

Interviewee: Heather-Lyn Haley
Interviewers: Jessica Roberts and Alicia Winske
Date of interview: April 9, 2008
Location: Worcester, MA
Transcribers: Jessica Roberts and Alicia Winske

Abstract: Heather-Lyn Haley was born on July 4, 1966, in Nuremburg, West Germany, though she and her family have lived in Leicester and Worcester, MA for most of Heather's life. She attended a private high school and went on to attend Worcester State College for her undergraduate studies, where she majored in English and participated in student government, the school newspaper, and worked as a DJ for a local radio station, WICN. In this interview, Heather details her undergraduate studies, extracurricular activities, graduate student experience, and her career decisions. She also discusses her personal life, including relationships and a reflection on her life's decisions. Heather encourages others to pursue their dreams and go after what they want, a theme prevalent in her own life.

J: This is Jessica Roberts and Alicia Winske from Assumption College doing an interview for the Worcester Women's Oral History Project. The project is completing a citywide oral history of women from Worcester, aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences based on the goals of the 1850 National Rights Convention held in Worcester. The project is focusing on the areas of women's education, health, work, and politics and community involvement. Today we're going to focus on your experiences with work and education. Thank you very much for your help with this important project. Could you please tell us your full maiden name or, if applicable, your married name?

H: My name is Heather-Lyn Haley.

J: Um, when were you born?

H: I was born on the fourth of July in 1966.

A: Where were you born?

H: I was born in Nuremburg, West Germany. My dad was in the service.

A: Oh wow, that's really interesting!

J: So what is your family background in terms of nationality?

H: I'm Irish, mostly. A little bit of German, a little bit of English, but mostly Irish.

J: All right, now we're going to talk about growing up. So, can you tell me a little bit about your parents, like their names and stuff?

H: Sure. My parents are Steve and Kathy Haley. Mom was from Arlington, my dad was actually born in Billerica but he grew up in Maine and then he moved down here and my mother used to walk pass the place where he worked, the garage where he worked, when she was going to babysit after school and that's how they met. And they had lived in Leicester pretty much since they got married and we lived there when I was little. Um, he worked at UMass Medical School in the computer room and now he's retired and my mother works in insurance.

J: Interesting.

A: Do you have any siblings?

H: Yes, I have...I'm the oldest of four. I have a sister named Hilary who worked at Quinsig for a while in the Adult Education program but she just got a new job so she works as a recruiter for the nursing home system. My sister, Heidi, is married with two kids and teaches, she's a cheering coach at a high school. And I have a brother named Stephen who has four kids. He lives in Barre and he is a carpet installer and salesperson.

J: So, your parents, did they have any influence on your career, education, goals, stuff like that?

H: [Laughs] Um, probably yeah.

J: Any specific influence? Did they push you in a certain direction?

H: I think my mother always felt like she didn't get the chances that she should have. My mother always wins every contest; she always has the highest score in every class she's ever taken. And she was the oldest of five girls and her family didn't do that well financially and there was no way that she would be able to afford college on her own, and at the time there weren't really the same kinds of programs to help people. So, she remembers on her graduation day, going up there to get her plaque for having the highest scores, and the principal saying 'Oh, what a waste.' Because that was it for her. You know, she went to work in insurance and married my dad, and you know, she's taking insurance courses and always does really well, but never went back to school. So her goal was more just to have a big family and make sure that, you know, the whole aunts, uncles, and cousins, major family gatherings, because her family didn't have that and that was really important to her. So, we have a very strong family and I learned a lot from my aunts. A couple of them went on to college so, you know, you don't really have to make every mistake yourself. I learned a lot from watching my aunts make mistakes. [Laughter] And you know, [phone rings]. We've got to pause that for a moment. [pause] Ok, my dad worked at the medical school and when I was in high school, I went to Saint Peter Marian but we lived in Leicester, so you couldn't take the bus from Leicester, so I used to go to work with him in the morning and just volunteer at UMass until my bus came and then after school until he was ready to go home. So that's kind of how I got in to UMass. So he really actually had a pretty big influence on some of my career path because I worked there all through high school, undergrad, and then after grad school went back.

J: [Laughter] Well, that's good. Alright, how about your siblings? I know you said your aunts had a lot of influence, like you said their mistakes, but your siblings, did they have the same kind of thing?

