

Interviewee: Therese Grattan
Interviewers: James McNerney and Ethel McGinn
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Transcribers: James McNerney and Ethel McGinn



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Abstract: Therese Grattan was born on November 12, 1948 in Tarrytown, New York, and was raised in Worcester, Massachusetts. She now lives with her husband, William Grattan, in Westborough, Massachusetts. Therese has two daughters, Jennifer and Rebecca, and five grandchildren. In this interview, Therese discusses her life growing up and work history with a focus on her teaching career and accomplishments. Before finishing her degree at Westfield State College, Therese and her husband got married. Two years later she earned her degree and became a teacher. Therese recently retired from her position as the Principal of Crocker Elementary School in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. She discusses her teaching experiences and some of her biggest accomplishments in her career, but also in her life. Therese was successful in teaching every single first grader that she had had in the classroom how to read. Also, Therese made a major impact on every school that she taught in or ran. Specifically, in the Fitchburg Elementary Schools, she was able to bring in computers for every student. Therese also stresses the importance of her family and her relationship with her husband as influential in her life.

EM: We are completing a citywide oral history project of the lives of Worcester women aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences. Based on the goals of the 1850 national women's rights convention in Worcester, we are focusing on the areas of women's education, health, work, and politics/community involvement. We want to focus today on your experiences with education. Thank you for your help with this important project. Do we have your permission to record the oral history using... and when you answer can you just say your name and the date?

TG: Ok. Yes. Therese Grattan. November 1, 2014.

EM: Okay thank you. So the first question... what is your full name including your maiden name and your married name if applicable.

TG: Therese Marie Doyle is my maiden name Grattan G-R-A-T-T-A-N.

JM: Okay. When were you born?

TG: November 12, 1948 and proud of it.

EM: [laughs] and what is the name of your husband?

TG: William. William Joseph Grattan.

JM: Do you have any children?

TG: I have two girls.

EM: Do you have any grandchildren?

TG: Five grandchildren.

EM: What are their names?

TG: It's Alexander, Aaliyah, Amanda, Samantha, and Gavin

EM: And your daughters names?

TG: Jennifer and Rebecca.

EM: What cultures or ethnicities do you identify with or what's your family background?

TG: My own background is Irish, English, and Scottish and with one of my daughters, we brought in the Hispanic culture and the Black culture into the family.

EM: Great.

JM: Can you tell us about your parents or your siblings?

TG: My dad taught at Assumption College. He started in 1961 and he was a very intellectual man and if you wanted to talk about something he could pretty much talk about anything. He was a really hard worker—I'm one of eight children...

EM: Oh wow!

TG: ...so that you know that both of my parents were very organized and the emphasis from my father was always academics and there was always a push for school and education and the importance of it. He eventually taught in Hong Kong, in China, in Africa and then came back and continued back at Assumption in Worcester.

EM: Wow that's great.

TG: My mom was a very hard worker. She raised eight children and it was very, very organized. We all had towels with our initials on it...

EM: [laughs]

TG: ...and we all had chores, mine was Tuesday up, Thursday down for cleaning the bathrooms...

EM: [laughs]

TG: ...so the house was run very, very in a very organized way and it was always clean but they were wonderful people and I miss them both.

EM: Do you think anything from your growing up experiences, like you were talking about your mom and the organization, has an impact on your life now?

TG: I think I have part of both of them in me. With my father I think I inherited—there is always a challenge, there is always more to do and when you are one of eight there is always a lot of competition, so that when you look at my resume and you compare it to the resume of all of my brothers and sisters we are all a little bit neurotic, a little bit obsessed with the work ethic.

EM: Right. Great.

JM: Where do you fall in your siblings?

TG: I'm number four and my father called me four.

EM: Aww, that's cute!

TG: It was cute, yeah.

JM: Where have you lived during your life?

TG: I was first born in Tarrytown, New York and lived there for four years and then moved to Virginia, my dad worked for C.I.A. at that point...

EM: Wow!

TG: ...and I lived there from, let's see, 1953 to 1961 and then my dad took a job at Assumption so we moved up to New England—I thought we were moving to Worcester...

EM: Oh [laughs]

TG: ...that's how much we knew about it. And then I stayed in Worcester until 1971 and then—so we lived in Falls Church, Virginia, we moved to Worcester, we lived at 35 Saxon Road, right near the college...

