

Interviewee: Susan Kasper  
Interviewer: Nicole Bongiovanni and Caitlin Trethewey  
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**Abstract:** Susan Mary Kasper was born and raised in Worcester, Massachusetts, where she still continues to live today. Not only did she attend grammar school and high school in Worcester, Susan is also a member of the Assumption College graduating class of 1982. Experiencing the Worcester education system first hand, Susan is extremely familiar with the changes and transitions of the schools over the years, and reflects on its progress in gender equality. In addition to owning a donut shop with her husband William, and working as a nurse at UMass Memorial Hospital, Susan is also a mother of two. In this interview, she admits her struggles with balancing her career and her family, but is thankful for the support of those around her in making that a little easier. Susan has been able to overcome the societal pressures of managing both her work and her home life, becoming an inspiration for women everywhere.

**NB** Alright so, we can first begin with childhood, if that's ok?

**SK** Yup

**NB** Alright, you were born in Worcester, correct?

**SK** Yes.

**NB** OK and when were you born?

**SK** 1960

**NB** 1960?

**SK** Mhm

**NB** So what was it like growing up in a place like Worcester?

**SK** Fine. I don't know, I guess it was pretty good. I had five brothers and one sister so there were seven of us and then I had my parents so there were nine of us like in a colonial house, which today would probably be considered small.

**NB** Right

**SK** People don't, you know, I shared a room with my sister and then my brothers were three in one room and two in another.

**NB** Oh, wow.

**SK** BUT, I didn't think our house was small when I compared it to other people like friends and stuff in the neighborhood – everyone came from big families, you know, that was kind of popular then. I used to walk to school every day, which was not close, I mean I'd say – what do you think [talking to her daughter] 2, 2.5 miles? [Hear door shut] Kerry-Ann's home. And I walked home from school, you know, there's no bussing at that time for – at least for us. You know what I mean? It was a neighborhood school basically, it was a Catholic school. So I probably – I guess I went to public school for kindergarten and then I went Catholic from 1 through 8. They had a church and a school on the same property; it's still there today, still a school now. I don't know, what was it like growing up....

**NB** Is there differences that you see in Worcester then that you see now?

**SK** Oh yeah! I mean when I grew up it's like when I went out, I went out. I just left the house and walked. These kids (in reference to her daughter) don't do any of that, they were driven everywhere they went, you know? Everything was a neighborhood thing. You hung around in the neighborhood. My mother literally had a whistle [laughter in the background] that she would blow when it was time to come home.

**NB** Oh, wow.

**SK** Not that if you were too far away from home you wouldn't hear, but that was kind of her deal, you know she'd get you out of the house and then she'd blow it to come back for the lunch or dinner or whatever, and things like that.

**NB** So when you weren't at home or at school what were the places you usually went to, like, where'd you spend your time?

**SK** I didn't do any sports. I took guitar lessons; I remember that, when I was in grammar school. And – oh I used to play basketball though, on Saturdays, and I used to walk from – I was over near Clark University. Well, I wasn't – I didn't live near Clark but we used to play basketball by Clark so I would walk to Clark on a Saturday and play basketball then we would stop at McDonald's and come back.

**KK (daughter)** You'd walk to Clark from where?

**SK** From Wildwood Ave

**KK** Clark University?

**SK** Yeah, it was just right up Main Street [laughter] just think where it is though it's just right up in Webster Square

**Daughter** I know

**NB** You got a lot of exercise

**SK** We walked everywhere and you did-

**CT** And that was just normal for you?

**SK** Yeah, oh yeah. I didn't do it by myself. I'd go with like a group of people, we'd meet up at that school and then we'd head to Clark together and then we'd leave Clark.

**NB** Kids these days don't do that.

**SK** No, no.

**KK** You'd get shot [laugh] sorry, sorry.

**SK** No especially in that neighborhood now. It's kind of like – not that it was good then, it wasn't good then either, but it's, it's probably a lot worse now. You know?

**NB** Right?

**SK** Yeah, you did stuff like that so as far as – I don't know, I guess I rode my bike. I mean I don't know. Just kind of hung around until I got older then I had a job or whatever and went to school and was busy with school and stuff.

**NB** Alright we can move on to education then. You want to take that right?

**CT** So, where did you attend school?

**SK** High school?

**CT** Yes.

**SK** So after I left Our Lady of Angels I went to a school that was called Marion, it was an all-girls Catholic school and then my soph – my junior year it was merged with St.

Peter's which was from the Main South area and they brought it up – St. Peter Marion was up off of Grove Street, which you girls probably – if I had to, it's on the way to Holden. You guys aren't going to know where it is you know what I mean why would you? So they merged St Peter's and Marion, so that's where I went to high school.

