

Project: Bay Area Feminists Oral History Project

Interview with Lu Ryden

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[Interview # 1: April 17, 2006]

[Begin File 04-17-2006 Interview - Lu Ryden (Parts 1 and 2)]

[01 – 00:00:00]

Moon:

My name is Danelle Moon, I am the Special Collections Director at San Jose State University. And today I am at Lu Ryden's home, and together with graduate student Karen Clementi, I will be interviewing Lu. And Lu will be sharing some of her experiences working on the San Jose State City Council. Today's date is April 17th, 2006. And the interview will begin. All right, well let's just start. And as I said, we're just going to approach this like a conversation. And, you know, as you're thinking of things or I might ask you to spell something out for me in case I didn't catch the names like accurately so that we can make sure that it's well represented in the transcription. But as I said, you know one of the themes coming out of this project for me relates to trying to understand what the feminist capital meant to women that were actually working in the capital at that time. As you know, Janet Gray coined that term and it became quite a popularized sort of term that was used all over the media and in fact internationally as I've been looking at her papers that we have. A Danish press actually picked up on it and we were talking about this feminist capital, which was kind of interesting. And so what I'd like you to do as a council member, can you talk a little bit about what your experiences were like and what did the feminist capital mean to you? Or did you even pay that much attention to the hype that was going on at that time?

Ryden:

I didn't pay too much attention to it. Because to me feminism always had this radical term to it. It was people that were, you know burning their bras and that sort of stuff and that just didn't appeal to me. But I found when I got on the council that the gals there were not feminists in that right. We didn't agree on all things, but the feminist capital to me only meant there were a lot of women. And there were, my goodness there were a lot of women on there.

Moon:

So basically you didn't define-- you still don't define yourself as a feminist per se. But there have been a number of examples where you talked about feminist sort of ideas in some of your work. Can you express some of those views at all?

Ryden:

I don't know what views in particular. I had so many views on so many things. Can you come up with one? (laughter)

Moon:

Well, for example I think you were quoted in a couple of different-- I might actually get back to this later. Actually, I think I'll skip that for a moment because we're going to get into talking about the national organization of women and some other things related to the ERA. Which I'm really interested in your insights on that. I actually come from-- my mother is also a very religious fundamentalist Christian and she never ever would've even considered herself as a feminist in any shape or form. And she was never really politically active either. So I really have a real affinity with understanding where you're coming from. From you know, from your religious or what's been recorded about your religious affiliations with the (inaudible) Christian church and whatnot. So I just wanted to make sure that that was out there to take a little bit(?).

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Ryden:

Yeah, I remember when we print things not all of it was true.

Moon:

Exactly. That's why we're here, to clarify some of those points.

Ryden:

They had me running around like some religious fanatic.

Moon:

So we've already kind of addressed that you didn't really consider yourself to be a feminist, and that you haven't really thought about that term. And that you see that term in a negative sort of way. Is that how you would--?

Ryden:

Well, yeah. I see it as a negative saying that it's a feminist capital. To me there were women there, feminists connotes something that would be more radical.

Moon:

OK.

Ryden:

So of all women, there were women. We all had our own things.

Moon:

And so looking at your activism, when you first got involved on the city council. Could you describe how you went from the process of being you know, at home and being involved in some of the professional work that you had done to the point where you actually got engaged in politics.

Ryden:

Well, I was sitting home one day recovering from a face-lift. (laughter) I had been in the modeling agency business so with that, when I retired from that I just thought I'm going to relax and enjoy myself. And then a call from the republican headquarters, and because I had been doing PR work for the republican party, when there (inaudible) governor came to town, and he was a republican, I would do the liaison between the press. And I had been in the republican women's club and was always interested in politics. So they called and asked if I would represent district one and they were just the dividing up into 10 different districts. And I said no way, I am not interested in running for office. Because I heard too many people and what they go through and how they're battered in the press and so on. So I thought about it, and then I looked in the paper and saw who was running. And not any of them, none of them expressed what I felt the direction of the city should be going. And I saw things that (inaudible) irresponsible and a lot of (inaudible) traits from the negative point coming in. So I thought, well and I prayed about it. Because if that's what I'm going to do, I'm going to make sure I'm doing it the right way. And then I felt I got the answer and I called and said OK, I'll run. And oh, you're an answer to prayer. (laughter) Not realizing. And from then on I had no idea what it was like to run for office other than the fact of what I had read other people going through. And we're running out of time in the 1980 when Reagan was running and he came in on my coat tails. And the tempo of the people was more in the Reaganomics type. So I had that going for me. I had name identification going for me from my television program. So that was the only thing going for me. I didn't even know what a pack(?) was. What is a pack? And they said, well I had a gal helping me who knew about as much about politics as I did. She was my campaign manager, and we would just you know, speak to different groups. I

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didn't have any money to run a campaign hunt, so I was asked-- the republican headquarters helped me an awful lot, and the republican women's groups helped me. And I asked them what a pack was, and they said well, the builders want to talk to you. And I said what do they want me to talk to me about? I don't know anything about building. And they said well, this is what they want to talk to you about. What is your philosophy and what do you feel about certain projects that are going on in town? And that's the way it went from me getting really-- my feet wet in politics and a complete (inaudible) fight(?). And there were four of us running, and I had the Lynnberg(?) High School kids helping me, which was a good project for the school because they gave them my opponent and myself they could work for either one and get the credits for it in class, political science. So I had the students helping me and everybody was so helpful. Then walking (inaudible). I had people later on tell me years later that you know, I didn't know who you were until you came to the door. I think it's so great that a candidate actually comes to the door. How many miles I walked. And people would say, "Hey, we'll help you". But then they never showed up, and then a lot of people did show up. So I came in, there were two of us. I forgot the name of the-- Frank. Frank Beal(?), he was my opponent. He turned out to be a son of a very good friend of mine, but he was a nice kid but I felt I had more to offer. I was in my 50s and, no I had turned 50 yet. When I was elected I had my 50th birthday. And so I would just say he is a nice young man, he was an eagle scout and I'm sure once he matures he will be a very good person and I hope he runs then. And we never did anything bad about one another, but they could see the difference.

Moon:

Now when you were talking about your dilemma with the pack, what was that exactly?

Ryden:

Well, the Political Action Committees are, I'm sure you know what they are but I'll tell you high time(?) you found out.

Moon:

Right.

Ryden:

Where the committees like the builders and the union groups. Oh the union groups hated me, and I would just simply go there. And because I knew nothing about building, I probably didn't know the difference between the sewer pipe and a long one (inaudible) you know, a sprinkler. And I just told them what my philosophy is. This is the way I believe and I didn't believe in urban sprawl and so on. And so they were dubious and I think they split their endorsement between Frank and me, but I'm not sure. (inaudible) my age. (laughter)

[01-00:10:00]

And then the unions, I can remember talking to the firefighters unions. And because I was a republican, they were all opposed to that and they would give me some really tough questions but I answered them as truthfully as I could. And nobody endorsed me. So when we did our publicity for it, I had a picture, it was a really good picture of me and I said I do not accept endorsements from any groups, any PACs, or anything. Which is true, because they never offered any. And then I said rent control was something at that particular time I was opposed to rent control. And I said some of the things that I was in favor of and opposed to. And (inaudible) got elected.

Moon:

So you kind of turned it around, the whole business of not getting endorsements as part of your campaign strategy to really in your favor by saying well, I don't take endorsements. And therefore you didn't have to say well I've got the endorsement from so and so as part of that.

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Ryden:

Never have to account for anything and make people feel that you're indebted to any group. Later on I accepted endorsements but they all knew that when I accepted the endorsements that they weren't going to get special treatment. They would get the treatment of certainly I will put them at the head of a list or something if they want to come in and talk about a project, but I couldn't promise that I'll go to them(?) without (inaudible).

Moon:

Right.

Ryden:

And so they respected that.

Moon:

So what were some of the issues that you ran on?

Ryden:

The first time it was rent control and the homosexual gay rights group. Isn't it amazing how that has changed? Before when I was running in 1980 with the gay rights, you didn't even want to have your picture taken with them. And I had worked in the modeling agency so I was working with them all the time, and to me they were no different. If they want to have sex differently than we do, fine. Just don't, you know, force me to accept it or condone it. So it didn't bother me, but I was opposed to what they were running on at that time was-- gosh, I can't remember. Not the marriage thing, that came later.

Moon:

It was the pride. They were trying to celebrate gay pride week, I think. And there was a couple of resolutions that had gone before in Janet Gray Hayes's two terms. Actually, there were resolutions that were submitted by the gay community.

Ryden:

Yeah, I opposed those.

Moon:

And you opposed those. And you also ran on that kind of opposition to some of those issues.

Ryden:

Yeah, because I didn't think it belonged in issue. Just like this 14, 67 I think it is now, that is up in the assembly that they should teach kids in school about Oscar Wilde was a homosexual and he did this, or because a person was a homosexual. I don't think their sexual orientation has anything to do with the work that they do. So that wasn't up at that time, but that's the way I feel homosexuals are. They're just people.

Moon:

Now before you actually-- you received some endorsement or your work actually kind of began by getting the Republican Party actually soliciting you. And then some of the work that you had done with the Republican Women's club. Were there any individuals in your previous life that you would say that helped mentor you or gave you the role model that you needed in your life to become confident enough to go into politics for one.

Ryden:

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I never lacked confidence. (laughter) I did have a gentleman from the-- Vern Kastino(?) was his name, he was a really neat guy and he had been on the central committee for the republican committee. And he took me under his wing and told me some things to do and he's the one who came up with the idea of don't accept any endorsements. And then I could go to people that I knew before in television, and any agency that I had and talked to them so that they would spread the word about me cause they knew me. And Bob Hosfet(?) over at channel 11 was helping, giving me names of people to contact. But as far as mentoring, I think Vern would probably be about the only one.

