And she remembers me too because after I met her, she would portray her position. Lynne, Lynne was---all the legislators knew Lynne from all the way down in San Diego, everywhere. Because we had a lot of centers throughout the states. And Gloria---we had another woman here Jeremy? Lucia Brown, she passed away. Lucy worked as long as I did. Yeah, she passed away about three years ago now. She was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And there were times---and we also had, several times some of our teachers went. Some of our teachers would go to Sacramento.

NF: Certainly in those days Ms. Mahler went.

FW: Oh yeah. Everybody knew Theresa.

NF: What happened?

FW: One of the legislators said, I think this was Mervyn Dymally. He said, “Here comes Theresa and all of her gang.” She had three or four parents you know.

NF: I know.

FW: And here comes Theresa and all of her gang. You know she was known throughout the state.

NF: Oh yeah. Definitely.

FW: She was strong.

NF: Do you remember how you first got to know her or how---

FW: At a meeting. At a city meeting. We had, see your center met, your parent group met and your center and then we would have a city meeting where delegates from each center would meet. And that’s how I met Ms. Mahler. That’s how I met Theresa.

NF: And how would you describe her if you, you know?

FW: Next to my mother. One of the greatest women I’ve met. She was very, she was very interested and she was, she was----how can I put this? She did her job. And she did it well but she didn’t play around. She was serious. She was serious. Very serious. And she was, she was kind of like a perfectionist. She didn’t like her name connected with anything that wasn’t complete. You start a project, you complete it and she would talk to us like we were her children. You know, she was like, “Well Fay I think that you should have done this and you should not have done that.” You know. That’s the way she was and that’s what made her so good. You know, in fact I was their perfectionist. She was good at her job. She was very good at her job.

NF: Yeah she was—I wish I could have met her.

FW: Oh you, yeah.

NF: I mean I feel like I know her now.

FW: Yeah yeah because you be--- Because that’s the way. Yeah we missed her when she retired. We missed her.

NF: I think the children’s centers missed her too.

FW: Of course. And they haven’t been the same.

NF: I know.

FW: And then some of our teachers started getting older and they retired. Because the last time I talked to one of my favorite teachers---you know they call this when you are forgetting and all this stuff Alzheimer’s. So I guess this is what she has. Her name was Betsy Wright

And she was at the Frank McCoppin, a head teacher at Frank McCoppin. And I phoned her to let her know that Lucille died and I just was surprised at some of the things she was saying and asking me. And I said, “Oh my God. I didn’t know this.” Because we talked often and I guess you know that it could happen so fast.

NF: Yeah I know. How did you meet Lynne Monti?

FW: I met Lynne---Lynne’s child and mine was in---Lynne came to the school where I was. And that’s how we met at a parent meeting. Because she\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Sutro. She brought the--- and then from there, we went to city meetings and from there to Sacramento. But that’s how I met Lynne. Yeah I met Lynne. Then state, God she would get on that plane with me and we’d go down and tried to get things straightened out in the state.

NF: Where were you guys flying to?

FW: Different places. Yeah we’d fly to San Diego, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Burbank.

NF: Wow.

FW: Yeah we were all over.

NF: And what was the purpose of those meetings?

FW: To introducing and when there was a bill that was introduced too, especially a bill we wanted passed, so we were like campaigning. We were campaigning and trying to get more parents involved. See we needed the parents support. The bill, the legislator, needed our support. And so we would be out doing this and playing at different conferences. Because we would have an annual you know, every year and we would get five or six hundred people. We would have a great turnout. Yeah.

NF: And what kinds of things would you talk about at these conferences?

FW: What different centers needed. What teacher needed to be replaced and it’s a whole bunch of stuff you know. And we had displays. I should have kept all this stuff. Like we would have displays from the kid’s work. Some of the things the young people were doing in the centers. Yeah, we’d have a big display of that stuff. Have a nice lunch and stuff.

NF: Wonderful. And how often do you think you and Lynne would go up to to----

FW: To Sacramento?

NF: To Sacramento.

FW: When legislature was in session and according to how many bills were introduced, sometimes we went twice a week. And sometimes we went every week for weeks. Yeah. If there was a bill, I’d tell you Ms. Mahler would call me at three o’clock in the morning if she found out something that she thought we should---yeah. Because she knew at the time what I was doing, I could get away a little bit better than other you know? And especially she knew when I was in the post office if it was my off day. My off day belonged to Theresa Mahler. Yeah, my off day belonged. Because she knew I had a good friend, who could pick up the girls for me. And she would, bless her heart. The one I was telling you just passed away. She would go by and pick her. She had a car and she was a nurse and she worked midnight to eight. So therefore, she was free in the afternoon to get our kids and whatever we had to---uhu because she would have had her sleep and everything. And Mrs. Mahler knew this. So she would say, “Oh Mrs. Brown, call Mrs. Brown and see if she could get the girls. I would like you to go up because Willie is introducing this bill or Mark is introducing this bill and I want somebody there to represent the center.” And here I go.

NF: And would you go with other---take other mothers with you?

FW: Oh sure. You call around and see who you could get. And everybody knew practically everybody’s job and their off days and stuff. Because we were god about taking our kids, you know, keeping our kids. Helping each other with the kids when the daycares were closed. So we were pretty good about that especially with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ centers. I would take, sometimes I would have ten, twelve kids going to a baseball game. Yeah.

NF: Oh, wow.

FW: I had people on the bus saying, “Are all those your children?” And so this is the kind of thing I would do so I would know what parent. I had a great list of parents and I would know who could do this and who couldn’t do that and who was interested. We had some that weren’t interested.

NF: Right.

FW: And so this is what you do. You call them and they’ll say yes or no. yeah.

NF: And what was the---of the centers your daughters went to or even the---what was the racial and ethnic breakdown? I mean was it some black and white? All colors of the rainbow?

FW: My kids were in a predominantly white. Because I took them out of district.

NF: Right.

