

Interviewee: Julieane Frost

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Date of Interview: March 10, 2022

Location: Assumption University, Worcester, MA

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Abstract: In this interview conducted in partnership with the Worcester Women's Oral History Project [WWOHP], we explore the many accomplishments of Julieane Frost. Born in Rutland, MA, in 1959, Julieane grew up enjoying the quiet comforts of a tight-knit neighborhood, including but not limited to the summertime activities offered at the town pool. She graduated from Wachusett High School and furthered her education at University of Massachusetts Amherst with a major in psychology before accepting a job at Brown University. From there, she went on to work for a myriad of Worcester staples such as Clark University, the Ecotarium, the Higgins Armory Museum, and most recently as Senior Marketing Manager at the Worcester Art Museum. Julieane offers both a lot of laughter and sound life advice as she eloquently walks us through her history.

RM: Okay, so to start off just with a more fun question, what is your favorite thing to do in Worcester?

JF: What's my favorite thing to do in Worcester? Oh, well, having worked at the Worcester Art Museum, I really should say to go to the Worcester Art Museum. right? Oh, boy, my favorite thing to do when in Worcester? That's a tough question to answer because I like to do a lot of things. I really love Flora in Winter at the Worcester Art Museum. We just ended Flora in Winter for this year and that's always a highlight for me, because the museum is filled with flower arrangements and I love flowers. And I love seeing what floral designers create, as inspired by works in the collection. I also, I love going to concerts and shows, concerts at Mechanics Hall and shows at the Hanover Theater. And even though it's not in Worcester, per se, Tower Hill Botanic Garden is a favorite of mine as well.

KB: Ah, Amen, amen.

RM: That's awesome. I would love that floral show in the art museum. That sounds very beautiful.

KB: Do you have a favorite flower? That is a very broad question, so no pressure.

JF: Yeah, no. Oh, I could not pick a favorite. I love so many. I love rugosa roses. Those are those are really on top on my list. I love all kinds of daffodils, irises, lilies. I love peonies. There are so many.

KB: Great taste!

RM: Yes! Okay, so what is your full name, including both your maiden name and your married name, if you are married?

JF: I am married.

RM: Okay.

JF: My name is Julieane. And it's spelled JULIEANE. My maiden name is Komenda. That's k o m e n d a. And my married name is frost which is F r o s t.

KB: So, when were you born?

JF: I was born in 1959. I was born in Holden Hospital. Which I don't think exists anymore.

KB: Where was that?

JF: It was in Holden.

KB: Oh, duh.

RM: So, as you just said, you have been married. What is the name of your spouse?

JF: Doug, Douglas Frost.

KB: Do you have children? I know you mentioned grandchildren.

JF: I do. I have a daughter and a son. My daughter is, I don't know how many details you want, but...

KB: As many as you would like to give!

JF: My daughter is, I think she's 33 now. She has two little boys. She's married. And she and her husband are both pilots. They just both left the military. They were living in Virginia. She's a helicopter pilot. She was a helicopter pilot for the Navy and he fought—he flew fighters for the

Air Force. And they both are now in Massachusetts, which is very exciting. So now we get to see our grandchildren on a regular basis.

RM: So two grandchildren?

JF: Two little boys, four years old and the other he just turned two.

RM: Oh, That's great.

JF: Yeah, so that's, that's fun. And we also have a son and he just turned 30 He lives in Arlington, Virginia and works for the Department of Commerce for the federal government. He studied Chinese in college and so he's fluent in Mandarin and I think sharing his expertise on China.

KB: Yeah, that's a good, that's a good skill to have. Wow.

RM: Are they still flying?

JF: No, they aren't. Nope, they're out of the military.

RM: Yes, yes. Yeah. That's cool, though. That's a really great job. So, what kind of culture or ethnicity do you identify with, like family background?