EM: Okay

TG: ...I mean it's a short walk. And then in 1971, Bill and I got married, we moved out to Westfield, Mass. We lived in Westfield from 1971 'til 2004 and in two thousand—let me make sure I have this right – I wrote a lot of things down, I hope you don't mind...

EM: [laughs] No that's okay.

TG: ... so in 2004 we moved to Connecticut and then 2007 no I'm wrong—we moved to Connecticut then in 2007-ish we moved here we moved to Westborough so we moved back to Worcester County.

EM: Okay.

TG: And it feels really good to get back home, it feels really nice.

EM: [laughs] Okay, so what about Worcester kinda brought you back here?

TG: It feels like it's home, you know, it's where I went to school, it's where I went to high school, it's where I started college, it's where I dated, where I got my first car, where I got married. One of my daughters was baptized in Worcester. It just has a real sense of home. I still spend a lot of time in Worcester, mostly at restaurants, I spend a lot of time.

EM: [laughs] What's your favorite restaurant?

TG: I love Tweeds.

EM: That's a classic.

EM and TG: [laughs]

EM: That's great.

TG: It is.

JM: What changes have you seen in Worcester over time?

TG: Traffic is number one.

EM: [laughs]

TG: When [Rt.] 290 was first built, it was built to match the traffic at the time and I think we have overrun it...

EM: mhm

TG: ...and as you know 290 is pretty much very crowded all the time. I've seen a lot of poverty move into Worcester. I've seen a lot of change in the family unit, that instead of a lot of homes having a married couple with children that many more times it's a single mom raising kids. So that's been a major change. In the newspaper, it appears as though there is more crime than there used to be before. Let me see what else I have. What I do like is that I have heard there are grants available to fix up homes and when my daughter was looking to buy a house, there was a grant available where they would offer \$20,000 if you bought a house on Belmont Hill – in the Belmont Hill area, so I've seen it grow from a small city to a much larger city with much more diversity. I think it's still a wonderful place to live.

EM: I agree! [laughs] So what do you think specifically about women's experiences in Worcester?

TG: You know, I think it always reflects society and I lived in pretty much a bubble and I went to an all-girls school.

EM: I did too!

TG: Did you? Where did you go?

EM: Notre Dame Academy.

TG: So did I!

EM: Oh! That's so exciting!

TG: So you know the attitude that they give you is that women are important...

EM: mhm, yeah

TG: ...and that you are college bound and that's your emphasis and you are very much supported. So I was very lucky at a time when men and women's roles were very different that I was in a situation in high school where women were important. And so that carried me through the rest of my life.

EM: I agree.

JM: Where did you attend and graduate from college?

TG: I graduated from Westfield State College, it's pretty much the same as Worcester State, except it's in Westfield.

EM: mhm

JM: And what were your challenges in education?

TG: I was a young one in class—I was a November baby so I was always one of the youngest ones. When I lived in Virginia, the class sizes were very large. The class sizes, it was parochial school, and the class sizes were up to sixty. For first, second, and third grade you would go to school half a day and there would be thirty students. All of this makes me sound so very old.

EM: [laughs]

TG: By third grade, you'd go full day and you'd get a uniform and there were, welcome to sixty kids in your class. So that was a challenge. When I moved up to New England, it was wonderful to find out class sizes were much smaller up here so that when I went into 8th grade I absolutely loved it. There were only about thirty kids in a room. That's actually when I met my husband, Bill. He lived down the street and we went to the same school together...

EM: Aww

TG: ...which is a sweet story. So what was your original question?

EM: About challenges in your education.

TG: Oh yes. I think in heading towards college, money is always an issue... to come up with tuition. The process of applying and hoping to get into a place near where you lived or near where you wanted to actually go or to dorm. And those were the challenges.

EM: So, at what point, was there a specific time or over time did you realize what your vocation, your calling was?

TG: Well it's interesting because I wanted to be an airline hostess. And so my father, he put me on a plane and I got sick.

EM: [laughs]

TG: And that was the end of that. And I taught a CCD class in Worcester at Blessed Sacrament and one of the moms told me that her daughter was the only one in her family that enjoyed going to CCD class and I was her teacher.