Moon:

Were there any females in your life who prior to actually considering politics that you would say help shaped your ideas on, you know, your political and maybe religious social sort of ideas?

Ryden:

Came up with it all by myself. (laughter) I think it depends what you're exposed to I guess.

Moon:

Right. I think so.

Ryden:

Absolutely.

Moon:

Do you think that gender played a specific role at the time period that you were actually engaged in politics in helping you one, get elected, and two looking at kind of the larger, kind of work of women in politics at that time?

Ryden:

I think so. I think the feminist group played a big part in getting women elected into office.

Moon:

I think actually you even credit them at some point in one of the interviews that you did with Janet Flemming(?). You had written or she recorded you in her book saying something to the affect that, and this is in reference to your opposition to the women that were involved with NOW, the National Organization of Women. You said you felt indebted to those women who forged ahead of me. They took the abuse, showed nerve, and were not afraid. I admire anyone who forges new trails. While I don't agree with Friedan and Stein, and I do admire them for coming out. Does that character (inaudible)? You felt about that way I feel and so in thinking about some of those political issues, of course you know gay rights was a big issue in San Jose at that time. And the equal rights amendment also was a major issue, and actually became kind of a-- really helped move women a long in politics even though the amendment never was actually ratified. What was your perspective on the equal rights amendment, and how would you characterize that?

Ryden:

Well, I was opposed to it and gosh, I can't remember what was going on at that time. I'm a great admirer of Phyllis Schlafly, even though she's kind of alterable(?). I don't know, run some of the things by me again.

Moon:

Like for example-- like you said that the equal rights amendment was being carried actually to Congress. It actually began with the National Women's Party in the 1920s, and it took over 59 years before it was actually passed both houses. And in the '60s, in the early '60s, the equal rights amendment had a number of dips during different time periods or you know, in between World War I and II, and then during the Cold War,

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and then up to the civil rights era. So there were a lot of ebbs and flows of actually activism that was going on surrounding the amendment, and now became the kind of organization that subsumed the National Women's Party, which had been the radical wing of the feminist movement in the suffrage era, and then in the post suffrage era as well. And so what happened, I think was really-- it was the re-invigoration of the ERA and with the women's movement came partially from the civil rights movement, and women not being satisfied with their roles within some of the organizations that were trying to put--

Ryden:

The glass ceiling type.

Moon:

Yeah. Not even the glass ceiling. Like in the society in the SDS and some of the other, you know, core groups that were part of the colleges. Women really didn't get the opportunity to be part of, you know, the infrastructure of those organizations, and there was a lot of sexual discrimination that took place against them. And so the ERA became a logical sort of place for activist women to get involved in, and so but at the same time, a variant anti-movement really started to gain momentum and actually was successful in keeping in the ratification process.

Ryden:

That was Phyllis' group.

Moon:

Well, yeah. Phyllis was, of course, involved with that. Anita Bryant was, and so I was just curious. Were you a member of any of the anti organizations part of Phyllis' organization?

Ryden:

No. I just had my reform views(?) and it's the (inaudible), I can't tell you what they were now. (laughter)

Moon:

Well, one of the things you had said-- something that I had read. Let me see if I can find it. I think something to the effect that you were actually following the traditional league of women voters position from the post suffrage era in which they-- they didn't support the amendment, which I believe was one of the reasons why it didn't pass in the 1940s, which it should've passed. It was very close in votes. The Senate had passed it and the house hadn't, and it was really the house that held it up for a number of years. But one of the reasons why I think it really didn't pass was because the league of women voters and national women's bureau did not support the amendment in those years.

[01-00:20:00]

And they made the argument that they believe that the amendment wasn't-- well one, they believed that it should come at the state level, but it shouldn't be a federal amendment. And you had said something similar that you thought should be taken care of at the state level. So I was just curious if you remembered saying that or if you had any sense of why you felt that was the case?

Ryden:

Sometimes I'm lucky if I can remember what I had for breakfast. Let's see. No, the ERA to me I always equate it to the glass ceiling and to women wanting the same things as men have. And I can remember being back in Washington at one of the Cumberson's(?) homes. There was a group of us there and they were talking about women in the army and in the military. And I was opposed to women in the military front lines. I said they should really take their position in the back. And we are not equipped. I mean heaven sakes if we get PMS, look out. And we had some argument where you think women can't do this, they can't do that. It's like they no, they can ferry airplanes, they can do all that stuff, and whatever. And that was my

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main squabble with the ERA. Wanting the same things as men had, but were not built the same way and we're not physically, I mean mentally, physiologically comparable to men. We have much more to offer.

Moon:

Well, I think one of the major arguments against the ERA during that time period was women's participation in the military. And looking at that in retrospection today and looking at just the Iraq wars. An interesting example, it seems to me that that's not really-- I don't think anybody would. If ERA was to go up again in the next, you know 10 years for similar sort of ratification, more would go back through congress again. I don't think that argument would be one of the arguments that would be (inaudible).

Ryden:

I disagree with you.

Moon:

You don't think so?

Ryden:

I think that there's enough people who have seen what's been happening that they wouldn't go along with the-- when women joined the National Guard and so on, and then they had to leave their babies at home. And when women get out in the field, the men feel protected toward them. I don't know how they're going to feel 10 years from now if they keep beating them down, but I really think that they would be opposed to it.

Moon:

OK. I think that's interesting. I think a lot of people are suggesting that that's not the case. You know, people that are falling on the other side of the argument probably. Another issue was *Roe v. Wade*, Roe had passed in 1972. And I know Phyllis Schlafly had part of her campaign against-- most of her campaign was focused on the military. But there's a number of studies that are being done right now on the whole history of the ERA, where they're showing a link to also Roe B. Wave. I was just curious, was any of your objection to ERA connected to Roe at that time?

Ryden:

Probably, but you know I don't think *Roe v. Wade* should have been a federal law. I don't think it should have even come before.

Moon:

Right. But that was just more of an argument against the equal rights amendment at that time.

Ryden:

Fine, I probably would.

Moon:

You probably would've done your (inaudible). (laughter)

Ryden:

Yeah. Because, you know, if a woman does not want to have a baby that's between her and a couple of doctors who feel that she should or shouldn't health wise have it. But I am pro-choice in the fact you make up your mind before you intercourse, not afterwards. So that's my pro-choice stand.

Moon:

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OK. Now looking backwards a little bit prior to your engagement in politics. You had quite an interesting career from your modeling agency to the work that you had done on the television show. You hosted the talk show with Jess Marlow(?), and then later on got your own show. Could you talk a little bit about what you were doing? You know, how you got involved in television, why, and how you think that might've impacted your work as a politician?

Ryden:

I love to talk about me. (laughter) I got involved in television for the simple reason-- one day I was ironing. I was a stay at home mom. Kids were at school and I was ironing, which I don't like to do. I was stuck out on reruns and they had nothing interesting. So I called up channel 11 and I said, "Well, you should have a women's program on there." And I can remember back in the '50s there was a program on-- a magazine type program. Like you took a woman's magazine in some (inaudible) or something, and did articles out of think what you did around television. So I said why don't you do that? And they said they were thinking about that. So finally this was at the beginning of the year, finally by the end of the year they made their decision. There were about 30 of us that were competing for this job. I can remember Jess Marlow was there and it was set up-- the old cameras in those days you rack the lenses and so on. We were supposed to discuss the Cyprus situation, which was very in the news at that time. And one gal that was being interviewed there was sitting and saying-- so Jess says, "What is your opinion of the Cyprus situation?" And she said, "I think it's a beautiful tree." (laughter) And I thought, "Well, I'm not going to give that answer." We were all watching this whole thing. Of course she didn't make it though, she as kind of dippy. But I've always been a ham in school, and just give me two or more together and they're breathing, I'll talk. So I just answered what I knew about the Cyprus situation and so on. And they paired it down to five and they paired it down to two, and there were just two of us left. And we had to demonstrate on camera some simple activity. Well, in those days women wore hats. And this was in the early '60s, so we wore hats. And so I told how to keep your veil pressed so it'll always look fresh on your hat. And I don't know what the other girl did, but evidently they liked me best so they picked me in 1964, I guess it was. And we had a show called Afternoon, and Jess and I did the news for the first 15 minutes, then the last 15 minutes I was supposed to interview somebody. And then we turned it just into an interview show. That lasted about a year and then it went off the year, and then I talked them into putting me back on. I went on the Don Hayward(?) at that time, and we just did a real variety show, had a lot fun. I would have people in from the restaurants to do their favorite recipe. We do a before and after on a woman. Women would call in and they say they feel frumpy or something and they want to be made over. So I did that, and went down to Hollywood, interviewed with a lot of the stars and the TV stars and so on. I think we were on ABC at that time. And then I interviewed politicians and I'd go up to Sacramento, and it was just really fun. I enjoyed it. We had about five years.

Moon:

So it was more of a variety sort of program that you did, it wasn't like a straight sort of political sort of show or necessarily--

Ryden:

It was more fun.

Moon:

OK. Were you familiar with the Left Right program that was on television during that same time period? I think it was called Left Right and they had different hosts that would be on it, but it was actually a political forum. And Glenna(?) Matthews, who is a historian on California history, she actually was one of the top show hosts for that program. Janet Gray I think had done some programming for that.

Ryden:

Was that KTH(?)?

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Moon:

I think so. I think so.

Clementi:

(inaudible).

Ryden:

Left Right Center?

Clementi:

Left Right Center.

Moon:

Left Right Center, that's right.

Ryden:

OK, yeah. I vaguely remember something like that, vaguely.

Moon:

OK. I was just curious. Because they were doing-- you know, it was a nonpartisan sort of program so they would just bring both. You know, the (inaudible) league of women voters is a nonpartisan organization. And so I think they were just trying to show both sides of an issue and not so one person-- the host would actually bring in different interviewers to talk about a particular issue. And unfortunately I don't think any of that video from those programs exist, or I think it was channel 11 who actually was the sponsor of that program.