H: Um, more the other way around because I'm the oldest. So, they were stuck with teachers saying, 'Oh I had your big sister'. But they didn't really have as much influence on what I did. Although, they say that people define themselves in opposition to their siblings, so like, I hate Swedish meatballs because my sister loves them. [Laughter] That sort of thing. That's the only reason I don't like them! But you know, that sort of thing growing up, but Hilary was always very outgoing and I was more the shy, academic one, you know. So that sort of thing maybe, but, I did an awful lot of baby-sitting. But like, I raised my, I did my share of raising kids when I was in high school.

J: So how long have you lived in Worcester?

H: Um, I think ten years...?

J: And before that? Where did you live?

H: Oh right, right. I grew up in Cherry Valley, which is sort of between here and Leicester. It's a neighborhood, so it's part of the Worcester zip code system but they go to the Leicester schools, so it's sort of a border town. And, um, I lived there all through my undergraduate when I went to Worcester State and then I went to grad school in Amherst, so I moved to Amherst and I lived there for five years and came back and commuted to Amherst for the last five years. [Laughter] It's actually a really beautiful drive! It's peaceful and relaxing and it wasn't so bad because when you're a grad student, my schedule was flexible enough that if anything was terrible, I could stay home and work. It wasn't too bad of a commute. So we came back probably in '95, back to Worcester. And I lived just off James Street for a while and then we bought this house a few years ago.

J: What's this neighborhood like?

H: This neighborhood is pretty friendly. It's a lot of families with kids. My best friend in high school actually lived a block away from here so I spent a lot of time in this neighborhood when I was in high school, although I didn't live in it. So, I've kind of experienced it both ways, and there's a lot of kids who walk around and hang around together. There's a, they call it 'the paper road' because on paper there's a street, but really it's just a path. Our road is a dead end and the street right there [points to the parallel street] is a dead end, and there's a path that connects the two that runs right beside our driveway, along the side of our yard. So, the kids are always walking through there, and adults with dogs kind of do the loop walking the dogs and stuff, so we're in a crucial spot in the neighborhood so we see a lot of people, but we don't really know that many of them yet. Because we don't have any kids and I think that's really what draws neighbors together a lot, because the kids know who everybody is because they're all on the same bus and they go to school together. But we don't know the neighbors that well. We know

that the guy on the end of the street has a dog named Penny, but we don't know his name. [Laughter] So he's just like Penny's dad to us. We don't really know. But um, so that's it.

J: How has it changed since you were younger?

H: Um, well the stores have changed and I don't know that it has really changed all that much. It's hard to say because it feels the same. It doesn't feel any more dangerous or anything. I'm not that old! [Laughter]

A: Um, what schools did you attend?

H: I went to Leicester elementary schools. I went to Saint Peter Marian High School, Worcester State College as an undergrad, and then UMASS Amherst.

J: What was your schooling like in elementary school? How were the girls treated?

H: Um, it didn't feel like there was really that much of a difference between the way the girls and boys were treated. In gym class, the boys played touch football and the girls would do something else, you know, track or something, I forget. And they used to, when I went to school, girls had to take Home Ec and the guys had to take Shop and it was, you couldn't choose to do the other. Until like three years after I got out of elementary school, they changed the rules. You know, some pioneering girl fought her way into Shop and the rest is history. And the cute guys started taking Home Ec and baking cookies and flirting with girls. Through high school that's how it always was. In high school the gender thing was kinda played out through sports. At St. Peter Marian, at the time, at least, hockey was kinda it and, the hockey players were kinda treated like disciples by the headmaster, who might as well have been God because he made all the rules. They could bring doughnuts to class and no one else could eat in class and you know, they didn't have to hand in their homework. So there were some differences, you know, but nothing really blatant.

J: How about in terms of teachers? Mostly female?

H: Um, Leicester actually had a pretty good mix of male and female, but I had male teachers starting in third grade, you know, at least a couple of them. By the time we got to sixth, seventh, eighth, it was probably half and half. Um St. Peter Marian was also pretty mixed, although it was kind of the traditional split, like the men taught math and history and the women taught English, although I had a couple male English teachers so I guess I shouldn't say that, but it felt a little bit...but not too bad.

A: Now when you went to Worcester State, did you live there or did you commute?

H: I commuted. It felt like I lived there.

