

## **Kitty Richmond Cone**

I was born in Champaign on April 7, 1944, and then a couple of years later when my father returned from World War II, we moved to Florida. We moved to Florida and at this point, nobody was really aware that I had muscular dystrophy, although it was misdiagnosed as cerebral palsy when I was a child. Well, I, I have no idea what my story is, you know. I think they're discovering that it, it can manifest itself in all different ages, but mine, well, we moved to Florida and my father was practicing law there and, in Punta Vetra Beach, Jacksonville Beach area, and so I was in school and the school teacher actually said to my mother that I was walking on my toes, and so that began an entire process of my seeing doctors, and right about that time, well, I also made a comment earlier about how the Army hospital and doctors were like an HMO and the treatment was poor and the physicians were very poorly trained, and well, looking back on it, I think that that was some of my father's motivation was because that was a way of having health care coverage for me, but I don't know. Anyway, my father, there was something going in the law firm that he thought was unethical and so he left the firm, and much to my mother's horror, and, and then went back into the Army, and so then we moved to Augusta, Georgia, and that was where they really began treating me and I had a whole series of casts and braces. I was in second grade, so I was probably six or seven years old, and we lived there for one year and then we moved to Bethesda, Maryland, where we lived for third, fourth, and fifth grades, and I had a series of surgeries at Walter Reed Hospital, and all this was based on the idea that I had had, I think at this point they thought it was cerebral palsy, so they were, and what happened was that I was worse

afterwards. We were living in a private house in Bethesda, and so then when I was in sixth grade, my father was sent to Japan and so my mother didn't want to go until he had gotten everything established, and so I went back to Champaign and went to Dr. Howard elementary school for sixth grade. My mother's parents were from Champaign, yes, she was from Champaign, and so we got an apartment or something and, and I actually was very happy there because I got to spend a lot of time with my grandfather, whom I adored, and I had a really good friend, and then we moved to Japan and we lived in a situation where there was a, like a Japanese second wife and her mother living downstairs and we were living upstairs, and so that was very culturally enriching because I used to go down and have teacakes with Obasan, the grandmother, and the, the, the daughter taught me Japanese dancing and I was a little tottery, but I was, you know, I really enjoyed doing it, and all this period, I was still moving around without any apparatus on. I had had casts, but didn't have to use crutches with them. They were walking casts. That was to stretch out my, stretch out my heel cords, and then so I was there for seventh and eighth grade and I attended an American school there on the military base, what was it, Washington Heights, it was called and it was very near the Magi Shrine, and my father's roommate in college had been an ornithologist and my father was an ornithologist by, by hobby, and so the, so we were invited by other ornithologists to go visit them in their sort of vacation homes. So we traveled all over Japan to these beautiful places and looked for birds and, and then I, of course, as a young pre-teen wanted to stay on the base and, you know, hang out and go to church and my parents were like, "We're going off to this beautiful place, don't you want to go?" Anyway, I had surgeries there; two different hip surgeries, and I knew I was getting worse. I, I

could tell after the first surgery that I had lost a lot of muscle and, you know, I, I think there just wasn't the diagnostic capacity at that point or the understanding of what they needed to do for me, which was probably nothing. Well, they, they, it was an appropriate thing to have done if I had had polio, which was the diagnosis at this point. It changed from cerebral palsy to polio, but in any case, after I had the second surgery, I started walking with a real significant limp, and then they sent me back to, I was 13 by now and so when I was 14, I was, my mother brought me back and I lived at, well, I lived in a variety of places, but I boarded at this boarding school, Hope and Arms, which was in Washington, D.C., and I was walking with a cane and then, you know, after the election campaign was over, my aunt and uncle came back to Washington and I lived with them and my three cousins. I think the election campaign was Kennedy and Nixon, or which one was it, no I think it was, it must have been. Oh my God, I don't know. My, my uncle was the Republican Congressman from Champaign, so they were, they were, his name was William Springer. It must have been, I just, I was 14 at the time, so that would have been '58, and I turned 15 that April, no I turned 14 that April. Well, you know, Congress, it was a congressional election. He was, he was running for re-election, my uncle, and so they always campaigned there and then the girls, you know, when they got older, they boarded and when they were younger, they would go to Dr. Howard and then, you know, come back to school in Chevy Chase. So anyway, so I went to this, this boarding school, Hope and Arms, and then I moved in with my aunt and uncle, and they became sort of my, you know, they, I just loved them. They were so good to me. So then, so then at the school, I don't ever think of this as being discrimination because I just loved the school, but it was four stories tall. Now it has a flat campus and it, you know,

it's moved into more ample quarters, but it was in these old, sort of brownstone type places and so, you know, to get to the Art Department was on the third or fourth floor, and so I just, you know, I think that they were concerned and so my family looked around. I was still using the cane, but I couldn't go up the stairs and I was limping and, well, it exhausted me, yeah, and then, you know, I remember that my cousins started carrying me up the stairs, you know, they'd make a chair with their hands and, yes, all three of my cousins were students there.

So then, so then I, my family was sent to Richmond, Kentucky, and so I went to join them there and I really, I was 15 or 16 I guess, and I was there for one year and this was called the Boddle School, and my best friend who recently contacted me, we went to two schools together. This was, my father was teaching ROTC at the Eastern Kentucky State College and so I went to the private school that was associated with the, with the College and we were renting a house that was next door to this mansion and the girl who lived there became my best friend, and we used to, they also had a farm so we would take care of the baby pigs and stuff, and I didn't really like the school. I thought, there was a lot of cheating that went on in school and that was very problematic for me, and I loved the girls. There was a really nice group of girls, but you know, the, I had never been around overt racism before. I mean I'd been around it, but I wasn't conscious of it and, and that really bothered me. This was the first school I went to in Kentucky and it was the Boddle School. Well, it wasn't in the school. I mean everything was segregated, of course. This was in Richmond, Kentucky, and the town itself was very welcoming to me, you know, I got very involved in civic activities and, you know, enjoyed the people a lot, except that their, you know, the, people's attitudes were just overtly racist. Well, you

know, I remember that, you know, people would say “nigger,” and would use the term indiscriminately and they would say, they would say derogatory things about black people and I had never heard that, and my mother would have like washed my mouth out with soap if she had heard me, you know, say something like that. Although, my father used to, in his later years, bait me about stuff because he was from the South, but in any case, so what I remember very specifically that we had a group of friends and we always had slumber parties together, and, and, and one night we played this, well, the first thing that happened was that, you know, I, I would just hear their comments. So one night, there was this show on the television. It was an old movie and the African-American butler had been accused of stealing something and it had really been the rich brother, who was evil and it came out in the end, and I said, “You see, this is the problem,” you know, “This is,” and it was like, “Oh, Kitty, be quiet,” and then we had a slumber party and we, they played this game called “Truth or Dare,” something like that, and I don’t remember how it went, but so anyway, somebody else went first and then I was the second person, and so you told the person things about themselves that, you know, whatever. So a number of people said to me, “We really like you, you’re really a neat girl, but we wish you would shut up about the niggers,” and I was just like, you know, “That you just won’t stop bringing it up,” and you know, “Why are you that way,” and so I, you know, that, it’s seared in my memory. I can remember where I was lying and everything. It was, you know, I can’t remember the date, but other than that, I really, you know, and these were girls from the Boddle School at the slumber parties, and you know, not all of them did it. I mean it was some of them who did it and it was, it was, it made me feel, I

never really felt hurt, but it also made me angry. So I wanted to get out of Richmond. I, you know, I didn't like living in Kentucky.

So my, my parents were applying to different boarding schools in Washington again, and I got accepted at a number of them. I got accepted at \_\_\_\_\_ Friends and someplace else, but I decided that I wanted to go to, to Mount Vernon Seminary because Jessie, my friend, who was there in Richmond, was going there and that was in Washington. It was just, you know, it must have started out as a, some religious affiliation and it was them, and it was high school and junior college, and all of those schools were places where, except they were academically really excellent, and so I was so happy at Mount Vernon. I really loved it, you know, it was, I felt challenged academically. I was very involved. I was the co-editor of the yearbook, and it's on Foxhall Road and it belongs to George Washington University now and is called something else, and I was, as I recall, I was very popular, and so then, for a variety of reasons, the Headmistress threw me out, but all having to do with disability. I think, I think she was worried about liability, looking back on it, because she gave me these prohibitions. One of them was that I had to take my bath in the dorm mother's bathtub, rather than in my own suite, which you know, four girls in a bathroom, and I couldn't get out of the dorm mother's bathtub because it was so huge, so I started taking my baths in my own suite, and the other thing was that she told me she didn't want me walking down to the hockey field. So there was going to be some award given and I knew that I was getting the award and, and you know, they have these teams in it. In Mount Vernon it was the Yellow and the White team and my team, you know, was doing something and so I really wanted to go. So the way I used to get around was I would put my left hand on

somebody's shoulder and then I would use the cane in my right hand, and so I walked down to the hockey field and Mrs. Lloyd found out about it and she pulled me out of Art class one day and just said, you know, "I'm so disappointed in you. You haven't obeyed the rules," and I, I was their, I was their best student and so I was outraged, you know. I thought she was so unfair, but I also, so then, well no. She left that to my aunt to tell me that they were putting me out. Well, my aunt was driving, you know, her three girls and me up to Champaign for Christmas to visit our grandfather, so this was at the end of the Fall semester when this happened, and this was my first semester at Mount Vernon. So I was probably 16 now and I guess that was in 1960.