EM: Aww

TG: And that was in high school and that's when I first started thinking about, "Gee, I really would like to be a teacher." And so eventually, down the road, it did eventually come.

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

TG: My husband is a big one on that. Other staff members, supervisors, boss, bosses, other principals where I've worked. And at Westfield State, it was a combined effort between the

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college and the elementary school for the education majors, what used to be called the training school, so that everybody supported each other. All the teachers at my school supported all of the students coming from the college. So it was a real good, strong support system.

EM: That's great

JM: What was your first job?

TG: My first job was a legal secretary job. I went to Quinsigamond [Community College] for two years to become a legal secretary. And then worked as an office manager—I was in an office, it was called Swartz and Swartz. And I worked there for two years and that was enough. I learned about the business world—I learned it really wasn't for me.

JM and EM: [laughs]

TG: And I had enough of secretarial work to last a lifetime. So then, decided I really wanted to get into education. I went back to school—so I had completed two years. So I had completed one other year at Worcester Junior [College]. And then my husband and I got married and moved to Westfield so then I finished up the last two years for my degree at Westfield. So that was my first job.

EM: Okay. So, going to your teaching and being a principal and, like, your role in education what has that meant to you? What impact has it made and how has it shaped you?

TG: It's been my whole life except for raising a family and being a family member. It's really been—education has been my whole life and it's something that, it began as a focus when I was quite young in my life and still is today. Even though I'm retired, I just put in a job application for interim principal...

EM: great!

TG: ... in a town not too far from here. So, it shaped me, but it continues to shape me. And, as education changes, so do I. As society changes, so do I. So that it's something that it's never the same. Everything is always different from year to year. There is always something new and it makes you, it makes me, change and grow and I like that.

JM: What were your primary responsibilities in terms of housework and childcare, especially with your career taking up time?

TG: This is a good one.

EM: [laughs]

TG: From the age of 22 to 34, I was the main responsibility for the housework and the childcare. And I stayed at home when my husband went to work. From the age of 34 to 50, I

went to work full-time, so somebody came in to clean the house. My husband and I shared sick days for the kids. And I was still responsible for all the shopping. By the time I turned 50, [laughs] things changed. My husband and I shared the errands—he does the grocery shopping. He takes care of the outside; I take care of the inside of the house. And I keep up major responsibilities of communication with my oldest daughter and he takes care of communication with my youngest daughter.

EM: [laughs] That's a great method.

TG: Yeah. So, over time we have both grown and changed.

EM: mhm

TG: We always promised each other that whatever one person can do, the other person, the one person should teach the other, how to do that job. My husband knows how to iron, he knows how to bake, he can pretty much do anything that I do.

EM: That's great. So, what do you think are the pros and the cons of the path you've chosen as far as work-wise?

TG: The pros is the schedule, that it matches a family.

EM: mhm

TG: That I was very lucky that I taught in a school that my children actually went to school so they'd come with me in the morning, they'd come home with me in the afternoon. So that was definitely a pro. As far as a con, teachers still need to have more respect in the country. I think it's something that, it's been a fight for a very long time and I think teachers are looked upon as having summers off which isn't true. You know, you do end up working all summer too. And, hopefully within the next ten years, that will completely change.

EM: [laughs]

JM: How do you feel about the choices you've made in your life – do you have any regrets?

TG: I have two regrets. I wish that when it was time for me to choose a job in life, that both male and female roles—jobs—would have been available to me. At that time, it was pretty much these are the typical female jobs and you would choose one. It was teacher, hairdresser, nurse—the very, very typical ones. My other regret is I haven't learned how to speak Spanish yet. I've tried it twice and still need to try it again. So those are my two regrets.

EM: Can you tell us about a specific student, or maybe a class, that was either challenging or kind of pushed you as far as, like, your job?

TG: Every year is a challenge and what's great is every year is very different. It's like a whole new job every September or every August. There was one year that was a particular challenge. I had thirty-three students. And teaching first grade to thirty-three students is very—it's quite a challenge. I'm proud to say that every child I ever had I was able to teach how to read. And with many different levels of students, I feel really proud to be able to say that. What it did help me do was to make a change to teaching fourth grade. I had taught first grade for twelve years and the classroom with thirty-three students was just—I couldn't give the attention to the kids that I wanted to. And I knew that fourth grade was something that, the kids were a little bit more independent and we could do much more group work, so I was able to make a change to fourth grade.