**CT** Okay.

**SK** And I was bussed there. That's not something I could have gotten to.

**CT** So with the merge was that all girls still?

**SK** Nope. Then it became co-ed.

**CT** So did things change when there were girls and boys?

**SK** Yeah .[laughter] Yes. Because when I first got to Marion, it was so funny because it was Catholic. I really – I had fun there. I really liked it, but they had home-ec rooms, there was a sewing room, and then there was like this cooking room and I was on the tail end of all that going away. So – but I did experience it for like that little bit and then it was gone. It was like – that was like, not something – like you just didn't do that anymore. So when they brought St. Peter's and Marion together, it just became like probably what it is today. It was just academic, you know, it was just school and they got rid of all that stuff.

**CT** So then after that where did you go to college?

**SK** Then I went to Assumption [Colleg]

**KK** You went to BC

**SK** Oh no, I went to BC [Boston College], I forgot about that. [laughing] I did, I went to BC for a year and then....

**NB** Why did you transfer?

**SK** Because I got married. And we moved, came back here, we were married and went to Assumption together.

**NB** Oh wow.

**CT** And what was your favorite thing about Assumption or BC?

**SK** Probably the location, probably the location. Assumption was nicer, it was a smaller college.

**NB** You moved in this house here?

**SK** Oh God no, [laughing] we got an apartment. What did I like about Assumption? I liked the location; I liked the academic – it was a Catholic college. So I left BC to come to Assumption so I felt like I was still in the same....

**NB** BC is more in the city right?

**SK** It is, but it isn't. BC is, I suppose it's more developed now, but when I was there it was on Comm [Commonwealth] Ave so it was up in Newton, kind of in Newton, so if you left the campus and you walked the street – unless you went to Cleveland Circle, which got like city-like with the T [public transportation system] and all that stuff running you were in our neighborhood like this. That's what you left and you walked through to leave that campus like if you had to go up to the Newton campus or anything like that you just walked a place like this. It was kind of like city, but not really.

**CT** So it was kind of like the feel of Assumption?

**SK** Yeah, yeah.

**CT** Because you're in the city but you're-

**SK** Right, right.

**CT** And then, are you still involved in Assumption at all – besides living across the street [laughter]

**SK** No, not really. I mean, yeah, we might walk through there every once and a while but no not much.

**CT** And then?

**NB** Family?

**CT** Sure!

**NB** So you're married?

**SK** Mhm

**NB** And his name is...

**SK** [Looks at husband at the kitchen counter] Him? [laughter]

**NB** Yeah!

**SK** Bill. Billy, yeah.

**NB** Okay and how many children do you have?

**SK** Two.

**NB** And their names? And how old are they?

**SK** Billy's 26 and Kathleen's 25.

**NB** Billy Junior I assume?

**SK** Nope. I wasn't going to do it. [Looking at husband at kitchen counter] His name's William George Kasper, he's the second, so my son would have....

**NB** Would have been the third.

**SK** So I was like no we're not doing that! So I named my son, who was born on my father's birthday, William John Kasper, and my father's name was John.

**NB** Did you always know you wanted to raise your kids in Worcester?

**SK** No.

**NB** You just decided to?

**SK** Our families were here, we went to school here, we never got out. It kind of traps you in. I'm not – not a good or bad thing, you know? It's fine. But that's just where we kind of ended up.

**NB** It's home.

**SK** Mmm

**NB** Did you come across any challenges raising them here?

**SK** Not too bad. No. I mean if anything it was helpful because I had his parents and – my parents are deceased now, but I had my parents. And our first home that we, you know, we had a home before that but I guess Wildwood Ave I'd call it the first home, I lived next door to my parents, I built a house next door to them. So they were very helpful when my kids were little with work and school and all that stuff.

**NB** Which was nice?

**SK** Yup.

**NB** Are there any major differences in your parenting vs. the way that your parents raised you that you see?

**SK** Yeah, I think so. My parents were probably old school. Probably more strict, well those were the times though, you know what I mean, it was the 1960s, 1970s so, I guess things were a little different, but I think we ran a pretty disciplinary house for the most part, it wasn't a free for all by any means, [laughter] but you know similar things just as times change like you'll do things different then your parents would do, just because it's different.

**NB** Right.

**SK** It's different times.

**CT** We're going to talk about your work life, and what you do. So what do you do for a living?

**SK** Well I graduated from Assumption in 1982 and things were very bad then, there were no jobs, it was terrible and-

**WK [husband]** Anyone want something to drink? No? [laughter]

**SK** I ended up getting a job....

**WK** Want me to make some smoothies? [laughter]

**CT** We're good!

**SK** They're going to have tacos later! Right? Is that what you said?

**WK** Tacos, are they?

**CT** Well we already had them

**SK** Oh you already had them, oh.

**WK** Oh! [laughter]

**SK** So I graduated then, and I got a job with the Department of Revenue for a year but that was like...

**WK** That was a joke.

**SK** Yeah, well it wasn't really a joke, but it wasn't anything I was going to do so I was like I'm not doing this. But it was a job anyways for a year and I started taking classes, so I decided I wanted to go to nursing school. Things were tough you know? And I was oh my God I need to find work or whatever. So I tried getting into nursing school. I tried to get into Quinsig [Quinsigamond Community College], which even then was a two year program which I was trying to get things done. I was like I've already been to college for four years, I wanted to get on with my life and ....