JF: Both of my parents were born in Germany, and then came here in the late 1950s. I think they immigrated here in 1957. And my parents were both what we might call displaced refugees from the war. My mother was, my mother was actually born three days before Germany invaded Poland. So, in 1939. And she grew up in what became East Germany, of course, is now part of regular Germany. And at the end of the war, she was probably around six years old. She and her mother, who was by then a widow, her mother's father died in the war. They, she and a younger sister escaped across the border into West Germany. And my father was born in what is now the Czech Republic, but it used to be called Sudetenland. And there were a lot of German nationals living in that part of, of what became the Czech Republic. And at the end of the war, they were [there] when the, I guess the Russians acquired that, that or, I'm not exactly sure if it was the Russians or the Czechoslovakians acquired that part of that area of Europe, all of the German nationals were expelled. So, they lost their home and they were, they became refugees and had to move to West Germany. So, both of my parents had to leave their homeland, their hometown. And there was a program at that time in this country where churches were sponsoring displaced people, so Germans who had been displaced from their homes as a result of the war. Both of my parents they actually met and got engaged in Germany. And they were both able to immigrate here in I think it was 1957. My father was a pipe fitter by trade. So, he was an apprentice and the family that he lived with in Rutland, Massachusetts, they were able to, they sponsored him and they were able to get

him a job working as a pipe fitter. He worked for MD Homes here in Worcester for many years. And my mother was a homemaker for many years. They were married and lived in Rutland. That's where I grew up.

RM: Wow, that's awesome. So, you said you lived in Rutland. Did you live anywhere else? Or how did you kind of find yourself in Worcester? Kind of the journey of growing up?

JF: Yeah. Well, I, I graduated from Wachusett [High School]. And then went to U Mass Amherst, and I met my husband at U Mass. I got a job at Brown University for about a year and a half after college. And then my husband and I got married in October of 1982, and I moved back to Worcester because this is where he lived and where he worked. So that's how he ended up in Worcester County.

KB: What did you do at Brown?

JF: I was a research assistant in the psychology department for about, as I said about a year and a half, and it was a grant-funded position and when the grant ended then the job ended. And I came to Worcester.

RM: What was the neighborhood like generally that you lived in growing up?

JF: Oh, I've lived—so after my parents married, they, I think it was maybe three or four years after they got married, they were able to buy a house. They bought a little house in a cul de sac neighborhood in Rutland. It was a new neighborhood, they were all little Cape Cod houses. So perfect for first-time homebuyers. And it was, it was a wonderful middle-class neighborhood. It was at that time, this was in the 60s, there were lots of kids. It was, of course, the baby boom. So, every family house had a couple or three kids, all of the moms stayed home, the fathers worked. That was what it was like back then, and we were always outside playing – summer, winter. We played outside all the time. And it was, in many ways I had an idyllic childhood because of that, you know, we always had friends to play with. It was a safe neighborhood. We were in a small town. Rutland had a fabulous recreation program. There was a town pool, and there was swimming lessons. And then we swam there all summer long.

RM: That's great. Yeah, that sounds like a great 'growing up' area.

KB: So you mentioned that you have a couple of family members living in the area. You know, general Massachusetts, do you have anyone else living close by?

JF: I have, well, my mother still, my father has passed away, but my mother lives in Holden. And I have a sister who lives in New Braintree, which is actually where my husband and I lived. We

moved—after we got married we lived in Worcester, we actually shortly after we got married we became the live-in house managers of Hope Lodge, which was owned by the American Cancer Society. It was right on Oak Street right behind the Worcester Club. And we—they just opened the facility. It was a home away from home kind of for people who had cancer who had to come to Worcester, or even to Boston, because at that time, Boston didn't have a facility like this. So, they could stay at Hope Lodge while they got their treatments in Worcester. And they needed a couple to live upstairs on the third floor and kind of look out for the place. And we so we lived there, a friend of my mother-in-law, they were looking for a young couple, we were just newly married and asked us if we'd be interested. So we lived on the third floor in the old Billiard room that had been converted into this really sweet little apartment. And so we didn't have to pay any rent really, our only bill was the telephone bill every month. And so we got to live there. And we both had jobs besides that, and we saved up quite a bit of money to build a house - when we ended up starting our family we needed more room for one thing. And we wanted to be in a small town. So we built a house out in New Braintree, which is about 45 minutes west of Worcester. So my sister, this is a long way of saying that my sister who also moved out there still lives there. And then I have - so I have - I'm the oldest of three sisters. And my next sister lives in New Braintree, my youngest sister lives in India.