So then, my family was again living in Augusta, Georgia, so I went back to Augusta and I, I, well, they gave me the option of being a day student, but I was just, at Mount Vernon, but I was furious. I was so humiliated and I didn't, my aunt said, you know, something about, she probably said, "Kitten, Mitten," you know, "I have some bad news," you know, and Kitten Mitten was what my aunt called me and she said, you know, the, the, "The school thing's not working out with you being a boarding student and Mrs. Lloyd is upset and, but you can come and live with us," and go to Mount Vernon on a daily basis and Mrs. Lloyd, and there was no concept on my aunt's part that she could fight this. There was no consciousness whatsoever and it absolutely was the culture then and, you know, my family was scrambling around. I mean I was so, you know, in some ways, I was very unlucky because I went to thirteen schools, but you know, the combination of the disability and the military, you know, meant that I was all over the place, but on the other hand, you know, other, other kids with disabilities my age were in segregated schools and getting a lousy education. So my parents were making

sure I had a rigorous academic foundation and they had both gone to really good schools and, you know, education was highly valued in my family and they were doing their best to try to help me get through school. So then I went back to Augusta, Georgia, which is where they were, my father was stationed again and I, I went to the public school there, Richmond Academy, a big school, much bigger than any school I had ever been to, maybe 2,000 or more students, and all white, and I hated it, you know, I was sort of a snob and this was now in the Spring semester of '61. I was in my junior year and I was a snob in that I wanted, I wanted good challenging classes and, you know, I, I, I think I didn't think much of, I just didn't, I just hated the South and Richmond Academy, Augusta, Georgia is not, you know, not the most open-minded place in the world, even today, so I, you know, I, I think that they had me use a wheelchair and this was, I'm trying to remember if I walked around or what. I think I didn't. I think I used it for my senior year so I, it was a big campus with a lot of space between the classes and everything and there were classes upstairs, so my classes got kind of screwed up. I was in the middle of studying the \_\_\_\_\_ and I ended up switching into Cicero and, but there were classes upstairs that I didn't take because, so I think I took two years of English because it was on the ground floor. My mother hired someone to drive me to and from school and, and at the end of the semester of my junior year in high school, and again I got into it on the race issue. There was one very ugly incident that I, and so the sort of things that I found pleasure in were church. Well, you know, I, I was in the cafeteria and this group of boys, small group, was talking about shooting up nigger town over the weekend and they had already done it. It was the past weekend with BB guns and, you know, everybody just acted like it was nothing and I was so horrified, and so

then, you know, it was like then it became like a crusade with me and I remember I wrote, I wrote a, there was an incident about people, some African-Americans had gone into the church, a church in Augusta and I had this idea that it was, had something to do with one of the Eisenhower family members, but I can't really remember, but in any case, they had gone in and they had been asked to leave. So I wrote a letter to *The Augusta Chronicle*, which they didn't print, about, you know, Jesus doesn't care about the color of our skins. He cares about our souls and, you know, He loved all people and, you know, just some young valuations and heartfelt, and I, I remember showing it to my father thinking he was going to be really pleased and he was like, "I don't think you should send that letter." In any case, so, so I, at the end of that semester, over the Summer, I said to my parents, "I'm not going to go to school any more. I've had it and I don't like these Southern schools. They won't, you know, I'm not working out anywhere I'm going, you know, and so this is sort of the only thing I have going for me is my brains."

So my father arranged, and this was probably, you know, he paid the tuition for another girl to go to this Catholic high school, Acquinos High School, in Augusta, and I don't know if that was his way of getting me into the school or if it was just something he did out of niceness, but in any case, they took me. I was the only Protestant in the school and I was feisty, you know, I was, I, I would challenge the priest when we had religion classes. He would come in, we had them every day, but he would come in once a week and talk to us about matters that the nuns were not supposed to talk about, hygiene, sex basically, and you know, I, I argued with him about birth control and the infallibility of the Pope. I mean here I was, this, but he told us, you know, he told us things that are like when Catholics talk about this stuff, it's, you wouldn't believe it if you hadn't been there,

but he, he told us that if you were French kissing on an airplane and the airplane crashed, you would go straight to Hell because, because you had aroused the boy. I mean, crazy stuff, but, but also, you know, I think he genuinely believed it. I have no idea, but you know, and I, I got into, well, we were talking about, about birth control. The first thing he did was read us something by Margaret Sanger about, you know, how important birth control was because, you know, babies were being put in garbage cans and dying, and, you know, there were very poor mothers who were dying because they were just having one baby after another and so that made sense to me, and so then he started saying, then he started explaining the Catholic point of view, which was that a child that is not brought into the world because it is, because of birth control is poorer than the poorest child on earth because they will never \_\_\_\_\_ vision, and so I argued with that. So I was always sort of a problem case, I guess, and Vatican II hadn't taken place yet, which liberalized the Catholic view and took place in '62, and I graduated in May or June of '62. Well, you know, and I wanted to be a Catholic because everybody was a Catholic. So I went and took, you know, classes and I just couldn't believe in the infallibility of the Pope. I was already an Episcopalian, which is almost being a Catholic. So anyway, so then, then I, you know, that year I went around and looked at colleges. We went to Emory. I think we went to Sophie Newcomb. Well, I was using a wheelchair only at school. It stayed at school, even though this school was very small. It was like maybe 25 girls and 25 boys in the class and they were separated, so it was a very small school, the Catholic school, but I needed the wheelchair because I was falling down. It was a manual wheelchair and I didn't use it at home. I drove myself to school, got into the chair, and then drove home afterwards and I wasn't, when I, when I was

looking at colleges, I wasn't really thinking that I was going to use the wheelchair, although I'm sure my parents thought that, but I remember going around to the dorms at Emory and, you know, just realizing that the, the, the campus was so large, and we didn't think in terms of somebody helping me, you know, that just, I don't know why. I think, I think my parents, you know, probably figured that they could pay my roommate, you know, to help me with whatever I needed help with, but I, I really, we, I think it just wasn't feasible, but I wanted to go, what I really wanted was to go to a women's college, and so we were considering Sophie Newcomb because it was in the South. It's Tulane and, and I don't remember what happened with that, and you know, when I was in, in high school, I always thought I was going to go to, you know, Wellesley or Vassar or something like that and that was clearly out of the question because of the weather and everything. So the next thing I know, I'm going to the University of Illinois and I don't know how that happened, except that it was right there where my grandfather was, my, everybody, you know, my uncle was the Congressman from that District and then, well, I found out about the program on campus when I got there. They obviously did.

Well, you know, I realized there are many errors in that oral history, you know, because what they told us was they just wanted your actual voice and not to self-sensor and not to study up, you know, or anything like that. I was the only one that took them at their word and now that I start some trouble.

So anyhow, I got there and I, I was, I was actually happy there, you know. I don't think I went through the interview process. It was probably connected to my uncle, but I, well the truth is I had excellent SAT's and I had straight A's. I was qualified, but I don't remember going through an interview process, not at all. When Mary told me that she'd

gone through an interview, I was like, “What interview?,” you know, I was like, but maybe, you know, maybe I, I probably shouldn’t even say that because I don’t know, you know, that’s a wild guess, and maybe I did go through some interview and I don’t remember it, but my first recollection is going with a group of students for functional training week into the Quonset hut that was the major, you know, place where they did the, the tarpaper shacks. They were Quonset huts. That was my first memory was going in there and then Chuck Elmer took us all over to a dorm and we had to learn how to do things that we, you know, because I wasn’t used to being in a wheelchair and I, you know, my wheelchair was on campus and I was at home, and so I was walking and I had to make the transition to using the wheelchair and getting onto the toilet from a wheelchair and that kind of thing, to transfer. The bed was low and so Mary Lou had to show me how to get into it. So, so I really liked the rehab program in the beginning. I thought it was, I thought it was neat and I wanted to participate in the activities. I, I became a cheerleader. I, for the wheelchair basketball. They didn’t have cheerleaders for the football. It was, the football was very, it was organized as a, just a U of I sport. There were two teams and they didn’t play any other teams, and that may have changed. Well, there, there were, there were, it was beginning to be like that, but the, the Gizz Kids, which was the basketball team, played the, played teams, other wheelchair basketball teams and we were the cheerleaders for the team, but we also, we also went out on, they had this tour that took place during semester break and we rode around in, in two of those, of those blue and orange buses and there were square dancers and the basketball players and the cheerleaders, and we all traveled around together, and there was no heat on the buses and we were freezing to death, or very bad heat. I used to have

a couple of pictures of myself in, at U of I, cheerleading, but I don't have them anymore. I don't know what happened to them.

Anyway, so, you know, I, I went in and did the exercises with Chuck Elmer, which was the, the substitute for PT, I mean for PE, and then I took Swimming one year for Athletics, and at the same time, I started out being a really serious student and then, well, it was terrible, you know, it's embarrassing. I only went for the final at the end of the year. I don't think they took attendance. I was looking at my grades and my grade point average was pretty good, you know, it was A's and B's. Well, you know, I guess they didn't take attendance. They didn't let me slide because nobody knew who the heck I was, but you know, and if they had, they would have checked me in more carefully, but let's see. I had some classes that I loved. I loved English Literature and so I tended to want to go to those classes, but I didn't know that Tim moved classes to the ground floor that way, but I knew that he did it and that's really good, that's really good. Well, you know, I think Tim was an amazing, was an amazing person in terms of his vision and his implementation of his vision, and for the time he was living in, you know, it was a pretty amazing thing that he accomplished. My problems had to do with, you know, with my desire to be very independent.