A: Uh, what did you study there?

H: I was an Elementary Ed major there for two years and then I did my student teaching and decided I could never be a teacher for real. I got too attached to the kids and I would have been burnt out by the time I was twenty-five, so I backed out of that and switched to an English major and got into journalism, um was editor of the student paper for a couple years. Did a little bit of student government, was on the student senate. Worked there in the summers putting together the new student guides cause we did those like a newspaper, and yearbook, and I used to proctor exams on the weekends as my side job, so the different achievement tests, all the number two pencil things. They used to do the Massachusetts Electricians Licensing tests and there were often guys at that, and you know, being a crazy college kid that was exciting to get up on a Saturday morning and watch guys take a test.

A: That's funny!

J: [Laughter] Has it changed much? Have you been back?

H: Um...A couple of times. It's hard to really tell whether it's changed or not because you don't really feel as connected when you just go in to visit. So we actually just got invited back there, the thirtieth reunion anniversary of the student center was just last week and so they invited all the former student leaders to go to that, so we went and didn't know anybody and sat there and looked at the yearbook and then left again. We walked around and looked at everything, you know, looked pretty much the same, although now there's a parking lot, so I think that probably the parking garage on campus probably makes a big difference. I don't know if that really counts as a historical change.

J: No, my friend actually goes there, so I was curious, myself. Did you do any other groups on campus? I know you said student government and editor, but anything else?

H: Ah, I tutored for a while

J: What subject?

H: English

A: Were there any support networks or mentors that were important to you?

H: Sure. Um, at Worcester State there was um one of the journalism professors, Bob Walker, who was really influential for me, really taught me how to stick to a schedule and write quickly and let go of it, cause I'm kind of a perfectionist and I'll write something and not feel like it's finished and, it will take me ten times longer than it needs to, and in journalism it's gotta go out the door, and it's kind of freeing, you know, to just be able to let go of it, but that was really, you know, he taught me an awful lot, and, then, a lot of the faculty there wrote me good recommendation letters when I decided to go to grad school, although, well, here's a way it's probably changed. My big complaint with Worcester State, mostly I thought it was a great school because you get out what you put in, and that's true at any school, you know, if you really make a lot of it you will, and in a lot of ways I think a small school is better because after

looking at Umass Amherst, I would have hated being an undergrad there. You never see a professor until your senior year. You're all taught by teaching assistants in gigantic classes and Worcester State was never like that. I think I had one class with sixty people in it, and it felt gigantic, and that's the only time there was ever a big class, but nobody ever mentioned grad school as an option, or a possibility, or something you should be thinking about. No one suggested I take GREs when I was graduating, and so I just went out into the workforce and five years later it was like this is not enough I have to go to grad school, and it was hard five years later to go back and take GREs, you know. That's the kind of thing you want to do while you're still in test mode, you know. So that, I think, was kind of a disappointment, and now I think they have more graduate schools right on campus at Worcester State, so hopefully there's a little bit more awareness and they counsel students differently.

J: So, when you graduated, what did you do afterwards?

H: Oh um, I was still working at UMASS Medical School, but it used to just be the Medical Center, so it was the school and the hospital combined when I started. Well, I started working there in 1980 as a volunteer when I was like fourteen or something and um, anyway that was when I started getting paid, I think was 1980, but I worked in data entry doing billing for nine years and then when I got my bachelors degree I got a job in the Curriculum Dean's office, the office for medical education, and I was a research assistant there, so it was a very different kind of work and I got a couple of publications, and that was where I met people who had graduate degrees and said, "Oh you should totally go to graduate school. You would love it." Cause no one had ever said that to me before. None of my aunts went that far and I didn't really understand the whole thing at all, so no one ever really talked about it, but then once I was there, they really encouraged me and pushed me to do that, so um and the publication really helped me get in. I forget what that question even was. Did I answer it?

J&A: Yeah you did [Laughter].

A: What do you do now for a job? I know you still work at UMASS.

H: I'm back at UMASS now. I actually left for ten years while I was in grad school, worked out in Amherst as a teaching assistant, a research assistant. I worked for a couple of survey organizations doing telephone surveys. [Laughing] So I don't hang up on people now, who call and say can I have a few minutes to take a survey. Um, now I work in family medicine and community health. I'm a sociologist. I help junior faculty, MDs, who have research ideas because they didn't really get training in research. They were busy learning all that medical stuff, you know. I partner with MDs to get research projects done. It is very interesting because I get a lot of different kinds of projects at once.