KB: Oh wow, a little far.

JF: Yeah, she comes home every year to visit but she lives in India so. So that pretty much takes care of, on my side that pretty much takes care of my family. My husband came from a very big family. He grew up on Beechmont Street in Worcester. And, he was one of seven children.

KB: Wow, so a lot of aunts and uncles.

JF: Yeah!

RM: What brought your sister to India?

JF: Well, I like to take some of the credit for that because after my husband and I were married, I got a job working at Clark University. I was the Assistant Director of International Programs and the Study Abroad Advisor. So my job was to—I had kind of dual responsibilities. One was to advise students who wanted to study abroad in the first semester, help them find the right program. And the other was to help international students who came to Clark to study, and I still have friends that I met. One of my best friends was a German student who arrived on the first day that I started my job at Clark, and she needed help finding an apartment. So, I helped her find an apartment. We're still really good friends.

KB: That's amazing.

JF: Yeah. And so I knew some Indian students, and I used to invite them home. So when my mother would have Thanksgiving, have us over for Thanksgiving or maybe for Christmas, I would say, do you mind if I bring a couple of international students along? My younger sister—she's nine years younger than I—she was fascinated by these Indian students who came and had Thanksgiving with us. And so, I think that kind of planted the seed and then she ended up studying the Veena which is an Indian instrument and she kind of dabbled in Sanskrit and things like that. She ended up going to California and got a doctorate in religious studies and, and spent a lot of time living in India. And, and in the end, she married an Indian man and has been living there and she runs her own business. She's got a very interesting career. In part, she's a life coach, but she uses [it] as the basis of a very strong grounding in spiritual life and Vedic Astrology, which is sort of ancient Indian astrology. So that's, that's what she does.

RM: Wow, that's so cool.

KB: You have a lot of really successful family members. But yeah, that's really cool.

JF: I think you're right. I haven't done anything as interesting as that.

KB: No that is not true, absolutely not.

RM: Okay, so what challenges would you say, if thinking about Worcester, that this city sort of faces or what would you change about Worcester if you could change anything?

JF: Okay, change about Worcester. I would implement a trash mediation program or something like that. I think that we have a big trash problem.

RM: That's very true.

JF: And I think I was very encouraged last summer, when, during COVID the trash situation got really bad. I'm talking about litter. And I think that there was a program that the city implemented where young people were hired to go around in teams and clean up trash. And I thought that was a really great idea. I think the recycling bins contribute a lot to trash because the recycling gets put out in open bins, and then the wind blows it all around. And I just think that when I was growing up, I was taught not to litter and I think that's something that is, it's a small thing not to litter but it really impacts the quality of the experience of living in the city and walking around. I live on Elm Street now and I walk pretty much everywhere. I walked to work up until I retired in December. But up until then I walked to work every day. And so I'm on the sidewalks and I see the trash so I think [it] seems kind of small, but I think something to clean up the streets.

RM: Yeah, definitely. Yes. No, I don't think it's small.

KB: That's really a very noble answer. Very nice. And then sort of leading on that, what changes have you seen in Worcester over time?