FW: And these were predominantly---and I didn’t take them out because of the school where they might have been going. I took them out because it was convenient for me getting the bus to work. I could walk down to the end of the street and get the bus and go on to work. Because we are up at six o’clock in the morning sometime or earlier. So that’s what this was all about. And before I could get the school because the schools classrooms afterward were the children’s centers. And this is why we had to leave Frank McCoppin because the principal would not work with the children. She didn’t want the children’s centers in her school and all she wanted was an excuse to try and close the centers. She really wanted the center closed. And when she found out where I lived and which was---if you’re close to the school, I mean my kids were like this close to being in that district. Just that close. Because we could get to school on the bus, two minutes. But it was fine so Ms. Mahler said, “I have your spot, just go over to Woodrow.” That was farther but it was right on the bus line to get down to I don’t know, where it was. So it worked out.

NF: So were you one of the few black women that was in the leadership position or----?

FW: No.

NF: No.

FW: No. Most of the leaders were black.

NF: Really?

FW: The most work, I’ll say the most constructive work were done by the black parents. Because we knew we needed the centers. We knew the centers were good for our kids. Because Lucille the one I am talking about that passed away, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the other girl who passed as an attorney all those were black women. Willie Mae Addison, Willie Mae is black. Gloria is black.

NF: Interesting.

FW: You know we would just get up and go. Like I said, we knew this was a good program and we knew our kids needed it and we worked for it. There is another young woman, a lady who’s down in Palo Alto now. She was one of our good parents. We were all from the same school.

NF: There was one Shirley---

FW: Wysinger.

NF: Wysinger.

FW: Now that is a woman to talk. You know Jeri mentioned this to me. She said, “Well did you tell her about Shirley Wysinger?” Yes Shirley. Yeah she’s black. In fact, I don’t think Shirley ever got married.

NF: Really.

FW: She has two sons or three.

NF: Is she around your age?

FW: She’s---Shirley, I think is younger than I am. You know women.

NF: I know.

FW: I tell my age but some women don’t. But Shirley is younger than I am. Shirley and Jeri and what is her name, she had one daughter and her husband was in law school, he became an attorney. I can’t think of her name. Yeah but Shirley, we built some new homes in San Francisco and I remember when Shirley was the first person to move in when they were completed.

NF: Really?

FW: And she works for the city. She works for---

NF: Was this -----?

FW: Western Edition. I often see her on television and read about her in the paper. When you said Shirley, I knew you---because Jeri told me about Shirley. But we don’t get together too much now. Yeah we used to but we don’t get together. And then I moved up here and you’re going to complain about\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I said, “I’m tired of San Francisco and old. I want to be comfortable.” You know and everything is here. I don’t have to leave from over here to do anything. All the stores and stuff. So I’m fine.

NF: Right.

FW: But they all still live in the city. Well Jeri lives in Pacifica, which is---

NF: Well maybe we could get you all together.

FW: That would be beautiful.

NF: You know some time when I am here we will all get together and that would be fun for me too.

FW: Yeah because I think Jeri know how to because Jeri works for, what did I tell you? The Bar Association She’s the secretary for the Bar Association. Because she served for secretary for ours. She was the best secretary. She didn’t miss a word.

NF: Really?

FW: She did not miss a word. If somebody said, “No I did not say that.” She’d read the minutes back to us. She didn’t miss a word. And she, I mean she’s a tiny little old something but she was strong. She was real strong.

NF: Well that would be wonderful if you could put me in touch with her too that would be great.

FW: Yeah. I talked to her yesterday.

NF: What were the views when you had your kids in the childcare program, what were your views of welfare at the time? Like AFDC? You know?

FW: I never experienced it so I don’t know. That’s why I worked two jobs, three jobs.

NF: Right.

FW: I didn’t want anyone telling me how to spend my money, where to spend it. You know and I didn’t want---I wanted to have things that I know that the welfare would not allow me to take. My daughter, if you do happen to meet her, she was born with this tulses of the left eye. She had surgeries four times. I wouldn’t even take help then. I had a good insurance and what the insurance didn’t pay, I paid it myself. My mom and dad never took--- I’ve always been an independent persona and I think the rest of my family is the same way. I may have some nieces and nephews, I don’t know about them. You know, but not the sisters and brothers. You know and I never have had any assistance. And the social worker who worked with me with Bev’s surgery and stuff through the program thanks to Ms. Mahler---through the program, he told me, he said, “Now you know that you can get help.” His name was Webster, I said, “Mr. Webster if I do need some help, I will call you. I really appreciate it but I can handle it now.” Because I had a good insurance that covers most of the expenses. Yeah. And she had a surgery too at some time ago, hence I know about children. So no, I really feel the program is abused by some people. I really feel that there are some people who receive you know, shouldn’t have to. I just feel that when you’re young, you go to work. Because there is always a job. It may not be what you feel you should be doing but it takes care of your family. Because like I said, I did housekeeping for a while. I did housekeeping because I needed those extra dollars and they were dollars that I earned and dollars I could spend however, I wanted to spend it. You know, you get on this program, because I had a friend, and she said, that she would push her television in the closet when the social worker was coming by.

NF: Oh yeah, you couldn’t have anything.

FW: So, no. Not that I’m a great lover of these things because my kids did like cartoons and that was my way of punishing them. It was by best punishment for them was not let them watch cartoons on Saturday and they could only watch two hours. Oh Debbie, she would just practically die. She just thought that was the worst thing I could do you know. Only two hours but no, couldn’t watch T.V. when you were being punished because, you know they say you’re not supposed to spank your kids so they didn’t realize taking cartoons---she’d rather get a spanking. So but I don’t---I know a lot of people who \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the program.

NF: Well a lot of people got off the program because the childcare program.

FW: Yeah, yeah and I can say because of the childcare program, I didn’t have to get on. I didn’t even have to think about it. Because my salary at the time allowed me to have two children in the program without having to pay, you know all my money. And when I sneaked in, you know it was me. That was me. During the daytime, that was fine. If I wanted to work at night, that was different.

NF: Do you remember the women advocating for welfare rights in the late sixties in the same time that you know, you guys were doing the childcare thing or was there a whole welfare rights movement going on?

FW: I remember that thing about----

NF: There was this woman named Espanola Jackson who---

FW: Yeah, I know who Espanola is.

