

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA C. KARCHER

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT AND DEDE YOW

EDITED AND INDEXED BY JAN HEIDRICH-RICE

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Interview with Barbara Correnti Karcher  
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Wednesday, 23 March 2005  
Location: CIE/CETL House at Kennesaw State University

TS: Barbara, why don't you just start by telling us when you were born, where you were born, and where you grew up.

BK: I was born in 1946 in New Orleans, Louisiana. My mother's name is Betty Lockhart Correnti. My father was Alfred Francis Correnti. I grew up there. I never dreamed that I would leave it. If I had known that coming to Georgia would have meant that I wouldn't go back home, I don't think I could have ever left. But it happened because my husband and I were never quite ready to leave at the same time. We each went to graduate school, met at the University of Georgia; then he went to Vietnam. When he came back, he was behind me. I finished classes and started teaching at Georgia [Georgia Institute of Technology] Tech, so you start setting down roots. Then I came up here to Kennesaw Junior College, and he was at Mercer [University]. For two academics to have a job, both in the same metropolitan area, we were pretty lucky. So we ended up remaining here.

TS: Well, I know you got a degree from Loyola [University]. Why don't you talk about that a little bit? Why did you go to Loyola?

BK: I wasn't ready to be released from my mother's apron strings. She didn't wear an apron; that's my excuse. Anyway, when it was time, I looked at colleges away, but I wasn't really ready to leave home. I didn't want to leave New Orleans, you see. I was fully enjoying the city. I was there for Mardi Gras—everything; it was a great place to go to college. But I didn't have the dorm experience. I've always wondered about that, but considering my daughter's *comme çï, comme ça* experiences with dorms up at NYU, I think—well, maybe it's all right because you can have some problems. So anyway, that's why. But Loyola was a wonderful place. It was small, about 3,000 people, like Kennesaw was when I came here.

DY: Jesuit school.

BK: Yes, that's what I was going to say. I still miss the Jesuits. They are so challenging and so intelligent, so well trained themselves.

DY: You met [A. William] Bill Bergeron, didn't you? He was here on the faculty in the English department, and he went to Spring Hill [College].

BK: Oh. No, I don't know Bill Bergeron.

DY: Spring Hill is a Jesuit school. Bill is also from New Orleans and has moved back there. Yes, so he went back.

BK: Of course, we think about that, too, with retirement. But we really feel like Georgians now after being here longer than I was ever there. But there was an historian whose class I took at Loyola who was so wonderful. This was back in the '60s, and he had come over to Athens before I got there, at the University of Georgia. And he had on his bumper sticker *Free the Berrigans*. His name was Joe Berrigan.

TS: Was he related to the Berrigans?<sup>1</sup>

BK: No, but it was so funny because he had on his car *Free the Berrigans*. So I always remember his name was Berrigan. [He wasn't a Jesuit]; in fact he was married and had children; but I just particularly remembered him.

TS: I remember him at the University of Georgia.

DY: Was he on the history faculty?

TS: Yes, he was on the history faculty.

BK: I guess I particularly remember him because he moved over to Athens just as I did; there he was, too. Not that I took a class at graduate school in history, but I think I went over and talked to him at some point.

TS: But you had had him as an undergraduate.

BK: Yes. And I wasn't a history major; it was just a history class. I don't know why I took it, if it was required or not. You know, one of the things about Loyola that has had an impact on my teaching . . . it's one of those things where I don't even remember the professor's name, and I think all of us should take heart in this if we ever feel down about teaching. This professor was a social work professor, and I was a sociology major. I took whatever the class was from him . . . Isn't that funny? I don't remember the class. It might have been Introduction to Social Work; I don't know if I ever even had that class! But, anyway, this guy sent us out into the community and had us do an interview of somebody in an agency, and that always struck me as so important and worthwhile. I think it has colored everything else I've ever done. I'm always sending my students out, and I'm going out myself. I don't know his name; I feel so guilty. I feel like I should write him a letter of appreciation. The anonymous, wonderful professor. It probably wouldn't be that impossible, but, of course, I was there from 1963 to '67 so it's getting pretty long ago.

TS: There ought to be an old catalog around where you could find his name.

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<sup>1</sup>Philip and Daniel Berrigan were Catholic priests who were arrested a number of times for their antiwar activities.

- BK: Yes, just probably if I'd call the alumni office they might be able to figure it out for me. I should do that. It's not on a to-do list at the moment, but it's hanging around in there. I should write it down, and maybe it would actually get done.
- DY: So this is a kind of mentoring that you're talking about, in an almost abstract way, isn't it?
- BK: Yes, because he just sent us out to *do something*. It was a teaching technique he used that touched me so deeply, and I realized that it gave me a real life experience. That is something that I think sociology goes along with anyway. Any of the disciplines can tie things into real life, but if sociology doesn't, how dry! Truthfully, some of the sociology classes that I had as an undergraduate, you know, you'd memorize, and you'd give it back on a test. It was interesting. But in this particular case, there was a connection with the real world. That's what I valued, and that's what I think has been really a significant aspect of my own teaching, and, in fact, my whole career. Maybe it's just me because I'm kind of gregarious; I like going out and doing internships and meeting people out there and making the community connections. But at one point it struck me that I bet it went back to that thing I did as an undergraduate that was so meaningful to me. At least it was one of the contributing factors, I'm sure. And, of course, the Jesuits, Loyola University, were very social-justice oriented. We would do things in the community anyway. You know, because I got the service award—that's why you're asking me to speak—I think my emphasis on service has to do with all of that in my personal background. It was just a continuation. And, of course, when I came here, it was a junior college. Tom was here even before me. So service was one of those things that we were expected to do.
- TS: Yes. Why did you major in sociology?
- BK: Well, that's a little embarrassing. You know how students are desperate about "What should I major in? Oh, please tell me the answer." So the summer before I went to Loyola, I met with—I guess it was the chaplain or somebody, and I was begging him to tell me what to major in. I wouldn't let go, and he finally said, "Well, a lot of our girls major in sociology and go into social work at Tulane." [laughter] Is that ridiculous?!
- DY: I don't know; that sounds like a good career path to me.
- BK: But you know what happened was then when I got into it, I enjoyed it. I was taking other classes, and I could have changed majors, of course. But I ended up really liking the research more than the social work, so I ended up wanting to go to graduate school in sociology itself rather than social work.
- TS: Right. Were there any mentors that you remember other than those that you talked about at Loyola?
- BK: The head of the department was Dr. Lawrence Bourgeois, and he was so lovable. He was a very sweet man—very helpful, kind of dry.

DY: Is that a requirement for sociologists, that they have to be kind? Because I remember the sociology course that I had as an undergraduate. The instructor was just the kindest human being.

BK: That's how this man was—very sweet, although he had his own political problems. After I left, he actually kind of got shoved out. He ended up going to the University of Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg, and he became the chair there. He didn't say too much about it, but he had some resentment. I always felt bad about that because he was real special to me. I think what happened is the famous guy came back, Joseph Fichter, who was a Jesuit, and he took back over the department. I don't know; there was some kind of slippage there where my friend left, and the other one, whom I didn't even know, [came back]. I wasn't there for the famous one; he was away on some kind of fellowship for four years or more. But I kind of regretted that my friend had left Loyola somewhat unhappily.

TS: So you graduated in '67.

BK: Yes.

TS: Was Chuck [husband Charles J. Karcher] at Loyola?

BK: No, I didn't meet him until graduate school.

TS: Okay. So how did you decide to come to the University of Georgia?

BK: You know, back then there were a lot of fellowships available. I applied for . . . I don't know how many. Of course, one of the reasons was, no doubt, because of Larry Bourgeois. He was the one who would tell me where would be some likely places to go, and he had a connection at the University of Georgia with John Drenan Kelly. He used to go by John Kelly, and then later in life, he decided he wanted to be called Drenan; that's why I could remember Drenan. But at first I had to think of John; he would probably be glad of that. He came over and actually visited the [Loyola] campus to recruit for graduate school for the University of Georgia. I was offered two really nice fellowships, one at the University of Kentucky, and one at the University of Georgia. So I went flying off to both of them to visit—I don't know if I'd ever been on a plane before at that point, I don't remember, probably not—and visited both campuses. Probably one of the important things is that Georgia was a little closer than Kentucky, because I never dreamed I wouldn't go back [to New Orleans]. And there I met Chuck. One of the first days there. We got engaged within a month or two.