A: That's pretty cool!

J: What are your hours like?

H: I have a pretty flexible work schedule. Um, I usually work seven to three. If I don't want to, I don't have to work seven to three. I can work ten to six. There have been whole seasons where I worked ten to six because I was doing something else and that just worked better for my schedule. I've actually just shifted to being a morning person in the past year, but um I can work from home when the weather's bad and I get a lot of vacation time so it's flexible.

J: So, um what has your work meant to you?

H: Um...I don't know. [Smiles] What has it meant to me? I guess it's a good feeling to know that I, um, well I think because I worked there as a kid, it's kind of fun to be back as faculty when I, you know, started at the bottom of the ladder. I've had the lowest possible grade job in the system and now I'm finally getting a little bit closer to the top, but I'm still just an instructor, which is the bottom level of the faculty positions, so right now I should be writing my promotional materials to go for assistant professor and then I have to start getting my own grants, so I'm still considered junior faculty because I'm not totally grant funded on my own yet. I write a lot of grants with other people, but because we're writing about medical stuff, usually the MD, we put their name at the top because the money's coming from the NIH or places that are looking to give money to the MDs, so I'm, a lot of time, in that sort of second position, so I'm on six different grants right now. I do one thing forty percent, one thing twenty percent, and a couple of five percents, and, you know, I have twenty percent time the department where they decide which project I'm going to work on and, so I'm doing five different projects with that twenty percent of my time and, so it's really splintered, which sometimes is nice and sometime is very frustrating because I have too many bosses.

J: So, is the assistant professor something you're gonna go for?

H: Yeah, hopefully pretty soon. It's just a matter of finding the time to do it now because I know several of the people on the Personal Action Committee who have said do it and you'll definitely get it if you do it, but my direct supervisor doesn't really say the same thing and, so, I don't know. I'm at an awkward position right now. I'm on the Women's Faculty Committee and a lot of the women there are really pushing me to go for the promotion because in a lot of ways, right now, I'm feeling more of a gender crunch than I ever did in all of high school and everything because I'm in that helper position and a lot of the faculty...I'm being assigned to these guys who have research ideas and I do all the work and they get promoted. And so I'm like a rung on that ladder to promotion and I just keep getting stepped on and over til they get where they need to go and I crunch their data and give them results and they go out and present them. So that part's kind of tricky and the guy that's my...like because my time is so splintered the department just kinda picked one guy and said this is the one you actually work for who does your evaluations and your performance reviews and stuff 'cause he's the guy that hired me. I started out at one hundred percent under him, and then as he lost grant funding, I found funding in other places, but he still wants me...he still acts like I work under him one hundred percent, and he does not encourage me to go foreword and so there's kind of a tricky line. You can't have someone be your mentor when they're your boss because the goals are different and so it's better for him if I sat where I am, and so he doesn't have a lot of incentive to push me to do anything else because then he has to find someone else to do all his work, so....

J: Do you think it's the field that's like that or the position?

H: A lot of it is because I'm a non-MD working in medical education. There's only so much you can teach a doctor when you're not a doctor even though I've got a doctorate in Sociology, but there's only so much I can teach them and I do a lot of training with doctor patient communication. It's one of the main areas of research that I help support and I teach research methods, mostly just one on one though, not to big classes.

A: Ok, just to make a little bit of a transition, but do you consider yourself politically active, at all?

H: Only a little bit. Um, I have a Connie Lukes bumper sticker on my car and I had a sign on my front lawn during election season. I've always voted, um, but just this year I've started to get a little more involved, um with the Massachusetts Commission for the Status of Women, is a committee I kind of got drafted into. I was the president of the Worcester Women's History Project for a couple of years and while I was in that position, I was representing that organization to the Massachusetts Council, and so now I've stepped down as the president of the Women's History Project, but that gives me more time to go to the Massachusetts Commission stuff, and so they have a lot of events that they sponsor where women politicians come in and talk or women who are doing really well in business, or whatever. So, I have actually started to meet more of the politicians and think a little bit more about being politically active, but I'm not really involved in any campaign so..

J: So, what is your involvement with the History Project now?