JF: Oh, boy, I'm gonna have to think about that a little bit. But well, one because this is in direct relationship to what I've been doing for most of my career in Worcester, in that I've worked in public relations and marketing for three Worcester museums. The former Higgins Armory Museum, if you remember that. And then the Ecotarium and then the Worcester Art Museum, which is my most recent place of work. But I also worked as a freelance consultant for a number of years for other organizations. So, a lot of what I have been doing throughout my career is public relations. Working directly with the media, placing stories, pitching stories, and the *Telegram & Gazette* was the biggest - the news outlet in the city. We used to have at least one, more than one, early on arts reporters. So these were people whose job was just to report on the arts. We used to have a wedding section where in the paper, anybody who got married, submitted their wedding announcement with a picture of the bride, used to be just the bride, then it was the couple, now it's - it's gone. Birth announcements. So I, both of my kids, when they were married, they were on the list of all the babies born. So, how the community news is, I guess, conveyed or communicated has changed drastically. Social media, I think has taken over that. But early on we got two newspapers every day, the *Worcester Telegram* and the *Evening Gazette*, a morning paper in an evening paper every day. And that's how we got our news. And it wasn't just the national or international news it was who was getting married, who was serving on this committee, who was helping raise money for this cause, all of that was part of the news. So that's probably one of the biggest changes that I've noticed. I think that the makeup of the city has changed dramatically as well. We are a gateway city. And I—my parents were immigrants. At that time, I think that the, I could be speaking out of turn, but I think at that time, the immigrant community was primarily European. But now we have people from all over the world, and there's a very large Ghanaian community and Vietnamese and Cambodian community. And so we have become very, very much more diverse as a city.

RM: And how would you kind of speak about women's experiences in Worcester generally?

JF: Well, you mean now today, or over time?

RM: Over time, yeah.

JF: Well, as I mentioned earlier, I grew up at the beginning, well, the very end of the 50s and beginning of the 60s, and I think in the 60s and the 70s how women lived and what women did, and I guess their experience, just you can't even describe how that changed. When I was born, most women didn't work, they stayed home. And they raised their children and they kept house. By the time I was married, that was completely different. There were some women who still stayed home. But I think today—and it's in large part economic, but not all economic—I think that women

want to work and they work and it's very rare now for a woman to stay home and just raise your children. Children are now in daycare much more often. I mean, it's very, very common, as opposed to when I grew up that, you know, I don't even think there was a daycare. Maybe women took children in, you know, they babysat, but there weren't daycare centers. So that's been a seismic change in women, just in my lifetime, and how things have changed. So, and today, I can't think of anything that a woman can't do today. I mean, my daughter was a helicopter pilot in the Navy. I couldn't have imagined that and that would not have been possible when I was born. And I'm not that old.

KB: No, absolutely not.

RM: Lots of changes in a short amount of time.

JF: Yeah, so well, so there's, I think there might be one or two military roles like the SEALs or something like that, that still don't allow women but I think other than that, I can't think of anything that a woman can't do if she puts her mind to it, maybe professional football.

RM: Yes, that could be one!

KB: So we're gonna shift gears a little bit and move into education. I know you mentioned that you went to Wachusett, and then you graduated from...remind me again?

JF: U Mass Amherst.

KB: Yes, so did you pursue any like educational programs outside of that? Or what were your majors, minors? That sort of thing?

JF: Right. I didn't go beyond a bachelor's, but I majored in psychology.

RM: What were some challenges you may have had in your college experience? I guess, in terms of education, just to keep it less broad of a question.

JF: I think that in terms of coursework, I, majored in psychology. At first, when I started at U Mass, I thought I might major in English, because I liked English and liked to write, and in hindsight, I kind of wish that I had stuck with that, because I ended up really, in that field of writing and communications. But at the time, I took some psychology courses, I really liked them, I did very well in them. And I think I just decided to follow a course that kind of came naturally to me, and that I did well in which makes sense. However, when I started my junior year, I got this idea that I wanted to, because I think I took a neuro psychology course, and I kind of I thought that was really interesting, and I got this idea that maybe I should become a doctor. So, I started on a pre-

med program, which I abandoned at the end. But not until I had taken Chemistry, Organic Chemistry is probably my biggest challenge. Yeah. That was tough. I got through it, and I passed, but that was tough. And physics, and I think it was after I took physics I said, this is just too hard. I don't I don't want it badly enough to do this.

