

Interview with: Susan Hammer

Interview by: Danelle Moon

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Interview: DS400038.wav

[01:29:02] at beginning {start at [00:00]}

Moon:

My name is Danelle Moon, I'm the director of San Jose State University Special Collections and Archives, and today I'm interviewing Susan Hammer at her home in San Jose California. Today's date is July 11th, 2006, and this interview is part of the larger oral history project documenting feminists in the South Bay. I have questions but I also have—and I really want to approach this like a conversation, so that, if you know—a casual—as things pop up I'll ask you, "Oh, wait a minute, Can we go back to that point, or something. And so, in—when we're talking about acronyms of you know, organizations you've been a part of, or if there are dates, you know, connected with a particular time period, if you can just remember to say, "Oh, that was in the 1970s" or whatever. Okay?

Hammer:

Okay.

Moon:

I always bring two tape recorders just in case one doesn't work. (both laugh) [inaudible]
With these digital sort of devices, but—well, the reason initially I started this project, because what I really wanted to do, was get a sense of what it meant for women to be part

of this Feminist Capitol. You know, all the hyperbole that was kind of created as part of looking at how women got into politics and looking at some of the—you know, particularly looking at [Janet Gray]—um, kind of entry into politics and how feminism became sort of a captured sort of term for women that were entering politics, and she used that term literally in some of her publicity. And so, first of all, I was just wondering what it meant to you. Did you feel like you were a part of the Feminist Capitol when you came into politics? You came a little bit later from the point where Janet Gray and [Wilson] were in the initial part of the actual, you know, election part of it. But, I just would like to hear what your take was on that.

Hammer:

Well, you know, I was first elected to the City Council in 1982. It was about that time that San Jose and Santa Clara County were referred to in publications and media and all, as the Feminist Capital of the country. And certainly [Janet Gray Hayes?] and Susie Wilson were sort of the trailblazers in that whole movement. In fact, Janet Gray was my mentor, and I could go into that with more detail at some point. But when I was first elected to the San Jose City Council in 1982, I became one of eight women; eight out of ten people on the City Council were women. And I mean that was extraordinary. And [Tom McEnery] was elected mayor and he had been on the City Council; he was elected mayor, and then I ran, and those elected to this Council seat representing district three: sort of central San Jose. But before that, I had—before I was elected, I had worked part-time as a special assistant to Janet Gray. She was a neighbor, she was two blocks away, and I have known Janet Gray since I started dating my husband in 1959, because his family was [Katy Corner?] from Janet Gray. So, I've known Janet Gray for a long, long

time. And Susie less long, and maybe not as close to Susie, but I've worked with Susie on a whole lot of things. And then, you know, people like, you mentioned [Lu Ryden] but, certainly somebody like [Zoe Lofgren], who was very young when she was elected to the Board of Supervisors. In fact, when I was elected to the city council, I can't remember when Zoe was elected, but three out of the five members of the Board of Supervisors were women.

Moon:

And that was Zoe, and Dianna, and Susie right?

Hammer:

Yeah, that's right, that's exactly right. Zoe is about ten, at least ten years younger than I am. So we were a part of an exciting movement. And certainly—uh, there's a researcher, a woman who wrote a book—

Moon:

[Janet Smiley?] from Santa Clara University.

Hammer:

Yes, yes. Exactly, which I guess, probably did the definitive study of that point on the Women's Movement in San Jose. And San Jose and Santa Clara County continued to be good places I think, for women to get elected to public office. Although what now, there is a six-five women majority on the council?

Moon:

Yeah.

Hammer:

So our numbers have slipped slightly but I don't think that you can read anything into that.

Moon:

Well, right I'm sure it kind of ebbs and flows with the issues and the politics and the women that are actually being active.

Hammer:

Right, it does.

Moon:

I actually was talking to [Linda Lazal?] a couple weeks ago.

Hammer:

Uh-huh, she has been replaced by a man.

Moon:

Yeah, yeah, and she's a very ardent feminist; she really believes strongly that women need to be mentors and that's what she kind of conceives of her role in politics. So, she thinks there needs to be more women represented than there are of course.

Hammer:

So do I.

Moon:

I do too.(both laugh) But trying to get that fifty-fifty sort of thing going on has been very troubling since, you know, the 1920s. It's not just like something that comes very easily.

Hammer:

Although, I don't know, I mean, you know, it's an interesting point of discussion, whether there should be equal representation, if it's fifty-fifty. The bottom line to me is

that you want to get good people elected to public office, and you want the men to be particularly sensitive to women's issues. And I guess you could say vice versa.

Moon:

Right, right.

Hammer:

But I do think they are-that we have been very fortunate in the quality, by and large, of our elected officials both in the city and in the county.

Moon:

Yeah, I would say in California in general, particularly in northern California, it seems like there has been a stronger tradition of that, from those, you know, that time period especially.