Ryden:

Now they're three-inch tapes.

Moon:

Well, right. And they'd be hard to transfer to film.

Ryden:

I have some out there.

Clementi:

They did run one of you not too long ago on channel 11. I forget what they were talking about.

Ryden:

Well, I think they were talking about Don Heyward(?) when he died.

Clementi:

I think so. Yeah. It must've been that because they ran a clip from you in the '60s on--

Ryden:

Yeah, it was a still.

Clementi:

It was a still.

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Ryden:

Yeah, it was a still. Yeah.

Moon:

OK. Now who was Don Heyward(?).

Ryden:

He was a director there and he worked at channel 11 for a number of years.

Moon:

Oh, OK.

Ryden:

And so when I got the show Don was with me. And then it was just my show and Don quit to go polish cars or something.

Moon:

And so how long did you do the variety take?

Ryden:

I did mine for probably about three years.

Moon:

For about three years? Oh, that must've been fun.

Ryden:

Oh, it was great. I loved it.

Moon:

It must've been fun to interview some of those-- go to Hollywood and interview some of those stars.

Ryden:

Yes. Some of them before you were born. (laughter)

Moon:

Probably not. I'm older than you think.

[01-00:30:00]

OK. Well, that's interesting. Another thing I noticed that you were also appointed to the San Jose human relations commission. Why don't you talk about how you got appointed to that and what you did on that commission.

Ryden:

I think that's when Norm was mayor. And I think I had gotten off of television at that time and my interests was peaked in politics at that time because I (inaudible) to people that I did interview, like Jess (inaudible) and I asked him the question: They call you big daddy up there. Well, that was a no no. I was never supposed to ask that question, but I did and didn't realize it was a dumb question. So his feathers were a little ruffled, but he answered it. I can remember the people that I interviewed. Let me see now. What was-- senior moment here.

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Moon:

So when Norm was the mayor and he--

Ryden:

When he appointed me to the human relations commission, I went up to see Norm and said, you know I'd like to be on the committee. There are several people that filed for it, and so I got appointed to it probably cause of Norm. And I found that to be a very interesting commission. We had the gays, the homosexuals coming in there too and demanding, not asking or not being reasoned with, just demanding that certain things be done. And then we talked about the civil rights things and various things like that. It was very interesting.

Moon:

Yeah, it sounds like you had-- had some sort of relationship with Norm before you were appointed to that? Could you describe that?

Ryden:

Just from television. I had interviewed him on television. And we'd go to political events as a republican. I can't remember. I was nominated for Republican Woman of the Year, but I don't think I got it. That one year and I don't remember what it was. But Norm was a great guy when it came to remembering people's names. Their names, their dog's names, their relative's names. So he could come up to-- I don't know if he had something in his ear that people were telling him, but he was great that way. And he was a nice guy, didn't agree with him politically, but most of them very nice people.

Moon:

Well, now he's working for the republicans so meeting him over there with the Bush administration. He's the secretary of transportation.

Ryden:

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. He is a secretary.

Moon:

Well, he started in the Clinton administration, and I think you Bush was trying to show his bipartisan sort of--

Ryden:

I don't agree with a lot of things Bush is doing, but he's my man.

Moon:

OK. Well, maybe we can talk a little bit about that towards the end of the interview. Some of the other points that you came out strong on during your years in the political fray(?) included things relating to anti-welfare. You seem to be strong on law enforcement, anti-housing, and subsidized housing, and you opposed district elections though you admitted that you benefited also from the district elections. So let's take those a couple pieces at a time. Could you just talk about what your position was and why you objected to kind of the welfare legislation that was going on at that time?

Ryden:

Well, much of the welfare legislation has to do with the gimme, gimme, gimme. Rather than what could we do to help you become more self-reliant? So that's a republican position.

Moon:

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Right.

Ryden:

You know the old story about giving fish. Well, we're teaching the fish and that was my main stand against welfare programs. I mean there are some people that have to be on welfare. I mean let's face it, if they're stuck with a couple of kids and their husband leaves them. I don't have much sympathy for those women who have three kids who have three different fathers, and I would be opposed to something like that. But you go to think of the kids. That was my stand against welfare. Give it to those who need it and trade in. Ernie Conue(?) at that time came up with the welfare reform in the assembly here in the state. And work fare or something it was called. And that was teaching people. So when (inaudible) was governor, I was appointed to the thing that took the place of CETA. It used to be CETA, and then they changed it to be a more progressive with regard to--

Moon:

It was-- that was the name of the commission, it was called something like that?

Ryden:

Yeah. That was it for two years. I was on it for two years to get the people to learn a trade.

Clementi:

Oh, a Telworks(?) now.

Ryden:

GTPA. Government Training Program, something like that. That's where I was it.

Moon:

Oh, OK.

Ryden:

And we'd meet in Sacramento every month or so. And you know we were just trying to get training programs. With the private enterprise and get training programs, and schooling. And that was my position in (inaudible).

Moon:

OK. And when you were working on that commission that you were appointed to by (inaudible), was that during the same time that you were working as a council member?

Ryden:

Yes.

Moon:

OK. And how successful do you think that the commission--

Ryden:

It was doing good. But you know like all bureaucracies they had to (inaudible) down on red tape and you'd come up with what would be a good plan. And then there's 20 of us on the committee and we tossed these things around and what would be the best way to do it. And I was in a videotape of what the GTPA was and what we were trying to do and so on. And what they would-- we'd come up with a good program, but then you throw it into the bureaucracy in the system and it'll take forever to get to a committee, to a by committee, to a sub committee. And it was very frustrating.

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Moon:

So was anything ever passed?

Ryden:

There were laws passed that-- can't think of what they are now, but that gave more power and money to organizations that were willing to work with the government. I believe there were times when you would give a special benefit to somebody who had hired somebody that was going through a program.

Moon:

OK. So providing is not really rehabilitation, but it's giving incentive to people to get off their--

Ryden:

Yeah.

Moon:

Now the welfare issue is such a big-- I mean we could spend hours just talking about that I think. But looking at some of the policy work you were involved in. How can you balance the whole concept of providing welfare benefits to, like you say, some of the women that are, you know trying to raise their children and balance that against some of the other concerns that you have related to? You know, abuse of the system or criteria for giving out, you know basically funds to support people. How would you--?

Ryden:

Well, they have to have a need for if they're going to go on welfare, they have to be able to take a job. I don't have any problems with day care for women like that. I have a problem with daycare for women-- we won't get into that right now. I realized that there were people that needed it. That there are people who lived off of welfare, generation after generation, which I opposed. And felt that a lot of these people that are on welfare could very well be put out in the fields to work, could work along the highways, which some of them do but they're not welfare workers, they're from the police department. And I felt that there were jobs for them. There's always a job available, and my problem was get a job.

Moon:

OK. Now a corollary sort of topic is the anti-housing. Not really anti-housing but really the subsidized housing that was really a hot issue in the '80s and California, and certainly in San Jose. What was your--

Ryden:

Subsidized housing?

Moon:

I think you were opposed to subsidized housing.

Ryden:

There was a certain part of subsidized housing that I was opposed to. We have a unit here in Cavardi(?) that I'm interested in essentially. Because-- anyway, what I was opposed to is families. There was something written in that particular law that they were trying to get through that I felt was wrong, and only encouraged people to go to subsidized housing rather than to be self-reliant and try and get on their own. As you can see, I am a person who's going-- since I brought myself up from the bootstraps, that it can be done considering my background. So I just didn't have any patience for people who wanted welfare, who wanted government assistance.

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Moon:

My Dad has a similar position on welfare. He came from a very poor family and had difficulty, and I noticed in some of the biographical information on you, you had quite a challenging childhood. (laughter)

[01-00:40:00]

Do you want to talk a little bit about how your childhood influenced you as an adult and how that led perhaps to-- you know, the political realm?

Ryden:

I don't know how much you know about my childhood.

Moon:

Well, I understand that your mother was a working house woman and you ended up traveling quite a bit and-

-

Ryden:

Mom was a glamorous, beautiful woman and she had four ½ husbands. The last one she lived with for 30 some years, they weren't married. But in spite of my religious background, it was all right cause she was old.

Moon:

Oh, it's OK when you're old. (laughter)

Ryden:

And he was a nice guy. As a matter of fact, he's living with somebody else here in Cavardi(?) now. She was hard working and this was in the 30s. I'm 75, so this was in the '30s and she held down as many as three or four jobs at a time. And she'd be a manicurist at one place, she'd be a waitress in another one, a hostess another place, and she'd go from place to place in San Francisco and in Portland, Oregon, and in Washington. And she had several jobs, but she always wanted-- I lived in a lot foster homes. But the foster homes were people that not through government, but through families. You know, people she knew and so on. And so I was always taking care by people she knew. So I probably went to 11 different schools in 12 years and I was able to spend my last two years at high school in Minneapolis and that was great. Those are the important years in your life, and you remember them. I still go back to high school reunions. But yeah, what developed my philosophy was the fact that mom was really hard working. We didn't go on relief from those days. That was not an option. You got out there and you worked, and you find a job. I lived with my aunt and uncle, mom would pay them what she should could get paid out of the wages that she had. He was a lumberjack and we lived up in Oakland, and there wasn't much money. There was a wood stove and gosh, there's sometimes we only bread and gravy for dinner. I've been there, I've done it. If I had a choice I would not do it again, but it gave me a good background and so I felt that's, you know, do it.

Moon:

Right.

Ryden:

And I had the choice going to all those different schools of either being a wallflower and you know, stepping back and letting everybody trample on me. Or I could be obnoxious and get out there and do something, and I chose the obnoxious part. And I was always running around making an ass of myself. (laughter) In high school I was in not the drama group, but the talent show. Couldn't sing, couldn't dance, didn't bother me. I was out there writing scripts and having fun.

Moon:

Now after you graduated from high school, did you go to college after that?