Well, in the beginning I attended all my classes and then in the, the Summer of my freshman year, my mother died suddenly, and it was the end of my freshman year, but I had already started to get political because I had been elected to the Student Senate. She died of cancer, but I didn't know anything about it. They had kept it from me, which I don't think is a good thing to do to a child. I have a brother, younger, six years younger, George, and so they were still living in Augusta and my mother went to

Washington to visit. Well, this was another situation where the Army doctors didn't catch it. They thought it was nerves. It is really poor medical care, and yet the idea of it is good, you know. Well, look at the VA. The VA is good in a spotty way because of some misdiagnoses. Well, I, I was so grateful to have the military medical care, that, you know, and I always went to military bases, you know, but I didn't need anything. I mean, I stayed away from, well, my mother kept going in and saying she couldn't swallow and they never took an x-ray. They just said, "Oh, it's nerves," you know, take this or that, and my mother was an alcoholic, so it may very well be, I mean I think that probably, she died of throat cancer, which is fairly, that's, and so I think that she went to visit my aunt in Washington, D.C. because they lived there and my aunt took one look at her and got her into I think it was G.W. Hospital or whatever, and I thought it was Georgetown. I mean I can't, I can't remember, and so they knew that she had cancer, but they, you know, they told me there was just, you know, she just was thin and that she was getting whatever and then, and then one day, a cousin of mine who lived in Danville up here, my mother's first cousin, Danville, Illinois, came over to tell me that my mother had died and I just couldn't believe it. I mean, I was like, "Where did this come from?" So, so then I went back to school and after the semester was over, I went to Washington to be with my, you know, aunt and uncle and the girls, the aunt that called me Kitten Mitten, and I only have two aunts. One is my, well, one was my father's sister and one was my mother's sister. The one in Washington was my mother's sister and she essentially ended up becoming my mother, you know, and she sort of started out when I was in ninth grade, you know, because she was watching over me because the family was having its problems, and so my father came and picked me up and we went back to Augusta and he

had hired this young military couple to sort of keep house for him and it just was not going well. I mean, they were feeding him spaghetti every day and everything, so I decided okay, I'm going to stay here and make sure things go well, and my little brother was there and, you know, I was trying to help my father with him too, because he needed somebody around him, you know, like he got stung by a bee one day and swole all up and I called my father to come get him, and so I stayed in Augusta for one semester, just like sort of trying to heal us or something, and then I went back to school, and by that time, you know, I had already gotten involved in the NAACP on campus and I had run for Student Senate on, I remember, I remember I had an interview. This is so weird, with Roger Ebert. He was the Editor of *The Daily Illini*. Roger and some other people, and they asked me questions like, "Who is Harry Tebow,?" "Who is Revelow P. Oliver?" I mean I remember the questions and I didn't have a clue. It was people on campus, but I got *The Daily Illini* endorsement anyway because I was running on a political platform and, and I was, you know, I had various constituencies. There were the disabled students, there were my sorority sisters, there were the radicals, and the girls in the dorm. So I beat out, you know, the other two candidates and got elected and had started going to meetings, and I don't know, I guess, I guess as soon as the election, I can't remember, but you know, I started going to meetings and, and so then I came back and I had lost my seat, you know, after not showing up for the Fall semester of '63, and so in 1963, oh my goodness, okay. Well, there was so much going on in the civil rights movement and I just became consumed with it. I wanted, that's what I wanted to do. So, and I, I am an organizer by instinct, that's just the way I am, and so, you know, I wanted to be doing, you know, fundraisers to send money to the South, and help organize for the \_\_\_\_\_

Freedom Singers and just, you know, put out pamphlets and do all this sort of stuff, and you know, my concern about college was not, and I had, you know, I mean and this is like so obnoxious, but I had inherited some money from my mother. So somehow or another, college didn't seem as important as it, you know, as it had, and well, you know, that was a unique time to be alive. Well, you know because you're '44 too, and the issues seemed so pressing and it was kind of like if you got it, you had to do something, and obviously I couldn't go to the South for Freedom Mississippi Summer or something like that, so I did everything that I could do, you know, to try to be of support.

So during that period of time, I think Tim began to get concerned about, about primarily being Rudy, Rudy Frank, because he wanted us to be, he wanted all the students in the rehab program to be, you know, and maybe I'm paranoid, but I think he wanted us to be solid citizen types, low-key, and Rudy Frank and I were both activists and he used to challenge me all the time, and that's because I started out as a Republican thinking that was the party of Abraham Lincoln, you know. So, well, one time they did a skit at the, and I don't think Tim wrote the skit, but they, you know, the Rehab Center had some involvement in it. It was, you know, we got together. We were kept together a great deal. We, there was a sports program. There were, banquets were, you know, organized by the Rehab Center. There were events that, you know, a lot of activities that kept the disabled students together as a group, and by this time, I'd, I had branched off into politics and I had friends who were disabled and it was all very positive, and they made fun of people who were in wheelchairs, who were being activists. I remember that, but the incident that I recounted in my oral history was the worst, you know. The gathering with all the students in the disability program was, and that wasn't anything

important, just sort of a social function. I mean all, however many of us there were, we all came to that and people were given awards and, I was probably a sophomore, so I think in the Spring of '64, and so I can't remember the skit very well, but it was, you know, it was, it was making fun of people who were political and it kind of seemed to me like it was a bit mean-spirited, but in those days, the Left on the campus, I mean to call it the Left seems weird, because the things that we were doing are now so accepted, but they weren't in those days. So I think, I don't remember if Tim talked to me about my activism, except for one time when I wanted to get out of the dorms and, yeah, I had found an apartment, Lando Apartments on Green Street, I think, and, and so I went to the Dean of Students, or the Dean of Women's Affairs, or what, whoever the women students went to and talked to her, and she said she thought it was fine and I said, "You know, I'm getting weaker, I'd like to have a chance to live on my own before I, you know, before I really can't do much," and she said, "Well, that sounds to good to me," and then she said, "Oh, well, let me check with Tim Nugent." So I had to go in for a meeting with Tim and my aunt. My aunt is extremely proper. She was extremely proper, but you know, totally on my side, you know, she, my mother's sister, and so we went in and Tim said things that just, you know, I think maybe he thought my aunt didn't know what I was up to or I don't know why, but I said, "Tim, I want to," you know, I didn't call him Tim. I called him Mr. Nugent. "I'd, I'd like to live in an apartment because I'm getting weaker and I'd like to be able to do, you know, have that experience while I can still really whatever," and he said, "Well, Kitty, they don't much about muscular dystrophy. Maybe you're getting weaker because of all those protests you're involved in," something to that effect. Muscular dystrophy was diagnosed when I was fourteen.

Actually, I was in the hospital when I turned fifteen at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, and they had a bunch of people in there and they took biopsies from all of us. It was a very oddball culture. So then, and he said, you know, he also said, I said, he said, "Well, what is it you think you want to do?," and I said, "I want to cook and, you know, take care of, you know, my own place," and he said, "Well, are you sure you don't want to just play house," which was, in those days, that meant something, sleep with somebody, Rudy Frank, well, it wasn't even Rudy at this point, you know, and I wasn't sleeping with Rudy either. It was just, and I don't know if that, it was awfully invasive. Well, my aunt didn't like it very much, but she didn't say anything, one didn't, you know, she would never, she was the last person in the world who would ever, ever, you know, she was very polite and also, we wanted to get out of there with what we, you know, what I wanted, but no, no, she wouldn't, you know, only once did she ever get very, very upset about something and actually write a letter, and that was to Pan Am Airlines when they wouldn't bring me home from Europe after taking me over there, you know, but so I got to move out. Tim agreed and, well, but I think, you know, I was going to her on the basis of my disability, so that makes some, some sense, but it was like I thought, "Oh good, this is going to work out." I mean, and the truth is, what I wanted was more freedom, you know, to be able to organize, you know, and I did want to live on my own, and I think I was a little bit older than other people because I had dropped out for a semester, and in those days, you know, women had hours. Men didn't have hours. We had to be in the dorm at 10:00, and, you know, I, I was, you know, running films and organizing things and I found it hard to get home at 10:00.

So anyway, the, the, the other thing that I didn't like, and this is something that I realize I am completely against the grain for, for everybody, is that I had an objection to the focus on sports for the program, the rehabilitation program, and I, you know, to me, I just, I have an attitude about sports, you know. On the one hand, I think, in general, I think sports are great. On the other hand, I think that they siphon off a lot of people's energy, you know, which maybe they would be using for something else because it's a coming together experience and, but I like sports. I used to, Dick Butkus was at the U of I when I was there and, you know, I would, I went to all the football games and stuff, but to me, there was just so much emphasis on the sports and if you were physically stronger, you did, you got more prestige from the rehab program than, then if you went to the Stokes Mandell Games and if you went to the Paralympics, and you know, there was a big emphasis on training, and maybe part of it was sour grapes because I was, I came from a family that was very interested in sports and here I was and was not able to, I mean, the only thing I could do was play ping-pong standing up. So, you know, I, I couldn't do any of the sports. I just, you know, it was, the sports programs were sort of designed for para's and quad's, and strong post-polio people, and, but I don't think that was it. I think it seemed to me like here you have a bunch of people who have different disabilities and there's this emphasis on competition for physical fitness, and it didn't seem right to me, and, and so I think nobody agrees with me about this. It's my own thing, but it was your way of getting prestige in the, you know, in the Rehab Center, was to be a good athlete, and the other thing that, I'm trying to think, my one other issue with the Rehab Center. I think that's exactly right that if you're not a wheelchair athlete, the people at the Rehab Center are indifferent to you. Well, the, that, I think that's right, and

then the other objection that I had, which I, I understand that you have to look at this in context, was that they would only take, with rare exceptions, people who could do everything themselves, the physical cream of the disability community, and so if you couldn't pass functional training week, you were out, and there was no concept that you could have assistance to accomplish what you needed to get done. I do understand how that developed. I, I think, you know, that it started out with veterans and I think Tim felt very strongly that in order to, for people to be accepted in the world, in the society, then people had to be completely able to do things for themselves and look very, very competent. I don't know if I remember Tom Jones, I think so. I've lost, completely lost my memory. Well, it was called functional training week. Well, I think I had never said the word "hell" in my life until I got here. It would have been considered a profanity to me, but everything's changed, everything's completely changed. So, well, I, I think every student will tell you that what Tim said to us in orientation, or Chuck Elmer or somebody, was that if you get, if you are seen receiving a push across the campus, then you are hurting everybody else's chances because there could be an employer and they would think, "Well, I can't hire one of these people because they're going to need a lot of help," and the, I, I found it very burdensome, as did other people with muscular dystrophy and with certain other very severe types of disabilities because I didn't have much arm strength. So, you know, you had fifteen minutes between classes. Well, maybe it was ten. I think it was fifteen though, and there were some people who were so physically weak that it took them, they were exhausted by the time they got to class, and, and, you know, people would always offer to push you, and to me, it made total sense to let people push you, particularly if there was a big snowstorm and the sidewalk hadn't

been cleared, and I was one of those people that was not very good at pushing my chair. I was slow. So to me, I just, I thought this is a, not a sensible use of my energy.