DY: That's quick.

TS: So he was in graduate school in sociology also?

BK: Yes, yes. We were classmates. He made me take a class once so that it could make. Everything has its positives, but it was a class in suicide. About eight of

us sat around a table and talked about all the research on suicide that whole quarter. But his major professor, that was his topic, you know. [So Chuck said], “Come on; you’ve got to take it.” I could have taken something more interesting, maybe, but I took it. That’s another example of how things may not be as they appear—you know, you look on the surface; you look at the transcript. “Oh, she has an interest in suicide!” [chuckle]

DY: That’s why I have graduate degrees in English as opposed to history; because of a boyfriend. Ridiculous. I tell my students things like that happen in your life.

BK: And at the bachelor’s level, it hardly matters—does it?—unless you’re going to go into business. Maybe you should have had some accounting courses or whatever. But for so many things, you can go into graduate school and catch up. You change fields at the graduate level.

TS: So you got your master’s in ’72 and then [your] Ph.D. in ’74 at University of Georgia. Are you going straight through? You said something about Georgia Tech earlier.

BK: Yes, when I went to Georgia Tech [to teach] in ’72, I had nothing left but my dissertation, and Georgia Tech was such an interesting place. There weren’t very many women’s restrooms, for example! I remember I had to go upstairs; it was just like a little hole. It was all men. The students were tolerating social science because they had more important things to do. They might disappear for weeks at a time.

DY: They were engineers.

BK: Engineers, architects. The architects, especially, I remember. There was some word they would use that would happen—I don’t remember what it was, but this is what it meant. It must have been some project that was suddenly thrust upon them unexpectedly. When that thing came, forget about the rest of the world because they had to go day and night and work on nothing but this project. So that’s what I found out the architecture students—that they disappeared—they weren’t dead; they were just on that . . . whatever that word was! I wouldn’t doubt they still call it that at Georgia Tech; that kind of thing would be part of the culture. But, anyway, Georgia Tech was good for me in the sense that even though I was on a temporary contract that was renewed for one year—while somebody else was gone—it meant that I really didn’t get involved in committees. I was on the outskirts and was able to go home and work on my dissertation. I can remember, we had an extra bedroom in our apartment, and all the chapters were lined up on this bed. You know, [back in] the olden days when we would worry, “Should we keep a copy in the refrigerator?” [laughter]

DY: Yes, I remember that.

TS: Just in case of a fire or something?

BK: Yes. And people who would say, “It’s in my trunk.” Because now you can send it to yourself and it’s out on the Internet. Can you imagine, my aunt typed my master’s [thesis]. She was a great typist, and I went down to Florida so she could type my master’s thesis for me. And, of course, it had to be correct, and it had to have a carbon copy. Did we not even have Xerox machines? That’s hard to believe. I don’t think we did. We had to have carbon copies.

TS: Well, Xerox machines had been invented by that time, ’60 or ’61.

BK: Maybe they wouldn’t allow them to be used. I remember they had to have a real original. It’s what they wanted.

DY: I think that’s it. I remember at UGA . . . Do you remember having to take your dissertation over there and that woman measuring your lines?

TS: Margins and all?

DY: Yes.

BK: And my poor aunt was doing this—to think that I . . . but she just adored me. She was my aunt and my godmother who didn’t ever have children, never got married; and so she invested a lot in me. When she was getting older and had dementia, would you believe, she helped me out by giving me a care-giving role? In gerontology, by my actively learning—which is the only way I learn things—by actually going through and doing things.

DY: And why you send your students out to do that.

BK: That’s right. At the time, it was really hard. But then I realized later on when I could use this in my classes how she had given me another gift. It’s amazing.

TS: What did you do your dissertation on?

BK: Oh, brother! This is the title if I can remember it: “The Complementarity of Objective Measures and Subjective Meaning: Orthodoxy Scores and Religious Self Labels.” Something like that. [laughter]

TS: And what does that mean?

BK: Well, I wish I had just used the same data from my master’s degree, really, because I had this great little study I did for my master’s degree. I studied the Catholic parish there in town, talked to people and found out about things like, “What do you think about birth control? And what about priests marching in the streets, and these revolutions and stuff?” It was really great. But you know what? At that time, no one taught me how to analyze qualitative data to quantify those kinds of things. It was really hard to write it up. So I thought, “Oh, I’ve had enough of that; let me do something easier.” So my major professor, who was Jack Balswick for the Ph.D., offered me some data on religiosity that he had.

Some measures were an objective measure and some were qualitative. It struck me, when I was trying to analyze that they were complementary. Wasn't that a big revelation? But there was this fight going on, and the qualitative and the quantitative sociologists didn't want to talk to one another, so that made me mad. And that was my great revelation.

TS: The quantitative thought they were scientific and the other guys weren't?

BK: That's right. And nowadays, although the journals are still quite quantitative and full of numbers, the qualitative people are getting a lot more support and recognition. I think it's pretty obvious now that you need both. You need to [determine] what people mean by things as well as just what you have measured because your measure may not be at all what they're thinking. So it took that many pages because I also had to report on the data. But my big thing was we should combine these measures and not just have the one type or the other.

TS: For your dissertation, that's what you're concluding?

BK: That was the dissertation, yes. It used to be in the library. Are they still here?

TS: Hopefully.

BK: I noticed that the [KSU] archivist asked for our publications. Do you think they'd like something thirty years old if I come across one in the office move?

TS: I'm sure they would.

BK: That would be nice to know it was saved and not just wasted.

TS: Archivists are interested in historical records.

BK: Very historical, almost pre-! [chuckle]

DY: How do you see your experience with the dissertation and the thesis, too? How do you see that carrying over into your own teaching?

BK: Gosh.

TS: Or maybe why you would come to a junior college instead of wanting to go to a research institution?

DY: Very good way to set that up.

BK: You know, graduate school didn't prepare us to teach back then. I think they're doing a little better now, I hope.

DY: So you didn't have a teaching certificate?

BK: I did not.

TS: But you had taught at Georgia Tech before you came here.

BK: Yes, I had taught. Oh, you know, I told you I had that scholarship. It was called an NSF Fellowship. Would you believe I had this nice fellowship, and I gave it up because my husband was going into the Army. He got drafted, went to Vietnam, but he was in Officer Training School down in Columbus.

TS: At Fort Benning?

BK: Yes. So I packed everything, moved down there, and found out when I got there he had quit Officer Candidate School. So then he had to go to basic training someplace else. Meanwhile, I moved back up to Athens. So I had one summer in Columbus. I lived at the—listen to this—Ka-bar Apartments. Someone said, “How’d you get the apartments named after you?” Ka-bar Apartments. And it’s still there. I went by on the highway one day recently, and there they were, the Ka-bar Apartments. But anyway, when I came back, I didn’t have my fellowship anymore. I would have had to compete for it again because they didn’t have enough for everyone. So that’s when I went on assistantships and ended up being a teaching assistant. I was teaching Intro Sociology for awhile before moving on. So, anyway, I got more training in teaching through the American Sociological Association’s teaching movement; it really was a movement, led by Hans Mauksch. He was a wonderful teacher himself and gave workshops all around the country and sort of trained the trainer. There are many, many, many teaching resources now connected with the American Sociological Association that never would have been otherwise. That’s the kind of thing I’m saying where people share ideas about teaching. People didn’t even do that; it was just the teaching you took for granted. So when you ask why would I come to a junior college—that was where I got the job. I wanted to be in Atlanta because my husband was about two years behind me, having been in Vietnam.

TS: So he’s still working on his doctorate [at this time]?