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Ryden:

No, I could have. I went to art school, to Minneapolis School of Art for about a year. Got my own car, a 1929 Ford Model A when I was (inaudible) around and I didn't get much encouragement to go to college. We were in Minneapolis at the time and they were just sort of, you know, go to work. I could've gone to the University of Minnesota, but I didn't have any ideas of what I wanted to do or anything. So I went to Minneapolis school of art and I did quite well there and I wanted to go into advertising print. You know the sketches you see of fashions and stuff. But I never stuck to it, so I quit after the first year. I went to get a job. Got a job at a bank, I was not a teller, I was a gofer. And then they came for receptionist job so I asked for that and I got the receptionist job. Any job that I had, I always tried to get up a little bit higher in picking order. But I will say this, I had one job that was just terrible. I love to dance, I couldn't tap dance or anything, but I love ballroom dancing. And when I was 19, there was an ad in the paper to teach dancing. This sounds like fun, I'll go do that. And I was just going with my husband at that time, so this was not an Arthur Murray type of studio, this is one of these studios up on the second floor of an old run down building with someone with bleached hair with black roots. And her husband had you know, the mustache and the slick back hair. So I went up there and there were about five other people. We learned all of the dances, and I just loved the tango, waltz, fox trot, everything. And then this was in the 40s and so there were a lot of veterans coming out that wanted to use their money to learn how to dance and meet gals. So we all had to take a different name. I was very naïve in those days, and we had to take a different name. You can't have your own or they'll look you up and bother you at home, so I loved my grandmother's name. Her name was the same as mine, Lura(?). Lura May and her last name was Leigh. But I loved it because I loved pronouncing like sleigh, and you know it's just so beautiful and someone like Gideon Leigh and so on. So they wanted to know what name I was going to take, and one guy said well, I'll take Mr. Jones. And one gal said I'll take Ms. Smith, and I said I want to be Ms. Leigh. (laughter) And the woman looked at me. I didn't see anything wrong with it because I was spelling it a different way and they were spelling it Lay.

Moon:

Oh, I see how that would be problematic.

Ryden:

And so she said oh well, Lura. Just a moment please. And then she went in the back room and I could hear them howling with laughter and she wants to be called Ms. Leigh. So she came back and says, "I think you ought to take a different name than that. Try something else out. You know, Ms. whatever you wanted." So I don't know what name I finally picked. I still didn't know why I was changing my name. (laughter)

Moon:

That's a good story.

Ryden:

That's funny. Life is like that sometimes isn't it?

Moon:

Well, on a more serious note. From dancing, that actually sounds like a lot of fun. Sounds like it didn't bother you. You had a lot of energy and just went from thing to thing that just kind of sparked you.

Ryden:

Yeah. I didn't want to be stuck in any particular job.

Moon:

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Well, speaking of being stuck in different types of jobs, one of them main issues that was facing San Jose in particular, but I would say it was a national issue certainly. It was the whole comparable work issue and the strike that took place in the '80s.

Ryden:

Oh yeah.

Moon:

Where did you fall on the issue of comparable--

Ryden:

Well, Fletcher and I were pretty much the same. I did not believe in (inaudible) war, but I believed that a person should be paid what they do for the job, not what somebody else is getting paid. I mean I didn't think that a secretary should get paid the same as somebody working up in driving a truck or something or working a field that was not comparable to any type of work that they were doing. I think that secretaries, and I tried to give my secretary a raise because she was so good. I couldn't do it because of the union, they wouldn't allow anybody to give them. I couldn't even give a bonus. So I just think people should be paid what their worth, and never mind try to compare it with somebody else who has absolutely different type of work.

Moon:

Yeah, I think that the whole strike actually did have some resonance. Though for-- like particularly in the city, offices in relationship to the librarians. The librarians were one of the most underpaid of all of the employees in the city at that time. And male librarians made more than female librarians and they did exactly the same job. And so I think that's where that whole strike was successful in actually making more of a level playing field for women in the workplace.

Ryden:

Well, both Paul and I agreed on that. You had to take the whole law, you couldn't separate it. And we felt the people like-- there should be no discrimination if you're doing the same type of work, you should be paid the same. Comparable work to us was comparing that job that you had a librarian to somebody in the street department, and you can't compare those two jobs.

Moon:

Well now they're very different jobs. And in fact the librarian would have a higher degree, whereas the person driving a truck wouldn't necessarily.

Ryden:

Absolutely, but the person driving a truck might get more money.

Moon:

Right.

Ryden:

So we believed that you should be paid-- it doesn't matter what sex you are. Even when I was looking for a secretary, I think I went through about six of them. I didn't even care if they were homosexual as long as they could do the job. Just bring me somebody who can do the job.

Moon:

Well, I think it was an interesting time period in San Jose's history because it was the first major strike of that kind of the nation, and so once again San Jose got the headlines for being at the heart of some of this debate.

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Which made for an interesting environment I would've though to-- I wasn't here in San Jose at that time period so I think it must've been an interesting time period to be watching the politics that were taking place.

Ryden:

Oh, it was.

Moon:

Another big, important issue for women entering into politics.

[01-00:50:00]

A number of women who became successful all had some sort of environmental perspective were either members of environmental sort of-- or conservation groups and specifically related to the open space issue that was so prevalent during that time period. Which was the idea of preserving the foot hills and to Janet Gray's campaign when she entered office was basically to stop the sprawl and to come up with a reasonable redevelopment plan. So the city can be planned in a logical way and not ruin the entire environmental parts of the city. Including water quality and just the destruction of the whole infrastructure. So where did you stand on in environment in some of those topics?

Ryden:

Well, when it came to San Jose being like a lace tablecloth, the county, the city, and so on. I was in agreement we should make it all a city and I think I read something in the paper the other day where one part of the city was part of the county was going to be an annex to the city. Because they don't get inside (inaudible) and crazy things like that. But I could go along with that, but I did not go along with the urban sprawl. But excuse me, I did not see anything bad about expanding the city as long as you could keep the infrastructure along with it. The police, fire, water, sewers, and all of that. And I was OK with that, but there was a lot of urban sprawl going around. I know that I voted on the coyote situation, and there would be something about the highway or the freeway going down near when it was supposed to be developed but a trigger mechanism when it as supposed to be developed and so on. And I didn't see any problem with that and you have your trigger mechanism and you don't sprawl out there until you're ready to take care of it.

Moon:

So you agreed with the extension of building the coyote hills?

Ryden:

As long as there was no trigger mechanism that will not blow 'til you're ready.

Moon:

So that you would have the other kind of redevelopment sort of pieces in place from the infrastructure.

Ryden:

Yeah, I (inaudible) ran amuck. I mean I was opposed to an awful lot of stuff that they didn't redevelop.

Moon:

Why did you say it ran amuck?

Ryden:

Well, they were taking in parts of the city that's supposed to be blight, but they weren't really blighted areas, they just wanted to make them better. Well, fine if you want to make them look better I don't have any problems with that. But what they would do is they is they sell the redevelop bonds and all they could use that redevelop money for was to build the building. There was nothing for operation and maintenance, and

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everything came out of a general fund. So you were shorting the general fund on the things that you really needed and they were just taking too much in the redevelopment area.

Moon:

Yeah, I think that's always a problem in redevelopment is that you always see that happen where you get bond money to build like on the campus on San Jose state or any campus in California, you get bond money to build a building, but it doesn't give you the money to hire the people to maintain that building and libraries are a good example of that. We are always under funded from a staff side. We have this beautiful building in the king library, you know which is the king library. But we are terribly understaffed, and you know it's a beautiful building but we need more money. You know, now they're trying to build funds to raise for, you know, for buying books. We don't have a book budget that's really adequate for the size of the population that we actually are there to serve. But anyway.

Ryden:

I agree with what you're saying, and when they do this, they should have some source of revenue that's going to support it.

Moon:

So it seems I read some of the other comments you've made about similar sorts of topics, and it sounds like some of your-- the way that you voted was really kind of follows a similar pattern which is that you didn't necessarily object to the initial issue or the project, but that you wanted to see how they were going to support it. Is that--?

Ryden:

Yeah, that's about it. What's your revenue stream? Like money that you get for the block grant money, and I was opposed to many of those things because the people who got the block grant money, some of them didn't live up to what they were supposed to do. And so I said well let's cut their funds then and give it to somebody who can. Blasphemy, can't do that.

Moon:

No, looking back at some of the work that you had done on the city council. Were there some issues that you thought were most important to you personally or to your community and policies that you think you had influence on in actually getting--

Ryden:

Yeah, I think on the pornography situation. They were having big boobs and all this stuff so kids could get at them all the time. And Bob Putnam and I--

Moon:

Do you mean the magazine?

Ryden:

Yeah, the magazine sent, we're all told we've got complaints from the people. You know I take my son into the store and there's this Hustler magazine or something sitting there. So we did something on that as well. I was taken off of a couple of committees because I didn't move along with Tom on some things. And so I was removed from committees.

Moon:

What are some examples of those committees?

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Ryden:

I was taken off of the place(?) and fire retirement ward and the finance committee.

Moon:

Now did he want you removed from those committees?

Ryden:

Because I didn't agree with some of the policies that he wanted. One of them was the arena cause I was very much opposed to the arena as long as the city had to pay for it. I felt that we were going to build the arena, sell the land to them, let them build the arena, and we'll take the taxes from it. And they wanted to do whatever they wanted with the arena then build it, do what you want with it, but we'll take the tax money from it. Buy the property, we'll even give you the property. Give you the property and build on it, but I was so opposed to that because I said we're only going to spend \$100 million on it, and it was a 6/5 vote. Bob and I managed to get three other people to agree with us. I only dumped out on us, that's why I went to Val and another one was term limits. I was opposed to the term limits even though I got in on it because term limits did not turn out to be the way they were supposed to. I think I made that clear in there because it's no more the person who's in office endorses somebody else. And while there's still office and still in office and their term is up, I want you to vote for this person. This is that person I endorse, and if anything comes before the council, you do it my way. You give money to this candidate or you don't get your projects or the counseling type of thing. And that's what it went down to, and it no longer was people running from the districts like I was. It became a political machine again.