EM: mhm. Alright, so we are going to move to politics and community involvement.

TG: Yup.

EM: So, do you consider yourself active politically?

TG: Not so much. I'm certainly aware politically. I don't consider myself active politically, but aware politically. Knowing who is running for what offices, knowing what the questions are, you know, certainly watching all the political advertisements that aren't so great.

EM: I agree.

TG: I have supported school committee members in the past. So in the past, I have been more active politically than I am now.

EM: What do you think about the current governor, everything that's going on with that?

TG: Well, I plan on voting for Martha Coakley.

EM: Okay.

TG: I am an independent, but I do plan on voting for her. There are pluses and minuses to all the candidates. She seems to be the most frank, the most honest, and I'll end there.

EM and TG: [laughs]

JM: How have you been involved in volunteer or community work?

TG: Over the years, I've done a lot of it. I'm at the point that I still want to get paid for what I do because I've done so much volunteer work in my lifetime.

JM and EM: [laughs]

TG: And, as a teacher, you don't just teach 9 to 3, you know, you're there by 8 in the morning, you're still there at 4 to 5 in the afternoon. And, you spend your evenings planning lessons, and analyzing data. So what was the question?

JM: Have you been involved in volunteering?

TG: Oh, yes. So that I give a lot to the school. And, as principal, you give your whole life to the school. So that, that's a way of volunteering. Being on P.T.O. ([Parent Teacher Organization], so that you're working with families all the time. I worked at St. Vincent's [Hospital] as a volunteer and I worked at Hahnemann Hospital as a volunteer, I taught CCD, I was part of CYO. What else did I write down? Oh at school, I was responsible for bringing in one hundred computers from a well-known university in Cambridge. That, I have a brother that works there, and so he was able to help me bring them to Fitchburg, which is a very, very poor community. So I was able to be involved in the community, plus do volunteer work as well.

JM: What were your goals in doing all this volunteer work?

TG: You know, I don't think I ever really set a goal at that time. I think I was aware of the good feeling that you get when you help other people. But as far as being a teenager and setting a goal of, "Well I'm going to go and help the people that are in the hospital," you know, I was never really that much aware of my decisions. So, I was aware of what a good feeling it was to help out and to help people that were sick and to help change people's lives.

EM: At Notre Dame, there's a Love in Action program. Was there one when you were there too?

TG: No, not at all.

EM: It was a volunteer-based program so I was curious if you did that in high school as well. So what role has religion played in your life?

TG: It's a very important role, from being very young. It was, we followed all the commandments, we went to mass on all the holy days. When, when Vatican II came out, it was a major change in our lives that we were allowed to actually think about Christianity, and what did it really mean, and what did being a Catholic mean? So that, it was refreshing for Vatican II and it's refreshing again with Pope Francis. I really just love him a lot. But, I've always followed the rules of the Church. Do I believe 100% of everything? No. Do I believe we are headed in the right direction? Yes.

EM: What was your opinion of Pope Benedict stepping down?

TG: I was okay with that. And, when I see that the change that came because of that, I'm glad he did.

JM: Did you keep, like, you know, religion a big part with your children, too?

TG: I did. They didn't always appreciate it.

EM: [laughs]

TG: Neither one of them go to Church on a regular basis, but they do celebrate in their own ways.

EM: Did they go to Catholic schools, or?

TG: They went to public school.

EM: Okay.

JM: Have you had any health issues that have impacted your life or any family member's lives?

TG: I actually just donated a kidney in May to a friend.

EM: Wow!

TG: So that, that impacts my life a lot.

JM: Yeah.

TG: And it's really, it's strange knowing that you can save somebody else's life and to sit there and to talk with them and be with them and know that they are there because of you. It's really, really very strange feeling.

EM: That's powerful.

TG: Yes, yeah. And, it really, I'm really glad that I did it.

EM: There was a story in the news recently that a teacher who donated..

TG: I saw that!

EM: I thought that that was really powerful, too.

TG: Yeah.

EM: So what experiences, what are your experiences in accessing quality affordable health care?

TG: I'm on Medicare and a supplemental insurance. So my husband worked for the state so we have always been very lucky we've had very good insurance. So that has never been a problem.