KB: That's funny. I don't blame you, though. It's a, it's a tough track.

RM: Yeah, science is not for me. Even just taking our required science course here. No, no. You have to be like having passion for it. I think.

JF: I still can't tell you what I learned in Organic Chemistry. Something about the carbon. I don't know. Yeah.

RM: It's so much memorization, and then you forget it after you take a test.

JF: Yes. Right.

RM: So, once you graduated, did you have like an idea of like, this is what I want to do for my career immediately? Or did that kind of come like over time?

JF: No, I never really had a clear idea of what I wanted. And I've just, I have been very lucky that opportunities have presented themselves to me and I have taken them and that has kind of created my path. And it started when I was hired to be the Study Abroad Advisor and Assistant Director of International Programs at Clark University. And in part I was attracted to that job because I'm a first generation American, I had grandparents that lived in Germany, I had visited them. So I had some international experience. And I think I had an affinity for that experience of being new in a place. So, I was hired for that job, and I realized that what I liked the most about that was the communication part, the writing. So, I would write booklets for each of the different study abroad programs in each different country and the customs, what to expect, how to prepare yourself. And so then I left when I had my daughter. And then when she was a little bit older, I took a job at the Higgins Armory Museum. It started out as a staff writing position, and then it evolved into a public relations position. And so that is where I really learned that I love that, I love telling stories. And that's really what public relations is. It's telling stories, and trying to get those stories placed in various outlets so that there's a broad audience for that. That's really what it is.

RM: That's great.

KB: You absolutely found your calling. You're fantastic at storytelling. I'm, like, mesmerized.

JF: [laughs] Aw, thank you.

RM: Um, okay, so... we already spoke about your jobs... So did you have — How did you kind of come into the work you're doing right now? How did that sort of, like, the process of leading from after graduation from college to today?

JF: Well I started—when I got the job at the Higgins Armory Museum, I had never written a press release, I had never worked in the—I was a good writer, I had very strong writing skills, but I learned on the job, how to—and that was when the news industry was very different than it is today. It was very straightforward. You wrote a press release, you sent it by mail [laughs]—there was no email back then, or Internet—to the reporter or the editor of the newspaper, and then followed up by phone call. I was very lucky that the arts reporter for the *Telegram & Gazette*, her name was Joanna Zekos, she invited me and I think she could tell that I was really inexperienced [laughs] and she invited me into the *Telegram* office to give me a tutorial on how to work with the press. It was wonderful. And I'm really grateful that she did that. So that was a big help. I then left—I was there for about eight years—I then left to join my husband in the family business, which is Frost Manufacturing Corporation. He's the fourth-generation owner of that building, and he needed some help with marketing. And so I came in and worked with him for about another eight or nine years. And then I decided that I wanted to get into—back into really, public relations and writing and... I wanted to broaden my horizons. [laughs] I started my own little freelance consulting business. I took on a number of clients around the city, including the Ecotarium, I was doing some work for them. And then when the position opened up at the Ecotarium for the marketing communications manager, I applied and I got that job. I did that for about three years, and then I was hired by the Worcester Art Museum. A position opened there, and I was actually invited to apply by—I knew the hiring manager for that position, and he invited me to apply and I got the job. So that's what I've been doing, until December.

RM: So in December, you retired?

JF: Mmhmm. Well, from full-time work at the museum. I'm still doing consulting work there.

RM: Okay.

KB: Good for you. Good for you.

RM: That's great.

KB: That's fantastic that you've had so many successful connections with people. Like that is half the struggle, knowing people.

JF: It is.

KB: And you're a likable person, so...