NF: She was a big spokesperson for----

FW: She always was speaking for something. She loved to speak.

NF: And so I hear.

FW: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know who you are talking about. Yeah. I don’t---you know I was probably so tired and was so---I never paid any attention to anything. I was so involved in my own stuff, I didn’t pay any attention to anything like that because when I got a chance to sleep, I slept you know and like I said, the girls and I were very close and a lot of mornings I woke up, they were in the bed. And they had twin beds. They were in the bed with me I didn’t even run? when they got in there. I would be so tired. I would be so tired. And when I met my last husband, he started coming by and he would take the girls out. He said, “Because your mom needs some sleep today.” And I got to thinking, “That’s a pretty good guy you know.” He would take them to the park. He took them to the zoo, took them to the pier down there. Those kids went places, I’d never been. You know.

NF: So what year did you marry him?

FW: We got married in eighty---eighty, eighty-four, somewhere in there.

NF: And you’d known him for a long time?

FW: I had met him and didn’t even realize that’s who I had met years ago. My sister was a neighbor to his brother and I had seen him and I had not even know he was the same person after I had met him.

NF: And what was his name?

FW: Mose Williams. Yeah he passed away. UNCLEAR SENTENCE. My kids loved him. He was a good guy.

NF: That’s wonderful that you found him.

FW: Yeah. He was a good guy.

NF: What did he do?

FW: He worked for a paper company. He was an operator for---what was the name of the paper company? It was over in San Francisco but he had retired on disability before he passed away. He got injured on his job. A guy ran into him driving a forklift and all he did was pick up the bundle and take---well it wasn’t the guys fault, it was the fault of the forklift. Something was wrong with it; in fact they sued the company that made the forklift. They won the case.

NF: Right.

FW: They won the case. It’s the brakes or something. So anyway, that was \_\_\_\_\_\_.

NF: So you were together maybe twenty years?

FW: Umhum. Because we knew each other way before then. Yes to but to be married.

NF: So your kids, they were older when you got married?

FW: Yeah you know, you have to be careful.

NF: I know.

FW: And they were doing good. My kids, to be brought up by their mother and my sisters. My sisters was good. Because see, my sisters took care when I’m off going to Los Angeles and Culver city and all those places, my sisters took care of my children. One time I went to Los Angeles, I got the wrong bag. I took my daughter’s clothes and but my daughter took my clothes. They had to go to the airport and send my clothes to me. We took the wrong bags. And my sister lived in San Francisco so it wouldn’t hurt to run to the airport. Yeah so they took care of my girls for me while I was doing all of this schooling.

NF: What do you think made you stay involved for so long. Because you know some people came in and out and---

FW: They did. The parents and I felt that if I could just make a little contribution to get just a little of what I got from the centers, I felt good. I felt good. And when I kept trying to leave, I was asked to do this and asked to do that. There was a group from Oakland come. They wanted me to attend their meeting, to set up their meeting and I kept saying, you know, “There are other people, why don’t they call their director or their head teacher?” And I got to thinking; those are the parents, the types of parents they want. They want a parent who’s been involved. You know so this is what kept me---

NF: Going.

FW: I just felt all children deserved a chance and the center did give them a chance. And it helped a lot of parents. Those teachers helped a lot of parents you know because they were with your child all day especially in the summer. And two and three hours in the afternoon. And they see, “Well Johnnie should do this or Johnnie shouldn’t do this.” And you know they talk to the parents about it and most of us appreciate it. Yeah, most of us appreciate it. Because my oldest one was a rough houser. Oh, she’s use the most safety pins. The whole school would run out of safety pins putting her clothes back on her because she loved to play. So they would talk to me you know, “Debbie did this today, Debbie did this today.” And I appreciated it. I appreciated it. And she would be calmer the next day you know. And when Bev, wouldn’t eat and these kind of things. Because these were things that I didn’t even realize were going on. So that’s why, if there was something I can do to help one parent or one child, it’s not costing me anything, you know time.

NF: Do you remember mobilizing against this one bill called AB750? Because Lynne talked a lot about this. That it was---

FW: Whose bill was that?

NF: That was introduced by Jerry Lewis down in San Bernardino and the bill was going to put all the money to the federal government and the state wasn’t going to---

FW: Wasn’t going to have any---

NF: Wasn’t going to support them financially anymore. That it would shift in that the priority would be women who were coming off of welfare or on welfare and that was---Lynne talked a long long time about that.

FW: Yeah, Yes we did. We went to Sacramento more than once on that bill. Because it wasn’t a good bill. But coming out of San Bernardino, what would you expect. You know it wasn’t a good bill because it wasn’t fair to some of us. It wasn’t a fair bill.

NF: How many times do you think you and Lynne went up to Sacramento together?

FW: Especially Lynne and I. because Lynne and I probably went more than other parents because like I said, Lynne had the car. And---

NF: So she had a Volkswagen.

FW: Oh, yes. UNLCLEAR We you know, I really can’t say. This went on for quite a few years and see and I went a lot of times before I even Met Lynne and after Lynne was gone. You know but Lynne and I went several times. We went several times because Ms. Mahler called her almost as many times as she would call me after Lynne got involved. Yeah and she realized Lynne was a good speaker and she was just you know, she would study the bill and then she would---yeah and that’s after Mary had left.

NF: Right. Right. Right.

FW: Mary had left then.

NF: Yeah I think Mary had left in sixty-five or sixty-six.

FW: She wasn’t around too long after I went into the parents---But then we would see her. She would like volunteer and since she didn’t want to continue as active as she was. Because she was just tired and plus she had a job. She worked.

NF: And she didn’t take her vacation days for years to do that.

FW: To do those things. That’s right. Yeah so, she wasn’t around but we would see her. Specially, I would see her quite a bit. She was a lot of help to me. But I didn’t do the legislative thing too long. That was my last position. And I did not fight none support and I wasn’t getting any support amongst the parents \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

NF: Right this is in the very---

FW: It was when the whole\_\_\_\_\_. You know these youngsters just wanted a place to drop their kids off and make sure they were going to eat. You know we would have meetings and they would said that their kids have cereal for dinner and that kind of stuff and that just really and truly---I wanted to say, “Well let Johnnie go home with me. Because he’s going to have some spinach and some chicken or some fish or something.” You know but they were different. They were like oh, the kids were accidents or something you know. Quite a few of them who was that way. And I don’t know---and we had some two parent families with kids in the centers too you know. Now how they qualified, I don’t know. I really, truly don’t know how they qualified but we had some.