I donated the kidney and everything was paid for by the other person's insurance, not by mine. So that has never been an issue. Switching over to Medicare was a headache certainly, it's a tremendous amount of paper work and things don't just seem to match, reading this page reading that page and in the handbook, but it eventually worked out just fine. So it's never been a problem.

JM: How do you get through tough times, what motivates you to keep going?

TG: Chocolate.

JM and EM: [laughs]

TG: I do a lot of talking to myself with let go, let God, that helps me a lot and there was a famous philosopher that wrote, "All shall be well." So I repeat those things over and over again and just trying to realize that it's not the end of the world and that tomorrow will be a better day, and things will work out, and trying to deal with a sense of worry, it takes hard work so that you don't worry as much so that your life can be a little bit easier. But I think a bright outlook and a good sense of humor helps, but definitely chocolate.

EM: How do you define success in your life, and how has the definition changed overtime?

TG: I've defined it in a lot of different ways all of them public awareness. That for each degree that I have received I felt very good about my own personal growth and generally a new job would follow each degree and a pay raise would follow each degree.

EM: [laughs]

TG: Which was very nice. It was wonderful to always be recognized in the newspaper so that anytime you could read about yourself and how you are helping someone else how your helping other people, it's a really good feeling and watching children that you give Christmas presents to their family and they don't know about it. I brought a program into my school to provide dinner for kids. So that we were providing breakfast, lunch, and dinner. So that when you see something so realistic right in front of you and when you see families that sign up for, "Yes, I want my kids to have dinner," it's an absolutely wonderful feeling, it's very concrete and it continues to make you want to go on and on .

JM: Based on your life experience what advice would you give a woman of today and future generation?

TG: I thought about this one for a while. I would want any woman to know that... that everyone should have the gift of love no matter what form it comes in. Every woman should have the courage to have a voice and to believe whatever she wants to do as an individual that she can try and accomplish it and accomplish it. That would be the major message I would give to women.

EM: So now that we're working to tell a fuller story of the history of women that has been recorded in the past what should we be sure to include?

TG: I think always keeping the in reality. I think the history of Worcester is important and how it affects everyone not just women, how it affects everyone is important to include. I think speaking with women and actual lives and what they've been through and what they are is really a wonderful, wonderful thing to write down.

JM: What major historical events in Worcester have occurred during your time?

TG: Kennedy's death was big. Kennedy died when I was in high school. That affected, well it affected the whole country. You know at school it meant immediate prayer and the whole country was in mourning for not just several days but for years. People still talk about Kennedy. Having Johnson come in after Kennedy was certainly a letdown for the nation. But that's politics.

EM: [laughs]

TG: What else did you ask?

JM: Did it impact you personally?

TG: The Cuban Crisis did. My father was asked to become involved in that. So that he spent several days in turmoil deciding what he was going to do. He was an economist and they asked him to be involved and he worked for the CIA and he said no. So that was a great relief because that meant he would have been away from home for quite a while. So that affected me a lot too.

JM: So you said you met your husband when you were really young right?

TG: Yes.

JM: Were you allowed to date him right away?

TG: Well, I didn't say I liked him.

JM, EM and TG: [laugh]

TG: I met him when I was 12 or 13. He lived on the same street that I did and I didn't date him until we were in college. I did some dating in high school. I didn't start until junior year, between junior and senior year is when I started to date. And it just kind of naturally happened and I started to go to dances and it was more like when were you allowed of the house of your own with friends and when your friends had licenses if they could drive.

JM: Where'd you go on dates?

TG: We'd go to restaurants. We didn't have a lot of money so we'd spend a lot of time at his house, which was just down the street. We did a lot of walking together. We would go to movies, we'd go to plays. We went out for Sundays a lot. We went out for ice cream a lot. But he's a good guy.

EM: How did he propose?

TG: At Worcester airport.

TG, JM and EM: [laugh]

EM: I would have said no.

TG: It was one of the places where we used to date. We would go up to the parking lot there was several places in Worcester at that time you'd go parking and so that's when he asked me to marry him, and I did say yes.

EM: [laughs] How old were you when you said yes?

TG: I might have been 19-ish, 19 or 20.

JM: Really?

TG: Yeah.

EM: So, when you were young what was considered fashionable?