**NB** Quinsig was a community college right?

**SK** Still, and it still is! I couldn't – it was like still hard to get into that program. And then I applied to Hahnemann Hospital School of Nursing which is not a hospital anymore. Well, it is but it's not like – it was a regular hospital and now it's like an ambulatory, you know, a day thing, type of thing with clinics and stuff. And you went three years, for nursing school there or any of them that were at St. V's [Vincent] Hospital or City Hospital, but since then those have all closed. Probably closed maybe 3,4 years after I graduated so it wasn't long after that that it was all done and then I started working at Hahnemann which is the school that I went to, had my kids, and then Hahnemann was getting ready to close down and we merged with Memorial. Do you guys know these hospitals kind of?

**NB** Yes, Memorial Hospital

**SK** Yup, yup. Right, Memorial is on Belmont, UMass is further down, UMass University and then, after we merged with Memorial, then we merged with University, so now we're UMass Memorial. So I've been there, I will have been there 30 years in 2015.

**NB** Wow

**SK** Yup. But I really started at Hahnemann, then I joined Memorial, and then I joined – then there were those three mergers there that changed things. But I kept ..

**CT** Kind of like your high school! [laughter]



**SK** Yeah and I kind of kept my seniority through all those mergers which is good too.

**CT** Oh, good! So what's your like favorite part, or what's the best part of your job?

**SK** Ah, I'm ten minutes from work, I get to park ON campus because there is so much seniority, where people have to work there 10 years before they can park on campus, they have to get shuttled in. I think that's horrendous. 10 years. I'm like, they have to go to a parking lot up by Hanover Insurance, which is up off of Lincoln Street and get shuttled in, and I'm just like that's another half an hour in the morning and in their afternoon to their day. But I love the people I work with, I just like everything about it. I like what I do.

**NB** That's important

**SK** Yup.

**CT** Do you ever find it difficult to balance home life and work life?

**SK** Oh it's terrible. [looks at daughter and laughs]

**CT** Raising your kids and working?

**SK** We had tacos tonight! [laughter]

**CT** Or even like when they were growing up?

**NB** Yeah like when they were little...

**CT** Like being a mother and...

**NB** Cause you were so...

**SK** Well yeah, yeah. It's very hard. It was a scramble, Kathleen's [her daughter] scrambling now and I'm like, "Get used to it, you're gonna be scrambling the rest of your life." [laughter] 'Cause you do. You're juggling things, you're working, so your kids you know, they've got to go to Catechism, they've got to go to soccer, they've got to go to this. So even if you have babysitters you've got to set up rides for them -- it's hard. It's hard. And I wasn't a stay at home mom. I mean I worked three days a week when they were young, but I work four now. But you had to have -- I had help, my parents were good, even the babysitters, they were never in a day care situation, they were always in a home or with a relative, a family friend.

**NB** Did your husband work while you were working too?

**SK** Yup.

**NB** What did he do?

**SK** He's been scrambling too. [laughter] He, what 20 years ago, he so, he is in transportation, he is a sales rep for transportation companies and that's since changed 'cause they closed and then he has to sign on with another one and if something happens there. But he's been basically doing that for 30 years too. But 20 years ago we opened up a donut shop.

**NB** Oh, wow!

**SK** So he does that as well. That runs 24/7. Well, not 24 but ...

**NB** You guys still own the donut shop

**SK** Yup

**NB** And you like that?

**SK** Yup.

**CT** And is that in Worcester?

**SK** That, you- [laughter] you- yes, that's in Worcester! [laughter]

**NB** What's it called?

**SK** Donut Express. Over-off of Hope Ave on Webster Street.

**NB** That sounds fun!

**SK** Yup but I don't work there. I am the facilities manager...

**WK** That's right!

**NB** You get a lot of donuts though? [laughter]

**WK** That's right she's the facilities manager-

**SK** Yeah! Thank goodness for that!

**WK** She takes care of the outside property [laughter]

**SK** I shovel the mulch, and I clean up the yard, [laughter] I pick up the trash...

**WK** I stay on her! [laughter]

**CT** Clean the windows-

**SK** ...and I put up the Halloween decorations [laughter] and I look at the dirty windows and say oh God...

**NB** I would love the donuts. [laughter]

**WK** No you wouldn't, you get tired of them.

**SK & NB** Yeah.

**Husband** All the girls there feel the same, they come in and they start eating them-

**SK** Ask Catherine, she'll be like na!

**Husband** Yeah ask Catherine! [laughter]

**NB** I get it I work at an ice cream shop and I get tired of the ice cream once you work there for a long time-

**SK** Yeah, yeah.

**Husband** Yeah, that's right

**SK** And you know you can have it at any time and you're like-

**NB** Right, and they're not the healthiest things either!

**SK** No

**WK** No, no [laughter]

**SK** Nope they're not good for us...

**WK** Well, my donuts are fat free. [laughter]

**CT** Do you have any advice for women who struggle with being a mom and having a job at the same time?

**NB** Anything you learned that you would pass on to them?

**SK** God, I don't know. I mean I hope they have support, you know? It's very important, I can't imagine trying to do it on your own. It's hard. I have a couple – well, like Billy's sister, she never worked and I think it's nice, but I have no regrets about how I did things. You know?

