

Interviewee: Maureen Ryan Doyle
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Abstract: Maureen Ryan Doyle was born in Holden, Massachusetts in 1951 and attended Notre Dame Academy. She proceeded to be in the first class of women at Assumption College. Her sharp personality and desire to be successful led her to start her own businesses. She owns a freelance writing business and simultaneously manages property. Both of her careers have been very rewarding and she was determined to establish herself as a working- woman. Through her life she mentions how supportive her husband has been about her career paths. In the interview, Maureen touches on the importance of family, education, and career life. She has successfully learned to balance them and knows how to prioritize her life. She mentions that you need to learn to take life as it comes at you and be prepared to take on various situations. She also highlights her experience growing up and living in the Worcester area. She reflects on positive changes she has seen in the city and other improvements that could be made. She loves the Worcester area, choosing to raise her family in Holden, and is directly involved in various community projects.

JC: The first question we wanted to ask you was, what was your full maiden name?

MD: Maureen Ryan

JC: And can you give us your married name?

MD: Maureen Ryan Doyle.

JC: When were you born?

MD: 1951.

JC: Do you have any children?

MD: I have two children, a son and a daughter.

JC: And how old are they?

MD: They're both twenty-two and are twins.

JC. So I'm guessing you don't have grandchildren?

MD: You're guessing correctly.

JC: What culture and ethnicities do you identify yourself with? Any family backgrounds?

MD: Irish on both sides, so Irish American. In fact I have two grandparents that emigrated from Ireland.

JC: You mentioned you were married; can you give us the name of your current husband?

MD: Yes, Francis X. Doyle.

JC: Can you give us any information about your parents?

MD: Sure, what kinds of things do you want to know?

JC: Where they were born? Where they were from?

MD: My father was from Worcester. My mother was from Holden. They were both born in 1912. After they married, they lived in Worcester for a short period of time, a couple years, and then moved to Holden, which was where I was raised.

JC: How did they meet?

MD: I believe they met because friends set them up. That good old-fashioned way. It's still used today.

JC: My parents met the same way.

JC: Where have you lived during your life?

MD: I've lived in Worcester, Boston, Holden, the Jefferson section of Holden, which is a separate post office designation, and Atlanta, Georgia.

JC: Can you describe what some of the neighborhoods were like?

MD: Well certainly growing up in Holden, and I live in the Jefferson section of Holden now...certainly there are some differences when I was growing up in Holden back in the '50's. It was almost a rural community and today it's just a typical suburb. There were some local farms. It was just a typical '50's setting, kids running around free all the time in the backyards and primarily stay-at-home moms. And dads would come home at the end of the day with the only family car.

JC: I know that you mentioned your mother was from Worcester is that correct?

MD: My mother was born in Worcester, but was actually raised in Holden.

JC: What other connections do you have to Worcester?

MD: Well I went to high school in Worcester, went to college in Worcester here at Assumption. My employment over the years well some of it, comes out of Worcester well, the other parts are from the Worcester suburbs.

JC: Do you have any family members that live in the same area as you do right now?

MD: Yes, when you say the same area do you mean the town of Holden?

JC: Right.

MD: Yes, I have an aunt and a cousin who live there.

JC: Do you keep in close contact with them?

MD: Oh absolutely. We are seeing them next week at Thanksgiving.

JC: Very nice. Through Worcester have you seen any changes throughout the years since you've been in high school and college?

MD: There have been vast changes in Worcester throughout the years. Some of them have been wonderful changes and some of them not so great. Certainly, we look at Worcester today and we look at the revitalization for instance Mechanics Hall represents and Hanover Theatre. These are all wonderful additions to Worcester. Certainly it seems that the general population is supporting these great cultural efforts. But also if you look at what was one time Worcester Center Outlets the Common Fashion Outlets (???) whatever that last name was. That is certainly an example that have gone (____???)out of Worcester. When I was young for instance, before that whole complex came to be, there was a very vital downtown with small locally owned businesses. They were thriving. But Worcester went the way many cities went in the '60's and '70's where downtown small businesses simply became replaced by large malls. Some of those worked and unfortunately some did not. The one in Worcester, even though it was brought back a few times, and tried to be revitalized, and remarketed, and re-packaged it never seemed to catch on unfortunately.

JC: What challenges do you think this city still faces today and how do you think you can improve them?