TG: When I was in high school the mini skirt was in and the sisters did not really have a great appreciation for the mini skirt. When I was a freshman they checked the length of your uniform very, very carefully to make sure that it was appropriate and it was always covering the knees. So that when I went through high school and went into college that was when the mini skirt was coming in. So fashionably I was able to change from a uniform in high school to real clothes in college, which was absolutely terrific. We wore hats or veils in high school and by the time I went to college all of that was pretty much gone from society. I really wish hats would come back in.

EM: [laughs]

TG: Fashionable was having a family, getting married, raising children. That's what life used to be at that point. That's what was the main goal and lovely for me it was during my time that it started to change. So that we were encouraged to work, we were encouraged to produce within a work field.

JM: Growing up did you know that you wanted a career or did you think that I'm just going to raise a family and my husband will work?

TG: Growing up I didn't have a clue. We used to play school at home, there were so many of us. We used to pretend it was school and we'd all be teachers. And of course telling each other what to do. But did I have an actual plan that I'm going to do this, this, this and this and when I'm going to do it, I don't remember having a plan. I remember wanting to be an airline hostess. And then I can remember as a junior in high school stopping to really think well what did I want to do. So it wasn't really 'til I was in high school that I thought that I really do want to be a teacher.

JM: What was your favorite musical group or song?

TG: The Beatles.

EM and JM: [laugh]

TG: Of course.

JM: What about your favorite dance?

TG: The twist was out at that time.

EM: [laughs]

JM: Any clubs that you were a part of?

TG: There was the Comic Strip. It was down at Lincoln Square it's not even I mean the buildings aren't even there now. But the large groups would come in, famous groups I should say would come in, associations which I'm sure means nothing to you. The Righteous Brothers came in. Diana Ross came to Holy Cross. The Beach Boys, we went to see the Beach Boys in Boston. So that we had access to a lot of famous singers, which was pretty neat for Worcester, Mass. It was pretty good.

EM: So what are your thoughts on last year, or this past June rather, President Obama coming to talk to Worcester tech?

TG: I'm really not aware. I know that it involved traffic a lot.

EM: It did.

TG: It was a major problem. I'm really not aware too much of what he had to say. Did you go?

EM: I didn't go, but I read in the newspaper basically, he was liberating the students. But I was just curious if you had an opinion on it besides the traffic. [laughs]

TG: No I don't.

EM: What do you think about the old court house in Worcester being transformed in the news recently? It's talking about being transformed into a hotel or an apartment or classrooms. What are your thoughts on that?

TG: I'm ok with that, the new courthouse is absolutely beautiful, and it's in a good spot and I think we outgrew the old court house. When I worked for Schwartz and Schwartz I used to walk, I worked on Main Street and I'd walk down to the courthouse always filing papers so that was something that was very familiar to me and not being arrested for part of working.

EM: [laughs]

TG: It was very familiar to me and I always enjoyed going there. I always felt very important when I was there. But I'm fine with changing it and using it in a different way.

EM: Do you have any thoughts on Higgins [Armory] already closing and going into Worcester Art Museum?

TG: It's sad.

EM: It was a big part of my childhood.

TG: Was it?

EM: Yeah. [laughs]

TG: I have been there several times and I haven't sought out looking for any other than the art museum at all even though I've been there several times, I haven't sought it out. That was sad.

EM: I heard it's a very small exhibition in the art museum so I don't think I'm going to go. So how were girls treated when you were in school, at Notre Dame but also if you knew any—I mean obviously they were treated differently at New Shaine versus that, like any other schools, do you have any opinions or stories about that?

TG: We were treated as if we were going to college. It was a college prep school and you were going to be ready for college, and that was the emphasis right from the beginning. And I think that they held a high standard for you, for everyone and as a woman. And what would you be like, what would you act like, and you were never supposed to smoke in uniform. I mean the rules at that time were very, very different. About your behavior while you were in your uniform. I think the students that went to public school the sense that I had is that they had much

more freedom than we did. Our lives were much more restricted, and pretty contained about spending your day in school, spending your day doing volunteer work, so much for babysitting, so much time for homework, for studying. And your day was pretty well built for you. Keeping you busy, keeping you out of trouble. I'm really glad I went to school in Worcester. I'm really glad I went to Notre Dame.