**NB** That's good-

**SK** I have plenty of family that they didn't work when the kids were little, maybe 'cause it was too hard, or financially they could afford not to, but I guess I'm glad it went the way it did. I don't think my kids are any worse off for it, you know? [laughter] I think it's okay.

**NB** Absolutely.

**CT** Well, that's good. For community involvement, do you want to?

**NB** Oh yeah. Are you at all involved in the Worcester community as far as volunteer work or organizations?

**SK** I did when they were in school [in reference to her children]. I volunteered at the schools and stuff.

**NB** You volunteered at their school?

**SK** Yeah, yeah. I did that kind of thing. You know I got involved with them in the grammar school and Worcester Academy. I did stuff up there, but now, no, not really. You know I'd like to say I am but I'm not. I'm too busy! I don't have time!

**NB** Are there any particular programs that you know of that are in Worcester, benefitting them?

**SK** Like my kids? Or what?

**NB** Like any programs at all, I don't even know what I-

**SK** Well yeah! He's [in reference to husband] got donuts every day that the soup kitchen comes and gets.

**NB** Oh that's nice!

**WK** Oh, yup, yup. Yeah they come every day, yeah.

**SK** Every day Billy?

**WK** Ah yes.

**SK** Yup every day, now St. John's ...

**WK** They're a part of St. John's-

**SK** ...is a church down on Temple Street and they always had the soup kitchen, but then they, they just got funding and they built a building now that they call it, I don't know what they call it...

**WK** Soup Kitchen!

**SK** Well, is that what they call it now?

**WK** Yes that's what they call it.

**SK** There might be a better name for it.

**WK** No there isn't

**SK** Alright well it's a brand new building and they come and get the donuts every day.

**NB** That's nice.

**SK** Yeah well I'd rather, you know, rather not throw them away.

**NB** Right!

**SK** So they, that's good, they get to be used. There's not that many left over at the end of the day but whatever! You know?

**CT** Every little thing helps!

**SK** Yeah, right

**CT** So, for religion. What role has religion played in your life?

**SK** Me? You're not talking about the family are you? [laughter]

**WK** I think I'll be out in the coat room.

**SK** Yeah you go back down cellar. [laughter] Heathen! Well, I come from a – I have an uncle that's a Jesuit.

**NB** Oh!

**SK** He taught at, where'd he teach? Fairfield?

**KK** Loyola.

**SK** Loyola and he's now been pulled back to the retirement home, which is down in Western Mass and he hates it. He's probably what, in his 80s? 82 Uncle Bob...

**KK** Yeah.

**SK** And then I have a cousin, who's my other uncle's son who is a parish priest in Grafton, so I guess I could say I come from a pretty Catholic family. I was brought up to go to church *every* week, and my – I guess I tried to do pretty good by you kids. [looking to daughter] Did I?

**KK** Yeah, yeah. We went to Catechism and we went to Church.

**SK** I did all right. But I'm probably the only one in the house that goes every week now!

**KK** I went with you this Sunday!

**SK** Yeah, they come over now and again. He comes once in a while but he always has some reason- [impersonating Billy] 'I got to go down the store' [laughter] and he starts doing- [laughter]

**CT** So would you say that religion is – plays a big factor in the Worcester community or-

**SK** I-

**WK** The Worcester community as a whole?

**SK** Yeah, I don't know that I could speak to that-

**WK** I don't know about that...

**SK** I think the Church is suffering. I think that they are suffering everywhere, you know, Worcester's probably no different than anywhere else. I mean the parishes that I go to I still feel like there is a good amount of people there. I do, I don't know, I guess I shouldn't, I shouldn't say worry but I'm concerned about their survival. I don't know what's going to happen in the future cause I think there's not as many priests as there used to be and, trying to keep all these parishes, and the money that it costs to keep them all up. I don't know what the future is for those.

**NB** Did you like when you went to BC, you went there for a year, and then you transferred to a Catholic college, did you like the Catholic environment better at Assumption or did it not really have a-

**SK** I never really knew any different-

**WK** BC is a Catholic College.

**SK** Right but I went to Catholic sch-

**NB** Oh it is a Catholic college? Oh, I didn't know that.

**SK** Yeah, yeah.

**NB** Oh, I didn't know that.

**WK** Oh yeah, same thing. They're the Jesuits.

**SK** Yeah BC is the Jesuits, you're right. Never knew any different I had dealt with Catholic all my life-

**NB** I'm the same way.

**SK** Yup have never been to any other school but that-

**WK** Spoiled! Spoiled kids. I grew up in public schools. [laughter]

**SK** Spoiled? No. But I don't know. I mean, I don't know if it was different [laughter] to go anywhere else, maybe that's what I'll owe to you.