BK: Right. We lived in Stone Mountain, and he would drive through the Stone Mountain Park every day to go over to Athens—I guess he did it daily; it seems like a long way to go. But he goes to Gainesville every day now, so he’s used to driving. Anyway, I didn’t want to move away anywhere. I think I may have finally thrown it out, but I had an old typed copy [of] every college in the Atlanta area, and I sent out my vita to everyone. Of course, the first job that I got was at Georgia Tech. While I was there, I knew it was not a continuing job. So I was looking, and George [H.] Beggs brought me out here. Tom [KSU History Professor Thomas H.] Keene’s father-in-law interviewed me at Oxford at Emory, isn’t that what it was? But I didn’t get that job. I’m not sure if I had an interview anywhere else. So, anyway, it’s been a good fit.

TS: You came where the job was.

BK: That's it. And I think the reason that I probably have stayed is it has been a good fit, you know, with all the service. I always wonder if I could have gone the other way—if I could have gotten much more into research and writing if I had been in that kind of a setting where it was expected and we were given time. But my whole background fit right in with the service orientation and moving out into the community.

TS: So you had the doctorate in hand when you got here?

BK: Yes. I remember George Beggs saying I was the only one who actually had it. Other people said they were going to have it by a certain date, and nobody else ever did. But I actually did, thanks to Georgia Tech, because I would go home in the afternoons and maybe spend a day at home. It took a long time to pull that thing together. I had so many things . . . Okay, I'll write that book next time! That's a whole book I'm working on. Okay, put it aside. So it finally [was] finished, and it was in time for here.

DY: What kind of service did you do in your early years here?

BK: Here? You know, I was the chair of the Bicentennial Celebration Committee. Were you on my committee? Fred [S. Frederick, Jr.] Roach was.

TS: I don't remember.

BK: No, Fred Roach was on that committee. And Mary [L.] Lance. I was so pleased after all these years that we now have given her and Ed [Peter E.] Bostick credit, over at the [KSU] Arboretum, because that was done for the Bicentennial in 1976. So [I was the] head of that committee, and just name the [KSU] committees, [and I have been on them]. I am embarrassed to tell you I have never served on the Faculty Senate. I have dodged that.

DY: I haven't either, Barbara.

BK: Oh, I'm so happy then!

DY: Tom, you haven't, have you?

TS: No, I always go into hiding when they're asking for nominations.

DY: I'm afraid I do the same thing.

BK: I just fall asleep during those meetings.

TS: I do, too.

BK: I would be worse than no help.

DY: Well, we've all done tenure and promotion committees; so we have paid our way.

- BK: Oh, I have even chaired those [and] chaired search committees. Other than the senate, I think most committees, somewhere along the way, I've probably served on. This is my thirty-first year.
- DY: I don't know whether we're jumping ahead or not, but the fact that you have created the CAREing [Center for Active Retirement Education] Center and constructed that . . . I know you're moving into your "new home" soon [a house across from campus on Frey Lake Road]. You hope, right?
- BK: Oh, I've been down there visiting. I do need to correct the question, though. I didn't create the CAREing Center; I helped to create it. Judy [Judith M.] Stillion was the first director. I'm sorry; did you want to continue your question? I don't want you to lose your question.
- DY: Well, what I wanted to know was, I wanted you to take us to the CAREing Center. I want you to sort of take us through and tell me what kinds of service you did along the way, what kinds of work you were doing that manifested in that.
- BK: Oh, maybe why did I get [the Distinguished Service] award?
- TS: But also scholarship, because you kind of changed your [direction]. It's obvious your dissertation was not on gerontology. So I guess the question is how did you get to this concern with the elderly?
- BK: That's a good question. It was not anything I ever studied in graduate school.
- TS: Did they even teach it?
- BK: I was not aware. I don't remember any class like that. But when [KSU] went to a four-year school, that was a big thing. We all had to switch, and some of the students realized we were practicing on them when we went from two-year to four-year. We suddenly had these many new classes that we were offering. Well, we didn't get a major; sociology didn't get a major for a long time. But we had to decide what undergraduate classes to offer. I should say upper class; is that what you call it?
- TS: Upper division
- DY: Upper-division class is what we used to call them.
- BK: So which five would we have? We sat around—who was it?—Vassilis [Economopoulos] and I and who else would have been way back then? Ed [B. Edward, Jr.] Hale probably.<sup>2</sup> I don't know; I'd have to look at a list. Anyway, as

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<sup>2</sup>Kennesaw began offering upper level classes in 1978. Ed Hale joined the faculty in 1978, Vassilis Economopoulos in 1979. Linda Stephens was on the faculty briefly in the

we looked at what our own strengths and preferences or what we thought would be needed. I picked Sociology of Religion. That was the one I wanted to do. Vassilis wanted to do demography, because that was his love and students loved it. He could have taught the making of a trash can and students would have loved Vassilis. I wish you could have him on tape.

DY: We did interview Marjorie [Economopoulos].

BK: Oh, good. Anyway, so as we're sitting around talking about what we should do, one of the things we recognized as sociologists was the coming of the baby boom—the age wave and all that. We knew it was important. They didn't want to teach it, but they knew it was important. I said, "Okay, I'll teach it." So I believe that I taught the first gerontology course at Kennesaw. When we became a four-year school, that was one of the first courses we even offered. I was not aware of anybody else having any. There aren't that many even now. So there I was; that was gerontology. Annette [L.] Bairan and somebody who has since died, Jayne [V.] Bruno,<sup>3</sup> in nursing, invited me to come talk with them about how we ought to be promoting gerontology and the study of aging at earlier ages. They had this idea of doing an early course for freshmen. Anyway, because I was already teaching it, they pulled me in. We formed a kind of gerontology group. In fact, Annette has passed over a box of archives for me so that we have the history of gerontology at Kennesaw for me to keep in the CAREing Center. That will be nice. So, that story is there. There was [also] a famous bagel breakfast with Betty Siegel. She brought us in and a few other people who were interested and said, "Go to it! Do gerontology!" And then every once in awhile, a few years later, she would say, "How come nothing's happening?" There was no infrastructure for us. The administration wasn't promoting it, and so she brought Judy Stillion in. Judy is well published in the end-of-life area, which is included in gerontology. Because Judy reported directly to the president, the president could tell her to do things, and she started the CAREing Center. The first thing she did was—she's a great go-out-to-lunch person—she took me to lunch along with a bunch of other people. I was the one who most latched on to what she was saying, and we developed a relationship. First of all, she called me the assistant director for educational programs, and then I became the associate director for educational programs. It got to be crazy because she became director of ILEC, the [RTM] Institute for Leadership, Ethics and Character. She was having to backpedal on CAREing, and so she got me to be the director. A year ago January is when I got plucked away from the department. Jonathan [A.] Freedman took over my online courses. Thank goodness somebody could do that because that's not something that everybody can do. And I've been doing the CAREing directorship since then.

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late 1970s. Robert H. Hedrick and Johnnie D. Myers were instructors of Criminal Justice.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Bruno joined the faculty in 1990.

TS: I've got down a date from your Web site of 1999—that the CAREing Center was, I guess, officially opened up.

BK: Right. When Judy came, she was over in an office in KSU Center without a secretary. She had a computer, and it was such a great day for her when she was able to hire Joann [A.] Trodahl. She had a secretary! So the two of them started a lot of stuff. But she has depended all along on getting other people who are passionate about things, whatever it be. Like the Art of the Golden Generation [program]—the art department helps with that—and poetry. Bob [Robert W.] Hill has been real involved with that, and we have a poetry workshop coming up in April for older people so they can hone their skills. And then next year they can be in the competition and see if they can get their work published. Anyway, those were two programs that Judy and Joann started. There's always been this double mission for the CAREing Center. Programs for professionals in aging and programs for older people, although it's a little bit of an overlap with what used to be [KSU Continuing Education's] Golden University.

DY: Continuing education?