So that was the problem for me and, you know, later I thought about it that here we had such good access. We had curb ramps everywhere. We had ramps into buildings. We had elevators. Well, you know, so you had all of this access that was fabulous, you know. I, when I think back to the buses, I always used to use the buses that ran around campus on the fixed routes as, as an argument of why public, why public transit could be made accessible, you know. Back when I was in school many years ago, we had buses that ran around campus. So it, you know, all that was, was, was sort of, of a microcosm of what we would have liked to have seen the world be like, but it, it made it, you know, in the accessible bathrooms and all of that, it made it, we were accustomed to access and then when we got out, we were going to face all kinds of impossible situations. So to me, physical and attitudinal, exactly, and it didn't make sense to me that, that employers would, would see us as, with all these accommodations and that they, because we were getting a push, that they would reject us, but you know, perhaps that was the case. They rejected us anyway. I mean, did Mary Lou tell you her story about her first job? Her first job in Chicago was selling light bulbs over the telephone. I mean, she had a degree, she's incredibly smart, and she was selling light bulbs. She, she doesn't, she doesn't like to talk about that, but you know, I mean, that's. So you know, on the one hand, I totally appreciate what Tim did. It was a Herculean effort and he fought a, you know, he fought an incredible battle to, to get the thing done. By the time I got there, I think he was revered and had a great deal of prestige and control over the students, and I just, I think no other student had to put up with something like that, you

know, in the Rehabilitation Division. Well, you know, sometimes Mr. Kanitski was the one who, who, well, he was a, a smoother person, but you know, I remember, I went back there after the 504 Regulations were signed and I, in '77, and I said, you know, I ran into Mr. Kanitski and I said, "Isn't that great about the 504 Regulations?," and he was like, "Well, we're going to see," and I, I took that to mean that they thought that they were going to have an additional burden because they were going to have to do accommodations for all the other students besides the students they were watching, and they could no longer operate functional training week because the 504 eliminated that, and I, I, no, no, no, nothing was enforced in '73, you know, there were, not at all. It, It, there was no definition of who was a disabled person. There was no, well, people did after Califano signed it in the Carter Administration, yeah, because, you know, and Mary Lou probably told you this, but there were two different lawsuits pertaining to transit, and in one case, this was before the Regulations, and in one case, it was decided that non-discrimination meant that the bus driver just pulled up to the stop and opened the door. In the other, the Judge recognized that there was a need for some device so that a person in a wheelchair could get onto the bus. So, so they, it was really difficult to, to, for anybody who was leaping to comply, which wasn't the case, with a law that didn't have any regulations that explained it, because it was more complicated, then they had to cut out functionality week in '77. I mean, I, well, yeah, they'd have to understand the Regulations. All the Universities had to comply, not that they did. We fought that very hard.

Well, I never graduated, no, no. I think I have six hours to go. I, I, you know, I may have gone to Summer School. I'm not sure. I don't remember what happened with

me and Rudy. It was, he's passed, and he was an incredible person. He, he was post-polio and he was very, very small and frail, and he had a brace, and he walked very, very slowly, and Rudy was, he was so smart and he was a very good organizer, and I think he was from New York City, or New York somewhere, I'm not sure, but I think he, he was a real mover in the, in the campus sort of burgeoning student movement, and there really were only, you know, I don't know, maybe there were 30 of us on the campus. It was very small and, you know, who were really, really active, and we were active in SDS and then in SPEC, and then there was another group called Student Committee on Political Expression, and they were fighting for getting rid of women's hours, and there was, there were a variety of organizations, SNIC. They were mixed students in the NAACP Chapter. I would be, you know, I have been, if I had the money, I would get out all those archives from the, from the, from the University because I'm writing a novel about that period, and well, the guy who was head of our SNIC Chapter was black. His name was Ron, I want to say it's Ron Branham, you know, and I know that there is a Ron Branham who worked, was the Commerce Secretary who died in a plane crash, but anyway, his name was Ron and his girlfriend was active. She was black, but I don't remember her name. I don't remember anybody's names. It's really embarrassing, but one of the things that, that, that made our NAACP group more integrated was that a lot of times, the black ministers came and brought you know, from the town, and brought people with them, and, and then people came, people came from the South, you know, and would speak, and that was in the Summer of '64, and I'm trying to remember if anybody from our group went down. I think, I think somebody went down and, but we all were very aware of the danger that everybody was in, you know, and got regular reports when

somebody, you know, was chased out of town and, or, you know, and then, or threatened and so, and then, and then SNIC went through something and then we became Friends of SNIC because, I think Friends of SNIC was more Northern and more white, and, I'm losing my train of thought.

So by the time I was a Junior, really what I wanted to do, I was still going to classes, but for instance, I had switched to Sociology because I thought, well, that would be more germane to my interests, but I didn't like Sociology. I tended to want, well, I was gravitating towards becoming a Marxist. So I was on the FBI list. In fact, I have my FBI record. I requested it right at the time we were doing the 504 sit-in. So, you know, I was, I was, I was going to classes that really I needed to like Geology, where I couldn't fake it, but classes, Sociology classes to me were just common sense, but I tended to think, you know, for instance, that, that you could indeed find reasons for, for juvenile delinquency, as opposed to just studying what the characteristics of juvenile delinquency were, or you could understand the role of the family in society, as opposed to studying different types of families. So Mary Lou would go to classes and then she would give me her notes because she was a Sociology Major also, and I just wouldn't show up for classes, and then, and then, you know, there was this terrible thing that all the girls in the dorm did, we'd borrow Dexedrine, diet pills, you know, and I found that if I stayed up all night, I could learn an entire semester's worth of work in one night, so that's what I did with a number of my classes, and you know, I'm certainly not an advocate for Dexedrine. I think it's a dangerous drug, but I remember staying up all, you know, I had taken a high-level English Literature class and I stayed up all night and I read all of Sean O'Casey's plays and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and a whole bunch of Yates,

and who knows what all, and went in and took the exam, and retained it all, yeah, well, no, not really, you know, it's like, that's no way to study, you know, but so that was what I was doing in order to stay in school, and then I just decided to heck with it. I didn't want to. I, I think when I was in my Senior year, '66 and '67, the Fall of '66 and the Spring of '67.

Well, I wanted to just, I wanted to be an organizer and get out into the world, and so, well, the other side of it was that I was, you know, I, I always lived a sort of divided life between my, what was then a privileged life, you know, and I say that in all humility because if you act like you come from somewhere that you don't come from, you're belittling the experience of somebody who does come from it. So I was living this, this strange life where I was doing political organizing a lot of the time, and then after my mother died, the next year my maternal grandfather died in Champaign and left me money, so I, and I was thinking I was going to die and I, well, that was what they were telling me, the doctors. Well, well, the, the first doctors, I mean I found a letter from my aunt, the one who called me Kitten Mitten, Elsie Springer, to my mother after I, from the National Institutes of Health. This was the first and they were prognosing that I would die an early death, and my, my aunt wrote to my mother in Japan and, and first she said, this is so typical of my family, "I, I don't think we should tell her what she has because it might, it might make her depressed. She might see something on TV," and, of course, what I would have seen on TV was the telethon, the Jerry Lewis Telethon raising money, and, which we hate, and particularly people with muscular dystrophy. Well, you know, you love the services, but you hate the begging. So she wrote to my mother and then she wrote a second letter and she says, "Well, the doctor said that I need to tell her," and so

she said, "I've read all these pamphlets and, and I've, you know, talked to the doctors and I've tried to think of the best way to tell her and I told her, and she seemed a little subdued for a few days and then, and now she's back trying to get out of doing her Algebra homework again." So, you know, I don't think I, I don't think I, I mean I certainly believed, I certainly believed that I was going to die. They told me what I, no, they told me what, that I was going to continue to get weaker and that this was the prognosis, and, and because originally they were just, my family was going to tell me, "Well, the doctors are trying to do everything they can and they're just going to keep working on it," and then I found some pamphlets, and then, you know, I wanted to have a baby while I was still walking, and this was where I really got the idea and the doctor was just appalled. This was the doctor at the Muscular Dystrophy Clinic in Chicago and I was young, I mean I, I think I might have been in Chicago by then. I'm not sure if I had left the U of I by then. I, I, I think I, I think I was in my Junior year, actually, in college. Well, I don't know why he was appalled. I think it has to do, I think, I don't know. What he said was, "You know, you don't know if you're going to be alive in five years. How are you going to take care of the baby? Are you going to carry it or are you going to drag it around in a wagon?," which, you know, you tell these stories so many times, you don't know, you know, the reality from the story, but I do remember the doctor's name, but I don't want to say it. I don't know if he's still living. Well, that's the problem. I say everything and then I'm like, oh my God. So, but, oh God no, no, no, not Henry Betts, no, that's Chicago Rehab Institute, no, this was the Muscular Dystrophy Clinic, and so I, that made me, I, I, from the time I went to college, I always felt because of things I had been told, I don't know, things that, I had read a lot and, and the doctors at

that time, they did not separate it into the different types of MD in the same way that they do now and so I, you know, I didn't want to get married, I didn't want to, you know, I thought I was going to die, but then I kept saying to myself, "Look at me, I'm in much better shape than they, they said, you know, I'm still walking around. I don't believe it," and so I decided, I was taking a, a cure for muscular dystrophy, which consisted of pure testosterone and I was the only girl in the group, and I had, my voice went down so low and oh God, it really had an impact on me and I was, you know, I called up the doctor and said, you know, "Something is the matter here," you know, just real low, and he said, "Stop taking it immediately," but anyway, they had a whole, I went through a variety of different, you know, testing.