**KK** You went to St. Peter Marion

**SK** Yeah

**CT** Would you say in college women and men were treated the same?

**SK** In college?

**CT** Like at Assumption?

**NB** Like when you grew up in schools.

**SK** Yeah, I think so in college, and that was – I graduated from Assumption in 1982. Yeah I think so. I'm not sure, definitely not in the work force.

**CT** Mhm

**NB** You think there is inequality in the workforce?

**SK** What I can say is for my job, I think that – we've had conversations about, you know, if nursing had been a male dominated field it would be on a whole different pay scale. Not that we're not paid well, but it's because that we're female and I do believe that. I do believe that.

**NB** Do you think it's better now than when you were growing up?

**SK** Oh yeah, I think we are making lots of progress.

**NB** Lots of progress, but there is still a long way to go.

**SK** Yeah.

**NB** So, what cultures or ethnicities do you identify with?

**SK** My father was all Irish and my mom was Scottish and English. So, you know, St. Patty's Day has always been something we celebrated. I can't-I don't really think of anything else other than that.

**NB** Mhm. So tell me about your parents. What were they like?

**SK** Let's see. I don't know what I want to say about that. [laughter] My father was a lawyer; he went to Boston College Law School. He was one of what? Okay, so he came from two other brothers and two sisters, so his family was a family of five. My mom came from a family of four, she was from Maine. They worked really hard. They were good people.

**NB** So you were- you always had a big family? You were surrounded-



**SK** Yup, yup.

**NB** Which is nice.

**SK** Yeah, I still have a big family. It's crazy, it's really kind of nuts. Yeah, because my father had – my parents had seven kids.

**NB** Right.

**SK** So, how many grandchildren were there? There's a lot. I mean my parents have since died, but is it nineteen or twenty or something? [looks to daughter] Which is kind of a good amount you know?

**CT** Where did you fall in the birth order?

**SK** Right in the middle.

**CT** Oh, okay.

**SK** So I had three brothers ahead of me, and then I had two brothers and a sister behind me, and I was right – I'm the middle child.

**NB** Did you like being the middle child? How did that affect you?

**SK** Yeah, I mean I was the oldest girl, so I feel like I had a lot of responsibility being brought up. My mother needed help, you know what I mean? It was kind of like – I mean I obviously didn't have to help with the older three brothers, but with the younger family I felt like I used to babysit, and take them outside, and things like that. Help her clean.

**NB** But it taught you responsibility.

**SK** Yeah, yup. But that's – but no regrets for that.

**NB** I bet your holidays are fun in your family.

**SK** Oh yeah, they were

**NB** All of you guys

**SK** Yeah

**NB** That's awesome

**CT** Did your older brothers help your mom?

**SK** They did, but there was a big age difference. My mother – my oldest brother is sixty-two, and my youngest brother is forty-four. So there's almost twenty years there. So my mother had my brother Bobby when my brother Kevin was twenty years old. He was married.

**CT** Oh okay.

**SK** Yeah, they got married early too. I had two brothers that got married in college.

**NB** Did you find that your – the boys and the girls were treated differently in your family, or?

**SK** Yeah, maybe. Oh if my sister – If Kathy was here she'd be ripping it up. [laughs] Yeah I never thought that way, but she would say – and she's almost six years younger than me – she's like [imitating her voice], "Oh my God, we had to do everything around the house. They didn't have to do anything!" [laughs] I don't really remember that. Maybe things changed as my – as things, you know, she's on the younger half, so maybe I'm kind of like, I think well I was the older half, you know? I saw things a little differently than she did.

**CT** And maybe you just thought it was your responsibility.

**SK** Yeah, I don't think I thought too much about it, you know?

**CT** You just did it.

**SK** Yeah.

**NB** Um (looks through papers)

**SK** I'll bet you if you guys are struggling with time, so isn't anyone else (speaking of the interview)

**CT & NB** Yeah

**SK** They're up against the same thing.

**CT** Do you celebrate holidays in Worcester?

**SK** Yes

**CT** Do you have them here, or?

**SK** Yes. Well we all kind of take on one. Like I have Christmas and literally, we have forty people for dinner here.

**NB** Your family all lives in Worcester too, or where does your family live?

**SK** My brother Bobby lives in Boston, or Newton. My brother Kevin lives in Connecticut, but not far, like an hour and a half – Hartford, but he always lived away all his – he graduated from Holy Cross and then he worked for General Motors and he traveled to Detroit and then Florida, Atlanta, and then in the past five or six years he's come back to New England. Then that's it. Everybody else is right here. My brother Johnny is in Westboro, but we're all like within twenty minutes of each other pretty much.