JM: What was your most significant extracurricular activity?

TG: I think journalism. Which surprises me to say. But it was the first time that I really thought about writing and how important writing is. And the way that you say something in a sentence really has meaning to it. So I was a junior in high school when I went into journalism class and I think that affected me the most. I started to learn about different types of writing, and enjoy expository the most for writing but I enjoyed reading narrative the most. So it really did affect my life a lot. I wrote two articles that were published in teaching K-8 magazine. It's a magazine for teachers. I think that strictly relates from that.

EM: So you said your father was a professor at Assumption, but what was your parents' educational experiences?

TG: My dad got his master's and he got his Ph.D. at Fordham [University] in Brooklyn. He was very, very intelligent, more intelligent than the eight of us, I always thought. What was your question say it again?

EM: About your parent's educational experiences.

TG: My mom went to high school and then she went to some training, and she worked for a very short time and then didn't work once they got married she didn't work. She stayed at home to raise her children. So I had a very intelligent dad based on academics, and I have a very wise mother that knew the importance of academics and knew how to organize your life to achieve it.

JM: What difficult transitions did you go through when moving from childhood to adulthood?

TG: I did it with anger. Which I'm not truly proud to say. But it is very difficult to switch from being a teenager to an adult. Sometimes you don't agree with your parents and sometimes they don't agree with you. It was easier for me to do it with anger then trying to get them to understand my point of view. So I would, instead of being home at 11:00 I'd be home at 11:30. Just little things that would really impact both of us with trying to make a statement of I wanted to determine what time I'd be coming home. So I caused a lot of anger for a few years.

EM: What was your relationship with your siblings growing up, and what is it now?

TG: It's wonderful now. We are still all very competitive. And we still get together as much as we can. You always had somebody to play with, always. There was always somebody to help you with homework. You didn't always appreciate having a little one around with you all the

time. But when we moved to Virginia I was responsible for helping my sister Collette. My brother Mike was responsible for helping my sister Monica, so that little families were set up within the family.

JM: When you weren't at home, where'd you spend your time? Where was the hot spot?

TG: The hot spot.

EM: [laughs]

TG: We used to go to Newton Square a lot. We'd play basketball we'd hang out, we'd play tennis, we used to walk up and down Highland Street. That's where all the frat houses were.

JM and EM: [laughs]

TG: We spent a lot of time walking and driving up and down Highland Street. I mean that's for teenage years. We used to go to dances at all the different churches.

EM: So do you have any hobbies or regular activities that you like to do outside the home?

TG: I'm a walker. So that we walk almost two miles each day. Sometimes we walk to buy a lottery ticket sometimes we just walk to walk. But it's really good for both of us. I love to go out to lunch with friends, I can do two and half hour lunches very easily.

EM: [laughs]. What's your favorite place to go to lunch?

TG: Tweeds.

EM: Tweeds still. [laughs]

TG: Yeah, but I can go anywhere.

EM: Yeah.

TG: But when you go to Tweeds your lobster is always going to taste exactly the same. You know that it is always going to be delicious, and I love that. And its casual and its inexpensive. I inherited our family player piano. So I spent a lot of time playing the player part of the piano. It's a lot of fun to do.

EM: I'm not familiar, can you talk about it?

TG: Can I show you?

EM: Yeah.

TG: I'm going to need to use the bench.

EM: Ok.

TG: When my parents moved to Worcester, they bought this. All you do is you pump it. This is the marine seminar. [plays song] Would you like to try?

EM: Ok. [laughs]

TG: Give it a try. Do you recognize the song? Do you know the marine seminar?

EM: I don't think so.

JM: No.

TG: No? Yeah.

EM: What is this for?

TG: You pump it and don't go all the way to the bottom.

EM: Ok. [plays song]

TG: You're getting it.

EM: Am I doing it? [laughs]

TG: Yes you are.

EM: You're so much better than me. [laughs]

TG: Try it again.

EM: No it's not working. Ah ok. [laughs]

TG: You'll get it.

EM: Alright. [plays song]

TG: There you go.

EM: Ohhhhh! Wow! This is so cool. Oh my goodness.

TG: Let it come up more. There you go. You played the player piano.

EM: Wow, thank you! That's so exciting.

TG: Would you like a try?

JM: No.