BK: That's right. So we just kind of are side-by-side, recognizing that we are doing some things that they wouldn't think of doing, and they're doing a lot of other things which we don't have time to do. Then we also do the educational programs for professionals because a lot of people get into working with older people and never have any background in gerontology. Like I didn't. I had to learn it while I was teaching. So it's been very successful. Our current undergraduate students don't throng to gerontology, and yet they get surprised. They get out, they work with older people, and they find out it's not a big deal. It doesn't mean that you die young because you're working with older people. So a lot of people come back and take some background because they don't have it, and they like to get the academic approach to place it in perspective.

TS: For people off campus and a hundred years from now, what does CAREing stand for?

BK: This was one of Betty Siegel's "Waffle House" moments, I believe, where it came up. If not, it should have. I think she wrote it on a napkin. I don't know exactly the physical location. She came up with the acronym CARE, and it was originally the Center for Active Retired Educators. Then there was another [name] in the middle, which I have forgotten. But I feel pretty comfortable with Center for Active Retirement Education. The *ing*, I thought, was original. "In North Georgia." Isn't that amazing?

TS: That's great.

BK: Judy says that's always what she was promoting with Betty Siegel, but Betty didn't want to limit it. It's true; we're located in north Georgia. That's not untrue. Anyway, the ING started off with one of these summit conferences; the

people in the community were here talking about what we needed. And then, of course, a needs assessment study was done; Val [Valerie W.] Whittlesey did that early on. That's where the graduate certificate came from—which is currently on hiatus—but also the professional development certificate. So we've recently done another needs assessment, and Val and two students are working on trying to see how the data compares from the two different studies.

DY: Are you saying that your certificate is sort of on hold right now?

BK: The graduate certificate is, yes, because the psychology department has said that they don't have enough support for us. You know how their classes are so full; they have many, many majors. The graduate program was taking time from their faculty, and I think they think they should get one or more faculty support for that. It's something under discussion right now. In fact, we have a meeting set up in the president's office for people interested in gerontology. There's been hired a distinguished scholar in gerontology, but it's all washing around, trying to figure out where we're going to go with this. Meanwhile, the one that I have in the CAREing Center is going real well—the professional development certificate. It's continuing education, and we're just looking into ways to deliver it because it's a drop in the bucket. We had twenty-two students this year, and they loved it. It's just continuing ed, so it's not a lot of work. But it *is* work. It's not just sit there and snooze through. [Students] have an applied project. They go out in the community, and they're doing things that are worthwhile in the community and often where they work—usually right where they work, something that's valuable to the organization. But we get people who call and say they want to get a certificate in gerontology, but they can't come once a month. They can't get away; they're in another field; they want to move into gerontology but the employer won't let them go. So I'm looking into trying to offer it through the Internet. Then I think, "There are these fabulous places people can already go. Should we reinvent the wheel? So I'm torn about exactly what to do. But as I said, it's a drop in the bucket. There are plenty of people out there working with older people with no background in the study of aging.

DY: Barbara, I think that it's implicit in everything that you said why you stayed at Kennesaw, but I guess I'd like to hear an explicit response to that. You came here out of graduate school, Ph.D. in hand, and have been here ever since. What kept you at this institution?

BK: Well, I have put down many roots. I feel like I've helped to build the place. Don't you feel some ownership?

TS: Sure.

BK: And even you, young whippersnapper, Dede, that you are.

DY: I came in '82.

BK: Well, '74 I came, and what, Tom?

TS: In '68.

BK: No! Braggart! We'll never catch up with him. Anyway, the thing is, when we started—can you remember?—it was silly; it was crazy, nutty, the young small group of faculty that we had. We were close; we were friendly although we never did have time. I always remember [K.] Gird Romer, when we were setting up a faculty coffee room in the bottom of what used to be the library, I guess. I can kind of picture that there was a coffee pot, and it was going to give us a chance to visit with one another. Do you remember that at all?

TS: No, I don't.

BK: And I remember he was thrilled with that because he liked to sit around and have a cup of coffee. And we would have always loved this, wouldn't we, all these years? Nobody here has time to sit and visit. That's kind of sad. But I really do love the people here. I think we have an outstanding group of faculty, dedicated people, student-oriented, teacher-oriented. So that would be one of the reasons.

DY: The people.

BK: Yes, definitely. And the students, for the most part. There are always those little squeaky wheels who I've always let jangle me too much. And, boy, when I think about the olden days when we might have had some students who were maybe on drugs; who knows what their problems were? If I couldn't reach every single one perfectly, it would just bother me. But talking about the old days, do you remember when people were streaking?

TS: Yes. Catherine [M.] Lewis brought in some photographs of that the other day. She's teaching a museum class, and they're doing student life, so she had one of those pictures.

BK: From here on campus?

TS: Yes.

BK: Do you remember the guy who was living in the woods?

TS: He spoke to her class. The students tracked him down. His name is Mike Goldberg.

BK: I would have loved to hear that.

TS: Well, he's respectable nowadays. In fact, he's got kids in the University of Georgia.

BK: That's amazing.

DY: Just a regular Thoreau. He came out and joined the community.

BK: Well, he was poor. He didn't have any place to live, and so he would go shower in the gym and sleep in the woods. I think the police started to notice his car was there all the time. They checked into it.

TS: We had more woods then, too.

DY: I was going to say, yes.

BK: But anyway, this is home to me. I mean, I feel ownership because, like I said, we changed from the two-year to the four-year school, and we helped to create it. And that's why I'm feeling guilty right now. I feel like I've abandoned the sociology department.

DY: But I think that that's a mark of growth and creativity in individuals like you that characterize this institution.

BK: Yes, we've been very fortunate.

DY: That we don't just stay on the straight path of being a faculty member in a department, but, rather, we'll gladly trot down a little pig path and see what's there. I may be putting words in your mouth, Barbara, but I think that's what you're saying, too.

BK: Right. It's not like it was all planned out. The fact that I was able to do internships for years and years has been so significant in my work with the CAREing Center because I have roots that go so deep. The current head of the Division of Aging Services for the State of Georgia was one of my intern supervisors for my first intern. So she and I go way, way, way back. I don't really take advantage of that. It's what I'm saying when I have a lot of deep roots in Georgia.

DY: You're grounded in the community; you're a part of the community. That's another thing about this institution, too, is that it is a part of the community. It's all so inter-related.

TS: Yes. When did Chuck finish his doctorate?

BK: In 1977.

TS: And then he went straight to Mercer Atlanta?

BK: I'm not sure if he had finished his doctorate when he started at Mercer. You know what he was doing; he was going over through Stone Mountain Park that one year, getting all of his data together to do his dissertation. Then you know how it takes a long time. Anyway, he went to Mercer; he may not have even had his degree. It was Mercer Atlanta, not Macon. The one that was supposed not to exist any more, but there's still a campus over there. Pharmacy has moved out there; maybe there's education. I don't know what all has happened with that.

But anyway, over at [the] 285 [bypass] and [Interstate] 85 is where he would go to work. He was there a long time until that school closed down. The president had other ideas. That's an ugly story, but anyway . . .

TS: This is Godsey.

BK: Yes.

DY: [R.] Kirby Godsey.

BK: Who is finally going to retire.

TS: He's still there?

BK: Yes!

DY: I didn't know that.

BK: We heard that he was going to retire. So anyway, he taught awhile at Clayton State; he even tried to run a bakery for a while. He always thought that would be fun and found out—well, it's not easy. Then he went to be, I think it was called, associate dean at Piedmont College, which is why we got a cabin in Cleveland because it was impossible to drive home every day. So the good news is we have a cabin in Cleveland. But we hardly ever get to go over there. He is commuting to work now to and from Gainesville every day. I used to think, till he started to go to work there, that Gainesville was a place where you packed a bag and you'd go spend the night. I thought it was a distance! And he does it every day. So it's just one of those Atlanta commutes.

TS: So you're still living in east Cobb.

BK: East Cobb, off of Lower Roswell Road. We've been there since '74. That's where we moved there from our apartment in Stone Mountain.