**CT** So, what everyone doesn't like to talk about, politics. [laughs] Do you consider yourself active politically?

**SK** I have an interest in it.

**KK** Yeah she does [laughs] I think so.

**SK** I mean I vote. I mean I don't go out and picket or anything like that, I don't take it to that level, but-

**NB** But do you keep up with a lot of the current events and stuff like that?

**SK** Mhm, yeah.

**NB** Which is good.

**SK** Yeah.

**KK** You were a Poly Sci [Political Science] major right? [asking her mom]

**SK** Yeah I was a Poly Science major at Assumption.

**NB** Oh nice.

**SK** Why, I don't know [laughs] I never did – I mean it's kind of crazy, but I was.

**CT** And you obviously think women, men should have the same rights in the political world?

**SK** Yes I do. [chairs moves] ... I think so. I think they're probably treated pretty good out in that area.

**CT** For the most part.

**SK** Yeah.

**CT** We don't have a female president yet, but-

**NB** Yeah, is the world ready for a female president is the question.

**SK** Yeah, I don't know.

**CT** Have there been any major historical events in Worcester while you've lived here? So in your life? [laughs]

**SK** Let's see, historical events. I'm sure there have, but I can't think of them.

**CT** I think there was a woman's conference. And that's how this started right? (to Nicole) In Worcester?

**NB** I'm not sure.

**KK** Didn't a tornado come through? [to her mom]

**SK** Oh yeah. Well that's - we've had - Kathleen asked when that tornado came through.

**NB** Oh there was a tornado in Worcester?

**SK** Yup there was a bad one in the 1950's.

**NB** Did it hit Assumption College?

**SK** Yeah, I think it did, but Assumption I don't think was here. It was a different location at the time.

**NB** Oh that's right..

**SK** Yes, I think you're right. I couldn't really be specific where that hit.

**NB** Do you remember any of it?

**SK** Well I wasn't alive.

**NB** Oh, oh right.

**SK** I think it was 1957, I was 1960. They say it was really bad. Really bad.

**NB** Yeah, I couldn't imagine.

**SK** I don't know. I think there's probably lots of great things that happened in Worcester. I really do. I can't recall them though. I can't-I don't know. Like if you had a list I'd say, "Yeah, that's right, that's right", but I can't off hand think of it, it's too much.

**CT** Outside of Worcester do you remember anything historical? 9/11 or JFK?

**SK** Yeah. Well 9/11 yeah, but that was New York.

**CT** Like outside of Worcester.

**SK** Oh you mean-

**KK** During your time here.

**SK** Yeah well certainly had that because you know the planes took off out of-out of Boston.

**CT** Do you remember what you did that day?

**SK** Yup, I do. [laughter] We were building this house and I was out for a run, and I remember I come walking in the house and my father, who was still alive at the time, not this house, his house, and he had it on the TV and I'm looking at it, and it was just like – they were showing one of the towers on fire and they showed the other plane circling, and you know, they're all talking but they didn't know what that other plane was...that the other plane was going into the other tower. And I remember seeing it going, "Oh my God." It was just like – and I just, I couldn't believe it. Yup I remember that. Those were one of those moments you know? Like where were you when John F. Kennedy got shot, you know? People say well they remember, you remember those.

**NB** You remember they were building this house.

**SK** Yup.

**NB** Are there any particular landmarks in Worcester that you have a connection with, that trigger a memory or anything involving your childhood?

**SK** Um-

**NB** Like places that you would always go, or something like that.

**SK** Hmm-

**NB** Like if you didn't live in Worcester and you wanted to take your daughter around and show her places that you grew up and tell her stories-

**SK** Yeah it would probably be like schools or this person lived here that, you know, if she was – If it was an important person in my life, maybe. Yeah, I suppose I mean I would just do stuff like that. Nothing real big.

**KK** You used to hike behind the airport and Hot Dog Annie's.

**SK** Yup, yup, yup

**KK** [whispering] say all that.

**SK** [laughs] She's talking about- did you guys ever go to Hot Dog Annie's?  
[to her daughter] they're not gonna know about this stuff though

**CT** That's okay!

**NB** That's okay.

**SK** It's a hot dog place up in Leicester and we used to bike – we used to take the kids for bike rides up there and it would take pretty much all day to get there. And you have – you eat your six hot dogs each and then come back. [laughter]

**NB** But that place has a memory.

**SK** Oh it's still here too. Oh absolutely. We did the Worcester Airport and stuff. [to her daughter] Noreen used take you to watch the air-

**NB** That is an airport that is just private planes now or...?

**SK** Nope. That... Oh she stinks [about the dog. That airport, when I grew up as a kid that airport was viable, it was a busy airport. When these kids were little and I lived within a distance I could – I could literally know what time of day it was if a plane landed and the kids were napping, it was that busy. And then all of a sudden it just started to kind of not – they say it's because it's a difficult airport to land at because it's high on the hill, but all

those years there were planes there. Things changed, whatever, times changed. But now, of course I don't know if you guys know, but now... what is...who owns the airports now?