Well, my Junior or Senior year at the U of I when I was thinking about this was not what I want to continue doing, what I did was, that semester was the first really, well, there was the SDS March on Washington in 1965, but in 1967, there was a huge, like 500,000 or more, demonstration in New York City, the Spring of '67, before the outbreak of demonstrations at Columbia in '68. This is Spring of '67, April 15<sup>th</sup>, and so I organized, I think I started it in maybe the, January of 1967, to, no, I started it earlier, a committee to end the War in Vietnam, and if you started anything, you were the coordinator of it, so we were showing films about napalm, we were, we had something called the Non-Military Ball, you know, when they had the Military Ball, and my grandfather had this suit of Japanese armor over at his house, a Samurai, and so he had died, but it was, the house was still there because my aunt and uncle used to go back there when we were, you know, campaigning, so, so I had inherited Archibald, the Samurai Warrior, so we got him and took him over to the Student Union in the Samurai thing and

we, we put a sign up and said, "Come to the," it was either the "Anti-Military Ball," or the "Non-Military Ball," and then we sold tickets. It was a fundraiser and it was a huge success. I remember that, you know, we had a light show and a really good band, and people left the Military Ball and came upstairs in their uniforms and stuff and just joined our, our thing. So, you know, there was a lot of fundraising activity and a lot of just trying, teach-ins and all kinds of activities trying to educate people about the War, and so I was just doing that full-time. I was putting out the campus student newsletter for the Left, which was called *The Spark*, which SNIC and all the different groups, SDS, all the different groups. I was working on this political magazine called *The Illinois Political*, which folded after not too many, not too many issues. I can't remember if it was before or after I left. I think it was before I left and it was, it was based on, there was a really good, it was a slick political magazine and the guy who was Editor, Jonathan Eisen, had worked on a similar magazine at another college, which was called *The Advocate*, and it was a very good magazine and he was trying to replicate that and, you know, the people who were working on the Editorial part were like Roger Ebert and people like that, but it, so I was doing that, I was still doing civil rights work, and I just didn't have time to go to school. So, and I wanted to go to Chicago and be part of, you know, the organized Anti-War Movement that was larger than the campus. So I think it was probably in the, I think it was probably before that Spring semester, and I wanted to stay there so that I, I remember I, before Spring of '67, and before the big demonstration in New York. I had made the decision, but I hadn't left. I think, I was taking two classes in the Spring of '67, so that I could still have status on, just to be registered, and one of them was an English course that I aced because that was very easy for me, and another one was called Theory

and Pursuit, Theory and Practice of Communism. This was in my Marxist period and I was such a, I, I became a Marxist in the process of taking that class. That's what turned me into a Marxist and I flunked the course because I didn't take the exam, and you weren't supposed to become converted in the course of taking the class. So, but what I started to say is that in the Summers I was going off, one Summer I went to Europe with some friends. The next Summer I went to Russia and Eastern Europe and some other places. The next summer I went to Scandinavia. I was, so I was being very political during the school year and then I was going off on these trips because I wanted to do things before I died, and I got to go with the money I inherited from my mother's death and my grandfather's death. So it gave me the wherewithal to do these things, and that's what I started to talk about. So basically, I was an extremely visible member of the small campus Left and I think that that was disturbing to Tim, you know, because when we had, I think that he wants people with disabilities to appear very respectable and very much part of the mainstream, and not confront the powers in place, and I honestly believe, who knows, but I, I feel that the 504 demonstration was just instrumental in getting those Regs signed.

So I finally left campus in '67, after the end of the Spring semester and I moved to Chicago and did anti-war organizing. I was the main organizer of the 504 demonstration. Not necessarily the main leader. That was Judy Human. Well, I was put on staff for the Student Mobilization Committee to end the war in Vietnam and I did that for a number of years and got a lot of experience in organizing, and I also, and my cousin Ann, who's like my sister, came to visit me during that time and I'd already told her that we had, we'd gone to Europe together and, my aunt's daughter, the three Springer girls, we called

ourselves sisters because we were just sort of raised together from the time I was 14. I had told Ann that we had had a small demonstration in the Spring of, of '68, and it had been attacked by the Chicago police, and so then I went on vacation with the family for three weeks or something and then Ann came to visit me during the period of the Convention and, you know, I, people moved me out of the way when the police came in because they barged in in \_\_\_\_\_, and, but I got separated from Ann and, and, you know, I went home after, you know, by about 8:00, I went back to the office and did work and then I went home, and Ann came staggering back in and she said, "Oh my God, Kitty, they threw this little old lady through the window and they held her in a hotel and she wasn't even part of the demonstration," and it was very radicalizing for her, you know, she was like, well, that's what we all believed, you know, that nothing like this could happen in America, and, well, I had told her, you know, that the police had attacked our demonstration, which was organized by Women for Peace, I think, and it was just an ambush because they gave us a permit and then they yanked it at the last minute. I think it was to show us that demonstrating at the Convention was not a good idea.

So, you know, I was very active in that and then, you know, I, I worked very particularly organizing high school students and there were like 110 high schools that we organized, and so I did that until I think 1970, and then in 1971, I, I jumped around, oh, then I moved to Atlanta and I did the same thing in Atlanta, anti-war, and it was so much fun in Atlanta because Atlanta was wide open. People who then later rose to prominence. Carter was the Governor. We didn't like him at the time, but so we were working with a couple of GI's and we worked with, it was such an open city. You could get press. You,

the head of the AFL-CIO, the head of the Alliance for Labor Action, which was the Teamsters and the Autoworkers, the, the churches, the black churches, just, there was this huge coalition that we built and there were regional demonstrations against the war and I remember that one of Dr. King's daughters spoke and, you know, so I was the organizer. I mean I liked to do things behind the scenes. If forced to go out and give a speech, I can do it, but I, you know, I prefer to be behind the scenes, and so I just got a lot of experience in organizing coalitions and, you know, working with different types of people and believing that you could all, in spite of whatever differences you might have politically, you could, anybody who agreed with a particular issue, you know, that you could get them together, and that I, I think, you know, with a few more moves I ended up coming out to Oakland in '72, and I was working on something called the Committee for Democratic Election Laws and, a full-time activist and enjoying life. I, I feel like I was so privileged to live through that period of time.

So then, and just by chance, I came in contact with CIL, the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley, through getting my wheelchair. Judy Human came out here for that in '72, and then she went back to Washington or New York, I'm not sure, because she wasn't here when I got, got involved, but I wasn't, I wasn't involved with CIL. I didn't even know about CIL in '72, and then CIL was located on University Avenue at the time. It's on Telegraph Avenue now and getting ready, well, it's getting ready to move into the big new Ed Roberts Campus, so, and it's completely independent. I'm sure Zona will talk to you about it, but it's a bunch of just different disability organizations, many of which grew out of CIL and they're all going to go into a central campus called the Ed Roberts Campus, and it's, it's supported by the City of Berkeley

and the Department of Transportation. Its, its right at Abart Station, at the Ashbee-Bart Station, and its state-of-the-art design and, you know, combined IT and Reception and it's a great idea. Anyway, so, so I got to CIL through a broken wheelchair and they had a wheelchair repair department, and I was like whoa, that is very cool because in those days, it was a power chair. I got my first power chair in Chicago. I, I, I broke up with the man I was living with and so all of a sudden I had to get around on my own and I, I moved into, of all places, Marina Towers, the corncob buildings in Chicago that used to be the highest buildings, and, you know, I was like a little organizer person and all these sort of normal professional people lived in that building. So anyway, so when I got out here, the, and I came in contact with CIL, the first, I started doing volunteer work because I thought it, the services, they offered individual services, and I liked the idea that they were trying to fulfill or to fill in the gaps, which were not, they existed in service delivery systems, and one of the things that I discovered was that everybody, most everybody who worked there who had a physical disability like mine, had attendants, personal care assistants, and those were paid for by the state. This was in '74, when I got in touch with CIL, and so, so I, I wanted, well, I, I wanted personal care attendants. I wanted to have that because I was living with friends and comrades who just did everything for me, but it, it, you know, I felt like I needed to accommodate to their schedules and that sort of thing, and it, it would mean that I could do what I wanted when I wanted. So I also wanted to do some volunteer work for them, which was a whole different kind of thing for me. I'd, I'd been just doing straight political organizing for a long time. So I went in and did volunteer work, and then I decided I wanted to work at CIL, so I went to Ed Roberts, who was the Director, and I said, "I'd like to work here if there's any place for

me,” and he said, “Well, what would you like to do?” I said, “Well, I don’t know how to do anything except political organizing,” and he said, “Well, then you can work in the Community Affairs Department and you can do that.” This was in ’74. So then I, the, the first thing I decided to do, you know, because I was just on my own, was working with somebody, Hale Zucas, who was really an incredible mentor to me. I organized a little coalition to get ramps in downtown Oakland and, curb cuts, and we got, you know, \$100,000 the first year and then, you know, this little committee that I set up went forth and continued year after year and then they finally ramped the whole city. Oh, I know Michael Winter very well, but he wasn’t around in those days, and then I was, I think then they realized I was a good organizer, so issues were coming up in Sacramento where the in-home support service money, which was called Homemaker Tour Money in those days, was running out and there was a complicated formula, which I won’t go into, but people were being left without their personal assistants and so we went, so I organized people to go up to Sacramento and to lobby and picket and raise cane to draw some attention to the issue. So then, I ended up working in the Community Affairs Department for CIL with some in’s-and-out’s, which I won’t go into, just periods of time that, for a number of years doing health and welfare lobbying and organizing both, well, actually, local, state, and national, and I also worked on architectural barriers and transportation barriers, and the area that I worked on the most was transportation.