DY: Good grief! And you've seen the explosion [in population].

TS: Does he have to get on I-285 and go around that way?

BK: He tends to go the back way in the morning. He gets up at 4:30. He would have gotten up at 5:00 but the dogs wake him up at 4:30. And then when he comes home, he finds it quicker to come down the interstate and come by 285. But then Powers Ferry has become terrible, so it's not good.

TS: And then, let's see, your daughter was born about '78 or something like that?

BK: In '82. Elizabeth Marie Karcher.

DY: She's a year older than Ruthie [Yow]. What's her birthday?

BK: September 15.

DY: Yes, because Ruthie's July '83. I knew we had babies real close together. And she's at NYU [New York University]?

BK: She is.

DY: When is she graduating?

BK: May. This is it. She is doing an internship at the Bronx Zoo, having fun except that it's getting old. What she's doing is she's cleaning up, that's what the internship is.

DY: What's her major?

BK: Anthropology. And she has another course called Primate Ecology, which is going to require that she spend ten hours looking at the primates and not just cutting up bananas for the bats. But she's been able to be with the giraffes; they come over and they nudge her a little bit, so she's having a good time. But I think it's going to become more significant when she gets to do the ten hours looking at primates for that other class. Then it'll all kind of come together with the differences among the animals.

DY: And you just have one child.

BK: Yes.

DY: That's plenty. I think so, too.

BK: I don't know how people have more than one.

DY: And they're delights. I don't either and have a life. Well, I want to shift gears if we can for a minute. You have done so much, Barbara, in your long career here. And this might be a tough question to answer, but try. What do you think your most significant accomplishment has been?

BK: One?

DY: Or is.

BK: Just one in particular?

DY: Well, you can do a hierarchy if you choose. Or you can spin out many.

BK: Well, I'm thinking. I think probably something to do with the network of people that I am connected to: students, former students, agency people, organization people. Helping to connect Kennesaw to the whole community, and helping to build the CAREing Center. Connecting students with one another and the work place. I think those connections that I made.

- DY: I think that's a beautiful answer. I do. Because that in and of itself just encompasses your work and who you are. And the fact that there's a physical manifestation of the Center is nice.
- BK: Yes, it is like a crowning opportunity to pull it all together.
- DY: A Center—yes, literally a center.
- BK: And you know what we have planned? [W.] Phil Barco is so precious; do you know the [Director of Alumni Affairs]? Every time he comes into our house, not just to see me, it feels like a party has come into the room. He is so jovial and outgoing. I invited him because we'd been talking about an alumni association for gerontology people, which is a kind of a will-o'-the-wisp concept because a lot of the people will be working out there who never had any background in gerontology here. But they're still our alumni, so it's a way to try to capture some people. He and I have been back and forth on that sort of thing. We're launching the alumni group in April, and he's going to have it at [KSU's] Alumni House so I'm excited about that. That'll be another means of keeping people in touch with one another. That's really what I do well. Somehow or another, my brain keeps track of people. [I'll think], "Oh, you need to be in touch with somebody." It really is helpful to people, and I love doing that. So I think I'm a social secretary, down deep, keeping everyone organized. [chuckle]
- DY: It's important, though, because things don't get done, centers don't get created or built, without that kind of energy. It's almost as if there's not really a place on a vita or resume to put that.
- BK: Yes, you wouldn't put that as a category anywhere, would you? I mean, you could say, "Launched the alumni group". Oh, you know what else I do? I do the GGS [Georgia Gerontology Society] e-mail blasts. People love this and they think I do so much work on it. I get a lot of credit.
- DY: What did you say? E-mail what?
- BK: E-mail blast. You know, how you just blast it out to a whole bunch of people, whatever the information is.
- DY: Oh, okay. I guess I didn't know that term. I'm glad to know.
- BK: Well, you probably get them and don't even know it. You didn't know there was a name for it.
- DY: No I didn't. That's very interesting. A blast.
- BK: Well, I just got an award from the Georgia Gerontology Society, the Marietta Suhart award, which is a teaching thing. Judy Stillion got it two years before I did. They're really appreciative of all Kennesaw has been doing for gerontology lately. But, anyway, when I was the chair of the Education, Research and

Training Section and we were talking about what kind of education can we provide, I said, “Why is it that we don’t just let people know what’s already out there?” Because you know, everybody has had these programs, and it is so pitiful—two or three people will come. It was the greatest program, but nobody knew about it. So these blasts, people love. I’m very strict with them. They have to send [information through] me, so I can just shoot it right back out. I have all the people in an address book, which, by the way, was a good help from Abi [Adeyi], one of the men who works in [Information Technology] Services. He did it for me; he put them into an address book for me. I was so amazed; how nice. So I’ve got them right there in an address book. They get their e-mail blasts, and Kennesaw gets a lot of credit. It looks like we’re doing all kinds of service for the community, but really its not that hard. But it’s connecting people again. It’s just an orientation.

DY: I do see. I think it’s wonderful.

TS: So when we first asked about service, you were talking about, “Well, I was on this committee and that committee.” And now you’ve really changed gears from institutional service to community service, it sounds like. How did that come about? Who influenced you? Or maybe it was that experience that you had as an undergraduate when you went out and interviewed somebody.

BK: I don’t think so. I think probably having [supervised] the internships. That is such a blessing to be able to work with students one-on-one and to help them to see that this is a work that they would like to do—or not like to do, which they’re disappointed at, but better for them to find out before they graduate. So through the connections I’ve made with people out in the community there, I think that probably more opportunities came up to do things outside of the campus. It’s true [that] for many, many, many years, a lot of it was internal because that needed to be done. There was a lot of work to do building this place. There still is.

DY: I think we’ve got a nice segue here in that one of the questions we typically ask—and I can anticipate your answer being very creative—is how you find the intellectual climate on our campus, having been here for so long and understanding not just a necessity, but the beauty of connections?

BK: Well, I guess the negative first—the fact that we don’t have a lot of time to visit with each other. However, I do find—as you said last night, Tom, when you were at that session—it’s amazing the depth [you’ll discover] when people do have the time and the chance to sit and communicate with one another. As I have had those opportunities, I have been impressed. I just think the only thing lacking is more of a chance for us to communicate with each other. And I don’t know what the answer would be, because people get busier all the time. They’re still expected to do service, but now they’re supposed to publish, too. And they still teach as much. How do these younger faculty survive?

DY: Well, I think it's very difficult for younger faculty. I'm very interested in senior faculty like ourselves, and what we do. The three of us sitting here are, of course, very connected. We have work that we're interested in doing. But I think there are senior faculty who are sort of stuck there, you know, somewhere in between now and retirement. CETL provides wonderful things on Fridays and that sort of thing.

BK: Do you think they take advantage of it, those senior faculty you're talking about?

DY: Some do, yes. I even see the younger faculty coming in.

BK: I think that's great when the older faculty and the younger faculty get together.

DY: Oh, I do, too. That's one of the reasons I come here [to the CETL House] to many of these programs. And then again, we have these workshops at CETL that are helping us in our skills in terms of technology. I'm thinking about Gary [B.] Roberts' WebCT workshops and that sort of thing. I'm thinking out loud, Barbara, that there are places for connection but . . .

BK: It does take time to get there.

DY: It takes time to get there.

BK: It could be during a class.

DY: And it takes an attention to that. I think we get so much e-mail. Do you automatically delete when you get an announcement for CETL? Do you automatically delete when you get a blast from somebody? So the negative, what you're saying is the downside, is that we are not somehow making it work so that we can all take advantage of the intellectual climate on campus.

BK: Well, I guess. You know, I wonder if you could say there's huge intellectual capital on campus, but the extent to which people are able to use it and share it with each other is what I wish there were more of. It really kind of comes down to [this]: I wish that people could have a little bit less teaching so that it could be enriched by more of these experiences. Maybe more team-teaching, where people could teach with each other. Oh, man, you'd learn so much from your fellow faculty. It's amazing to me how people from different disciplines—often we're doing things in parallel, and we didn't even know it. It deepens your understanding and the breadth of what you know. So the busyness of the campus is kind of exciting, but it also takes away from opportunities like that.