**WK** What? Massport?

**SK** Massport. Now Massport has bought Worcester airport and Jet Blue has signed the contract and that happened last year. That's a big thing. Not that I fly out of there, I haven't flown out of Worcester Airport since Billy was probably a baby.

**NB** Do you like flying?

**SK** I don't mind it

**NB** You don't mind it. Do you guys-

**SK** But I don't love it

**NB** Do you guys go on a lot of family vacations?

**SK** I wouldn't say a lot. Probably not enough. [laughs]

**WK** Of course not.

**CT** Never enough vacation!

**SK** But we've had a few, yeah we've had a few.

**NB** What's your favorite place? Where's your favorite place to go?

**SK** Well any big trips I usually only get there once and I don't get back there again, but we have, we have a family situation at the cape.

**NB** Oh okay.

**SK** That my parents had, now we have still, even though they're deceased, and the whole family comes to there. That's probably one of my favorite places.

**NB** Is there like one place in the entire world that you haven't been that you want to go?

**SK** Oh yeah there's a million of them. The list is this big, [laughs] yeah I'd like to go to Europe and stuff.

**WK** Well we did go to Europe.

**SK** Yeah we went to Ireland when Billy was in school over there. But I think I'd like to go to Italy. There's a few places.

**WK** Hawaii.

**SK** You want to go to Hawaii? [to her husband]

**WK** That'd be nice.

**NB** Hawaii is beautiful.

**SK** Yeah, have you been there?

**NB** Yeah.

**WK** Our kids have done more traveling than we have.

**SK** Yeah [laughs]

**CT** What about for your personal likes? So do you like any music group or song?

**SK** No, I just try to keep up with the pace. [laughs]

**CT** Well like growing up did you have...

**SK** Yeah I guess. Let's see. I guess when I was younger...

**KK** There was that one-

**SK** Huh?

**KK** Who was that lady? You had a record, your first record? Was it Kylie Simon or someone else?

**NB** Carly?

**SK** Oh, oh.

**KK** The first record you got.

**SK** Carol King.



**KK** Carol King.

**SK** Yeah I was probably sixteen years old.

**NB** They were records right? They were actually records with the players.

**SK** Yes there were records, very much so, but then it was eight tracks. That was the big thing. Yeah it was crazy.

**NB** How has the music—like you see the big change in music, do you like the current music or do you prefer the old stuff?

**SK** Yeah I'm okay with it. I mean I'm not a big rapper or anything, [laughs] I don't care about that stuff or anything, but yeah I like it all. Pretty much. Definitely.

**CT** What was considered fashionable when you were young? Clothing wise.

**SK** Oh it keeps coming back, you know, it's unbelievable.

**NB** Leggings.

**SK** Yup, leggings. Oh what did I see the other day, the leg warmers. All that's coming back. I was young, that was – that was probably when I was nineteen those were in.

**CT** We're living the same life. [laugh] Parallel.

**SK** Yeah I know if you could hold on to your clothes and if you had a big enough place where you can keep things, it all comes back. The maxi dresses, like that was popular. Now that's all come back.

**NB** Is there any fashion trend now that you just hate?

**SK** Uh

**NB** There's a lot of girls in North Faces and Uggs and yoga pants, but nothing else?

**SK** Yeah I've never been the traditional Ugg person

**KK** But you don't hate it

**SK** No I don't hate it. I can't say-

**KK** Well like ripped jeans

**SK** Yeah. If someone would say to me, “What era did you not probably ever like?” The Disco era, like the guys in the leisure suits.

**CT** Yeah

**SK** I never liked that, never liked that.

**CT** Were you ever not allowed to date when you were growing up? Was there an age when-

**SK** Yeah high school probably was when it was starting to become okay. Maybe like end of high school.

**CT** Oh okay

**SK** Not certainly in the beginning.

**KK** You were able to date?

**SK** Yeah, a little bit

**CT** And would you say that it was the same way for your kids when you raised them, or were they-

**SK** No, I suppose it was more – it was easier.

**KK** I didn't date anyone until college so. [laughs]

**SK** No, Kathleen, Kathleen was quiet, Billy was probably messing around a little bit here and there, you know, like in middle school.

**KK** He had a serious girlfriend in high school though, Caitlin?

**SK** Yeah but that was at the end.

**CT** What a pretty name. [laughs]

**SK** Yeah, maybe Junior-yeah Junior and Senior.

**KK** Yeah two years.

**SK** Yup.

**NB** How would you define success in your life? Or like your definition of success?

**SK** I guess to see your kids be successful, healthy, and wise. Your family is still together and strong.

**NB** And you never had any experience with divorce or anything like that growing up?

**SK** Nope, my parents stay married, and I've managed to stay married. [laughs]

**NB** So you have a positive outlook on marriage?

**SK** For the most part. I'd like to – I mean I would never say to someone, you know I don't think anyone should ever be in a bad relationship. But I think you should try to figure that out before you get married.