MD: Well I think, I think now given the economic times, I think the city is facing great economic problems and we are not alone in that. I think, as a country what is happening the past few months is certainly very dire. And I think what Worcester is doing, for instance, all the restaurants on Shrewsbury Street is a vital area. We have a lot of people coming in. I think there is a parking issue there that needs to be addressed, to make sure that people continue that attraction for dining. And now theaters as well as downtown I

think this is very important feature to the city. So and I think the long-term plan to tear down what had been the mall is also a very good plan to open that back up. I can remember, I am old enough to remember, when there was free access, when that was an open way down by what is Union Station down to Shrewsbury Street. To open that access, and I don't know what the plan is for bringing down the mall given the economic down turn that we are facing, I don't know if that is now (_____??). But I think that would do a lot to save the downtown.

JC: I agree I think it would invite the youth to become more involved in the city and just (_____??).

MD: And you know you bring up a very good point. I think with all the colleges that are in Worcester it seems that the students from all of the colleges are kind of entities onto themselves. There is no cohesive feel that is I think a college town, the way you might think of Boston, or even Northampton, or even Providence. And I think more needs to be done for the college students together in the downtown area.

JC: I agree with that because I think that I know that they have the different transportation to bring us to each college, but I feel like we need more of a unification to bring us closer together. And I think improving the downtown is important. Can you tell us some characteristics that make Worcester the place that it is that you have noticed throughout the years?

MD: Certainly, I think one of the strongest points in Worcester is that it has really nice neighborhoods. And if you hadn't grown up in this area, it's a great place to raise a family. It's relatively safe, it's the kind of place you can't go anywhere without knowing someone who knows someone that you are probably related to. And it's a great feeling of community. And it's a city, yes, but I think it has a small town feel. And a small town feel in a very positive way, not a small town feel in being provincial, but a small town feel in you really care about your neighbor. And you care about your neighbors' kids and you are going to keep an eye out for them. And I think that as a larger culture we become more transient. And sometimes we need to move frequently for our jobs, and we often don't feel connected, perhaps, to the person sitting next to us. And I feel very blessed that I was able to raise my kids in this area where they felt very connected and not isolated.

JC: I think that is important too, cause Worcester is the second biggest city in Massachusetts and I think that even in the grand scheme of it you are able to find connections and you are able to find such good relationships. Can you tell us what women's experiences in Worcester generally over the years?

MD: Well, perhaps I should speak to my experience in the first class of women at Assumption. That was kind of an interesting time to in general be in college. There are similarities to what you all are experiencing with because it is the backdrop of the war, the Vietnam War when I was in college. But there was a difference in that we had a draft, so there was tension circling around campus. In terms of being a woman, the first class of women as we arrived on campus, we were greeted by upper classmen, then because there

were only men, and they were offering each of us a red rose. Now that would never happen today. And I am sure in a way it seems so Little House on the Prairie-ish. It seems so out of anything you have possibly ever encountered. But it was very sweet. It was very sweet and it was a turbulent time in the culture in general. But this campus was a very nice campus and part of, certainly not all, that turbulence. Part of that turbulence certainly flowed around this campus but not to the degree as say Columbia or Berkley. I don't know if you are familiar with the history of the college at all, but it was founded by the Assumptionists and was traditionally a men's college. And the Board of Trustees voted that women should be allowed to enter. And there were some people on the campus at the time who were very welcoming to this idea. And there were some that were much more opposed and were very vocal to us about their opposition. Oddly enough, some of the most welcoming people on the campus were the religious and the most unwelcoming were some teachers. I remember one class in particular where the teacher would call on the students by name. If they were male students he would say "Joe, Bob" or whatever. And if it were a female, it would be Ms. "So and so." I had a friend in the class who was married and he made a point to call her Mrs. all the time. He also made a point to tell the class that it was a darn shame that women were on campus because we were not there to get our BA degree, we were there to get our MRS degree. So gratefully those times have passed, but certainly those were strong issues to face.

JC: At the time did you guys, the women have to hold to a specific dress code?

MD: You know that is a really interesting point. The summer between graduation high school and entering Assumption, we received a letter from the Dean of Women, telling us what our dress code would be. It would be no pants, dresses and skirts would be permitted and certainly we didn't have to wear white gloves. We were in college at a rebellious time, so everyone showed up in jeans and that was it. And so, that all went out the window, everyone certainly ignored it.

JC: How did your family feel about you going to college?