H: Um, right now, I'm taking a little bit of a break. I'm not on a lot of committees right now because I started out on the events committee and then when I became president, you sit on every committee and it gets to be a lot and it was really fun, but you can only do it for a couple of years 'cause it's a volunteer position and it takes a lot of time [laughs]. Um, right now I'm chair of the nominating committee, so I have to find new members for the board at the end of the year because you only serve a three year term and then you come off the board for at least a couple of years and that way the membership keeps changing. Um, so, I'm the chair of that committee, I'm on the Ad-hoc Committee for the Oral History Project. I'm kind of deciding what the next steps will be with that because we've got over two hundred interviews now and it's hard to decide what we should focus on and where we should go with it and we're looking for some grant funding, so it would be great to find a person who had the time and energy to help us organize the interviews we have. We wanna code them and store them in a way that makes them more searchable. I guess we actually have a better oral history collection than Harvard Library does and, you know, it's just one of those things we need someone to take enough time to really put it up on the web in an accessible way, that sort of thing, so I'm on the committee to examine that and also, it's a brand new committee to look at the year 2010 and what kind of event we should do to celebrate that because it will be the one hundred sixtieth anniversary of the first Women's Right's Convention and they're choosing Worcester.

J: Any ideas for that yet?

H: I don't know what we're gonna do. Um, in 2000, we had a three-day convention at the Centrum and there were hundreds of people from different countries and three days of workshops, a play, and a concert and they totally burnt themselves out doing this amazing event. I don't know if we'll go quite that far because 160 isn't as important as 150, you know, so there looking at doing a one day thing, but I think people are still...and that's what the committee is for, to decide what do people want to do? what would be best for the city?, and I don't know, we'll see, so if you have any ideas let me know [laughs].

J: How did you get involved with the Women's Oral History Project?

H: Um, I used to just attend their events when I was an undergrad. Some of the things sounded interesting, you know, um, a picnic at the house of Abby Kelly Foster with a tour and you get to see the basement where it was part of the Underground Railroad. You can see where the slaves were taken into the basement and all that stuff. The woman who owns that house now is actually on our board, at this point, so she lets us open it up once a year to do an event there. And, um, they had a fashion show downtown with old the old cloths, so I just to stuff like that for a while and then when I moved back here when graduate school ended, I kind of had all this extra time and, so that was what I decided to do with some of it. So I signed up there and I also started working with Audio Journal, which is a reading service for Central Massachusetts citizens with print disabilities. We read the newspaper on the TV, you know, that channel where there's always somebody talking and it doesn't go with the pictures. It's for blind people. They read the newspaper on the air. I do a science program there where we read the science news for the last two weeks. It's fun. I used to be a DJ and I really missed having studio access, and so by doing Audio Journal, I have studio access and I have a key and I can go in at two o'clock in the morning and make myself a tape if I want, you know, whatever, but um, I was a DJ at WICN as an undergrad. I was pretty involved in the Worcester music scene, and did that. I was a DJ for eight and a half years. It was very fun. There used to be alternative rock on WICN and there isn't any more, now. It's mostly just jazz and classic, but they used to have a show, they called it Positive Noise and it was on every night from ten o'clock at night until six the next morning, and, so, when you started, you got a late, like a one to three a.m. or three to six a.m. shift and after you'd been there a while, you could get one that's a little earlier. I settled into the ten to midnight slot on Sundays and did that for a couple of years, which is never a nice time slot, but at Worcester State I used to be on the air until three in the morning and I'd drive to school and sleep in my car for four hours so class, you know, just ridiculous things. Go to Denny's until five-thirty in the morning and then do homework until classes started, so that was a lot of fun, and I was involved with a lot of the local clubs. We would do ticket give-a-ways and stuff and I would be a judge for the Battle of the Bands. I had a gold card for some of these clubs, so I never had to pay. I had a gold card and I could always get it. It was a lot of fun. Um, my husband, ex-husband, was also very involved in the music scene and we were both involved with the Worcester's Artist Group, which at one point was on Highland Street, off Lincoln Street. It was an old sprinkler factory and they had a big performance space with artist's studios around the edges, and so I rented a studio there and lived in it illegally for a year, um, which a lot of the

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artists kind of stayed in their studios, and, you know, you had a mailing address somewhere else and there was one bathroom with a shower that everybody shared and one kitchen, and, so, I used to go to mom's and shower a lot because I got tired of scrubbing it out from all those guys because people would just dump a gallon of paint into the drain and you know artists can be, um, kind of messy, but we did a lot of really good shows in that space. We had the Bosstones come and Dinosaur Jr. and it was fun and the Bosstones were troublesome, you know, but...