NF: There was a few exemptions in \_\_\_\_\_ around the something in the seventies and then all those went away. You know, there was a woman who I think was a legislative advocate right after Mary. Her name was Sharon Godske and she was married.

FW: I know who Sharon was.

NF: Yeah. I interviewed her. She was married and he was in school and they were able to---

FW: Okay I understand that. I would understand when they were students involved but some of these guys, some of these people were working. Because I knew a couple, they both worked. Yeah I remember Sharon Godske. Yeah. See all these people were younger than me.

NF: She had her kids like in the early sixties and she said that she was only involved for maybe a year or two.

FW: Yeah she wasn’t around much.

NF: I think her marriage started falling apart at the time. So what do you remember about Willie Mae as a---you said you stayed with her one time in Long Beach?

FW: I did. I spent a night or two. We were down there for a meeting and Willie Mae had three or four children and she served as---Willie Mae was the state president when I got involved. She was our state president. She conducted a good meeting. I remember and we had good attendance in those days. We had interesting---back to the parents again. We had had very interesting parents. They were interested in the future of the program, of the centers you know. And so therefore everybody cooperated and she would come up here to our meeting.

NF: Yeah. She seemed like she was really---

FW: Because sometimes she would stay---we were very upset with her because she stayed at a hotel because----PHONE RINGS.RECORDING STOPS

TAPE 1, SIDE B ENDS

TAPE 2, SIDE A BEGINS

NF: This is tape number two of my interview with Fay Love Williams on July twelfth 2006 in Antioch, California. I remember you saying earlier and I wanted to ask this follow up question. When I asked you about discrimination, you said that the first discrimination you faced was when you were in California not in Arkansas right? What was the incident? Do you remember?

FW: It was school.

NF: Oh, school.

FW: Parents who didn’t want my children in school with their children. Even one woman said in a meeting one night, “I moved here in this area so my children wouldn’t have to tolerate those people.” She said it sitting real close to me. And the sad thing about the whole situation was that I was the only black parent there. One of the Board members from the platform was black. And see my kids right now if you put all their friends in this room, they would have more Caucasian friends than black. Because I taught my children that people are people. It has nothing to do with color or anything. And I have entertained people in my home that was broke in my home by my door. I don’t know who they were until they walked through the front door. Because there is this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from Southern California, who wanted fried chicken. Well heck I thought she was black. She told Bev to ask your mom if she’d do fried chicken. So this is where I started facing most of my stuff. And thank God, that it didn’t affect my children. It didn’t affect my children. I could tell you a very funny story, I don’t know if you want to tape this or not. In San Francisco, right after we got started in the program in the children’s center, and Debbie was out in the playground and this little girl called her a nigger. She had no idea. She thought she was something great. She ran in and said, “Mom, mom, guess what? I’m a nigger.” I said, “Who said that?” She called the girl’s name on the playground and she said, she was excited. She thought she was such in, really gained something. I said, “Who called?---” And she told me. I said well, “You go back on the playground and tell her if you’re a nigger, she’s a cracker.” And I said, “So both of you guys are something different. You know from everybody else.” And I found out her husband was stationed at the Presidio. She was in the service. They were from Washington. And this is where I faced it most. There were places in San Francisco we used to go and they would act like we weren’t there. We never got served, we never got asked like you know like they’d bring you a glass of water and give you the menu. We weren’t even noticed. So I faced it more here than I did in the South because down there we knew. And it wasn’t a lot of---the schools integrated without, before I came from, without any problem. Because everybody knew everybody else and you know, their kids, they played together. Believe it or not, those kids would swim in the same swimming pool. Because the little city only had one pool.

NF: That’s a unique situation compared to some---

FW: And it’s a true situation. But then, I heard other people who had terrible experiences but I never experience that. My dad---there were Caucasians at my dad’s funeral and they asked, when my dad was sick, before my dad ever died. Because my sister said, “Well wait a minute, wait till he dies first.” Because people will ask if it’s okay if they could come to his funeral. Yeah. That’s how much my dad----my mom could get anything she wanted. She was highly respected because we were a respectful family. And there’s two sides to a lot of these stories because some whites are more prejudice than some, you know. I never had a problem there and I still don’t have a problem. No, I still don’t have a problem now.

NF: Now being in San Francisco when all the Civil Rights stuff was going on, did you pay attention to that stuff?

FW: Oh sure. Because I knew some people that was involved in some of this stuff. Especially when I left. See when I left Little Rock, that really concerned me because it was a surprise. I had no idea. And like I said, I was involved with some of the families of those kids that was, went to Central High School. And I had no idea that this was going to happen. I had no idea and I was really surprised that that happened in Little Rock. I really did.

NF: Did you watch it on T.V. like everybody else?

FW: Yeah I watched it. I watched it. I listened and I---at the time, I thought it was a bad thing. But as time passed and as other things happened and I saw, it was just opening doors that should never have been closed anyway. Because some of us portray ourselves as people that you know, maybe you don’t want to live near or next door, your kids go to school with. But they should be given a chance, given an opportunity.