MD: Oh they were delighted, absolutely. And there were very happy about me coming here. I had a brother who did his undergraduate work here and another brother who did graduate studies here.

JN: Now is that common that all the schools back then were just males?

MD: It was a time when many schools were strictly male, but it was also a time when that was starting to change. I believe the same year Assumption went co-ed I think Yale did, if not the same year or very closely after that. Holy Cross went co-ed a couple years after Assumption. So it was a time of a lot of turbulence in society in general and this was reflected of these changes.

JN: So was this a big change, the fact that Assumption went co-ed for a lot of the schools, were they frowned upon it?

JC: Did it create an impact for them to realize that they should welcome women into their schools?

MD: I think for Assumption they were very forward thinking. They had at that time their first Board of Trustees that was comprised of not just the religious but of lay individuals. They looked at where the country was going as a whole and also where the institution was going financially. And they saw this as the future and we need to welcome women.

JC: It's funny now, because women outnumber men on this campus and a lot of campuses in the nation.

MD: It is typical now for liberal arts campuses to have a 60/40 split, 60 being women, 40 percent being men.

JN: So now that women were welcome as students, were they now welcome as professors or had women been professors?

MD: Now that's a really interesting question. I can't remember having, any. I think that probably at the time there may have been one or two women professors on campus. In my four years here I don't think I had one. And, of course, at the time there were still religious teaching. And there was a grad program at the time in nursing and teaching and there could have been more female profs there that I suppose I did not encounter.

JC: Also it's funny, the majority of my professors are female. I don't know about yours Jacqui. Can you mention a little bit of your elementary school, middle school, high school, experience; the names of your schools?

MD: Sure, I went to elementary school in Holden. The name of the school is the Jefferson School. And at the time it was not a middle school it was a junior high, Holden Junior High. And as I said already, Notre Dame Academy for high school. You know it was a typical '50's experience. You look back and we learned all the regular subjects, classrooms were about 30 kids. One unusual thing at my elementary school, we started French in the fourth grade. It was an experimental pilot project of teaching foreign languages in the elementary school. It really was a wonderful project. I still can remember some of my French better than my Spanish that I studied later in life or my Latin that I studied in high school, simply because the French was studied so early. It was very forward thinking and it was a small program; top students were picked for this but it went on for several years, it was very successful. My high school experience at Notre Dame was wonderful. I loved being there. It was a small school, an all girls, I am a big proponent of same sex high school experience, for some students not all, not everyone likes it. It was very challenging academically and very enlightening. It was, the school was run by Notre Dame sisters and at the time most of the classes were taught by the religious because there were still so many nuns. I had a very rigorous curriculum. I did four years of Latin, four years of math; calculus and you know my love was English and history, which was great. I made some very good friends there, some that I am still friends with today.

JC: I believe it is still all girls today, right?

MD: It is. My daughter went there.

JC: What were some challenges that you faced in your education throughout the years?

MD: Some of the challenges...?

JC: With any of the curriculum?

MD: That is a really good question. I don't know if I have an adequate response to that. I don't know. I just I loved learning. I don't think I have a lot of challenges to bring out. I enjoyed very much my high school experience, my college experience. I did some graduate work. I guess maybe the challenge and here's one. I began a master's degree and then I had to stop it because of the job I was involved in. It took a lot... I was working over 60 hours a week and just did not have the time, with a lot of evening commitments, weekend commitments... working in public relations, it's part and parcel of the field. It was always on my mind that I would finish that degree and sometimes life just happens. Your priorities shift with different seasons of your life and I never did finish that degree. Other than that I really can't think of anything challenging. I just have always loved learning and loved learning new things. I have been very happy to pursue the education that I did.

JN: Did you see entering Assumption College as the first women's class as a challenge or?

JC: Were you intimidated at all by it?

MD: No I could not wait! Especially coming from an all girls' high school, coming here. I was 18, it was wonderful. It was wonderful, it was just wonderful. The class was characterized in the literature of the day as a class of pioneers. And I suppose that sticks. When you're 18 you just hey, this sounds like a great place to study. It has the major that I want, I think this is where I want to be. You are looking at that, you are not looking at any social statement that you may be making. And maybe in hindsight you can look at it that way. But at the time you are living life.

JC: Did you know what you wanted to be coming into school or what you wanted to major in or did that shift?