A: Did you have any background in music or you just really find it interesting?

J: I was just interested and liked the music and I had a friend who had a show and so I would go and hang around and say play this, play this, play this, until he said get your own show if you want to play that, so [laughs] I did and that's how I kind of got into it, but I really enjoyed that a lot and got spoiled by it and I gave it up when I was in grad school 'cause I couldn't keep all the music in my head and the reading that you had to do in your first year of grad school. I thought my head was going to explode. I had to stop 'cause I just kept playing the same old stuff. I couldn't really keep up with the new music every week because it takes some time to do that.

J: That's so cool!

A: I know it really is! Has religion played any role in your life at all?

H: Hmm, maybe a little. I went to a Catholic high school and my mother and my grandparents were pretty religious. I taught Catechism for a while. It was a good place to meet guys. [Laughter] I know that sounds crazy, but there are some really cute guys at my church! [Laughter] I had a friend in high school whose family was really active in this group called Teens Encounter Christ. They were the marriage counseling couple and they would go on retreats where different high school kids as part of their Confirmation class would get sent on these retreats and we were still, like eighth grade or freshman, and we would go and help out in the kitchen and make brownies for all the guys, and once again, all about, all about dating. [Laughter]

J: So you said you were married before, right?

H: Yeah.

J: What was his name?

H: His name was Phil McNamara. We just stopped living together last April and it has only really been final since January, so that's kinda new. He's from Shrewsbury and he's a music writer, the whole instruments, and now he's a substitute teacher at the Southbridge School. He was a cab driver when he was married to me [Laughter].

J: When did you meet him?

H: We met in probably '92 or '91 during the Worcester Artist Group days, during the crazy Harlow Street days. He had just finished school. He went undergrad to UMASS Amherst and I actually met him at a Bosstones concert. Yeah, everybody was on acid [Laughter]. But anyway, you know, yeah, that's how we met. We were both volunteering there. I was the volunteer coordinator and he was booking a lot of the bands and so I had to find out from him what the calendar was so I would know how many kids to book for every weekend, like how many people do we need working the door versus security and the snack bar and stuff. And he would meet kids out there on the floor and bring them in to sign them up as volunteers. I was the one who would call kids' houses and talk to their parents and convince them it was ok to let their kids come down to a punk rock concert in an old factory. [Laughter] So I'm not quite sure how I did that, but I did, and maybe I shouldn't have! [Laughter] But yeah that's how we met. And he was one of the few people that when he said he was going to do something, always did it.

J: That's pretty rare!

H: Yeah, it was pretty rare. And so that was enough to catch my attention and so he was the one I dated out of that scene. And we got married because I was going to grad school and I didn't want to go by myself so I asked him to marry me and he said 'yes'. And he tried to back out twice and I wouldn't let him because I was just too stubborn and sure of myself. So we did that and it was never really right, but we worked at it and we tried. Eventually, I threw in the towel because I was tired of trying. It was way harder than it should be! Also, when we moved in to this house, this is the soap opera of my life. He said 'Oh, things will change. Everything will be so much better when we have a house of our own, when we're not just renting.' And nothing changed. We couldn't really afford the house by ourselves and so we rented out the basement because there's a bathroom, a bedroom, a living room, and stuff downstairs. So we rented out the basement to this guy from my neighborhood where I grew up, who I knew was a nice guy, and was neat, and would pay his bills. And, then I fell in love with him and divorced my husband, and now he lives upstairs with me instead!

J: Oh, wow! Interesting!

A: Sounds good to me!

H: [Laughter] My husband was a year and a half younger than me and it always felt that way. I always felt old. And now the new guy is ten years older than I am and I feel like it took that extra ten years for a guy to understand as much as a girl my age understands! And so it's a better fit. He's more appreciative, and he knows how to fix things, and he pitches in around the house, and he gardens, and it's great.

J: This is another new thing, but have any health issues played a role in your life at all?