So then, when the ACCD, American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, which was made up, it was a big umbrella organization of all organizations that were run either, well, that were run by people with disabilities, that was the criteria if you wanted to be a voting member, you could be, you could participate if you were run, you know, by non-

disabled people, but you couldn't vote. I think that was the way, so it was a very big, broad effort and it primarily was organized to get out, initially, to get out the 504 regulations, and this is, well, this is '77. They hadn't actually been, well, the formal process is that they promulgate the regulations, they get comments, they sign them and then they become law and that had not happened, and that was the period of time when, when the two lawsuits were filed and ACCD, I believe it was ACCD, no, somebody filed a lawsuit for, against the, against HEW. I think it became HEW under Carter. Well, no, actually, this was the Carter Administration so it was still HEW. So someone, I believe, for ACCD filed a lawsuit to get the regulations out. HEW sent the regulations over to Congress to review, which is just unheard of. They had already had public comment and they didn't need the review. It was absolutely stalling because there was a fear that they were going to be very expensive for everybody to implement, and so, at this point, you know, the HEW regulations were going to pertain to anybody who received federal financial assistance in those areas, health, education, and welfare. So I think the universities, the hospitals, the schools, you know, they were lobbying behind the scenes because who wants to say that you can't have, you know, equality or equal rights for people with disabilities and education. Anyway, so there was all this unusual maneuvering that was going on and so when Carter was running for election, he committed to issuing them promptly, if and when he were elected, and he said it at Warm Springs, which is, you know, has all those ramifications. Yes, I know Fred Fay. Fred *loves* Tim Nugent. So then, the Administration comes in and right away they, they begin to review the regulations, and I don't think the business community even got it at that point that it, you know. I think hospital associations and education, you know,

universities were the stealth blockers. I mean this is what we think. We're not sure, but they didn't want to be overtly identified as trying to keep these from being enforced or implemented, but they were doing it through their own channels. That's what we believed. I can't prove it.

Anyway, Califano appointed this Task Force and there wasn't one person with a disability on the Task Force, and they were reviewing and friends on the Task Force began leaking to us changes that they were considering, and the changes were again to interfere of reducing the expense of implementing these, well, yes and no, one of them, for example. I mean this is just such an inane idea, was that universities could form consortia so that say in the East Bay area here, UC-Berkeley and the community colleges and whatever, could form a consortium and then a disabled student would take, say they were a major, say they were majoring in Science, they could take all the Science courses they could get at Berkeley that were accessible, but then they would have to go for their English classes over to Laney College or someplace else. It's crazy, right? Can you imagine, you know, in Washington, D.C., you know, you're racing around from one college to another. I mean, there are five major universities there and they're wide apart in different parts of the city. So it, it just, that was, that was an idea that had to do with money, not having to do that, not making the entire campus accessible, and then there were other issues like they did not want to cover alcoholics and drug addicts as persons with disabilities. Now that wasn't an issue of money. That was just an issue of not understanding, you know, and not understanding that drug addiction and alcoholism are diseases, and, you know, I mean, nobody was saying, you know, if some alcoholic is coming to their job drunk and not performing the essential functions of the job, that they

can't have the job. What it meant was, you know, if somebody was an alcoholic and was in recovery and was a Coach, and then somebody found out that in the past, you couldn't fire him, you know, that kind of thing. So, anyway, so we fought very hard on about eight key issues, but the number of issues kept increasing and then finally, well, we didn't address them. We were just getting them because they, there was no formal mechanism to, no interaction. So, so ACCD issued an ultimatum, and there had been other efforts, serious efforts, to try to get them to sign the existing regulations, but the ultimatum was issued I think in maybe February or March of '77. It's probably in the oral history, but I don't know if that's on-line yet. Anyway, and the, and the ultimatum was you sign them by April 4<sup>th</sup> unchanged or we will take action, and I think they thought because that previous action had been, Eunice Fuerito, who was this extremely, you know, elegant and well-spoken, large, blind woman, going and sitting in Califano's office having tea and then refusing to leave. But anyway, so people began organizing around the country, and out here, we organized, and this is what I did, you know, we moved into what was called the Disability Rights Center, which was sort of the predecessor of DREDF, and there was a disabled veteran, who was an attorney, who was training paralegals in education for All Handicapped Children Act, as it was called in those days, 94142, and, and so we just went into that office and all the paralegals began working on this demonstration. Well, we wanted to be prepared if, we were pretty sure that they were making changes that they were going to issue, and I, I, I think that strategy was just incredibly smart because it was so hard to organize people with disabilities in those days. There was no transportation. It was easier out here, which is one of the reasons it lasted out here, but you know, can you imagine New York City, no public transportation, no para-transit, you know. To get

people together to respond issue by issue, it wouldn't have made sense anyway. So it made sense to get people together and keep us together, but it also made sense from a sort of strategic point of view because instead of waiting until the Regulations were issued and then responding issue by issue, we took the reins and said, "Okay, you respond to us," which is ultimately what happened. We got just 90% of what we wanted. Well, I think the ultimatum came a little sooner than March because we were organizing for quite a period of time. I think it might have been February. So out here, we had like a staff and that, those were the paralegals and they were, all had disabilities. They, you know, sight, they were blind or deaf or, you know, had, a whole range, and we organized something called the Emergency, \_\_\_\_\_ for Emergency Coalition, and that was an area-wide coalition of people with disabilities, and then we organized a support coalition of everybody that we could possibly think of, you know, the NAACP and NOW, and unions and churches, and it was a very, very broad support group, politicians, anybody we could get to sign on, and so the day of the rally, you know, we did a lot of publicity, we organized transportation, we got the stage and the sound system and what have you, and went over there to, the demonstrations were organized for the eight regional headquarters of HEW and that's where the other demonstrations were.

Our demonstration here in San Francisco was, was at the HEW headquarters, which is in downtown San Francisco at 50 U.N. Plaza. It's still there and it's the regional headquarters for the western district. They have, I believe they have much bigger offices now, but in any case, so, well, the plan was to have sit-ins. I'm sorry. I'm like losing my mind here. The plan was to have sit-ins and stay in the buildings until the Regulations came out the way we wanted them and so we didn't tell everybody because we were

afraid that HEW would find out and, but we tried to tell people that we knew would be willing to sit-in, you know, bring something, you know, a pillow or something and plan to stay, and so we got, we had our rally and then, outside on this plaza. It's called U.N. Plaza and this was on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1977, the day after the ultimatum. I think it was the 5<sup>th</sup>. So then we marched into the building and confronted the, the Regional Director in his office and it was upstairs, and they let us go in. They didn't try to stop us. They didn't even expect us to be outside, I don't think. We had a permit from the city and everything, but so we're up there in his office and the poor man, you know, as fierce as I can be in my opinions, I don't like to be fierce towards people and so Judy Human, bless her, she's, you know, she just has such bravery about these things, you know, and she played it like for theater, only it was, it's real to her. It's absolutely real to her, so when we got up there, we were talking to him in his office. The leadership and a lot of the other people went in, about maybe 25. Oh, it was a big office, yeah, no, not all of us in wheelchairs, the blind people, deaf people, people with mental retardation, developmental disabilities, so we get in there and, and we say, "What are you going to do about 504?," and he says, "What is 504?" I have to say, she said, "This is a civil rights law that you are responsible for overseeing and you don't even know what it is?," and the cameras are rolling and I'm like, oh yeah, there was constant press coverage, and I'm feeling sorry for this man and then he, well, no, I, I, you know, I, I didn't, I mean I've, I've acted like that when it really was deserved, but this man didn't have a clue what was coming. So, no, I think it was absolutely the perfect thing to do, and then he said, "May I please be excused to go to the bathroom?," and, and we said, "No, we've been waiting all our lives to go to the bathroom." I think we reported out that part. I think we reported that out. There's a

really good film that was made by this and it was a tragedy because Channel 7 went all the way, the ABC News affiliate here, traveled with us when we went to Washington and they covered every single day and all their film was lost because there was a strike going on, anyway, I don't know. So, so then we started making phone calls all over the country to find out, on their phone, to find out what was going on in other areas, so then they cut the phones off, and the first several days were spent trying to figure out how we were going to deal when they came to arrest us, and then we realized they were afraid to arrest us. There were maybe 150 people in there and that would have been a huge deal to try to get us all out of there. So they couldn't have figured it out what to do with all of us, such a large volume of a range of people with disabilities. Well, and also, and the, the, Mayor Mosconi was very supportive, Jerry Brown was calling, and, and I'm not sure, I'm not sure what, yeah, he probably told his Police Chief not to arrest anybody, and Governor Brown and the Head of the Department of Staff, and we had done all this ground work and it was in Sacramento at the time as the Head, as the Head of the Department of Rehabilitation, so he was, he had status in the state government, and, you know, we had a lot of contacts with attorneys and people in the state government and, and connections to the Brown Administration, so that, that was helpful, but that, that wasn't what got us in there or anything.