Hammer:

Exactly, and you know, more progressive. Certainly our City Council became more progressive. Sort of with the time, you know, in the 70's maybe when [Norman] was mayor then Janet Gray; that had been before that period of time, it had been pretty much a good old boys network, and the mayor was elected as one of the five members of the council. And so, the Mayor didn't have any, other than ceremony, more responsibility or power if you will. But I think since then it has really evolved into something with it's-probably and maybe because women have been more responsive to family and neighborhood issues; sort of more humane aspects of what cities should be.

Moon:

Well, yeah, I think that that's one of those things that identify what are the things that women bring to politics. And all the women I have talked to felt that women have

brought very distinct, you know, personality to politics, and approach issues differently. And so, it's good to have a mixture of both men and women in politics.

Hammer:

You know, I think that they do, or that we do. And one of the things that comes to my mind is the fact that, I think, and this is certainly a generalization, don't seem to have their egos as wrapped up in their power, their responsibility, or position and much more willing to share power and be inclusive—

Moon:

—more consensus builders.

Hammer:

More consensus builders, I was just going to say that, and absolutely more consensus builders. And the whole idea of sharing power, I think, is very, very important. And, you know, that's what women traditionally did, you know, being full-time mothers and being involved with the PTA, and you know other organizations. It was more of a, sort of a group—

Moon:

—More community.

Hammer:

—Yeah, more community.

Moon:

Yeah, I think all the people I have interviewed have said exactly that same thing in a little bit different way; but basically it's the same concept of women bringing certain types of qualities to government. And that the ego, certainly isn't quite as—or maybe it's a

different sort of ego, I suppose on someone. But, it's certainly not—it certainly is a much more shared sort of process, rather than looking at it as an individual sort of accomplishment, perhaps.

Hammer:

Yeah, I think it is.

Moon:

Now, talking a little about your—the things that inspired you to become politically active. I know that, having read a lot about your background, that there were a number of things that influenced you toward politics. So, maybe you could talk about some of the things that inspired you: some of the people who really helped shape your process into political life.

Hammer:

Well, all that has to be discussed in the context of I came from a small town in southern California and a very apolitical family. My parents were moderate Republicans; and politics, not that they weren't interested, but it was something they didn't really participated in. And so, I guess my interest in politics in the political world really began when I was at U.C. Berkeley. And I graduated in 1960, and of course the '60 campaign was when John Kennedy was elected president. And I happened to be married to a man, who, with a good friend of his founded the First Democratic Club of [All Paul?], the law school. And it was really through Phil's family that I became sort of more aware and more interested in politics. His family was political and full-time San Joseans; and his brother in 1962, I guess, ran for State Assembly from here and lost by just a few hundred votes as I recall. So, that's what really got me interested, and then when Phil finished law

school in '61 we had no children, and we discovered we were footloose and fancy free, and we decided why don't we—we worked hard for John Kennedy in the grass-roots level—

Moon:

Locally you did that?

Hammer:

Yeah, yeah. Well, not here but we were in—and Phil's brother was a delegate to the Convention of '60 in Los Angeles, and we went to that. And you know, I was sort of star-struck by the whole thing, you know. Anyways, we went to Washington D.C., without jobs. We decided to go there and get a job—look for jobs, and work for the Kennedy Administration; and so, Phil got a job on the Civil Rights Commission, he was a staff attorney for the Commission on Civil Rights; and after a lot of knocking on doors I got a job on the first Peace Corps staff under [Sergeant Shriver]. And certainly the two and a half years that we were in Washington, and a little bit of a part of the Kennedy Administration, were really the defining moments for me. I was fortunate enough to be able to participate in the Martin Luther King March on Washington in August of '63, and you know, working for the Kennedy Administration, I think really had a dramatic effect on what I was going to do as an adult. You know, I never thought then for running for political office, but when we moved to San Jose Phil wanted to come back here and practice law. You know, we both got active. [John Vas Gonzales'] first campaign for the Assembly was in 1964, and we had one child, and about to have another. So I went out to his old headquarters out here on Hamilton Avenue, on the freeway, and stuffed envelopes (Moon laughs) and made phone calls and all; you know, just tried the real

grassroots level. And, you know, there were people like John and others, that really sort of to me, in my early 20s, really personified what sort of good government, if you will: you know, people that were committed to making changes for people who were disenfranchised and all. So, it was just a progression sort of, starting at that level.

Moon:

So, was it just a star-struck sort of thing at that age, when you were just getting involved in the kind of politics between the Kennedys and then coming back here and working for John?