JF: Oh, thank you. Well, you're absolutely right, that it makes [it] so much easier if people already know you. And know what your skills are.

KB: But that doesn't undermine the work that you probably had to put in to get those.

JF: Oh, absolutely. None of my jobs have been just...sort of, patronage types of jobs. You have to have—be competent. [laughs]

KB: [laughs] Right, right.

RM: But networking is a lot. Like half the battle sometimes.

KB: So, this might seem like a loaded question, so go about it as you like. How have you balanced your different priorities, responsibilities, roles and interests in your life? So how did you maintain both hobbies and profession and home – that sort of thing?

JF: Well, one of the ways that I've been able to keep balance in my life is – that my husband and I made a conscious decision that we were going to really place family first. We were lucky in that, he ran his own business, so he had flexibility. We could have both worked full-time, high pressure jobs and brought – made a lot more money. We chose not to, because we wanted – each one of us wanted to have a role in raising our family. So, for a number of years, we kind of switched off. So maybe I would be home in the morning, and then I would go to work and he would come home, or he would be home to meet the bus after school. So, we both really tried to work together that way. I come from a divorced family, my parents ended up getting divorced when I was probably about sixteen, and it was a very traumatic moment for me and my sisters. I think at that time – this is in the 70's—divorce was becoming more common, it was losing the stigma it had at one time. I think that women were encouraged in some level to put themselves first, that if they were unhappy in their marriage that it would be okay to get divorced. That kids are resilient, that they would be fine. I think now we know that that's not necessarily the truth, and we know more now about how if a couple does have to get divorced or wants to get divorced, we know more about how to handle that. So, it was really, really important for me to keep my marriage together. Because of what I had gone through. And I think both my husband and I worked really hard at that. So, we sacrificed financially—I mean we were perfectly comfortable, but we sacrificed probably earning the absolute most we could, for quality of life and our family. We had, at our house, we built that house ourselves, and we created all of the gardens. Gardening was a huge part of our life there. We built everything – We had a huge vegetable garden, huge flower garden, we had fruit trees, blueberries, raspberries – and that became part of how we raised our family, too. They helped in the garden, they had to help weed and mow the lawn, and that was part of also learning how to

work hard, how to take care of things. We also did a lot of camping, as a family, we did a lot of hiking. So I think that's how we blended and balanced work and family and having fun.

KB: That's amazing.

RM: Yeah, that's great, honestly. That's so cool that you guys, kind of, built your own home and everything... When did you – Why did you choose to move from that house?

JF: Well, what happened was, we lived there for about twenty-five years, and it was—it was almost twenty-five years of building it. [laughs] Well ...

RM: A work in progress. [laughs]

JF: And I think once our kids moved out—it was way out in a very rural area, kind of isolated. It was absolutely beautiful. We had eighteen acres. But I think when our kids moved out, we realized that we were driving forty-five minutes each way back and forth to Worcester, both of us were still working at that time — and spending the weekends taking care of the house and the gardens. It was just the two of us, at that point. We loved it, but we realized that part of what made us love it so much was the building and the raising the family and all that together. And we thought that maybe it was time to downsize. And that's what we did. It felt like we had to drive a lot, a long way to get to the theater, to get to museums, and now we walk everywhere. So we just kind of traded a little bit.

RM: Yeah.

KB: Do you still garden?

JF: Well we have a tiny little garden where we live, and — [laughs] outside our apartment house, but my daughter who has a house in [—] has tons of potential for gardens, and she's very much expecting me to take care of her gardens, which I'm very happy to do.

KB: There you go, there you go! So you get to carry that on.

JF: Yeah.

KB: That's good! And then [laughs] the next – so there's a bit of a conversation shift. The next question is about politics. So are you comfortable talking about your political beliefs? Is that something you're...

JF: Yeah! Oh, I guess – let's see what the question is. [laughs]

RM: [laughs]

KB: I realize that's probably daunting [laughs] to ask you right off the bat. The first question is, do you consider yourself active politically?