So then we, we, we had all these committees that were set up from the pre-occupation days, you know, that what we'd been organizing. We had a Press Committee and we had an Outreach Committee. We had a committee, well, we had organized a Committee for Medics, which is something that I learned in the Anti-War Movement and, you know, so they had gotten a doctor who dealt with disability stuff and a nurse who

also, so, and then we had other people who were medics, and we had a Legal Support Committee, and just a, and once we got inside the building, we had to have more committees. We needed a Food Committee and we had something called the Indoor-Outdoor Communications Committee, and we tried to get involvement from everybody so that they wouldn't go bonkers and so that everybody was taking on a lot of responsibilities, and so the food, for instance, we got food from Glad Memorial Church, which is a very famous church here run by, well, you know, the Minister was just a, you know, a real force, Cecil Williams, in San Francisco, and they feed hundreds of, of homeless people every day, so we got food from Glad. We got food from the Black Panthers, who were feeding, and the community got food from the American Legion, which bought us hamburgers. We had, you know, Safeway sent bread and cheese or something, so some days we had really delicious meals. That was when the Black Panthers were feeding us and other days, it was, you know, donuts, but there was something to eat. We, we, every single day, we watched the press coverage to see what it was like and we'd have an analysis of it, and then we would, among ourselves, the, the Press Committee, and I was on the Press Committee, and then we would figure out how we were going to respond. They were using "crippled and deaf and dumb," so then we would, we would, we would say, "We really," we'd, we'd have a Press Conference and we'd say, "We really appreciate your good coverage and we refer to ourselves as disabled people," which was the term that was okay in those days, "and deaf people," you know, "generally prefer to be called deaf. Deaf and dumb is not the correct expression," and so it was an education for the Press too. So we did something like that every day if we couldn't, if we didn't have any news, but we often had news, like Julian Bond came to

the building, and who else, Jesse Jackson came to the building, and, and we were getting information from Washington, so there were frequently things that were very newsworthy and then they, you know, they would do things like go ride, try to ride a bus and then they would ride an accessible bus over in, in, and more changes were coming out of Califano's office, to the 504 Regulations during the demonstration, more changes, and so through connections we got, they may have thought it. They thought it up themselves I guess. Senator Phil Burton, who was extremely powerful in, in the Senate at that time, wait a minute, was Phil Burton a Senator or a Congressman? Oh my God, I've lost my mind. No, he was a Congressman because Alan Cranston was our Senator. I don't remember. Anyway, Phil Burton was from California and he was very powerful, and George Miller, who was totally on our side, he was, Burton was from San Francisco and Miller was from this area, Richmond, \_\_\_\_\_ County, decided to hold a Congressional Hearing in the building, in the regional HEW building at U.N. Plaza, so that the people who wanted to testify could testify, and they came out here and held the Hearing and this man, I think his name was Eisenberg, who was sent by HEW, had to respond to the questions, and that was another one. Oh, boy. I was outside. I, I said something and then I went outside and gave a speech so I don't think I saw this, but it was, it, you know, people spoke. People's speeches are on, or their comments are on the DVD, and at one point, Gene whatever his name was, Eisenberg, got up and just ran away from the room and locked himself in some office, and Phil Burton ran after him and kicked the door and said, "Come out of there." I think that's all on the DVD. He had no response. He didn't know what to say, exactly, and he had been sent out there as a sacrifice by HEW, and so,

well, Califano was being very cynical. See, I think he, I don't know what his thinking was in sending this guy out, but there he was.

So anyway, the list of issues kept growing and so then we decided we really needed to do something else, and so we decided to choose a delegation from our building because all of the other demonstrations had fizzled out by now. It was just so hard and in Washington, they, you know, the big cops, they wouldn't let any food in and, you know, so they got basically starved out. They wouldn't let medication in. We were there almost a month. So then I think we elected about 12 of us to go to Washington, just to sort of lend the prestige of the demonstration and also because we knew the issues backwards and forwards by this time. We'd been discussing it with the Press and were quite fluent. Everybody who went in that delegation was very capable of speaking to the issues. So we got to Washington and the, I have the worst luck. The first, the first thing that somebody proposed was that we go vigil outside Califano's house and so somebody looks up his address in the phone book and it's on Springland Lane, and I know Springland Lane is one block long, in Washington. I don't know where it is except that my step-grandmother and, and great-aunt both live on this one block, and it turns out that Califano lives literally right kind of behind my great-aunt's house. So I'm like, oh my God. So we go out there and we're vigiling with candles and we're singing, you know, "We Shall Overcome," or something and then we're having a prayer vigil, and my cousin, Jimmy, who's a General, goes jogging, on my mother's side and the other one was on my father's side, goes jogging by and says, "Oh, this is so beautiful," and comes out and joins the prayer vigil, and I'm like, oh my God, because he recognizes me, and so then the next day, we go out to vigil and Jimmy is out there talking to the Press and

saying, “My mother is 92 years old and uses a wheelchair and she hasn’t been able to sleep all night,” and blah, blah, blah, and I’m hiding in the truck with a blanket over my head. I can’t deal with this, but anyway, we ran around and followed Califano and Carter everywhere they went because they had this open-door administration. You know how every administration has its open door for about two minutes. Now I look back and I, I really like Jimmy Carter, you know. I think he’s a good guy, but anyway, so they, you know, we went to the Press Club and Califano was speaking, and the reporter who was accompanying us from ABC, of course, had Press credentials and got into the Press Conference and got in the elevator with Califano and started asking him questions, and Califano ran out the back door. He didn’t want to deal with the reporter because the reporter had been totally converted and he was very fluent in the issues, and Califano was counting on the Press not being fluent, and the reporter later told me that it, it had totally changed his life. It was a, his name was Edmund White, from ABC, and so we did a lot of things. We held a vigil in front of Califano’s house, in front of Carter’s church, and they went out the back door and Carter was in the church at the time. It was on a Sunday and when the limousine went past, Rosalyn kind of looked out and, you know, kind of waved, I think. They were embarrassed, you know, because he had already committed to signing these things and now they were dithering, that’s right.

Anyway, we did a huge amount of demonstrating and we got so much help from the Machinist’s Union. They just, the demonstration at HEW in San Francisco was still going on while the delegation was in Washington. The demonstrators were still in the building. The man who wanted to go to the bathroom, they went home at night, although there was one guy who did stay over one night, but you know, we, we didn’t have enough

places to sleep. No, they were back there, probably 100 people, 125 people, and, you know, we stayed in constant touch with them to keep them, you know, up-to-date and try to lift up their spirits because it was hard going, you know, people, people were sleeping on the floor on these mattresses. It was just physically very difficult. So the, you know, we didn't have very many assistants when we went to Washington so the woman who was helping me was a blind woman and we were staying in a church in Dupont Circle, and the machinists rented this huge U-Haul truck with a lift and we would get lifted up and then they'd close it up and we'd be there in the dark, clattering into each other and then they would take us, you know, to where we were going. The first thing we did was go to a banquet there and, you know, they, I mean in our honor, and then they turned over their headquarters to us so that we could use all their office equipment and phones and organize demonstrations, and we did organize numbers of demonstrations. This is the International Brotherhood of Machinists, and one of the International Vice-Presidents like got religion and he and another one, this guy named Willie, who was from San Francisco, I can't remember Willie's last name, went with us and, you know, smoothed the way as we went and somebody gave us, I think Werner Earhardt gave us the money for the airplane tickets and, so anyway, we finally got a meeting at the White House with Stu Eisenstadt, who was the Chief of Staff or General Counsel. I think he was Chief of Staff. Well, we had met already with Harrison Williams and Alan Cranston, who were the two sponsors of the original legislation, and Harrison Williams was totally cool, but Cranston was raising the objections of the Administration and we were answering them, point by point. It was, that's the thing I remember most about the Washington trip is that. We had met with Harrison Williams previously and then we went to meet with Cranston.

It was in a large room and there was a lot of Press there, in the House, tons and tons of Press, and we were answering each question and, or we would, and, and it, it was, I, I, I don't know how it played out that way, but I just remember that everyone was so eloquent, and particularly Frank Bowe, who was the Head of ACCD, a deaf man, and he said, "Senator, we are not even second-class citizens. We're third-class citizens," and everyone started to cry. We were so tired. We hadn't had any sleep for like two nights, you know. We were running around. I don't think Cranston liked it, but you know, I, he, well, I'm not sure. I'm not sure. He was at that time I think the most powerful person in the Senate. That was before his downfall and, and you know, as such, I think he probably felt some need to probe what the Administration's, you know, what were our response. They were stalling and dithering on signing the 504 Regulations, right, right, and we knew that whatever came out of HEW would be the guidelines for all the other federal agencies. So we knew that if we ended up, if they ended up with a policy of separate but equal, which was where they were going, that we weren't going to get really good regulations for transportation, housing or, yeah, so, so we thought of it as the overall issue, even though these were just one set of Regulations, and so finally, after various confrontations in this meeting with Stu Eisenstadt, we got word that the Regulations were coming down and that the changes were not going to be made. The one thing we lost on was that we wanted, because this would have been a huge one, we wanted secondary, I don't remember the term, but for instance, if it applied to a university, it applied to contractors with the university, so insurers at the university would not be able to discriminate. Well, can you imagine if health, life, whatever insurers, you know, couldn't discriminate? I mean, that's, we're always discriminated against on, on, on

those issues. So we lost on that, but we won on everything else. I know, it was phenomenal. I, you know, I don't remember the date it was signed. Isn't that amazing? It's in April. I just, I just wrote up something about it, which, which I could give you if you want it. It's, because I wrote something originally for the, and I was so busy. We had this 504 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary thing because people were dying and we wanted to do something, and, and it turned into this gigantic thing like event and so I ended up, because I was one of the few people left who had been around, I ended up doing a huge amount of work and I wrote this little thing, and then I really, it's been up on the DREDF website for years and I hate it, and so I finally said okay, I'm going to write something else.