MD: I pretty much knew that I wanted to do something involved with writing. My brother at that point had already become an established professional writer. I had abilities going into that line and had known that if I never saw another calculus course in my life, I would be very happy. And I just knew that was what I wanted to do. I didn't have it refined at that point; okay I want to go exactly in this direction. But I knew the written word was for me. And so I started here. I think I toyed with the idea of being an English

major but by the time I declared it was really History because that was the type of writing I wanted to do, more of historical analysis.

JN: What support networks and mentoring have been important to you?

MD: Well when I was here, I certainly had a couple of professors; one in particular who was a great mentor to that and me was John McClymer in the History department. I think, in fact when I was a freshman it was his first year teaching and he was a great mentor to me. He helped me greatly with my senior thesis on Social and Economic Conditions of Women in the Victorian Age. It was a wonderful and exciting topic to be exploring at that time. And I think along the line there have been women that I have become associated with in professional settings. Perhaps we have mentored each other in a way of different points in our careers. And at different points in your life you look for mentors in different ways.

JN: Now when you finished Assumption College, what did you see were you options?

MD: Well I considered graduate school right away but was simply not in an economic position to afford it. So I worked for a while. One of the jobs I worked, I was a copywriter for a radio station. I was writing commercials and that was very exciting. I saved up enough money after a while and went to graduate school. And it was fun and money ran out, so I worked another job. I worked in public relations. Actually I was Public Relations Director here for several years. And from there I worked two other jobs, staff development, and, writing in various fields until I started my own business.

JN: So, now talking about your business, do you work outside your home?

MD: Actually I have a home office. I do two things, I have a freelance writing business and I also own and run a small property management business. And I made that shift to work from the home when my kids were very young. I wanted to still be able to (in quotes) “keep my hands in things” but I still wanted to be home for my kids. Especially when I had two at the same time, it became a bit of a challenge to be able to go out to work every day. My husband has always had a very demanding job and especially early in his career, he traveled very extensively and sometimes traveled months at a time, well sometimes weeks at a time, sometimes months. Early in his career he traveled to China on business. And I had to find a way to meet the needs of my life. And that seemed to fit the bill.

JN: When working outside the home for a wage, when did you begin working and what did you do?

MD: My first job outside college, well do you want to go back to teenage kinds of things or in college? Well teenage I did the various different kinds of things, babysitting, waitressing, the things everyone does. When I was in college, I worked part time at the new mall that opened at the information desk and I also worked for an English teacher grading her papers, which was a very interesting experience and good insight as to what

kids were writing those days. Right after college, I worked briefly for the telephone company as a service representative. And then I got a job writing doing the ads for a radio station and have been pretty much writing ever since.

JN: So now what exactly is your job, you have home office job?

MD: I have a freelance writing business. I have a variety of customers, I do work for non-profits, I do work for construction companies, I do work for architectural companies. I work for churches doing newsletters, brochures, that type of thing. And with the property management, I own several properties and I manage those properties. For instance, if there was ever a problem, question, I am the person who arranges whatever needs to be done.

JC: Did you have any setbacks when you first started the businesses?

MD: No.

JC: Everything worked out pretty well?

MD: Everything worked out, sometimes a process like that is slow, obtaining customers. What I found out is word of mouth is probably is the best. When someone refers a friend because you have done good work, that probably is the best.

JC: Do you ever find it difficult to balance both businesses?

MD: Constantly, well what I found is that it is difficult to balance [both] businesses but also with family life. Because it is always a juggling act and it is for everybody. And there is no instruction manual on how to do it...and you know if you have a deadline and have two kids sick with the chicken pox, you have to find a way to balance the act. Not only balancing but keeping a happy home life and realizing this is life. And life's not a destination but a journey.

JN: How did you come to find this work?

MD: I think I just kind of fell into it. I think that once I had the twins and I realized I did not want to work 50 hours a week. I had a husband who worked many hours a week. We had to come up with a plan for our life and I knew at that point, okay its time (___???)_. So we worked together to come up with something that would be a wonderful plan for our family, so it just evolved over time. It's not that one day I sat there saying this was the plan for my life, it evolved slowly. And it has been very workable.

JN: Who have you or do you work with, or work for?

MD: Just myself.

JN: What has this work meant to you?

MD: It has meant a great deal. What I think earlier in my life, when I was first out of college especially and was still in the early days of feminism, I think I looked at my work as my identity and I certainly don't now. It's part of what I do, at times I really love it and at times it can be pain. After all, it is work, it's not fun. But I do derive satisfaction and it's part of who I am, but it's not all of me.