Moon:

The city council did?

Ryden:

Yes. There were 10 fiefdoms and then the mayor. And the people, as we got on the council, then they realized hey, you got a lot of power here. And some of the people didn't let it bother them, and other people just ran with it.

Moon:

So you felt under Henry's tenure that he kind of reintroduced the political machine, or was it a combination of people?

Ryden:

It was a combination of people. Tom, he wasn't a bad mayor and we agreed on a lot of things, but there were major issues that we just plain didn't agree on. And he wanted to be top dog, and he wanted a strong mayor. So the council at that time then became 10 little mayors. 10 little mayors of each one of their community. So kind of aced out the general manager even though that was our charter was written, and everything-- and then Gonzalez and Hammer kind of took it from there. But it started under McHenry(?).

Moon:

OK. Now that's interesting.

[01-00:60:00]

Actually in this one article that was, I don't know that this was printed in the Mercury looks like in 1986, the headline reads "Ryden Wants McHenry to Apologize for Review". (laughter) Do you remember that?

Ryden:

Yes. He was rude to me. But you know, the Mercury likes to play up things. It must've been a slow news day or something.

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Moon:

Maybe so. They do like to play up these like in fighting sort of things. And actually there's a lot of articles that suggest you and him had this major problem and that you weren't able to reach consensus ever. So outside of looking at some of these specific issues you just mentioned, how would you describe your relationship with the other city council members and also in connection to some of that newspaper hyperbole.

Ryden:

Well, I got a long with all of them. Bloncko(?) and I, we had our section one time. I was called a bigot and a racist.

Moon:

By Bloncko(?)?

Ryden:

Block and Iola(?). Because I didn't agree with-- I don't know, something on affirmative action I guess it was. And then having the ballot in 85 different languages. I felt if you were a citizen that you were supposed to learn English after citizenship (inaudible). And so I was called a racist and (inaudible) really got after me. And Iola(?) really got after me on the council, so I just shut up and got hold of her afterwards, pinned her against the wall, and used some profanity that I don't usually use. And it was quite right and told her that if she ever called me that again, I would make sure that she suffered the consequences, not having any idea what that would be. Called her an SOB and everything else. And then we let it go at that, and she came to my office the next day and apologized for being racist, and I apologized for calling her all those names, and it was fine. It was a joke in my office that after every council meeting I would go into my office and scream to my own special door. (laughter) Things didn't go right. And then with McHenry, my relationship-- I got along with all of them personally, politically. It was always 10/1 in the vote and mostly on fiscal matters. And then there was the one Wigzy(?) Ziverson(?) comes up and wants to police department to learn how to get along with homosexuals, and I said where's your class on homosexuals getting along with the police department? Well, she thought that was not the right kind of question to ask, and she said we can't get them all together. Give me break, you know. If one's supposed to get along with them, the other. So I attended one of the classes and it was such foolishness. I was in love with the place many, many times. I loved it. (inaudible) instead I should have been a police officer.

Moon:

Were there a lot of problems with the gay community at that time?

Ryden:

Yes, there were. Their actions and activities, and as I said, the ones that I knew were great and some I didn't know were homosexual. I don't differentiate, so when I would go out the cops were friendly with them. They always got along with them, and there was that one place downtown. That gay and lesbian-- Billy Frank's(?). And I would ride with the vice squad and one point and one of the officers I rode with went to the same church that I did too. So I said now if I'm going to be opposed to all of this stuff I have to know about it, I have to see what it all is. So he took me through some of the stores that sell like dildos and all those things. And all the terrible, terrible pornography that's out with kids and women in chains and blood and gore, it's awful. And then we went through the theatre and I didn't bother looking at the screen, we just went through the-- you know, I said, "Gee, they don't have to learn much dialogue here." And it was all this [imitates sound] is all you heard. And then when they're on the streets, some of the prostitutes would come out. And Hi, hi Audrey. How are you doing today? What's going on? And they'd talk back with them. And you know, well you making any money tonight type of stuff. You want to get sure you get all this?

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Moon:

I just wanted to see how much time I had on the (inaudible).

Ryden:

OK. And it was pathetic with some of the homosexuals because you'd see young guys out there and trying to sell themselves to older men. And it is such a sad, pathetic situation that they had.

Moon:

Where were they doing this at?

Ryden:

You know on Lanson(?) street, up by the Billy Frank's Center, and downtown. You know that's when downtown was not built up like it is not.

Moon:

Right, cause I haven't seen anything like that.

Clementi:

It's not far from the train station. There are several places down there across the street from the train station down under the bridge by the arena.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Clementi:

It's right across from the arena there, on Stockton. Stockton was the big area.

Moon:

But is it still?

Clementi:

No, not really. They closed-- they had Bud's ice cream parlor and saloon, that was one of them. Renegade, the S&M gay bar is still there.

Moon:

That is still there?

Clementi:

Yeah, it's still there. I had a gay neighbor, so.

Ryden:

And then downtown on Market in that area there. And I'd say to one of the officers now that is a fairly attractive woman, why is she selling herself? They'd say that's not a woman.

Moon:

That's a man.

Ryden:

Yeah. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

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Moon:

Because you were talking about--

Ryden:

How I got along with the rest of them.

Moon:

Yeah. And but many of the council members were-- they actually ended up in the McHenry era supporting the gay pride celebration. But during the not Hammer but another.

Ryden:

Janet?

Moon:

Janet's, Janet Gray's period, they actually were-- right before her second term the council had actually approved a resolution to support the gay pride week celebration and then there was a lot of commotion by the Los Gatos Christian church, and they actually came in large numbers to the council meetings and voice their opinions. And so the council decided to vote on it again and it didn't pass. And when I was talking to Janet Gray the other day she was saying that it was just not at that time period, it wasn't right. I never got her to really explain how she felt about the whole gay pride issue, but she really felt that for her it was a political situation because she was going out for re-election and she said that it would've caused a lot of problems for her and her political career.

Ryden:

But it doesn't matter if you're a republican or a Democrat, it's always the votes.

Moon:

Yeah. I mean you can understand why you would actually perhaps-- and 1970, that was I guess it would've been '78 right before the November election.

Ryden:

She was finishing off her term when I came there.

Moon:

Yeah. Well, speaking of Janet Gray, she's quite an interesting woman. And she's taken-- if you read the Mercury news it makes it sound like she's taking credit for other women's successes, which I don't actually think is a fair critique of her personally, after having talked to her. But anyway, one of the common things that come out of the feminist capital and her goal, and people asking her to reflect on what her legacy is. They often want her to talk about her role in bringing women into politics. And so there was a great example of how many women did go into politics after she became mayor. And I'm not sure that it was a direct relationship between her mentoring other women as much as it just opened the door. And I think that's how she would characterize it today is that she helped open up the door so that other women could come in. For example, there were 8/11 San Jose city council members were women, 3/5 board members, work supervisors were women. This is speaking during the time that she was actually in office. So the county, and the county executive, the city attorney, the superintendent of schools were all women at that time. And one of the state senators who represent Santa Clara county(?), you know, is also a woman. And so she takes a great deal of credit for this rather remarkable sort of presence. At least that's how it's reported in the Mercury. And so I'm wondering-- and in fact you have been interviewed on this topic and in this interview you are cited as saying that Hayes(?) was all right. But the author indicates that you are often at odds with the mayor. Then you

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said, "The time was right and the politics were right, more than anything else. A lot of us did this on our, you know." So can you describe--

Ryden:

Sounds like me.

Moon:

I think that was a fair characterization of how many other women also felt. And I don't think that Janet was necessarily-- she might have meant it at the time that she was responsible for-- you know, helping women get in to the door. But I think what she really meant was that she helped open the door for women.

Ryden:

Yeah, I think so. She probably did. I didn't make a-- it didn't make any difference to me whether she was mayor or not and a woman. I just-- you know I got into it.

Moon:

Right. And do you think-- what do you think her role was? Do you think she played a significant role for other women? Do you think she was a model for other women entering politics after that time?

Ryden:

No, I don't think so.

Moon:

Or she wasn't one for you specifically?

Ryden:

Well, not anybody I knew. I don't think we even discussed whether she was. I don't think any of us discussed whether we had our own model or not. I can remember talking to other women on the council and they never--

Moon:

Articulated it quite like that.

Ryden:

They all went in on their own pretty much.

Moon:

Yeah. I think Susie Wilson will agree with you on that too. She didn't enter politics because of Janet Gray, she had already been very politically--

[01-01:10:00]

well, she hadn't had a political appointment, but she had sat on the council before Susan was actually elected so they were co-council members at one point. So I think that that's probably a fair statement.

Ryden:

Oh yeah.

Moon:

And I think that in fairness to Janet Gray, she wasn't trying to take credit for other women's success, but was suggesting that her entrance as mayor, as the first female mayor, was an important starting point for women.

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Ryden:

I think in a way she kind of meant(?) it was an important starting point because that's the way press played it. And she may have opened the door. I like Janet, she's a nice woman. And if she felt that she opened the door, it was because of the press. You know how the press will go onto something and they can make a big issue out of it. And they even made a big issue of her and Susie having her hair done for crying out loud.

Moon:

Right. Well, they focused on that with Hillary too. You know, it's just like get over the whole image. But the image is really an important part of politics too, and I think there was some point in some of the material that I read about you that you also went through a re-imaging. Can you describe why you did that and how that kind of transferred?

Ryden:

You mean with the city attorney?

Moon:

Yeah.