NF: Everyone should have---that is my one---everyone should have an equal opportunity at a starting gate. What you do with that opportunity is---

FW: Because I met, you know, my kids in college and all, I met, people who, “Well what is Beverly doing?” And I said, “Oh she’s in law school.” You know for some reason, they feel like our kids should only be a teacher or nurse. That’s the highest. I have architects. I have doctors, lawyers, all of that in my family. But I don’t think they make me any different than my friends whose kids only went to high school. You know and they are good people. As long as you’re a good person. It doesn’t matter what you do. Because we have some bad lawyers. We have some bad doctors. We have some terrible teachers. Because Bev had one teacher that shouldn’t even be teaching students in high school. In Washington High School in San Francisco. Yeah and she in fact, the other time I ever had to go the school with one of my children throughout all their school, was with this particular teacher. I had to go see her counselor because he was talking. She said he wasn’t lecturing. He wasn’t saying anything of interest. And she would open her book and she was reading. And he said to her, you know, “You’re being rude.” And she said, “No I don’t think I am.” She said, “Because I learn more by reading than I am by listening to you.” So, he sent her to the counselor. So, she said she\_\_\_\_\_\_ just got into another class and never had any problem. She said what he was talking about you know, and I found out later there were other parents who had had problems with him. He wasn’t a teacher. He just would get in a classroom and talk and had nothing to do with the books they were supposed to read.

NF: Right. Right. Right. Right.

FW: SO, other than that, I haven’t had too much problems with, you know---and especially children’s centers. I had no problems with children’s centers. None whatsoever.

NF: Were there Asian women who were involved with the children’s groups there?

FW: Very few. Very few. They was coming in as I was leaving in the Richmond district area where my kids were located because they started moving out that way.

NF: Right. Right. Right. Right.

FW: Now we had a group in the mission, a Hispanic group. And there’s quite a few of them.

NF: And were those parents, would some of them get involved in the parents groups?

FW: Slightly, yeah. We got a small group.

NF: There may be more down in L.A. I would think. There’s a little bit more---

FW: Coronado somewhere down there we would go and there would be quite a few. Yeah but San Francisco had a few and over there. Because we had several schools out there.

NF: Out of the mission?

FW: Yeah. What do you think you learned as a member of the parent’s association and the children’s centers?

FW: You know? I didn’t really. I can’t say I really learned too much because with the programs I had been with previously, I guess I could say I learned that kids should be mixed. They shouldn’t be this little group and this. I think all- they should be like--- how do you say this? Kids in a group and all kids should be taught from the same textbooks you know. I don’t think there should be any separation or any you know. And I found that in children’s centers, they did things by age group. Not so much about sex. Because the boys went in and they cooking just like the girls did and that was the good thing. And as the kids grew older in the next age, then they could move up and do what the older kids had done the year before. So that was good. At Sutro, that was really a great program. Yeah, they really did a lot with the young people and not so many outings, you know because they were close to the park. They could be in the park every day but the teachers \_\_\_\_ to them, you know.

NF: How about participating in the parents groups? Did you learn anything about yourself or from interacting with this other parents and going to Sacramento and you know any of those activities?

FW: I learned that I had to listen. I had to listen more and I had to learn how to participate in programs that I wasn’t even interested in but it was a part of the group. It was a part of the center and you know you had to do things that maybe you would rather be doing something else. I learned that you had to deal with sometimes things that you just weren’t interested in. Because like some of these women didn’t even know how to put a button on their kid’s clothes. But I knew all of this stuff but then I had to be a\_\_\_\_\_. That’s what we were doing at that\_\_\_. So sometimes to me it was wasting my time but then I realized hey everybody didn’t have the mother I had, you know. So that was through a couple of things.

NF: What did you learn about the political process from all of this or how you affect political change?

FW: I wonder after going to Sacramento so many times and either supporting the bill or not supporting----sometimes I wonder did we do any good? Did we do any good? Like I said, we met with these legislators. Sometimes we met with them in their office. Willie Brown was really good about keeping somebody out of his office when he knew some of the parents. And he was my neighbor you know. His daughter graduated with Bev. So we kind of like would see each other and Milton Marks, I don’t know if you have come across his name. These were our local people. And they listened to us and they even asked us about writing bills ourselves and I think Lynne maybe wrote one once. I think Lynne did. I don’t know what happened to it. But politics is a funny thing. I don’t know if we did any good political but we did get a lot of bills passed. We really did. Some never—what is the word for it. They passed but we never saw, you know.

NF: It never became a law.

FW: It never became a law so that’s all we could do is give it our best. Yeah we gave it our best.

NF: Do you remember the first election that you voted in?

FW: That was how many years ago? Fifty years ago?

NF: John Kennedy?

FW: Yes. You know I never think about time but that was fifty years ago.

NF: Because you are seventy-one now.

FW: that’s right. That’s right. I made twenty-one in June and I voted in November. Can you believe that? Okay. Oh gosh. Who was who and which was which. Yeah that was a long time ago. That was a long time ago. But I voted. I couldn’t wait. I had friends who couldn’t wait to get twenty-one so they could drink legally. I wanted to vote. Because that’s another thing, my parents, I always remember my parents voting but they had to pay what you call a poll tax. One dollar. And I never forget, my mom and dad, they would go up to the---there was a church. It was the Church of Christ. That’s where the polls were and my dad and mom would go vote. And I used to hear them discussing the candidates and they disagreed on some things. They really did. And on some candidates. So when I got old enough to vote, they couldn’t help me because I was living here. You know that’s who was president or whatever. But like governor and other legislators. And I said, “Why did I leave home? I need my mom. I need my dad.” Because my mom she would read up on her---she was very opinionated. You can ask any preacher, any teacher, or even any politician. My mom would say it straight up. Yeah, but I don’t remember who I voted for as far as California. But if I had their names, I could tell you if I remember their name. Milton Marks should have been one for assemblymen. But they were all assemblymen before they were senators and whatever.

NF: Often times that was how it worked.

FW: Yeah except Willie Brown. He wouldn’t move. Willie stayed an assemblymen until he came into the city and became mayor. And then Masconni after he got Sen--- then he was mayor. That was a sad thing. Milton Marks’s sons also went to high school with Bev. He first had them in a private school and then they went over to the public school. And there was another legislator from southern California other than Mervyn Dymally. He was really good. We had two greens. One was a green. He was a green. Leroy and another green.

NF: And then there was also this guy, Allen Sieroty who was really supportive.

FW: Yeah I remember the name now.

NF: And Corley Porter served for a while but then he---I think he retired soon after when you would have gotten involved.

FW: Because we was all up in Redding and in Porterville. We was all in these places.

NF: Really?

FW: Yeah. We was in Redding.