Hammer:

Yeah, it was. You know, I think as I—well, I don't think I was star struck with John, but I looked to him as somebody who had the kind of values that I thought that people in public office should have, and he still has those values. But, certainly there was a little bit of that being star-struck in Washington, and it was really great. Working at the Peace Corps, another woman and I, administered the placement testing program that was given to everybody who volunteered for the Peace Corps. And it was fun. Our office was just like a look out [inaudible] park at the White House. So, I just got involved in things, not just politics but you know, non-profits, and community activities when I moved back here, when we moved back here, in 1980. In 1980, a sitting Councilmen [Jim Self?] resigned with six months to go on his term and Janet Gray asked if I would consider being appointed to the Council; I was appointed, because it was only a seven member council at that point, six members in ninth. So I served for six months, and then worked for her and then in '82, stopped working for her and ran for my own council seat.

Moon:

Um-hm, right, did Jim actually resign? Was that—

Hammer:

Um-hm.

Moon:

Okay. I wasn't—I hadn't followed up on some of—the other council members. And I know that he had worked closely with Susie, you know when they were working on different things during their elections, so I hadn't—

Hammer:

I never—I can't remember exactly what precipitated that. I think he was going through some changes in his life and—

Moon:

He was also one of the youngest members at that point on the council, when he first got into office, in my recollection.

Hammer:

Yeah, uh-huh, right. I don't think he was—you know, we were about the same age I think.

Moon:

Uh-huh, yeah, hmm. Now, when you were in Washington one of the reports we had compiled, it said, that you had trouble initially finding a job, because you didn't have the traditional typing skills. (Moon laughs) Was that something that was really true?

Hammer:

Yeah! Oh, yeah! I mean it was very frustrating, I couldn't—every door I knocked on, you know, they asked—first question they asked—they didn't care that I had a BA in

history from a very good university, Cal; you know, they wanted to know if I could type or take shorthand. And I said, “No”, and well, that’s what we need to have happen. And so I finally got a job at the Peace Corp, where I didn’t have to type or take short hand. And I still don’t know how to do either one of those. I tried desperately, both early on when we were at Washington I took a typing class, and I had taken one in high school, its just—I don’t know what’s the matter, but I just can’t do it. You should see me on the computer (both laugh).

Moon:

Well, I know people who like “peck and paw” kind of thing because they never learned how to type, so it is a good skill to have especially with our computer orientated environment. Short hand, I don’t know.

Hammer:

Yeah, yeah, I could do quite good but uh—yeah, my senior year at Cal, Phil typed all my papers. And you know, he was going to law school, which is a little bit more difficult than trying to get a BA, you know.

Moon:

And your undergraduate degree was in history?

Hammer:

Uh-huh

Moon:

And so did you do a U.S. History sort of track there?

Hammer:

Yeah, and an emphasis on Latin America.

Moon:

Oh, okay. Well, that's a good place to get a history degree, that's for sure, especially back then. What was it like going to the Washington March to march with Martin Luther King?

Hammer:

Well, it was certainly very emotional, you know, to participate, What was it three or four hundred thousand people? You really get up in all the emotion and sort of cause while you're doing it and realizing that Martin Luther King was really a great man. So it was totally inspiring, and I think I was somewhat overwhelmed.

Moon:

Uh-huh. Did you do any of the freedom rides?

Hammer:

No, no. But Phil was an attorney for the Civil Rights Commission; spent a lot of time in the South.

Moon:

Oh did he?

Hammer:

Yeah, he was down defending masses of people one time. Like one time, he had a story of being in court somewhere, I don't know if it was Mississippi or Louisiana, and he lost a couple of dozen cases in about fifteen minutes; (both laughs) everything, people who had been arrested.

Moon:

Have they interviewed him? [inaudible 00:19:20]

Hammer:

Uh, I don't know.

Moon:

He should be interviewed, especially after he helped found the organization, and it sounds like he has a lot of things that they could use.

Hammer:

Oh, you mean the [inaudible 00:19:35] the First Democratic Club. Yeah, I don't know, I haven't heard about it, I don't think they have.

Moon:

Well, I know some people over there, and I'll mention that he should probably be interviewed. Um, but going back to—so you had all these experiences from the Civil Rights Movement, with the going with the democratic party and Kennedy, kind of all of that—

Hammer:

—and the Peace Corp.

Moon:

And the Peace Corp, and you moved back here and you were working really almost immediately back into doing some kind of work, like volunteering.

Hammer:

Volunteering, yeah, then got involved with the museum and you know, various things. And just—you know, I was in a fortunate position that most women aren't in today: where I didn't have to work, Phil started practicing law with a significant firm in town, and we had our oldest born in D.C., and we had soon after another baby here. We had

three kids. But soon after we moved back here—it was nice that I had the flexibility and availability to do volunteer work.

Moon:

Well, I think that, that is a very common story in all of the women that started in politics in those days, especially because the area did offer a lot of economic and upward mogul people the opportunity to do a lot of different things politically.

Hammer:

Absolutely.