**CT** Going back to the success thing. So you wouldn't consider work or anything involved with work?

**SK** As a part of my success?

**CT** Yeah.

**SK** Yes I had a good career; Yes, that would be part of it too.

**CT** Okay.

**SK** And I was happy. That's huge too.

**CT** And then were there any times where you struggled? And what advice would you give to people-

**SK** Just keep going. Oh definitely. Yeah when the kids were little and stuff...

**KK** What in marriage? Is this the question?

**SK** Financially.

**CT** No just in life.

**SK** Yeah. Oh yeah, I think there's always highs and lows.

**CT** Tough times.

**SK** Yeah, they come and go.

**CT** But they always end up good.

**SK** Yeah. Keep the faith.

**CT** Do you feel you have a legacy?

**SK** No, no. [laughs]

**CT** Maybe with the donut shop?

**SK** No I don't – well we'll see, who knows. That's okay though, you know what I mean? I like to be in the sidelines. [laughs]

**NB** It's not like a shop that you want to keep going for generations and generations?

**SK** No.

**NB** No? Just a-

**CT** Has really good coffee. [laughs]

**SK** I mean it's – yeah it's a fun place. I mean its hard work and stuff. I mean there's highs and lows with that too, but we've met a lot of good people, you know what I mean? I mean I don't spend that much time down there, but these people come and go and you see them come for years and then they pass away and it's just so sad. It's just like ugh.

**NB** Have you had to deal with a lot of loss in your life as far as family members?

**SK** Well I lost my parents.

**NB** How do you cope with that?

**SK** It's just the – it's life. It's just how it's supposed to be. I mean I had a brother that passed away when he was forty-seven. So that I don't feel too good about, but my father was in his eighties, my mom, she got cancer, but it's just kind of like that's gonna be the deal so you just have to kind of go with it a little bit.

**CT** That's where religion helps out a lot.

**SK** Yeah, we're not here forever. You'd like to be here for a long time though. [laughs]

**CT** Hopefully! [laughs]

**SK** Yeah.

**CT** Alright, so is there anything you wanted to add, or any particular subject that you think we haven't asked about or we missed? We overlooked?

**SK** I think you were pretty thorough. I mean maybe my future here. Do I plan on staying in Worcester? Probably. I don't see me going anywhere else. I'll probably try to. I don't know though, that could change. Who knows where your kids go, but I have a lot of roots here. His [her husband] parents are still alive, they're in their eighties now, so wouldn't want to go anywhere until that's...

**NB** You never get tired of it?

**SK** Worcester?

**NB** Yeah.

**SK** No, not really.

**CT** I mean it's so big.

**SK** It's big enough. And I love seeing... I'll be honest with you, you guys don't know, but we have a manager in this city right now that's probably not gonna be with us much longer, but he's in my opinion, and many others, phenomenal. I mean he's just done some great things with this city. You know and I think he just got the job basically through default. He was kind of like "Alright I'll step in and do it until you can find someone," and he ended up liking it and then having – he was really good at it. I think his career was maybe, maybe he was a lawyer, I think, I forgot. But I think Worcester – I like Worcester. A lot of people shit all over Worcester and I'm just like you know what, I mean we have our problems. We have a lot of rif-raf and a lot of bad areas and stuff, but we have a lot of good things too. Look at the colleges we have in Worcester.

**CT** Yeah there's tons of them.

**SK** And they're real good ones.

**CT** Yeah.

**SK** Real good ones. And we have some beautiful parks, and we have an airport, and we have great, you know, art museums.

**KK** Restaurants.

**SK** Yeah and I think our restaurants are good and I think that they're doing – I mean look at the transportation now. We have Union Station. I mean we've come a long way. I think we've come a long way. I'm proud of it.

**CT** Now that we're working to tell a fuller story of the history of women that have been recorded in the past, what should we be sure to include about you?

**SK** I don't know

**CT** Like if there's one thing that someone will take out of this interview, what would be your thing? What would they say about Susan Kasper?

**SK** I guess that I was born, raised, and I'm still here and I still like it. I don't hate it, I really like it.

**CT** And then is there anyone else you think we should talk to?

**NB** Not that they haven't chimed in already [laughs]

**SK** Lucy! [laughs]

**CT & NB** The dog? [laughs]

**SK** Lucy's like, "Yes it's really great! I won the jackpot!" [laughs] Huh Lucy? [the dog is sitting on her lap] Oh I don't think so, I think-No I don't think there's anyone you need to speak to. I think you girls have done a good job.

**NB** Alright well thank you so much for taking your time out to talk to us. And it was good getting to know a little bit about you and your life here in Worcester.