H: No, not personal health problems, but I work in the healthcare field. It's funny because these questions, like I helped a little bit with shaping the questions and because it was part of the National Rights Convention in 1850, there were four areas and health was one of the areas so we wanted to put in health questions. And some people, that's an issue, and I would say I've not

really had very good experiences with healthcare because I was just in the student healthcare system for way too long. At UMASS Amherst, you go and sit in the waiting room for four hours, and if you're still there, they'll see you and they'll say 'If you feel any worse, come back in a week'. That's all they ever said, no matter how long you sat there, no matter who you waited to talk to. But now I work with doctors all the time. I ran a focus group of twelve doctors this morning and it's just what I do. So healthcare is important to me because it pays my bills.

A: Do you have any hobbies or anything you really like to do for fun?

H: Music and gardening. We just bought bicycles, so I don't know if that counts as a hobby yet [Laughter]. We haven't ridden them, we just keep looking at them and thinking that they're cute. I read to the blind every other week. I do women's history and that's all the hobbies I have time for [Laughter].

A: Pretty busy!

J: Which one's your favorite?

H: That depends on the day. Well, when I read, I like to read science fiction.

A: How would you define success in your life?

H: Umm?

J: We need to know these things!

H: Well, it makes sense if you think about it. For my mom, success was the big, fat family. It's the opposite, kind of, for me. I decided not to have any kids. I did all my child raising as a baby-sitter. I feel like I am pretty successful because I'm happy most of the time. I like my job seventy-percent of the time, which is more than most people can say. And I see a trajectory that I can keep moving forward. And we usually can pay all of our bills! [Laughter] Or most of them anyway.

A: That's good.

J: Has that changed over time? Like when you were growing up?

H: Yeah, I mean there were times when it was more important for me to feel like I was pleasing my parents and there were times when it was more important to be cool or to get a date or who knows. But some things become less important over time and you finally settle a couple of them and you can move on to other things.

A: Based on your life experience, do you have any advice for future generations of women?

H: If you want to do something, just do it. I know that sounds so cliché, but I think that I spent way too much time trying to decide what I wanted to do for the rest of my life instead of what I want to do for the next month, you know, because it's all those little one months that add up and that's it. And the people that I know who knew what they wanted to do and just stuck with that one thing, did it and did it really well. Like the kid who always wanted to be a vet. It's just seems so much easier for someone who's that directed and knows what they want to do and just sticks with that and does it. Because once you're a vet for five years, you can always change your mind and do something else. You can always go back to school and get another degree. So, I feel like I wasted more time than I needed to trying to decide which major am I going to follow. Like grad school, I knew I wanted to go to grad school, but for what? I just read through the catalogue and the major that had the most classes that sounded fun was what I ended up doing. It's worked out, mostly. [Laughter] But you know, that would be my advice. Just pick the thing that interests you right now and go for it all you can because otherwise you'll just wish you did it later.

J: This is a really reflective question, but how do you feel about the choices you've made in your life? And do you have any major regrets?

H: Well we already talked about the divorce! [Laughter] I don't know, that's a tough one. Sometimes I wish that I had spent more time trying harder in school. Like, I could've been Honor's Society. I didn't even apply to good colleges. I just knew I was going to Worcester State. That's what we could afford. I got free tuition because I was a state employee and so I never even applied anyplace else. You know, all my friends had ten different applications out, 'Oooh I got into Brown! Oooh I got into Harvard!' I never did any of that stuff. I saved the fifty bucks and looking back, I can't say any of those things. I don't know that it would've made a difference, but at the time, I would've gone to Simmons and I probably wouldn't have even liked it because I changed out of an Education major and then what would I have done? Although maybe I would've gone into Library Science, and sometimes I think that would have been really fun. But I've done some work with the library at the medical school and some of their jobs look really fun. But you have to have a library degree to do that.

J: Is that hard to get?

H: There are some really specialized, advanced degrees in library science that take some time and internships, but not harder than anything else really.

J: Would you ever do that?

H: Maybe. I keep teasing that I'll go to medical school but I'm waiting until my 50's because I have to save something for later. [Laughter] But it could be Library Science instead, because I never got over that mess about blood, so I don't think I'll really become an MD. But the money sounds good.

A: Well, thank you very much for participating. Is there anything else you would like to add?

H: No, I think that's it. It's weird because you don't usually sit and talk about yourself for that long. But, that's about it.

J&A: Alright, thank you!