EM: Oh my goodness, that was so much fun, thank you. I've never seen something like that before. Alright, so just to conclude because we are running out of time, so what is something that maybe we didn't touch upon that you would like to talk about or something that you just want to explore or whatever?

TG: I wrote down major points that I wanted to mention. It's on the sheet that I gave you. It's bullets. I was Outstanding Young Woman of America, I traveled to China in 2008, I consider Worcester as home. Oh, and I'm very proud I have to show you, I am a first grade teacher in a Beverly Cleary book. I don't know if you ever read these as kids. Here I am, thin and beautiful.

EM: Oh my goodness.

TG: I'm pretty proud of that.

EM: Yeah. How did you get to be in that?

TG: The illustrator came to the school, and the principal stopped me and asked me if I would be willing to be interviewed.

EM: Wow.

TG: So it's kind of exciting then, and still is now.

EM: Going back to the Young Woman of America, what is that, what's the qualifications, how did you get into that?

TG: It was something that many teachers at Juniper Park, which is the school in Westfield. Many teachers were asked to join that. At that time it wasn't required to get your masters, but everyone there did, and it was part of that program, that woman that got their masters was a natural part of their education for work. You had to fill out a lot of paper work, you had to be nominated. So that was the process for that, you had to be accepted.

EM: Great, awesome, that's exciting.

TG: I mentioned the kidney. I taught several classes at Westfield State.

JM: So you were able to teach every first grader how to read?

TG: Yeah.

JM: So what makes your teaching style different? What was your..?

TG: Never giving up, I think. You know over the years you certainly have a lot of kids at different levels who come into your classroom and taking one on one time for a child and as much as the child needs. I used to have parents who would come in to help out with listening to kids read and they needed a lot of practice. And the reading program at the time was a very good phonics program, so the kids were very, very lucky to learn from it.

EM: Ok, alright is there anything else you would like to add to that? I think there's a few more bullets.

JM: What was China like?

TG: You don't see the sun a lot. I went to Beijing and I never saw the sun, the pollution was so bad. It is very unusual, it's very, you can't even picture how crowded it is. And at the same time it's absolutely beautiful. You have 5-star hotels right next to these tiny little shacks, and it is forever changing. It's a different world so to speak, completely. There's a lot, a lot of poverty. And the school system is very different than ours. The children are selected at a very young age from which track they would follow in school. And that's very unique for us. What an experience that was. I went to Thailand Square and sat there and just cried. That was a powerful experience in my life. My father lived in China, my parents lived in China at the time, and it was very difficult. It was Senator Kerry who helped him get out of China. So that was a major historical reference for me. But it was a beautiful place to visit, I'd love to go back one more time.

EM: Long flight.

TG: It is a long flight. But going up over the North Pole was great, that was fabulous.

EM: Yeah.

TG: That was really terrific.

JM: How long was the flight?

TG: It was 13 hours.

JM: Wow.

TG: Yeah, but we were allowed to sleep in, lots of eating.

EM, JM and TG: [laugh]

JM: Did you go alone?

TG: No, I went with a group of administrators. There were about 25 of us that went. We had a ball. We had a really, really good time, got to know each other really well. It was a lot of fun. So you want to be a teacher?

EM: I do.

TG: And what do you want to do exactly?

JM: Marketing.

TG: Yeah.

JM: I kind of want to be a stockbroker, I might change my major.

TG: Yeah.

JM: I kind of just want to make more money. We'll see what happens.

EM: I clearly don't.

JM, EM and TG: [laugh]

TG: I know. Good luck with your education.

EM: I appreciate it, thank you.

TG: Do you have any student teaching plans at all?

EM: Right now I'm student teaching at Westborough High school actually, for a pre practicum, and then next semester I will be at Doherty High school with my full student teaching.

TG: That's wonderful, great.

EM: I'm excited.

TG: I have a brother and sister who went there. It was brand new at that time.

EM: Mhm.

TG: Shows you hold old I am.

EM and JM: [laugh]

TG: Well good luck with that I hope everything goes well.

EM: Thank you.

TG: Good luck with whatever your plans are with what you finally decide.

EM: [laughs] He has time. He's only a first year.

TG: Oh.

JM: Yeah I am only a freshman [laughs].

EM: Alright, well thank you for the interview.