NF: You went to Redding? To---?

FW: Yeah. We had a meeting in Redding.

NF: Wow.

FW: I’m trying to think of the latest name that was very active there. Yeah. We were all over. We were all over. I went to places that I never heard of before in California that had a center. You know. And then when I car, I was going to all of these places alone especially if they were kind of close not too far. And Redding is one of the places. I’m still driving to places. Yep I still would.

NF: You were telling me about Gloria Brownlee and Lynne getting into it one time? Do you remember what?

FW: I really and truly don’t remember but it had something to do I think with some legislation. I think it had something to do with some legislation. I think it had something to do with the legislation because usually when we met like that, this is what it was all about. Bills. See because we’d get copies of the bills and then we discussed it amongst each other and everybody, each group, you know like Guerillas and San Diego and we would get together and discuss and see if we were going to support it or not and I think it was the bill that they didn’t agree on. One \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because--- and Gloria knew a lot of people too. She worked for ABC I think, channel seven. Her husband worked for one network and she worked for the other one. And we could kind of keep up with a lot of the you know--- and I think this is what it was about, legislation. But we thought we were politicians. We were working on these bills, we thought we were politicians. We was seeing some of these legislators wondering\_\_\_\_. Yeah we were there. And they would meet with us you know they would actually meet with us. They would come to some of our meetings. And like I said, Gloria knew quite a few people down in her area. And then what is it----National City? What is near San Diego? There’s some place, something City. Is it National City?

NF: American City? I know the city you are talking about.

FW: Yeah that’s near San Diego. She lived there. So Gloria knew quite a few people, with her being in television see? Yeah she knew quite a few people.

NF: So they had this---

FW: Had a discussion.

NF: In a meeting? In front of everybody?

FW: Not---well kind of sort of. And this was a small group. It wasn’t a big, big group of people. Because I think probably, Lynne and I was the only one from my area. And it was like, because I don’t think Willie Mae, I don’t think Willie Mae was there. We had a guy, what was his name? We had a guy from up here who was active too. Lynne is sure to remember him. He had custody of his children. And we had a guy from Redding too. We had quite a few men.

NF: And then there was a guy from Long Beach named David Michalii, Michaliis something like that. He was involved in the late part.

FW: Yeah, he came in at the end. I know who you are talking about because---

NF: I’m going to talk to him. I’ve found him so---

FW: Did you?

NF: His daughter called me. He drives around in his RV in the summertime and sees the countryside.

FW: How interesting.

NF: But he’d be back in Long Beach in September so---

FW: Oh, I wish I could do something like that. I would love to just stop here and there and---My husband and I had planned to do that and we never got a chance to do it. In fact, we had a trip planned. He found out he had, oh, I’m sorry---

NF: Oh, it’s okay.

FW: He found out he had cancer and then BAM he was gone. August to October.

NF: Wow that was quick.

FW: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Faded away.

NF: What kind of cancer?

FW: Pancreatic.

NF: My grandmother had it.

FW: We think he knew and he didn’t tell us because my daughter and I took him to the doctor on April. When the doctor came out, he went to talk to us and my husband got in front of him and I think he was going to tell us what they had found. And then he had surgery and all day they kept calling \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And he wouldn’t take chemotherapy. He said it was just---because he had a friend that passed away that had taken chemotherapy. He didn’t want to go through that. So he went to a meeting with me one time. He was trying to see what my programs was all about. He went to a meeting with me. He was trying to become a father. He said, “That’s all you guys do? Just sit there and talk?” I said, “But that’s constructive stuff you know?” So he didn’t go back anymore.

NF: Do you consider yourself a leader or an activist at the time you were doing all this?

FW: No. I just felt that I was a parent who just really wanted the best for her children and if it took what I was doing to do it---and they considered me as a leader but I never considered myself as a leader. I was just a parent who was trying to help you know?

NF: How would you, if I made you define leader and activist, how would you define somebody who is a leader or an activist?

FW: It is a person who knows who actually knows what they are talking about and knows what their next step is going to be and knows how to deal with people. Well I’m kind of describing myself. And you know, that’s a leader. Well I guess I was kind of a leader because I did take time. But I didn’t think I was a leader. I got the job but hey this is what I want. Once I got into it, I saw it was a good thing. And anything I am in to, I try to make it better. So I worked hard. If I could just help one parent get a little bit out of this program, what I’m getting out of. We did have a quite a few parents who were like me. They needed it, you know and you had to get them motivated. Because I know there was a lot of times they didn’t want to be there. But they didn’t want o hear me. They didn’t want to hear me next week saying, “Why weren’t you at the meeting last week?” So they would show up. And plus they got a free meal, free dinner. We always served dinner. Because you go to pick your kid up and you stay and then we have dinner and the kids have their dinner and you go on give them a bath and put them to bed. You had a free night you know? And I was very serious about that. Very serious.

NF: Was there something that would frustrate you about trying to organize these parents?

FW: Oh sure. Oh sure. You get frustrated every meeting. Because someone come in and they didn’t want to be there so therefore they would you know, they would either talk when they supposed to be listening or they found fault with something, because we had food--- something was wrong. You’re going to find a parent like that in every group. In every group. And we had this parent---that’s her name Edith Morrison who now lives in Palo Alto, east Palo Alto, Palo Alto. And she was one of those parents. She \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She’d go to meetings. She even went to L.A. a few times but she was always disturbing. You know she always had some comment that had nothing to do with what we were trying to do. So yeah she got, you know---

NF: Personality.

FW: Yeah, she’s a nice lady but we still friends---her granddaughter is Bev’s best friend. Her great granddaughter is Bev’s goddaughter so we you know---but still she was one of those. Yeah she was one of those. But you learn. Like I said, “Back to my mother, you learn how to cope.” And you know I had seven sisters. You learn a lot about women with seven sisters.

NF: Yeah.

FW: Yeah, so although I wasn’t with my sisters that much because they had left home but I remember that you know, you go along with the program. And being brought up in church. I was brought up in church. That’s where you find them. Those women honey, after you belong to some female group, the mission or whatever, you learn to cope.

NF: Did you all go to church? When you were in San Francisco?