DY: Well, we have the infrastructure for interdisciplinary work. I mean, Tom and I have been teaching our Georgia Writers, Georgia History course for ten years.

BK: Do you both get full credit for that?

DY: Yes. It's a lit course, 3350; and it's a history course, 3304.

BK: Oh, but they're registered for two classes?

TS: No, they're registered for one or the other.

BK: So it is cross-listed, but nobody knows that. They can take it for English or history credit.

TS: No. They have to pick.

BK: That's what I'm saying; they take either one.

TS: Yes.

BK: So that's a cross-listing, right? Isn't that what you call that? Which supposedly we're not allowed to do here.

DY: No, actually it's two discrete courses, two separate courses that happen to be scheduled at the same time and take place in the same room.

BK: So that's a way to get around the fact that we're not allowed to do cross-listing.

TS: Well, we've got twenty-five students who are getting English credit and twenty-five students who are getting history credit.

BK: Oh, you've even got double; you've got fifty in there. Wow. Well, see, then the institution doesn't lose any tuition.

DY: No, not at all. Everyone gains every way around.

BK: And that might be a way, then, if we could think more creatively about how to do things like that. I was picturing that class—whenever I've heard about it before, I pictured kind of a nice seminar, like the size of this room! [chuckle] I didn't realize fifty. Oh, well.

TS: Well, it's oftentimes forty.

BK: For my daughter at NYU, fifty is a good number. She'll be in a classroom of 300—physics—no personal contact for all the money we spend.

DY: Not in upper-level [classes]?

BK: Oh, yes. She's in some smaller ones now, finally, that she's ready to graduate.

TS: Well, in terms of intellectual life, as you got involved more and more in service, I know you've used this to make presentations at conferences. So how did your service contribute to your scholarship and what you're doing for the CAREing Center, for instance?

BK: Well, the really good thing has been that I've been able to focus on gerontology. When I was teaching religion one quarter, and theory and change, it was constantly something new. I'd think, "Oh, this is something I'd like to focus on; I might do a study on that." And then I'd switch gears and go to the next thing. But now that I've been able to focus on gerontology, it's really been great. For example, working on the needs assessment as I got the material ready for a presentation, I realized this is something that I need to write up. It's information that other people could use, and it's data-based; it's not just theorizing. You know, people could use this. So I actually wrote a paper for the president; she wanted a white paper on gerontology. I don't think she's ever read it; I don't know if she's given it to anybody else. But I spent a good week over the Christmas holiday period—not when we were on break, but during that December time—writing this up. I felt like I was back in graduate school. I loved it! It was in some ways frustrating and then exciting. You know, the writing! I thought, "I can do this! If I would just take a week at a time and do it for myself, instead of [preparing] something for the president that I don't even know that she's used." It was meant to be something that she could share with the deans and say, "Look, here's gerontology; it's important. We're going to have a lot of old people. We're going to have everybody working with old people, and we need to do background for people." I don't know whether anything was ever done with it. But it was a good experience in that I've got this paper now, and maybe I'll do something with it. So the ability to focus; that was hard for me, not to ever feel that I could focus and specialize. And I've envied people who could specialize at research institutions. They would know their area so well and could write about it, not necessarily easily, but it was not like you had to reinvent the wheel each time.

DY: Well, and also, you were teaching in that area specifically. I mean, the three of us, for example; we taught, and have continued to teach, general education courses. [It] is wonderful in its way because you absolutely have to keep up, for example, with world literature. But then again, if your focus is southern literature, or regional, well, it's somewhat distracting.

BK: Distracting is a good word.

DY: I wonder if the answer for some of us—for senior faculty, for example—is not this interdisciplinary view that you're talking about, too, to make these connections for teaching, for scholarship, and for service. And gerontology is, of course, in and of itself interdisciplinary.

BK: And that is its greatest strength and its greatest weakness because nobody wants to pay for it.

TS: How does the CAREing Center get funded? Have you been writing lots of grants?

BK: No. Well, we have. When Judy first came, her salary was a state-funded position. Then she got the secretary, and for three or four years, I was just kind of on loan from Sociology, robbing Peter to pay Paul, and I'm sure shortening my life, running from one to the other and losing things because I'd always think it was in the other office. Then I'd go checking back and forth. Anyway, there wasn't any money for my position. We did get to hire a project coordinator, and that has made a big difference. Patsy [Patricia A.] Matthews came from Adult Education [with] many, many years of experience. She has the big picture. But you're asking about the funding; so yes, it's state funded. We did get a somewhat small grant from the American Society on Aging to bring [in] a famous psychologist, but that was to fund that program. This is what we do with all these programs; they tend to be self-supporting. So when we bring people in for conferences on aging-related issues, we don't pay the speakers; we charge people pretty much the cost of food. And with Sodexo it's not too cheap, you know. We have to charge them something that they probably think we're making money on, but, in fact, we're pretty much covering the cost of it. People who are working in the area of gerontology, even though they become passionate about it and they love it, [are] not highly paid unless they're like the administrator of a nursing home, you know. People who become higher up in administration make more money. So that's part of what's dicey with encouraging students to work in gerontology.

DY: They all want to get out and make money.

BK: Well, that's it. If that's the case, then they wouldn't want to be in gerontology. Although, there again, if you focus toward administration—nursing home administration or some federal jobs—it's a pretty good job. So did I answer the question? I'm sure I lost track. Oh, you were asking about where the money was coming from for CAREing Center.

TS: Yes.

DY: Well, the umbrella question was the intellectual climate on campus; and you talked about the fact that we're not only sort of spread out, but that we're very, very busy. That's the downside. Then the positive, the fact that we have thriving, intellectual climates . . .

BK: Sometimes it's within the classroom, I suppose, because the faculty are sharing it daily with their students. But it's too bad. Jonathan [A.] Freedman, who took my place, suddenly was able to—thank goodness—take on my online [course load]. He said he'd never seen anything like it. People don't even have time to talk to one another here.

TS: I guess my question [is] about how many programs do you put on during a semester? Are you holding workshops all the time?

BK: We have what used to be called NCCARA—Northwest Crescent Consortium on Active Retirement and Aging. Now it's just Consortium on Active Retirement and Aging [CARA], with quarterly conferences.

TS: Four times a year you have a conference?

BK: That's right. We got rid of the Northwest Crescent because people were coming from far away. There's no place else around here doing this kind of thing, so they come from way down like, you know, by the airport. They come all the way up here because nobody else is doing these things for people in the aging network. By the way, it was one of the things that came up out of the needs assessment—what people said they could use—and it was short-term educational opportunities. The other thing that we do—I don't know if you call it a program—but the monthly class would be the professional development certificate. So it's not like every single term. This semester, we did (with ILEC) the Phenomenal Women's Conference, which was so good; we just had that one. And we have the poetry workshop coming up, and Art of the Golden Generation—the call for entries for that will be going out shortly. That'll be, I don't remember, maybe in August. It takes a long time to get it all together so we need a lot of lead time. Oh, Meaningful Aging. That's a new initiative, which is going to be the application of positive psychology principles and data to aging. So . . . for people over forty to reflect upon, “Am I living a good life? What else could I do to make it more meaningful?”

DY: Is that when people start reflecting on their lives? At forty?

BK: Oh, not necessarily.

DY: That just seems so young to me.

BK: We had originally said fifty, but we're finding that people younger want to be included.

DY: Oh, that's very interesting, Barbara.

BK: Well, it's not just at Kennesaw that people are running ragged, feeling like, “Oh, is this all there is?” Anyway, we've had one Meaningful Aging Conference already, and we're going to have another one coming up in June. So that should be a continuing set of classes which we will be able to market to, we think, senior living communities. This would be one that's probably more for community people rather than professionals. Although that's the thing: People get interested in both sides of this—for their own individual growth as well as [for] professional growth—if they're in the area.