Ryden:

Yes. Pat Sosedo(?) and I would sit in a council meeting, we look at her and we think, "Gosh. How does the woman fix herself up?" She has so much to offer and she's so smart. So I went over to her one time and said something to the effect of, "You know--" I don't know what I said to her, but I opened up the prospect of her getting herself made over. And she just jumped on it, she thought it was a great idea. So I said, "Well, come on. Let's go shopping." And I took her and had her hair done. Pat and I took her shopping. I don't think Pat really-- Pat just wanted her made over. I don't know how much she contributed to it, but I had the background for it from--

Moon:

Yeah, from your modeling.

Ryden:

Yeah. Well, and from putting together so many fashion shows. So we picked out some clothes for her and I took her to my hair stylist, and then took her over to get a decent pair of shoes. And she had been wearing the wrong size shoes the whole time, and it wasn't until I took her to-- can't remember the name. They have a place over on (inaudible), but she found out that she was wearing the wrong size shoes. And so she started dressing-- and she really looked nice. And I had her make up done, had a friend come over for make up.

Moon:

That was Sally Reid was it?

Ryden:

No.

Moon:

OK. She was the--

Ryden:

City attorney.

Moon:

--city attorney, right.

Ryden:

Right. City attorney.

Moon:

I can't remember what her name is.

Ryden:

No, Sally didn't need too much. She could've used some help, but then I see the Joan Gallow(?), later on in council meetings after I got of the council meetings, and she went right back to where she was before, that same bowl haircut. The same thing happened when I had the television show and made over of these women. Some of them would just look great for about a week or so, and then it was too much trouble so they stopped.

Moon:

So you never felt like you needed to-- you already felt like you had the finesse to present yourself so that was never an issue for you. I think Susie Wilson had said that Janet Gray, she liked to come to work in sweatpants. I mean that's what she wore around the house was sweatpants, and she was always very athletic too so she was always jogging or playing tennis or whatever. And so Susie said that she told her that she needed it. If she was going to come to the council meeting, she needed to buy a couple suits. (laughter) I thought that was kind of funny. And Susie's got a lot of style.

Ryden:

Yeah, she does.

Moon:

So that was a funny commentary. But talking about kind of the focus of how the media would just kind-- you know, they would just always use these very diminutive sort of statements against all of the women who were involved in politics, and particularly Janet and some of the people that were the key leaders at that time. How did you cope with kind of the discrimination that women faced by the press and then also kind of the-- you know just the gender dynamics and gender discrimination that women faced in working with some of their male colleagues and the council?

Ryden:

Well, I never faced any of that. I always got a long with men and I never had to worry about sexual harassment or anything. Somebody was trying to cop a feel I'd yell knock it off. (laughter) That was all we had to do. I never felt any gender discrimination with me. I never really understood the others, but if somebody got promoted because they were a woman or a man, I would usually go to the source. If there was any discrimination from the press, I would go to Phil Traustein(?) who wrote the article or to Nadine(?) who wrote the article and say, "How come you wrote it this way?"

Moon:

Right. Yeah, they use the housewife sort of imagery constantly in the press in talking about the women that were engaged in politics and frequently referred to them as, you know the house maker turned politician. And they would use really--

Ryden:

Derogatory?

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Moon:

--derogatory sort of statements that I think were really offensive at the time.

Ryden:

A lot of them were housewives.

Moon:

Well, some were, but I mean they used the term in such a--

Ryden:

In a derogatory way.

Moon:

-- such a derogatory way. There was this one example I was reading a couple of articles on Janet Gray, and there was a whole period in that same time frame and other U.S. cities where women became elected officials, and particularly at the mayor's level. And there was this one gal from Phoenix who was elected, and she had this really funny story where she would-- she told the press that well, she doesn't have a problem-- she was a republican too and she said, "I don't have a problem using my sex to get my way." And she was just really frank and very funny. And then she said, "And the only time that we have any trouble from the male council members is when we have to take a break to watch Guiding Light." And I thought what a great, funny response. Because on one level I thought why did you say that? You know, that just like reinforced kind of the stereotyping that was going on in the press, but on the other hand it obviously was meant as a flip sort of response to their questions. But I thought that was really a clever way of--

Ryden:

Well, yeah. And I don't see anything wrong with that. What good-looking man would use his sex to win over a woman?

Moon:

Yeah. Nobody comments on that hairstyle.

Ryden:

No.

Moon:

Now thinking about gender and feminism in politics, do you think that women-- and don't think of it as a feminist sort of thing, but as a feminine you know looking at women as kind of political players or kind of some sort of equality within politics. What do you think that women bring to politics? Do you think they bring something different than men do and then what are those? What strengths and weakness do you think women bring and how should we encourage that in politics?

Ryden:

Well, I won't say emotional because that always denotes something negative. But I think women have an insight that men don't have on certain issues. Not on all issues, but on certain issues. I think their intuition, their insight, they're able to look at issues from another person's standpoint. Somebody can come before the council or before then and raise an issue about-- let's see. I can remember one thing that came before the council on this builder wanted to build something. He held his property for sometime and he was a big builder, and the council was hemming and hawing around what to do about this. Well, we'll delay this for another two or three weeks. And I said buy by delaying this, he's paying interest on this property, he has employees that he has to pay. And I was looking at it from the business standpoint of it, rather than from a

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city standpoint of how we're going to make a decision on this. I think that women have an intuition as far as it comes to a childcare issue or even on the-- well, let's see. There are so many issues out there that we just bring a balance to it. I mean men come in with this macho type of decision they're always going to make, and they sometimes look at it from a financial standpoint, but they look at it from a man's viewpoint and women just couldn't get it from a different point. I can't really put it into words what it is. Can you?

Moon:

I think it does vary. I mean some women are really aggressive and have really great financial minds, and other women are more interested in you know, social issues and social activism and so they're really good at trying to bring consensus.

[01-01:20:00]

Like Dianne McKenna was described as the great consensus builder on this board of supervisors, and that was one of the qualities that she came in contact with felt that she had. And that she also had a very good sense of humor apparently, and could make people not be so tight up on these committees.

Ryden:

I think that's what you're saying. They can build a consensus much better than a man can. They can bring to the table things that other people don't dare.

Moon:

I think the whole idea machismo too is certainly part of the male sort of perspective and how they want to promote policies, but that's not true for all men certainly, I don't think. But I do think that women do bring certain qualities that are different than what men have, despite the kind of the socialization process. But then there's a lot of issues of course that both men and women believe--

Ryden:

Oh yeah.

Moon:

-- both offer similar sorts of--

Ryden:

There's aggressive women, mouthy women, they're real bitches too. But there are really mouthy, arrogant men too.

Moon:

Right. Right. So I think that that's a good quality. I think women need to balance out the political spectrum since we represent 50% of the population and we have important issues that need to be addressed.

Ryden:

We do something besides have babies.

Moon:

Yeah, right. But I don't think that we've reached parity and so reflecting on the time period that you were in office and then looking at where we are today, where do you think we're-- what do you think the successes have been for women in politics?

Ryden:

Well, I think they've been very successful, and when they had something to offer they were very successful. I think some of the CEOs that are women and sure some of them screw up, but so do men.

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Moon:

Right.

Ryden:

And I think they've been given more opportunities now. I don't think the glass ceiling is as low as it used to be.

Moon:

I don't think it's probably as low. It depends on what the profession is, but I think that largely women have made significant end roads in all of the professions though, certainly not--

Ryden:

What do you think they haven't made it?

Moon:

I think there's still a lot of inequity in, you know the ways that women are paid for the same work that they do that men are involved in. I think still, yeah. If you look at the academic environment the way that they make contracts for new faculty members, there's no pay, there's no way to compare whether or not you're making the same or equal amount that a male colleague is having.

Ryden:

It's terrible.

Moon:

And it's intentional. Though I don't think it's necessarily meant-- I think in previous generations maybe it was used as a way to discriminate against women, but it's hard to measure it because of the way that people are hired in these professions. But I think there's a lot of work that still needs to be done.

Ryden:

Oh gosh, yes.

Moon:

You know that sort of equity issue.

Ryden:

Especially in the academic field and that is the most important. That's bringing the next citizen into the--

Moon:

Right. But women represent probably 50% of the academy now, so it's not as though women don't have a voice in the administration. And I think that more and more women are becoming administrators. So it's not as though we haven't made some significant gains. I think we have, but I think there's some work that needs to be done.

Ryden:

Yes, I think of Condoleezza Rice who's just great in her future.

Moon:

Yeah, or Madeline Albright when she was in--

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Ryden:

I think she did a terrible job.

Moon:

Oh.

Ryden:

Well, of course you do.

Moon:

But looking at one of the issues that's been really important for a lot of other women that are engaged in politics is that they always refer to the female political networks that they've maintained as kind of a sustaining sort of influence for their initial campaigning and their work in politics. And so were there any other organizations that you were involved in? Were you involved for example, with the League of Women Voters or others sorts of organizations like that?

Ryden:

No, I wasn't. Emily's list or the League, I wasn't involved in any of them. Well, see Emily's list, they have certain criteria they want and you have to be in favor of abortion and I think that was the one that I couldn't go with because of that. And there was like a couple of other lists too that have it at the certain-- what's the test they call? The limits test, yeah, that you have to have. And that was, you know, things that I'm opposed to.

Moon:

OK. Now were you ever involved with the commission on the status of women or did you participate with the National Women's Political Conference? When they had this big 1977 meeting in San Jose?

Ryden:

I don't know, it was so new then. In the 60s when I first heard about I wanted to get somebody on my program from now, and they didn't have any representatives anywhere.

Moon:

Cause the National Women's Political Conference is a non-partisan, just like the League of Women Voters is but they're more involved in actually helping women get into politics and endorsing candidates both for the republican and democratic party.

Ryden:

I know, but they still have a limits test.

Moon:

OK. What is the limits test?

Ryden:

Not in the '70s, but in '80s when they contacted me. Everybody contacts you, you know and you have to write out all this-- one of the things was my opinion on abortion and one was my opinion on-- gee, there was one other thing. I don't even remember what it was at the time, it was an issue at that time.