JF: By active politically, do you mean that I sort of campaign for candidates and things like that? Or – I vote in every election. I absolutely... I can't imagine not voting, because that is such a...a privilege, to be able to have a say in who our leaders are.

RM: Yes, definitely. Have you been involved, I guess, in volunteer community work around political organizations or things of that nature?

JF: I haven't, no. And I follow current events, I read two newspapers every day, and I still subscribe to the *Telegram*! Maybe one of the only ones left. And the *Wall Street Journal*. And so I very much follow what is happening in the country and in the world. I tend to—I see myself as that kind of elusive moderate, and I just wish that people used common sense, it just seems to me that [laughs] ... I'm just a very middle of the road person. Massachusetts is very much a liberal state, so I don't always agree with what's happening in this state, but I guess I haven't reached the point where I feel like I need to get more involved in changing things. Although, perhaps now that I'm retired and have more time, who knows? [laughs]

RM: And, I guess, sort of around politics, or — has religion played a role in your life at all? Or... some spirituality, things like that?

JF: Yeah! I've always had—I have a very personal relationship with God. I grew up in the Congregational Church in our town. I was very involved in our church in New Braintree, and my husband and I now go to All Saints. He grew up in that parish. I wouldn't say that I am a strict, religious person—if I have something to do on a Sunday, I don't say no [laughs] because I need to go to church. On the other hand, I feel a deep connection to spiritual... the spiritual part of me.

RM: That's great.

KB: Do you do any sort of volunteer work in the church? I know that some have...

JF: I used to. When I was in New Braintree, I taught Sunday school, I was on the fundraising committee and organized fundraisers for the church and so on. But haven't gotten involved in anything yet at All Saints. I'm happy to go and participate and worship and listen to the beautiful music.

RM: Church music is very nice sometimes. Very peaceful. Okay, so the next section is about health, so... I love how they split it up, very aggressively...

KB: [laughs] I know.

RM: So, have any health issues impacted your life or people in your family that you'd be okay speaking about?

JF: I've been really lucky. I've been so healthy all my life.

RM: That's great.

JF: I haven't...I mean I had my tonsils taken out [laughs]. I've had my wisdom teeth taken out. And I had two perfectly normal childbirths. So, I'm very lucky, in that respect. I don't have any... any health issues. My mom has had a couple of...both of her hips replaced. My father was very healthy – he unfortunately died in a skiing accident when he was in his sixties, but I think that if that had not happened, he would have lived to be a very old man.

RM: In terms of health care, do you feel you have access to quality, affordable health care?

JF: I do. I've– that's one thing about living in Massachusetts, we do have excellent health care and I've always been, I guess...I just feel very fortunate that I've always had the care that I needed, if I needed it.

RM: That's great.

JF: Yeah. My mother always said to me, take care of your teeth – once you lose your teeth, that's [laughs] that's it, so...I've always gone every six months, gotten my teeth cleaned –

RM: It's true. My dad used to not go to the dentist, and he's just now having all the issues come up, and my mom's like, "I always told you to go to the dentist!"

JF: [laughs] Yep, yep, take care of your teeth! You don't want to lose your teeth!

KB: Those are gonna be with you forever! [laughs]

RM: It's true. You can't run from it! [laughs]

KB: So, I know we sort of talked about your family, but whose health are you responsible for, other than your own?

JF: Well, my mom is getting older, and although she's very independent, I do think about, as she gets even older, and what that's going to mean, and probably we'll need to provide some sort of care or assistance as she gets older, and starting to think about that. My husband is six years older than I am. He does—he's had a few—he's a pretty healthy man, but he has had a few health issues, even though I don't have to provide any care for anybody at this point, I do think about the future, and the fact that it will probably happen someday. I guess that's where I'm at currently. Although I do babysit for my two grandsons, [laughs] but in terms of providing personal care, I haven't had to do that yet. But I imagine, as I said, that it's probably in my future.