JN: Now going towards housework, what are your primary responsibilities?

MD: I guess cooking, but I have to say I enjoy cooking a lot. One of the things most important to me was providing nutritious food to my family. And I have one child who has a variety of allergies and it was always very important to me that he get nutritious food that would build his stamina.

JN: Do you share your housework with anyone?

MD: Yes, the people I pay to clean my house.

JN: Now what is the extent that your family helps out with housework?

MD: My daughter is living at home temporarily and one of her favorite pastimes is to cook. She finds it very relaxing. She will just whip something up because she loves it. I would say I do the most, the largest amount

JN: How has housework changed overtime?

MD: I can afford cleaning people. That's the best part.

JN: Even from the time you've grown up watching your mother do house work?

MD: Sure, certainly in those days my mother was the primary person to do the housework. My dad would help a little bit but it was the '50's and '60's, and cultural expectations were certainly different. My brothers and I would help out but there were gender specific roles. The men would be outside mowing the lawn and shoveling the snow, while the women would be cooking the meals.

JN: How do you balance priorities, roles, and interests in your life?

MD: Sometimes well, sometimes not so well, depending on what it is. It is a juggling act and I think all of life is and there are different priorities at different times. There was a point at which our daughter was quite ill, so our priorities shifted. At that point I wasn't taking on much as much work because the priorities had to be to get a proper diagnosis for what was going on. Two years later she's much healthier everything is going fine, I can handle my work. But also, it is an enviable situation to be in because not every person can say that. In 1989, your priorities can be this but in 2010 they can be that. You need to find your own path as you work through it all.

JN: How would you characterize a personal and professional cost of your chosen path?

MD: I guess I don't look at it as a cost, I just look at it as a benefit. Not to be Pollyanna about it but I have derived a lot of satisfaction from the choices that I made. I feel very strongly because they were choices that I made, and I don't feel as if anything was thrust upon me. I choose the type of work I wanted to do. I choose the kind of life I wanted to live. I choose the community I wanted to live in and raise my children in. And when I say I choose, I mean my husband and I choose together, that it was certainly a decision that we made very consciously. We lived in Atlanta for a year and transferred there for my husband's business. And it was clear that the company he was working with wanted him there and we very much wanted to be home. And we needed that, and in a sense it might have put his job in peril. And this goes back to something I was thinking about before this interview, I know a lot has been written on women and how they shouldn't have to choose between career and family, and I think that's true. But I think that it's also naive to think that men haven't had any decisions to make. There are times that decisions he made may have been a bit detrimental to his career according to family concerns or situations. But again, those decisions aren't easy, but you need to set your priorities for your life, your kids, and your marriage.

JC: How was Atlanta different from home?

MD: Oh my gosh, very different. Atlanta is very cosmopolitan which is great, but the Southern culture is very different. We were there in 1993. A lot could have changed between then and now. To be honest I found it was more sexist than I was comfortable with and I also found it racist. And I should say that pockets of that and I certainly don't mean to paint it with a broad brush that everyone there was sexist and racist. That's not what I mean. I mean there were pockets of that that were blatant. They were open, and being raised in Massachusetts I was not used to that context and it was good to experience something very different, but I was very happy to come home.

JC: Did you not feel comfortable raising your children in an environment is that part of the reason that made you come back?

MD: It was part of the reason; it was part of the reason. Because we were only there for a short time our children were enrolled in public schools. We had researched which would be the best area to live and for our children to go to school, and I was disappointed in the school system. And this was a school that seemed very, very high grade. They were in second grade at the time. Here is a cultural difference; the last day of school they came home off the school bus and my daughter, second grade, got off the bus with bright red finger nails and full makeup because that's what the teachers did on the last day of school. That's a cultural difference.

JN: Now I know how you kept saying home, you were going to go home, home as opposed to Georgia? So you knew you were only going to stay in Georgia for a short period of time?

MD: The deal was the company my husband was working for at the time had an office in Georgia. The base of the company was here in Massachusetts and the office in Georgia was in trouble. And they needed to have my husband go down and essentially clean up the company. And so we knew he was going to be gone for a year and he would return to his position in Massachusetts. We had just built a new home. We had been in the home for one week when we got this word that we would be moving to Georgia.

JN: So did you return to the home that you had just built?

MD: Yes, what we did was we simply locked the door of the house. The company rented us an apartment in Atlanta for that period of time.