TS: So you're holding some programs for professionals, and you're holding other programs for [the] community or anybody that's interested.

BK: Right.

TS: And you're charging for these?

BK: Yes.

TS: Where do you hold your conferences?

BK: Mostly over at the KSU Center. If it was really small—like the professional development class is meeting in the classroom at the ILEC House now, but it used to be at the KSU Center. People like [the KSU Center] because it's such easy parking over there for the most part. But it's awkward for us if our stuff is far away. So I don't know what will happen next year. You know we're going to get a new director of ILEC; Judy is retiring.

DY: From the institution?

BK: Yes. As of July, but she's going to continue with the Meaningful Aging. That's where her interest is now. She's going to come back home to us, and we are happy to have her.

DY: I'm crazy about Judy.

BK: Yes. She's a servant leader.

TS: So you're spending a lot of your time then organizing conferences and running conferences?

BK: Yes. And service for the Georgia Gerontology Society [GGS]. I'm the co-chair of the scholarship committee, which is sometimes worse than being the chair because you've got to work with somebody else. Like the students tell us in a group project; we know that's true, and we still make them do it. But anyway, [I'm] co-chair of the GGS scholarship committee, and I don't want to give a long story about this. But anyway, it's been kind of complicated because it's gotten involved with some other stuff. I spent a whole day last week just working on that, trying to figure out how in the heck we communicate with the Atlanta Community Foundation—[how we] jump through the hoops that they need in order to get our scholarship money so it doesn't come from the general fund. I'm a member of the board of the Georgia Gerontology Society so I do things with that. Oh, a big thing I'm involved with is our CAREing Center advisory board, [which] is really wonderful. They meet three times a year. We have some real heavy hitters on our advisory board—really, really well-placed people from the aging area.

DY: This is community?

BK: Community people who are on the advisory board. A couple of them are community representatives, but most are leaders of organizations in the aging network. So anyway, for this advisory board, Judy Stillion led us in one of her wonderful strategic planning sessions. She is so good; she sets it up in a way that

is really fool-proof. You end up with a strategic plan to work with. One of the things that they said to us in this strategic planning session, in talking about the certificates, they said, “Make sure that the certificates are nationally recognized, consistent with guidelines”—which sounds so simple. [It’s] not that hard to do for the graduate certificate because the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education [AGHE] has put out some general directions for that, and you can say, “Look, we do it just as the AGHE group does it.” But for continuing education, we are pioneering on this. One that I knew of closed down in North Carolina. There may be a handful of other continuing education certificate programs that are meaty like this, that go for such a long time and require a lot of students. There are some [programs] that take three days, and then [participants] take a multiple-choice test and they’re called certified, you know. So anyway, here I am with my advisory board telling me to do something, and good little girl that I am, people tell me to do something, I think I have to figure out how to do it.

So it brought me through a number of different new trails, and I did a presentation at the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. But I also called together a group—because I spoke by phone with Leonard Poon over at the University of Georgia, who is an internationally known researcher. He’s head of the Gerontology Center at UGA; he and I talked for an hour and a half. I was so shocked. I’m sure it was because it was December, and he wasn’t in his usual rush or on one of his trips. I think it’s also because he has just applied for a grant for a geriatric education center, which would be giving continuing education to people. So he was ready for hearing what I was talking about. He said, “You know, you and I need to call a workshop together.” So we did. And a third of the people at that meeting in Athens were from my advisory committee. Those were some really good people. So we are working on some kind of a statewide initiative to try to help with the education and training of people who work with older people. As I said, they get into it, and they don’t have any background. The advisory board’s concern was, “Well, here are all these different certifications. Where does ours fit in?” We think ours is really good, but who says so? There’s nobody out there to give it credence.

DY: You don’t have a board that certifies?

BK: Well, the advisory board thinks it’s fine, but who are they? I mean, nobody knows who they are. There is no certification agency for continuing education in gerontology. But if we could get the state to say, “Here are these different types of certifications; this is what we believe to be true and valuable.” And these are all people who are well-placed, as I said, so I think it’s kind of exciting.

DY: That is exciting!

BK: I hope a hundred years from now something will have happened!

TS: Yes, I see you’ve got people from Cobb Senior Services and Cherokee Senior Services, Atherton Place and Wesley Woods [Health] Center.

BK: Morehouse [College].

TS: Morehouse School of Medicine.

BK: And the head that, I mentioned Maria Greene, the head of the . . .

TS: Georgia Division of Aging Services.

BK: Division of Aging Services, not department.

TS: Greater Georgia's Alzheimer's Association.

BK: Ginny Helms. She's terrific. And Walter Coffey, who is in a way a competitor. But what was really great was these people who are heads of assisted living associations—who offer their own training—came to this meeting and all sat down together and said, “Yes, let's work on this.” Isn't that wonderful?

DY: There is a beautiful example of connection, Barbara, and connecting people to have something bigger than all these little parts.

TS: What is GAHSA? And Walter Coffey?

BK: Walter Coffey is [with] the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for the Aging; its [educational affiliate is] Georgia Institute on Aging. He does a lot of trainings for people in the types of housing that he oversees. His members tend to come from nonprofits. Who else is on [the CAREing Center advisory board]? Dan Day is [with] the Assisted Living Federation of Georgia, and his [programs] tend to be the ones that are for-profit. [He is affiliated with] Gaines Park Assisted Living, but he's also president of the Assisted Living Federation of Georgia. Genia Ryan, Georgia ALFA—Assisted Living Federation of America. She does a lot. Kathy [Kathleen S.] Scott's on there. But Genia Ryan is [with] Assisted Living Federation of America, and she does a lot of training herself. Jane Thomas is one of our supervisors who had a student in our professional development program. We like to have people who are partaking of our services [in addition to] the major people in the community. It's a challenge.

TS: Well, I know from just putting on two symposiums this winter how time-consuming it all is to do what you're doing.

BK: That's why we couldn't do it if we didn't have Patsy Matthews. She's so good at that.

TS: I guess I maybe had an ulterior motive in wondering how you were getting funded for all these things. Well, not really.

BK: Well, it was the president's special initiative, and I suppose they put money where they thought . . . If we get a new president one day, they could say, “Oh, we don't want money on that any more.”

TS: Oh, so you got money coming out of the president's budget?

BK: I think so. As I said, Judy Stillion was directly reporting to the president. Now I don't because it's through Judy and through the new ILEC director. But ILEC is a president's initiative, too. She comes up with these visionary ideas like Leadership, Ethics and Character, which has really caught on. People have really bought into that.

TS: Are you in the building with ILEC?

BK: I am, [but we are moving to House # 48 on Frey Lake Road].

TS: Are you going to be down there by yourself?

BK: No, no; ROTC is with us. They're in the garage, but it's a very nice garage. And we share the front bedroom. There's a wall in between, but for some reason they gave it an extra little . . .

TS: Remodeling what used to be the garage. Well, it sounds like you're doing some great things, and, if I understand correctly, you're going for state certification for these programs.

BK: If the state could come to some agreement. I think continuing education can be a little bit just-all-over-the-place is the problem. Now if the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education would say, "Hey, look what Georgia's doing; we ought to do something for continuing education . . ." In fact, that's what I presented on, and that's what I'm hoping we're going to do some more of through AGHE.

TS: Through who?

BK: AGHE is the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. If they would take it on, they have a lot of clout. They're part of the Gerontological Society of America. Some of these other groups are looking for profit; they're trying to feather their own nests, more or less. It could be seen that way, anyway. But AGHE, they're just academics who are really trying to agree on what the standards should be. Which, by the way, trying to get them to agree is not easy. I'm not saying it would be easy. But the [programs] that they give for the graduate and the undergraduate kinds of things, it keeps repeating itself. People ought to know about the biology of aging, the sociology of aging; it does repeat itself. And why shouldn't continuing ed have the same thing? So I'm hoping that AGHE will step in. But meanwhile, the state ought to have some agreement on what guidelines we're using and what different kinds of educational programs there ought to be.