Moon:

Affirmative action maybe?

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Ryden:
Probably.

Moon:
I wasn't aware that there was that.

Ryden:
And the League of Women, a lot of groups are non-partisan to a certain extent that they will take republicans or democrats and promote them, but there's certain criteria.

Moon:
I think the League has traditionally tried to maintain a non-partisan role, but I think it depends on where you live and here the democrats are stronger so it'd be logical that you would have more of a democratic image.

Ryden:
It's more democrat here.

Moon:
Now looking forward, you left off as in one of the things that you had said in some of the articles that I read, you didn't want to do-- you had your fill of politics after that time period. So could you explain why you decided to leave and why you didn't pursue a higher office after your work?

Ryden:
Well, the reason I didn't pursue a higher office is a personal reason, but another reason that I didn't is I didn't want to go through all that again. I'm sure I could've been elected to the assembly. When Chuck Quackenbush(?) ran-- how much time have I got?

Moon:
Let me just stop for a second because I want to change to another file. These little digital recorders are--

Ryden:
Now that I finally figured out how to use this. OK. This personal one with decision, and because I would be away from home too much and I battled part of my life, and the second one I'm sure I could've been elected to the assembly. Quackenbush before he ran said do you want to run? And it was a pretty Republican district and I shook. And I could've gone higher, but I just chose not to.

Moon:
Now looking at some of the coast work that you had done, and actually you had done some work, I think, also for the team--city ministries when you were in office if I recollect that correctly. Let me find that. So some of the networks that you actually became part of, I'm actually looking at other networks. The City Team Ministries was one of the organizations that you were involved in when you were in politics and you had worked also with the San Jose Rescue Mission, is that right?

Ryden:
Well, it's one of those organizations.

Moon:
So it's the same organization, OK. So what sort of things did you do with that organization?

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Ryden:

On the first part of the city team when I worked with them, we helped to form an auxiliary committee for the people in the area. And then I went up from that to the national board when City Team became national and then international. I went up to that board, and I was on that for probably eight years or so.

Moon:

Now what does City Team Ministries do? Can you just describe that?

Ryden:

It's pretty much like rescue mission, but plus the fact that we send people out to start commissions in their area and how to start them. And we went out to Philadelphia, we went down into Texas, and Arkansas and showed them how to start a mission down there. And what were the elements of going to making this successful mission. We have a family services organization that each week they come in, we have a-- they had a certain list of things that before you can come in and get anything. They have to register with us, and then we sent people out to them to make sure that these were needy people and not people just trying to get something from us.

Moon:

OK.

Ryden:

And we had-- so that's family services. Well we give them things for their home and new clothes and so on. And then we have the unwed mothers organization and help them get started in their own homes if they want to keep the baby, if they want to adopt the baby out and find new homes for them. That's what really gets me about some of the organizations that say, ProLife groups don't do anything.

[01-01:30:00]

You just tell them to keep their babies and they don't do anything about it. We do, we have so many organizations that are out there trying to help. Not only do we do that, we have a house of grace, which takes in gals that have had drug problems and we have little apartments for them set up and classes that they go to to get out of the drugs. And if they had children under five, you bring the children in here too. Over five and make sure that your (inaudible) place that they should be placed. We also have something for the men, we give them classes and training. We help them get their GED, all of them we help get their GED. Whether it's the men and women. So that's the kind of organization.

Moon:

OK. Now are you still involved with that group?

Ryden:

I got off the board a couple of years ago.

Moon:

OK.

Ryden:

I'm lousy at fundraising, and if you know you're going to be a good board leader, you've got to raise funds. So all I did was give money.

Moon:

Yeah, from what I've read about your background, the House of Graces sounds like it has somewhat of a personal meaning for you because your daughter had some drug problems.

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Ryden:

Oh yeah.

Moon:

Now was that a result or had that started prior to your going into office or how would you describe-- or would you want to talk about that at all?

Ryden:

She started in drugs with her first marriage I think. She's married to an FBI guy, and she didn't like him. She didn't want to be married anymore. So she found excuses and she was into pot at that time. So she left him and came back and went home, and then she was probably in her mid-20s. And she and her girlfriend got an apartment in Mountain View, and then she met these guys that were into drugs and both of them got into the drugs. So Liz, our daughter, started-- was living with the one guy, and she eventually married him. And the other gal was living with the other guy. And heavy, heavy into drugs. I mean it was something like \$3,000 a month habit that they had to. And there was nothing we could do because she was over 21. We tried to get her into the hospital, we dragged her out of the house, and bring her into the hospital. What'll happen, she can leave whenever she wants to.

Moon:

She didn't want to stay.

Ryden:

We talked to doctors and we tried to talk to her, and she just-- it was awful. So that was going on at the time I was running for office. But as far as getting involved with House of Grace, she didn't lead me into that.

Moon:

Oh, OK. I was just curious of that helped, you know, kind of (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)--

Ryden:

I could understand why they were there. Liz came from a good family, and some of these gals came from good families, but some didn't.

Moon:

Yeah. Well, drug abuse is not a class issue at all.

Ryden:

No, it's not.

Moon:

People think of it as a class issue, but it really isn't.

Ryden:

Oh, and Liz had abortions. She had two that I didn't even know about, and then two that I knew about and found out about the others later on. So I'm familiar with the abortions.

Moon:

It's very personal.

Ryden:

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I know what I'm talking about.

Moon:

Now this is totally off the topic from that kind of, you know, personal sort of family history. In your more current activities that actually are probably not heard today, but you had worked a little bit-- you know, done volunteer work for Kathy Cole's(?) and Reese Coles(?) work. And so I was just curious why you got involved with that. With Kathy and you know being that she was a democrat and--

Ryden:

Was she a democrat?

Moon:

Yeah. She was listed as a democrat.

Ryden:

Because she was a Christian it was the biggest mistake in my life to get involved with her. I found out later all the things that she had done, and she really was bias. And I didn't find that out 'til later on. And she was going on talking about her Christianity and everything, but later on when I talked to Christians, she was not the true Christian that she claimed to be. And she had-- when I was in her office working at the time, before I got there she had turned off so many people in the minority class.

Moon:

She was black too, right?

Ryden:

Yeah. She had turned off not the blacks, but the Orientals, you know, because of that. And then one very influential judge as Maria(?) tried to talk to her and she wouldn't talk to him. And then she-- I found out from City Team Ministries so it was the biggest mistake of my life, and I regret every minute of it.

Moon:

Now why would she be recalled? I wasn't here when she was being recalled.

Ryden:

She was recalled because she was an arrogant woman, and because she did the thing about the Chinese, which she never apologized for. I wrote up a thing that she could certainly-- I was up 'til five in the morning writing this article that she could very easily printed in the newsletter and sent out to everybody. Saying that it was a mistake, she shouldn't have done that. And, you know, but she said it's not a mistake, I meant it. And she was-- so finally I stuck 'til the end and I should've gotten out.

Moon:

OK. Now looking-- this is my last question, I think, and then I'll let Karen ask some questions if she has some to follow up on. Which is what do you think your greatest accomplishments were during your, you know not necessarily just related to politics, but what would you define as your greatest accomplishments? And then also what were some of your greatest disappointments?

Ryden:

As a woman or as a--?

Moon:

Well, looking at it from the political--

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Ryden:

Political woman?

Moon:

-- from a political woman's side.

Ryden:

So hard to get five other votes. I don't know what my best would be other than the fact that I think I've got integrity and even the editor of the Mercury News says one thing about Lily you can always count on was her integrity and her honesty. Good, coming from him who disliked me intensely. And the fact that you could run for office and you could make it, but it takes faith and strength. I think that just about sums it up. Well, I surely didn't have much of anything else. (laughter)

Moon:

OK. Do you think that you have some lessons that you could give to young women that are seeking office today?

Ryden:

Yes. At all times, be honest. Don't lie, it's too hard to cover up. Just be honest, and have integrity, and state exactly how you feel. You'll be surprised how many people will vote for you.

Moon:

OK. Karen, do you have some follow up questions?

Clementi:

Well, I was just kind of worrying, it seems like back in 1980 politics were a little bit simpler.

Ryden:

They were.

Clementi:

And they weren't as complicated as they are now. But when you were elected into office, that was the year that many women got elected in. Was there like the big male, the good old boys network going on on the council? Was there an obvious-- I'm finding it hard to put this towards. Were you treated any differently because you were a woman on the council or was it everybody was just equal right from the get go? Because like the Mercury, you're just supposed to play different things and you talked about setting people up at the council like they would have a tea party. And, you know, that was mentioned a couple times. It was quite entertaining.

Ryden:

Well, the council itself we were all treated equally on the council. We treated one another equally. We assaulted one another equally. And I told Jim Bale(?) one time-- well, this is really off the record.

Moon:

OK.

Ryden:

Just take that off the record. You don't have to turn it off, just take it off.

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Moon:

OK.

Ryden:

I told Jim Bale one time, he had promised when we were doing the arena, that he would vote opposing giving this one family so much money. And I said that is ridiculous, you know that she's lying and she shouldn't be getting that much money. And it had already four other votes. And Jim pooped out on me at the very end of it, and voted in favor of her getting all this money. So when it was set up at that time so the coffee urn was in back of my chair, Jim came back and was getting a cup of coffee and he said, "Boy, I have such a headache". And I said, "Well, perhaps that's because you don't have a spine to hold your head up". (laughter) He told me why do you say things like that? He's such a bumhole. OK.

Moon:

OK. OK.

Ryden:

Back on the record.

Clementi:

Back on the record. That was the one thing I was really curious about. And it didn't seem like it, so.

Moon:

I think at that point it wasn't the good old boys thing. It was when Janet and Susie Wilson first entered the city council, you know in the '70s that they really faced a lot of problems. And in fact, Janet actually-- Janet Grange(?) reflected on that and confirmed that that's how it was. It was a good old boy sort of network, and she had some real struggles that she had to overcome working in the council and then later on. Not so much as mayor, mostly when she first joined the council. And Susie said the same thing, and she said-- Susie had actually formed this group called the good old gals. I don't know, were you aware of that organization?