FW: Umhumm.

NF: What church did you all go?

FW: Presbyterian on Page and Oak. Reverend\_\_\_\_\_. Reverend\_\_\_\_\_\_ would start a church with nobody but him and his wife and children. I loved that man and he left. He left. He was Caucasian and he was one of these ministers who went from San Francisco to Alabama and marched with Martin Luther King Jr.. Yeah he was young. We were so scared for him because he had a young wife and two young children. But he went and we survived. Yeah Reverend\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I’ll never forget Reverend \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And we enjoyed the service. And then we went to church and we used to attend the Church of Living God on Page Street. The pastor there left. Everytime we would get a good enjoyable church service, somebody would get promoted. That’s what they do. They get promoted so therefore they go to ano---I don’t even know where Reverend\_\_\_\_\_\_ is because that church closed and somebody else is there now and the Presbyterian church now is going to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and Durksville. Yeah, yeah. But my mother was---I was brought up Baptist and Methodist. My mother was Baptist after almost married fifty years, they still attended separate churches. My dad \_\_\_\_ Methodist. And it’s that way throughout our family.

NF: Really?

FW: Throughout our family. Because we were taught, even though they have different names, there is only one God and one color blood which is red and they instilled that in us simply because. Because they visited each other’s churches you know. With my mom was born Baptist she died Baptist. My dad was born Methodist and then he died Methodist. But we had to go to Sunday school.

NF: Did you go with mom or dad to church?

FW: Their churches was different Sundays. In a small place like that, my mom’s church was first and third Sunday. My dad’s was second and fourth so everybody could go to church every Sunday. And the fifth Sunday the churches all got together and had what they called a singing convention at different churches. And that would be all the choirs from all churches. That was the best service for me because I loved good gospel singing. I loved the gospel singing. But now, I don’t go too often. No I got too involved in sports. You should of seen me on the ship. Everybody else is out having a good time and I am watching U.S.A get beat in soccer.

NF: The world cup?

FW: Yeah I watched the world cup so the church, we involved in. You know. And you had to when you were a child every Sunday. And my mom’s church was near our home. And every Sunday there was company. Every Sunday you had to cook for the preacher or their sister or somebody.

NF: Well did your mom have some kind of specialty recipes that you?

FW: My mother would never use the recipe. My mother could make---she could look at your outfit and she could cut it out and make it. Never used a pattern. I never saw my mother with a recipe and my mother could cook. And my mother’s food, you know, we’d be sitting around, “God I wonder what we are having for dinner today?” Because we had looked the kitchen over right? We didn’t see anything. But we always had to sit at the table and eat. We never could pick up our fork without blessing the table. And these are the kind of things I was brought up in. yeah and we always sat at the table. And when you wanted to leave the table, you had to say excuse me. And my dad had a brother who lived with us until he passed away and he sat at that end of the table and then my dad sat and my mom would sit over on the side. And it would be a table full sometimes. No I don’t remember all of us ever being at home together. Only time I remember being with my sisters and brothers was when my dad got sick in sixty-five.

NF: And you all came back?

FW: We all was there. But we were never in the room together at the same time. Because some would be in the hotel, some at the hospital, some at the house. But on my fortieth birthday which was, you know how many years ago that was. We were all together. We had a family reunion at my dad’s and mom’s place and it was also my fortieth birthday.

NF: Oh that’s neat.

FW: It was beautiful.

NF: I bet.

FW: And the next year, the first one of us passed away, my sister. She sat in her chair and just went to sleep. And the next year after that was my forty-year old brother. But we had that year and we all was there. My mom’s church gave a big thing for us. It was wonderful.

NF: Unbelievable.

FW: I learned my sisters out here. And we were together all the time. In fact if one of us left, we were just together Tuesday, Saturday. We get together. My brother comes here all the time.

NF: That’s wonderful.

FW: yeah. Yeah.

NF: And your older sisters did they come here for jobs?

FW: They came here. This lady brought my older sister, lived in St. Paul Minnesota. She has a child older than I am. I was born in \_\_\_\_. And her husband worked for the railroad. He was the porter and he traveled naturally. And how they settled in St. Paul, Minnesota, I do not know. But this is where my older sister lived. But she passed away a few years ago too and---But her husband still living. Just made eighty-one. I’m going to see him next month. He travels.

NF: Wonderful.

FW: He’s not like a brother in law. He’s like a brother. And he’s remarried since my sister died. But we still got family. Yeah so we’ll all be together again and we just had a family reunion here last year and he was here. He still can dance and he is so proud to say--- he was eighty then--- he was so proud to say, to make his little speech and just say, “Guess how old I am?” Because he is the oldest one in the family. Because we had my sister that was the next oldest, she passed away last year in October in Oakland. But we get together. We don’t let miles or anything. We get together.

NF: Wonderful. So back to your sisters who came out to California. They came for college, work?

FW: College. Whatever came first. So my sisters that came here first. She went to cosmetology school. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ College in Oakland. And that’s what she did up until she couldn’t work anymore. The next sister was in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Arkansas. She was working but she came. She left and came to work in Oakland. She went to beauty school also. But she didn’t like it because she didn’t know how much money she’s going to make. So she went to a nursing school. So she retired as a nurse. My next sister didn’t do too much because she had a successful husband and you know how some women don’t; kind of lazy. And she’s the one who was a twin but her twin was living in Minnesota now. So she moved back to Arkansas. She passed in Arkansas. Then the next sister lived in Fresno. That’s where I came first. Stopped in Fresno and visited with her. She was pregnant with her first child.

NF: And then you came up to the bay area?

FW: Then I came to the bay area and never did live in Fresno again. And I went to register in Contracosta College. Because my sister thought I should go to a JC first and I thought it was wasting you know because I had good grades. But I didn’t go because my mother got sick. I had to go back to Arkansas. And I thought I had to go back. She was letting me know three hours after I had left I did not have to come. She was better. Because she was taking care of my nieces and nephews because all of us was gone except one brother. Anyway, that’s when I decide to go to school in Follander so I’d be near them.

NF: And was that a co-ed college or a ----small?