TS: So it sounds like you've developed a statewide reputation, and you also have a national reputation with AGHE.

BK: That was one of the other things that the advisory board wanted us to do. I was kind of embarrassed to put it in our strategic plan, to develop national visibility. But I think we kind of are just little by little. We're not famous, but I'm making contacts, and Judy has made contacts over the years. I have got to tell you so that we'll see years from now whether this really happened. You know this, but I can tell you again. Betty Siegel would like for us to have a residential facility here for older people.

DY: Interesting.

BK: You know, where people would be able to go back and forth, use the library, come to our conferences and things. But where would you build it?

TS: We'll just have to get some more houses up the street [Frey Lake Road], I guess.

BK: I guess.

TS: Well, you know, Linda [H.] Damico is retiring this year, and she's going to a community at the University of Florida that I guess is kind of the model of what we would have here.

BK: It's beautiful. Oak Hammock. I went and visited there over the summer.

TS: Oak Hammock?

BK: Yes. I had my service award, and I used some of my travel money to go there to see Oak Hammock because that was what the president wants us to do eventually. It's got to be a little far down the road, but it's just one of those things that's possible.

TS: How big a place is Oak Hammock? Do they have a hundred acres or five acres? How much do you think?

BK: You know what? They are on the edge . . . Gainesville is not a big city, and so there was a lot more land; they're on the outskirts of Gainesville. They have a lot of land, not like this. We're so landlocked. I wouldn't know what you would say as far as acres, but it's a big, beautiful sprawling place. But you drive in, for example, and it takes you awhile to get through the property from the gates or from the big street into where the building is.

DY: Do you apply to live there?

BK: Oh, yes. And, for example, if you had a lot of needs for assistance, you wouldn't be able. It's independent living, but then there is an assisted living area, and there's a nursing home, too.

DY: So there's graduated care?

BK: Correct. So it's good for Linda because she doesn't have family who she could depend upon as she gets older. Hopefully she'll stay healthy all the way through and always remain in the independent living, but it's reassuring to know that those other levels are there if you need them.

TS: Well, that would be great. I wish y'all would hurry up and get that here.

DY: I think that would be excellent.

BK: Well, let's form a committee.

TS: I know Kathy's ready to move into it someday.

BK: I know. Let's build it.

TS: Not yet, but someday. [chuckle] So that can be your legacy.

BK: And the students; wouldn't they have fun? I mean, that would be a place for them to run back and forth and do things.

TS: Oh, it would be like Mr. Chips.

BK: One thing I saw at Oak Hammock is that the students from University of Florida would come and give performances there. It was an opportunity for the students and their classes to do things. I guess it's kind of like service learning. But they're practicing the skills that they're trying to learn in their classes.

TS: And how reciprocal it can be, too, because you have all this [retired faculty] talent that could be used on campus, not to mention supporting programs on campus. So you get an audience for what you were doing.

BK: Yes. Well, one of the things that I want to do—and it seems simple enough to do—but I'd like CAREing to provide a list of possible class speakers. There are some people with amazing experiences, backgrounds that they could share, always in history, I guess, but you might know of some author out there who wouldn't mind coming once in a while to speak to a class. It would be nice to have a booklet that faculty could use that says, "This person can talk about the Bataan Death March," or, I don't know; I guess we'll run out of these people before too long. The old people will be the ones who were in Desert Storm.

TS: Yes. [chuckle] That's true. The Vietnam generation is getting up there.

BK: Oh, for sure.

DY: Well, we are they.

BK: And there are a lot of us.

DY: There are a lot of us. We have a lot of political clout.

- TS: That's a scary thought. Everything has always been oriented to the baby boom generation. When the baby boom generation was young, they were building elementary schools like mad and McDonald's hamburgers. And when they got middle-aged, then we got McDonald's salads and Wendy's salads. So I guess gerontology is going to be "the thing" when the baby boomers are there.
- BK: That's what we've been saying. Twenty years ago, when we started that first aging course in Sociology, demographers were saying that this is something we need to prepare for.
- TS: Well, the baby boomers have always felt that whatever age they were, that's the age that all of society should focus on.
- BK: Strength in numbers, huh?
- TS: I suppose so. It'll probably be a great sigh of relief when the last baby boomer departs the stage.
- DY: Well, I'd like to see at least another big social movement before we throw the towel in, myself. I loved the '60s.
- BK: Well, how about aging?
- TS: Well, this could be it; the cause of the elderly. The Gray Panthers.
- BK: Yes, she [Gray Panthers' founder, Maggie Kuhn] was ahead of her time. Well, she lived at the time of the civil rights revolution, and she applied it to the gray-haired. But aging is not what it used to be. And I'm not saying we created it, but we're certainly not . . .
- DY: We do not go gentle into that good night, as Dylan Thomas would say.
- BK: Right. And, like senior centers, for example—one professional meeting I went to, senior centers were talking about how they had to prepare for the change of generations.
- DY: We don't all play bingo?!
- BK: Right. We're not necessarily all going to want to go and play bingo!
- TS: Or they'd go on their Harley motorcycles to get there, I guess, if they did.
- BK: Well, there's much more emphasis now in gerontology, in aging services, that we really need to get to know the individual and relate to the person as an individual and meet their needs as such. Well, there we go. We want it our way. We're not going to just fit into that structured situation!
- TS: That's right. A revolution in the nursing home!

DY: I have a short story by one of my favorite writers, Lee Smith. It's set in a nursing home and the older people—and they are older—form a club in which they write. It's a writing club, and it's called the Happy Memories Club. Well, the wonderful thing about it is the protagonist in the story—the main character—her life story is very racy and very interesting. Of course, she runs up against this Victorian—“Well, we can't talk about that!” She talks about their past, her life, her loves, sex, all of that. I think you would enjoy that.

BK: Okay, great. Thank you.

TS: Before we go too far, in addition to the service award that you got in 2003, you got the Philip Preston Community Leadership Award a few years before that [1999]. That oftentimes is something a little different than professional service, although not always. I wonder if you'd talk a little bit about what you were doing at that time that caused the committee to give you that Philip Preston Award. Phillip Preston was a faculty member here, but he had a career before he came here. I was in Leadership Kennesaw with him in '89-'90. He must have died that year because that's when we set up the Philip Preston Award.

BK: I don't think that one required that your service be related to your discipline.

TS: No, actually, it said it shouldn't be because he was an accountant, but he was in a Japanese-American society and had done all kinds of different things. They haven't always followed the concept, but the [award's] concept was that it was going to be non-professional service.

BK: Right, right. And I'm trying to remember because I was involved in a whole lot of different kinds of things. You and Kathy came to hear the Pandean Players. Do you remember the Pandean Players? I was on their board for a while. I don't remember what it was in particular I may have claimed to have accomplished for them, but whatever . . .

TS: Well, you got us to go to the concert.

BK: Right. I did drag a few people.

TS: Your daughter was in Pandean Players, right?

BK: No, she was the student of one of the Players. So we were so obliged to this woman for what she was doing, we thought, “We'll support her group.” But anyway, I remember going to different people and asking them to write me letters because you had to do a documentation [for the Preston Award], and I didn't know exactly how to document other than to get people to write these letters. So they would write these nice letters; one was for Pandean, and one for things that I had done with the Girl Scouts and school volunteering. What else? Oh, church. I remember they looked back at my records and saw all this stuff I had done with Sunday school and different things. So mine was not the kind of thing that would be one particular great quantitative service. I think mine was like the water

torture: some of this and that and the other and many, many, many things. Oh, the American Sociological Association—I had a beautiful letter from somebody up in Washington saying that they were doing something in Georgia, and they wouldn't have done it if they hadn't known that I was going to be the one in charge of it. You know, things like that. It's my connections again, all over the place. So it was that; lots and lots of different things. GSA [Georgia Sociological Association]—I'd gotten a meritorious service award. So it was a lot of those little things, like you said.

TS: Well, thank you for the interview.

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