Ryden:

Yeah, I get invitations to it all the time, but I don't know any of them anymore. And I don't go.

[01-01:40:00]

Moon:

Yeah. Yeah. You know, well I thought that was-- she said she hasn't had that. They used to go and have a lunch and then they would just kind of use it as a networking tool and it wasn't really to talk about politics, it was just more of a social sort of network for women.

Ryden:

That was a good idea. Susie's a good gal. I was on her committee for the ethics group too. And I enjoyed working with her. The one thing I held against her though, she used to be a republican. And I was counting her as a republican. Then she changed over to democrat and I said, "Susie, how could you do that?" Well, she was from Gonzalez, Texas and came from this very republican strong hold town and she really had some interesting things contrary to the way that her family (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). But she did some really interesting things in relationship to race relations. She was having come from a segregated Texas town, she really--

Clementi:

Yes. Segregation is a huge--

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Moon:

She just always objected to that as a young woman apparently. And she tells some really good stories about that. But we talked a little bit about her kind of movement from the family of republican to democrat. In Connecticut where I've done most of my research, which is on post suffrage women from the 1920s to about the 1950s. Some of the women that were interviewed in this oral history project in the 1970s, they talked about the illegal women votes and the roles that we play for them. And it's so interesting. They're so-- there's a lot of similarities between what women were doing in politics in San Jose in the 1970s-80s, to what women were experiencing. Women had to relearn how to be political beings again. There was a period of time where the women just didn't-- the league really didn't function I would say after World War II. The league really became more of a social organization than it was as politically active as they had been in the early years. But they set such an interesting correlation between--

Ryden:

Oh, I imagine. They must be very not used to it.

Moon:

And in Connecticut. Connecticut was a republican stronghold during the suffrage era and post suffrage era until the New Deal, until FDR became president. And a number of the women joined the republican party because it was the only party where they could actually get in, get elected to. You know, so there was such a-- the democratic women or the women that were aligned as socialists or other, you know, sort of parties. They didn't have a lot of success because they wouldn't get nominated and they wouldn't win. So a number of women just became republicans as part of that. Which I thought was interesting.

Ryden:

I thought that would be interested in Europe. Well, when Susie and Janet Gray were on it was-- I could see where they were going to have trouble because all the old guys that run they had been on there for--

Moon:

Well, for a year.

Ryden:

Forever, yeah.

Moon:

And it was a machine sort of, you know political--.

Ryden:

And you know there's no such thing as a non(inaudible) office. You elect these people to office, but they have fair policies and their ideas are not going to change.

Moon:

Right.

Ryden:

So you elect a republic and you elect a democrat. We have our own platforms and we run accordingly.

Moon:

Well, one thing that Janet Flemming the political scientist has said in her book was that she looked at-- she was looking at what-- how did everything converge to become this kind of so-called feminist capital during

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that timeframe. And one of the things that she talks about is the post water gate era, and that women represented a fresh, honest voice that hadn't been there in, you know, the mainstream of political culture at all levels. And so when you-- just in listening to you talk about your experiences, it sounds like you're looking at women as offering a different sort of voice. Would you agree that it was kind of a reaction to the politics of the time? Where men-- you know, where there was such corruptness and obvious, at all different levels with that capture.

Ryden:

You know, I think World War II had an awful lot to play in this and the Korean War too. Because women then became more independent, and they had to go out on their own when all their husbands were away. I think that started, and then after the women became a little bit more independent, then they were able to voice their different opinions.

Moon:

Right.

Ryden:

So yes, it was a fresh new voice that came in, but only after the experience of having been independent enough to voice their concerns. Because otherwise they were housewives, stay home, watch the diapers, and take care of yourself.

Moon:

Right.

Ryden:

And the family. And there's nothing wrong with that.

Moon:

Well, you know there's room for a number of different choices I think.

Ryden:

If somebody wanted to stay home, I admire. That is a hard job.

Moon:

It's a really hard job.

Ryden:

And to work and try to keep them calm, that's even harder.

Moon:

Yeah. Are there any other things that you'd like to add before we close off the tape record?

Ryden:

I don't know. What should I? (laughter)

Moon:

Any thoughts you have.

Ryden:

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You got to have a good sense of humor, I agree with that. You have to have a good sense of humor. I love fun and I like that sort of atmosphere. And things get too heavy, it's not good looking situation. So I think it's a people oriented-- you have to be people oriented. And you know I would see people on the council that had changed from when they first went on, and how easy they were swayed by certain things. And it kind of disappointed me.

Moon:

Well, one of the things Susie had said was that she never-- you know, if she believed in something, she wasn't going to back off. And she really tried to maintain her integrity that way. And she wasn't necessarily, you know roped in by some of the other political kind of maneuvering, perhaps that would (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). And she felt that maybe Janet Gray was not as good. She would, you know sensationalize different events, but not necessarily follow through with the policy and I don't know. Would you care-- how did you--?

Ryden:

Well, Janet Gray went along with the flow. She was OK. She was not a strong mayor. She was indecisive on some things. Nice woman, but not a mayor.

Moon:

How did you feel about Susan Hammer? She was-- she followed a mechanical--

Ryden:

Susan is a gal who has her mind made up, and everything that she believes in I don't. (laughter)

[01-01:50:00]

She said, I don't know, when you're opposed to homosexuality but you're not opposed to the people that are homosexuals, and you can accept the and everything, but you don't like what they're doing. She was on the council sitting next to me. She says, "Now, I'm trying to promote this home for AIDs. And would you vote for anything like that?" I said of course. If you're trying to cure a disease, I wouldn't have any problem with doing something like that. But I said if you're trying to set up a place for homosexuals to meet one another, no I wouldn't. And you know, we always get this idea because we're ProLife. Have your baby and don't take care of it, or take care of it or don't bother me with it. We don't do that. We get this idea for anti-homosexuals that we want to kill all the homosexuals. Churches welcome them with open arms. I don't know, it's hard to combat that, you know. Well, especially when you're the lone republican on the council. When it came to the term limits, boy I went out whole (inaudible) on that one. And I believe that we should have term limits and (inaudible). What really got me was when they came up to the council, they tried very reputable business people came on to the mayor and tried to get it put on the council agenda. And he wouldn't put it on the agenda and the rules committee wouldn't put it on the agenda. Finally they came up as off the agenda and said why they wanted to have term limits. And the council sat there. They talked on the phone, they filed their names, they went over and had a cup of coffee, they talked amongst one another and didn't pay any attention to these people who were trying to get term limits put in. So I was in favor of it, term limits, so I said-- the mayor said OK, thank you very much. Now the next item on the agenda. And I said, wait a minute. I think that this is a very valid point and I think we should put this to the agenda. We should put it to the ballot is what they wanted to do. No, I couldn't get a second to the motion. But I did the whole thing. That's so infuriated the business community that they went out there and they got these petitions, and I went out there and helped them get the petitions signed for two terms. We had more signatures than we needed. Brought it in to the city clerk's office, the mayor was extremely upset. Which is one of the reasons I got taken out of the finance committee. Extremely upset, and he made the city clerks office to the tune of \$60,000 have to recount all of those ballots to make sure we had enough to get on the ballot. And of course when it went on the ballot, we fought it on the ballot and we all fought when it was on the ballot and it passed, so they got limits.

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Now they can't make a career out of being on the city council, so they have to go up or out, one of the two. They still, which makes me upset and one of things I voted against was retirement money for city councilman. You are going for an eight year term, why should you get retirement on an eight year term?

Clementi:

Exactly.

Ryden:

And some of them were only going to get four. They got it. Not while I was in office, but they got it afterward and they made it retroactive to people that followed me on the council. They're constantly giving themselves a raise when at one point they gave us a raise from \$15,000 to \$25,000, I don't know. When I went on the council, I was making \$400 a month, whatever that is. \$4,800 a year? By the time I quit the council, and that was 10 years, I was making \$55,000 a year. Now that was on heck of a raise.

Clementi:

And you tried voting against it, didn't you?

Ryden:

Oh yeah. Yeah. Constantly voting against it. Well, if you don't like then don't take the money. And I said I'm taking the money because if you keep the money you're going to squander it on something I don't approve of. And I gave the money out to the community. I gave the station 15, I think it was out there, and air conditioning that they didn't have.

Moon:

Oh, the fire station?

Ryden:

The fire station didn't have air conditioning. I gave another fire station a big stove. I gave the historical museum something about \$15,000 worth of stuff.

Moon:

So you basically gave your salary back to the community?

Ryden:

Not my salary. No, the overage.

Moon:

Oh, the overage. OK.

Ryden:

All of that. And that was in my-- cause they gave us \$100,000 and some to run our offices with. \$120,000. I didn't need that much, especially when I couldn't give my secretary a raise when she was good work. No, and I also told the people. This is not my money I'm giving you, this is your money that you're getting back. (laughter)

Moon:

No. Well, gosh it's been such a pleasure talking to you this afternoon and if I can think of some more questions that, you know, maybe you'd like to think about later I'd be happy to come back and chat again.

Ryden:

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The Evergreen Times did an article on me that just came out. In the last one, yeah. So you need to get a hold of that.

Moon:

Oh, OK. Yeah, I'd be interested in reading that. Well, thanks. Well, it's probably rewarding to get people still asking you questions.

Ryden:

Well, yeah. Surprisingly. I can get people to remember my name from television when I had blonde hair and I was only in 30s.

Clementi:

The guard down at the gate, I told him who I was here to see and he goes, "She had a TV show in the 60s". (laughter)

Ryden:

No kidding. (laughter) I always joke about the guards at the gate. I said that they'll come up in their walkers and tell you.

[01-01:53:35]

END OF INTERVIEW