FW: Not too small.

NF: Really.

FW: Not too small. It was a good school. It was a Methodist-supported school. Very good. The president was oooh boy. We had to wear hose to school. You had to be dressed. You couldn’t go like kids going now. You look like you were a college student. \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Harris good guy.

NF: Where did you live when you were?

FW: I lived in the dorm for a while. And then ---- those girls some of them they were there because it was customary to go to college from their family and I couldn’t study. I couldn’t concentrate so I moved out with this family. I had a room in this family’s home and that worked. Because they were also big supporters and graduates of that school. And this is what they did. They took in students because they had a big house and they would take some student looking for a place for just to help out in the home. And I could cook see and that was a big help and then his wife was paraplegic. I don’t know what happened to her I think she had a stroke. So we helped with grandma. Yeah so, we worked out a nice family. Because two of them was teaching in Little Rock somewhere in some schools. The other daughter, I don’t know if you have heard of Tustee, not Tuskegee, she was teaching somewhere in Texas. So they were all already in the teaching profession and they were so much help to me. So much help to me and they cried when I left. They really---they cried. They were just like my second family. It was really, really nice people. And like I said, they owned a big beautiful home and the man of the house had a sister that lived next door to him so she helped with his wife. So between the daughter in law, me, they didn’t have to bring anyone in.

NF: That’s wonderful. Let’s see---

FW: But I didn’t like living in the dorm. When it’s your time to do the laundry, that person who was supposed to have done theirs yesterday, didn’t, went shopping or something and it didn’t work out at all. I stayed though a whole semester and then I realized. It was the best thing I could have done because I would not use that much money. It didn’t cost me as much.

NF: Right. What did you enjoy most about college?

FW: To be perfectly honest, I don’t really know what I enjoyed most. Because I was right out of high school, maybe football. I missed my brothers. See I came up with two brothers older and one younger. And I miss my brothers and we had a great basketball team an outstanding basketball team. And I played basketball myself. But I didn’t play in college. I didn’t make the team, I wasn’t good enough. But I think the sports program because I was used to going to church every Sunday anyway. I was used to studying and I think probably it was the sports program. And that’s where I took my cosmetology class. And I liked doing hair. Oh I loved it. We only had one Caucasian girl who would come to the beauty shop and I learned to do her hair. You know I learned to do permanents by doing her hair. So that was a good thing. But I love the football games. I loved homecoming. That’s it, I loved the football games, yeah, yeah.

NF: And you had a boyfriend off in Korea at that point right?

FW: Yeah. I also had a good friend on the football team too. There was a lot of veterans there and they were football players. Quite a few guys from Ohio. Most of the football team was from out of state. Yeah they were from out of state.

NF: Interesting.

FW: My best friend married one from Ohio.

NF: is there anything that I missed in terms of the children’s centers?

FW: Well you hit the teachers, you hit the parents, you hit the administrators, you hit the legislators, you got the kids.

NF: Like I said, what if anything did you learn from Theresa Mahler?

FW: Just how to be a good caring and sharing person. Because she really was sincere about her program and she was sincere about her parents giving the best so their kids could become better and that I learned from Theresa. She was just an outstanding woman. And she was just very open. You know how some directors or whatever would talk to the teachers. She talked to us as people as a person with an understanding, when I finish, you could say what you have to say but let me finish first. And I learned that from her. I learned that from her because she shared her time. She really did. And she cared. She loved the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And I’d say because she wasn’t around her.---What time is it?

NF: 5:30

FW: Oh got to go. Almost. Another few minutes.

NF: Okay.

FW: Where are you parked?

NF: I’m just parked right in front. I can drive us or you can drive us.

FW: Okay. I have to come out that door. You in the driveway.

NF: No I’m in the---

FW: That’s you across the street?

NF: Across the street yeah.

FW: Yeah. Okay. Yeah that’s what I---That’s the biggest thing I learned from Ms. Mahler; to care and to share. She was outstanding. It is too bad we don’t have some of those people today. But I am not involved. See that’s another thing I miss about being a grandma because I would still be around in the school in some kind of way. I’d be like my mother. My mother never stopped going to PTA meetings. She stayed the treasurer because they said that she was honest and that no money went out without an explanation and the correct signatures and I would be involved with my grandkids if they were in school.

NF: Why do you think you stayed---we have a couple more questions so we can finish before you go get your daughter. Why do you think you stayed active even after your own children were---

FW: Just hoping that I could help somebody else’s child. You know I thought if I just stayed around then that would maybe show this parent that its not so bad. You know and when you are doing something for your children, nothing is too much. And I think it did help some. I think it did help some. And I was asked that question several times, “Why are you still here you know, you have kids in high school?” You know. But I didn’t stay too long after they were in high school. But I stayed and I said, “because I’m just trying to---still trying to help and I’m so used to not having this time to do anything else. So I’m still doing it.” And I’d go up to their schools also and the program I was involved in, the center I was involved in was----Because they just went from here to there to there. Because junior high was this close too and then her high school was right up. And some of the parents and I, we would meet. Because see some of the parents still had young kids in school. I’m the one who had the older ones who was leaving then. You know like it’s three or four kids, some of them still had kids in the center. So I would meet some of them some time and we would talk and stuff. I just enjoyed. And I didn’t do nightclubs, I don’t drink, I don’t smoke. You know I don’t do any of that kind of stuff. So this was just something, this was my highlight. You know this was giving me something to do. And I think the other parents, I don’t think they resented me. I think they appreciated me you know, still being a part.

NF: Last question: what in your life are you most proud of?

FW: My girls. My girls. I’m proud of my girls. Debbie is married a third time. Even with the first marriage would still be going on but they were too young. They both were still in college, they were working, and they never had time to really spend any time with each other. In fact, we still friends. His mother and I still friends. He calls me. The second marriage, \_\_\_\_\_ But I’m still proud of her because she worked through these things you know. But my kids they are my pride and joy. They are my pride and joy. And I’m proud of myself because they couldn’t be what they are if I had not been what I was. So with my------ TAPE ENDS

TAPE 2, SIDE A ends.

END OF INTERVIEW