Well, in the 32 years since, the, after the 504 Regulations were signed, I was working very much on transit. So I was working on the Department of Transportation 504 Regulations and I was, I was going to be one of the 504 trainers that went out and did, Mary Lou may have talked about that, but I, I was an alcoholic and I had just stopped drinking, and I felt like that was just too dangerous, too, you know, it was the '70s and there were a lot of drugs going on and stuff and I just, I wanted to be at home with my AA meetings and that sort of thing. Anyway, I was working on the 504 DOT Regs and when they came out, you know, I worked on comments for the Regulations. I was working on what was called TransBus, which was a, a type of bus that was a low-floor bus with a ramp, that everybody went in and out the, the, the ramp, and the idea was that it was much easier to produce. It, it would be, if everybody, if the bus design was adopted, it would create accessibility integrated into it's design of the bus and the Department of Transportation had, had mandated it, but then nobody wanted to produce

it. The only production was John DeLorean. He did, yes, he did, you know, he was a wild man, but he did design the bus, but now there are buses that are very similar to TransBus on the road, but, but that deadline for those buses to be in production came and went and nobody made them, you know, nobody was going to sit on General Motors. So, the 504 Regs for transportation were reasonable. They were very reasonable. They allowed for, do you want to know what they allowed for or should I just keep going? So anyway, an amendment came up to the Service Transportation Bill in Congress and it allowed transit authorities not to go forward with the mandated purchase of accessible buses and renovations of their, their rapid rail systems, like the, you know, the El in Chicago and the New York Subway, which was a 25-year period. It was not a drastic, you know, thing and it was key stations anyway, and, but they would allow for local option and everyone, every aid agency would have opted for para-transit and there was no way that that would be equal, you know, and there was a huge propaganda effort around supporting this amendment, and I went back to Washington and lobbied and, boy I would never want to be a lobbyist. It's like that is not, you know, I mean, they made, the Senate ended up deciding that only half of a, of a transit authority's bus fleet would have to be accessible, which meant, you know, that there was, there, you know, people who are more transit dependent than anybody are getting lousy service. I mean, there was so many things wrong with it. It's just, you know, I don't need to tell you.

So, so I was doing that and then I moved to Mexico to adopt a baby and I, in 1981. The Cleveland Amendment did not pass, but the Department of Transportation, in a lawsuit, won one local option and then they went back and redid it, and it, they were only repaired by the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act in 1990. So I went

to Mexico, adopted my son, lived there for 2 ½ years because I couldn't pass home-study, because of the disability and came back, and I started working with Ed Roberts and Judy Human, out of Judy's kitchen, in the very initial staff of the World Institute on Disability. So I worked at the World Institute on Disability for a while. I, it's here in Berkeley, but it's going to move into the Ed Roberts Campus, and I also was recruited to the DREDF Board, and DREDF was always very much the organization for me because they were working for societal change. I, I, I, I'm not very good at serving individual clients because I get all caught up in their stories and, and, and it's, it's really not the way I see for change in the world. I, I say God Bless it, you know, to the people who do individual services, but the DREDF was to me, you know, they had trained all these people in their rights; they were defending 504 in the, in the Supreme Court; they were, during this time, they were doing cutting edge litigation on the issue of IDEA and integration and abusive behavior modification techniques, getting them out of the California schools; and, and they had done some very wonderful work in the, we call it public policy work, but in the public area; the Civil Rights Restoration Act; and working always with the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights; and, the Fair Housing Amendments Act. Mary Lou probably went over all this with you, but so then I came to work at DREDF in 1990, and I ran the lawyer referral service, and got off the Board, and then DREDF went through this sort of financial crisis. Mary Lou left as the Executive Director, probably after about 8 years, and the new Director who came in just, I think he'd been a bureaucrat in a state bureaucracy and he did not know how to, well, he didn't get that the way that people needed to be accommodated. That was one of my issues with him, and the other thing was that he didn't do any development work and, you know, there was, it was very

important. There were two of us who kept saying, you know, “Shouldn’t we have an event? Shouldn’t we do some fundraising?,” and he, he had come in at a time when, you know, the, we had just secured very large federal contracts to train people in, in ADA, and so there was a huge amount of ADA work to be done and, and that was a lot of money and the staff grew really fast, and then, you know, there was no money behind it. So the Board, I believe, asked him to leave and he resigned, and so then, Mary Lou came to me one day and said, “You know, we’re not going to be able to do the lawyer referral service any more.” Well, I was so devastated because it was just beginning to make money. It took time to get it up and running, but in any case, I’m, I’m so glad because she said, “If you want to continue to work at DREDF, you have to do development.” So I said, “Okay. I’ll try. I’ve never done development,” not realizing that I’d always done development of one sort or another because you have to fundraise when you’re being an activist, and you have to introduce yourself to people who don’t know what the issue is. So I became a Development Associate and Mary Lou and I worked, we split a salary. We split my salary and so then I became the Development Director, and that, you know, lots of people don’t like to do fundraising, but I love it. It’s hard to ask people for money, but if you really, really believe in what you’re doing, you know, it’s like you’re offering people a chance to be part of something wonderful, so. So I did that until I left in, God, I think ’99. I think it was 1999.

Well, since then, I’m, well, when I retired, I started writing a novel about, you know, it begins, a lot of it draws on my experiences, but it’s not my life at all. But I, it, a lot of it takes place at the University of Illinois, doesn’t have anything to do with disability at that point. It’s, it’s sort of a coming of age novel that, you know, and how

families were split apart by the, you know, the radicalism of the '60s and their children and, like the Civil War. It did split families, particularly the Anti-War Movement, and the Civil Rights Movement as well. Well, my father was, my father disinherited me. The Disability Rights Movement did not do the same thing. In fact, my father was this rather, if you think of William Buckley, my father reminded, or William Buckley reminded me of my father. He had that same kind of sense of humor and that same kind of accent, even though he was from the South, and so he, he came around on, I don't know if he ever changed his mind about Vietnam, but he came around ultimately on the civil rights issue and stopped calling Martin Luther King, Martin Lucifer King, but. Well, about disability rights, he kept these files on me and I, I found, when I appeared in publications, and there was something in the Jacksonville paper that had the stupidest title, that was called *Kitty Keeps Protests Alive*, the headline, which makes no sense about anything, but you have no idea what it's about, but anyway, my father wrote in the margin, "You even beat out Spiro Agnew," and sent it to me. So I, you know, I think he actually thought, I think he was proud of me, at that point, but you know, our split was so ferocious that it just got healed, ferocious on the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-War Movement. He had, he had come from a family that had a long tradition of supporting the military and, which is very Southern, and also, his mother's family had, it's just so embarrassing to even talk about it, but had had this very magnificent plantation on the James River, so they had been slave owners and, in fact, her father, well, it was Westover. I don't know if you've ever seen it, but, yeah, so it's one of the plantations now that has tours. They only, it, there's a family that lives there, but they have tours during Flower Week or whatever. If you drive on I-95, you can see the signs on the highway. Well, I was so

horrified by the whole thing when I realized what it was. I even, it really came up for me because I started doing genealogy and then, her name was Martha Selden and that was her maiden name and it was her family that owned the Westover plantation, and so my father was very, very Southern in his outlook and, although, you know, he was in the campaign in Italy and he said he, he worked with, with black soldiers, but then I read something that they put Southern officers in charge of black soldiers throughout the Army. I don't doubt it, you know, it's, it's, you know, my father really was a Southerner, even though he had had a, a very sort of, you know, cosmopolitan upbringing, and so, you know, when we were living in Augusta, he was flying a Confederate flag over our house. So you can imagine why we had a rift.

So I started working on this novel and I've been working on it. I wrote it and I felt like I didn't, I, I wrote it in the present day with flashbacks and it didn't do what I wanted it to do. So I've started again, and then I've gone back and I'm doing a little bit of consulting with DREDF, and, but I was on the DREDF Board until I did that. So I did DREDF Board work on the Board of Directors, but then, now I, I just, like everybody, lost a whole bunch of money in the downturn and so I'm, I'm doing consulting with DREDF so I got off the Board again. Well, it's bad, well, it's bad to be a staff member and be, you know, be on the Board, yeah. It has the appearance of a conflict because we're determining policy that may affect my relationship as a consultant, exactly. So, but you know, I'm, I am a devoted DREDF supporter and, you know, that sort of thing, and I just moved here to Richmond, and I've been thinking of getting involved in doing something around the parks, because Richmond is a, it has a very high homicide rate, and it's, oh yeah, it's, it's the rough part of the Bay area, equivalent to Oakland, like I have a,

you know, my ex-girlfriend's granddaughter, Deonita, was just telling me that one of her girlfriends, they were getting together for dinner and she didn't show up and, and she found out the next day that she'd been shot and killed, along with her boyfriend in a gas station. Richmond is famous for the violence and there's a lot of violence. I, I was going to start with this little top lot park because it's right next to the school, and then I realized that there was so much violence there that, so I have ideas about things like that, but, so I want to get involved and try to rectify that.