JN: What is your husband's line of work?

MD: At that time he was running a division for the Tufts Health Plan. Now he runs the insurance operation of AAA Southern New England, and he is senior vice president.

JN: Now on to politics and the community that you live in. Do you consider yourself active politically?

MD: No, I don't. By active politically to you mean belonging to some political organization, no. Do I consider myself aware of current events? Yes.

JN: Have you been involved in volunteer or community work?

MD: Oh, a lot. Certainly when my kids were younger in school I was in every PTO committee, and writing newsletters for the school, and helping out harvest festivals, baking brownies, and chaperoning fieldtrips.

JN: Any specific groups you were part of outside the schools?

MD: Any groups I worked for outside?

JN: As in volunteer work?

MD: Gosh a lot of years. A lot affiliated with churches over the years primarily. A lot of committees, bible studies, and writing newsletters for them, helping out in Sunday schools, Christmas pageants and Easter pageants.

JN: What role has religion played in your life?

MD: A vital one.

JN: How have health issues impacted your life?

MD: I guess my biggest health issue was I had migraine headaches most of my life and had back surgery several years ago. But I'm very fortunate I live in the 21st century where such good medical care is available so I would say those things have impacted me less. Certainly the impact hasn't been as great if I lived in a different time or different area. When you live in an area that's very populated in Massachusetts, if you can't find what you want in Worcester, just go down the road to Boston. So I'd say, 'Have I had a few health challenges?' Certainly. With migraines, but totally under control with medicine and I had back problems, but I had very successful back surgery. So, some challenges but I consider myself very blessed to be where I am.

JN: More specifically, on your quality of healthcare. Do you think it's easy to access quality affordable healthcare?

MD: For some people, but not for others.

JN: But in your life?

MD: Yes.

JN: Whose health are you responsible for?

MD: My own. Nobody else's.

JN: Would you like to add anything?

MD: I've had a great life so far. I'm very happy to be born at the time that I was. My grandmother who came here from Ireland, she came here at the time where women still did not have the vote. She actually marched with the suffrage groups in Worcester. I'm very proud of that. I won a writing competition sponsored by Good Housekeeping Magazine and had a wonderful meeting with the publisher and editor of the magazine. I flew to New York and had three wonderful days in New York, and I was very happy with that. I'm very happy with the choices I made. That doesn't mean to say that every moment of every day has been easy. No life is. But as women, you're very lucky to be born in this country and that isn't to say there isn't more work to still be done. I think there's a lot of work to still be done. But, we're very fortunate and I recognize that. So far it's been good.

JC: What major historical events in Worcester that have occurred during your time have impacted you personally or any memories? I know that you mentioned your grandmother marching was a big deal, but is there anything else that sticks out in your mind?

MD: In my lifetime or before?

JC: Yes.

MD: Well, I just read something and this happened before my lifetime, but it ties with a story I was brought up on in my family. I grew up in a big family. My mother was one of six, my dad was one of seven, and I grew up with extended family. Anyway back to the story. In the 1920's Worcester was the home to the site of one of the largest rallies of the KKK. Now, that's a little known historical fact. When you think the Klan, you think of the South. So the Klan marched down the Main Street of Worcester and met at Mechanics Hall for their strategy session. Which is just unthinkable. When I grew up there was a story my mother and my aunts told me. They were young in Holden, and one night they looked out their window and someone had put a burning cross in the yard. Well, I'm sure it was from the rally and one of the neighbors was very anti- Catholic and the Klan was anti- Roman Catholic. I'm sure these two events happened within that week. I think that's very significant. I think sometimes we like to pat ourselves on the back and say we've never had prejudice here. That's not correct. We need to look a little more deeply into things.

JC: Recognizing mistakes that have been made and see how we can improve the future.

MD: Exactly.

JN: How old were you when you were allowed to date?

MD: Well, I guess fifteen. But to ride in a car with a boy probably 16 or so.

JN: Now where did you used to go one dates?

MD: You know I don't know that any of that has changed much. Dances, movies, theater, out to dinner I think typical stuff.

JC: What was considered fashionable when you were younger? Was there a certain brand people wore, a certain style?

MD: Like high-school, college aged?

JC: Yes.

MD: Certainly I can remember being very proud of my first Jonathan Logan dress in high school. That was a brand name plastered all over Seventeen Magazine. And cosmetics from Britain, post British invasion music and culture and anything British was considered just something you wanted to have. And it was the age of go- go boots and mini skirts, so all of that.