RM: That makes sense. What are your grandchildren's names?

JF: The oldest is Douglas, after my husband, although we call him Deke, and the two-year-old is named Kepler, and we call him Kip!

RM: Oh, that's so sweet!

KB: That is adorable! Kip!

JF: Isn't it?

RM: That's so sweet.

KB: That's really cute.

RM: This is a good question. How would you define success in your life, and has the definition changed over time for you? For what success means?

JF: That's a great question. I do think that success or how I feel about success has definitely changed. I think early on in my life, it was probably more defined by material possessions and accomplishments and jobs—how I stack up with others in terms of what I'm doing with my life, what kind of house I live in, what kind of car I drive. I think that's probably very normal. But now, what I consider to be success is that I have kept my marriage together. It's no small—it sounds so—in a world where women are becoming astronauts and engineers and almost president of the United States and things like that, to say that it's a success to stay married seems so simple and plain, but it's such a big thing. It is a huge thing, and so, having come from a broken family, I consider that to be a success. The fact that I have raised two children successfully to adulthood – they're productive, they're doing good work. But also, friends are becoming much, much more important to me. The fact that I have such good friends right now is so – like that is gold in my life right now. And I think as I'm reaching the golden years – I'm not there yet! [laughs], they're

approaching, [laughs] I think what's gonna keep me happy are my family relationships, but also those friends! That's gonna be so important.

KB: That's so good that you have such a strong support network. That's really important.

JF: Oh, it is. It's crucial. And I think that—I've read articles that people are having a hard time, I think, especially middle-aged women are having a hard time with friends because they're so busy trying to hold everything together, but those friendships are really important.

RM: Very true. What advice would you give to women of today and future generations? If you could give a piece of advice.

JF: I have to try to think of something that's not a cliché, like be true to yourself. [laughs] Oh, that is...

RM: It is a cliché question, kind of.

JF: It is, but let me think about what advice—there's so much advice—I think be careful when you make big decisions, because big decisions are sometimes hard to change. Like who you marry, what you do for work, and so on. But don't let that paralyze you from taking a chance. Because I think that I have – I didn't have a big plan about my life. I didn't. I know some women do, like my daughter did. She knew exactly what she wanted to do and she went after it and got it. I didn't have that vision or that plan. So sometimes I had to take a chance. And it worked out! Sometimes it doesn't work out, but then you can maybe shift and follow a different path. So I think decisions are important, and you do have to think about them carefully, but don't let that paralyze you from choosing a path.

RM: I love that.

KB: That's really good advice. Thank you for that. I'm gonna take that to heart. (laughs) So, we are working to tell a fuller story of the history of women that's been recorded in the past – What do you think we should be sure to include, in our telling of history?

JF: Oh.

KB: A very heavy question, as well.

JF: Yeah!

KB: [laughs]

JF: What should we be sure to include... I don't know...

KB: That's okay if you don't have an answer!

JF: That's a tough one for me to answer. I think... Hmm...I keep coming back to what—you know, I think the history of women is often focused on what they have done, what they have accomplished, what education they have. But I think there's so much more to women than that, and maybe it's really looking at how women have handled their own personal growth. Because that's the part you often don't see, the inside. I don't know how you document that, but I think that women are so much more than their degrees, than their jobs.

KB: Absolutely.

RM: That's a great answer.

KB: I was just about to say, that's a fantastic answer.

RM: Well, I think it's through conversations like this, and finding the deeper connections of women's lives and meanings, than just the how you look on paper, and the jobs you've had.

JF: Right, like what's on your resume.

KB: There's so much more to the heart than that.

JF: Right. And I think that we place value in the resume, that's — that's what society values, but how can we document that personal growth because that's, in some ways, that can be even more important.

RM: I think that's a good one to wrap it up on.

KB: That was amazing.

RM: Yes.