JN: What was your favorite musical group or song?

MD: From high school or college?

JN: Yes, either.

MD: In high school I think I was probably heavily into Bob Dylan and Donavan. By college it was probably more Motown music.

JN: Now did you still go to clubs?

MD: Do I?

JN: No did you?

MD: I don't now. Did I? Sure.

JN: Did the establishment or the club caters to a particular group or band?

MD: You know, in my day there were so many bands. Every other club was starting up a band. Anyplace you went there was a band it was always live..

JC: What were some significant extracurricular activities you participated in? I know you mentioned that writing was big for you?

MD: Actually, I was part of a radio station and part of the newspaper.

JN: What does your parents' education consist of?

MD: Both of my parents only went to high school because they both needed to support their families during the Depression. I think that was probably something they wished they had more opportunity. Education was very important to them. They made sure my brothers and I were college bound. Probably, at the three years old I was told I was going to college. They were both very bright and smart, but they needed to help out their families and that was something that you did.

JC: What difficult transitions did you go through in moving from childhood to adulthood? Was there anything major that made it difficult?

MD: I think the biggest transition, and I see this now with my kids, is the transition from college to working. It's huge. When you're in school if you're a good student, you know you can do school, you're on honor role or deans list. But when you make that transition into the working world, it feels a little daunting. And I think you're thinking to yourself, I need to prove myself in a real way.

JC: Where there any particular areas where you spent time or on campus?

MD: There used to be a coffee house on campus and a snack bar where everyone hung out. In terms of hanging out in the city, not so much. We were either in friends' dorm rooms or houses.

JN: Do you look around the campus and think it's completely different from when you went?

MD: Certainly, the campus is very different. I still have a connection to Assumption. I've been on the alumni board, the president of the board, and president of the Central Mass Regional Club. I'm on campus a lot and still have some contact with some students. And what I see is that same Assumption spirit, the students that attend are very bright. That has stayed the same. Physically the campus has exploded, it has grown tremendously. It is a wonderful place, it's really wonderful, the Testa Building and re-vamping the admissions office which used to be the president's home. My father-in-law taught here on campus for years and years. He was in the Economics department and a department chair. So I have a lot of connection. The spirit of Assumption blows my mind, it does. It's a nice campus and the school is dedicated not just to education but to educating the total person.

JC: How did you get through tough times in your life? What kept you going? What people helped you?

MD: Well, I think what kept me going was faith. Also, the friends that I had made (___?) Certainly, I had a very nice group of friends who had been involved and we had a support network. Not only do we pray for each other, but help each other in very real ways. And to go back to the time I had back problems...My kids were maybe about eight or nine at the time. Three months before back surgery, I was on bed rest and had to be lying down. I had such a network of support that everyday someone would come in and bring meals for my family. So, that's a very good support system that we have. It's also a very humbling experience. I would much rather be on the giving side than receiving the help. I think that women are very good helping people out and sometimes you need to accept that help.

JN: How do you define success in your life? Has the definition changed over time?

MD: The definition has changed completely over time. I used to think it was my career, that I was defined by my career or paycheck. Right now it is peace with the choices I made...the contentment that goes beyond a paycheck. It's certainly part of the package, we all need money to live. We always make choices and you need to look at yourself in the mirror (___?) We live in a culture where sometimes we celebrate material things and I think that's very shallow.

JC: Do you have any regrets with the choices that you have made?

MD: No, I don't think I do. You know I think sometimes life is too short to think there are other choices that could have been made. You've got to take the past and go with it and look to the future. If there's any regret I have, it's that I wish I had more time because

there are ten million more things I'd like to do, but there won't be more time. I'm given the time that I'm given. I use it wisely.

JN: Based on your own life experiences, what advice would you give to women of today and the future generations?

MD: Well, I would tell her to become well educated if she's able, I would tell her to follow her heart and her abilities and I would tell her to value time.

JC: Do you feel you have a legacy?

MD: I can tell you I've never considered that before! I hope so, I hope I have a legacy in my friends and that I lived with the choices that I've made. I hope other people will do the same and do what's right for you.

JC: Do you believe you've defined your own success and look to yourself to define it is that what you're saying?

MD: Well, I think, I think you can't live a life with the reflection through other people's eyes. And if you try to do that you will ultimately be unhappy. You have to find what that means for yourself.