Moon:

I think that's one of the dilemmas for some of the various women's organizations today, like the League of Women Voters, and some of these other places where women would be working in, but young women are working full-time jobs and maybe juggling a whole family life, and it's like when do you have time to do that type of volunteer work? Or do you want to put the effort into political campaign.

Hammer:

Well, and a lot of my friends and contemporaries did what I did. You know, have the family and volunteer and working with the kids' schools and all. I did that too at the [richer schools?]. But then when their kids were like maybe in high school or something about that, a couple of my best friends today, went back to school at San Jose State and got masters in social work, and you know, went to work. And with a couple of them in particular it wasn't for economics. It was because their husbands working—just to do something that they had always wanted to do. I knew I didn't want to go back to school—actually I thought about it at one point. I was going to go get a Masters in public

administration at San Jose State. As I had—I was about to enroll I thought, I really don't want to go back to school. I know myself enough well enough, you know: that I would start and then probably struggle with letting myself go. So—

Moon:

Uh-huh, yeah. Well, I think that, you know, people just make different, you know choices, in that way. I know like Susie, she had finished her undergraduate degree while she was, you know, in office.

Hammer:

I know.

Moon:

What an amazing thing to do while in office. I thought, She has got a lot of energy, you know.

Hammer:

Yeah, and she has three kids. You know, we're all different.

Moon:

Well, I also think—it's interesting to me looking at the media coverage through the new paper accounts of, you know, the feminist capital and all the women involved in politics. You know, it has run these hideous stories about their hairdresser. There is this one in the San Jose Mercury News story about the mayor and then [Rena Rosenberg?] is pictured in it, Susie Wilson, and one other person, maybe it was [Egeln]-

Hammer:

Egeln, E-G-E-L-N.

Moon:

Yeah. And I thought, Oh my gosh, this is so counter to what women are really trying to accomplish in government. How did you find the media coverage and kind of the pejorative way that they approached, kind of the coverage of women in politics?

Hammer:

You know, its hard going back, you know, thinking back. Well, you know, like I say, it's a little hard to recall. You know you're going back twenty years—

Moon:

When you were there did you find that you had to counter anything: the sexism, that they approached looking at women?

Hammer:

First, let me say that it was real demeaning. I mean, I do remember that back in the eighties, the early eighties. But as Mayor, I have been asked this a lot. I, you know, I think, for whatever reason, I never felt I was really discriminated against—you know, I figure some things were more difficult because I was a woman, and that I really had to prove myself. But on balance, I think with a lot of hard work and a good staff and everything, I sort of overcame that. And, I think that one of the examples is that when I ran for Mayor in 1990, there were five candidates, five or six. [Frank Fiscalini?] I guess was considered the frontrunner, and he in fact did win the primary, and I came in second by five or six points I think. So we had a run-off. But, the interesting thing was I represented District Three downtown and everything for eight years, I had worked very closely with the business community and I was known quantity. And I think—not that I think, but I know I was very well respected. So here comes Frank, who had been a very well respected school superintendent and hospital administrator, but had never run for

public office; and he got all the traditional endorsements from the Chamber, of which he had chaired their board or president or whatever you call it. So he got the chamber, and as I recall, the Realtor's Association, the Apartment and Housing Association, the police, and fire, I think. So here's this a guy who has never proven himself as an elected official in known quantity—no, he was a known quantity, I mean this guy had lots of connections, and a very good guy. But I think that, that may be an example of—if the situation had been reversed, I often wondered if I would have gotten all those endorsements if I had run against somebody that—if I have never held public office but had those credentials being a woman. But, I ended winning a very close election [both laugh].

Moon:

So it makes you wonder if all those endorsements are really all that helpful to the election.

Hammer:

Yeah, I think it really depends. And I had a very close relationship with the business community, and when I was Mayor, I did some pretty darn good things for the city as far as businesses were concerned; I brought Adobe and Cisco to the city. But there were many times especially when we were working on the Cisco and Adobe deals that I was the only women in the room. We were working on getting the giants here; I was sitting in my living room with [Bob Rewney?] and a couple of his people. I guess the bottom line is when people want to do business with the city—

Moon:

—well it probably doesn't matter who is in office.

Hammer:

—well not if he or she is competent and is willing to make things happen. All Cisco wanted was to have their—they were interested in coming to San Jose, and they said, All we want from you is to make it happen as quickly as possible. So I did, and the rest is history.

Moon:

Now there were a number of different issues that you had been involved with during your tenure in office, but prior to that, What was some of the issues that you ran on when you were running in your first campaign?

Hammer:

Well, back in '82?

Moon:

Yeah, start with the City Council then go up to the Mayoral period.

Hammer:

Well, in '82, it was sort of neighborhood issues: neighborhood, schools—

Moon:

—redevelopment?

Hammer:

Yeah. Redevelopment and the fact that downtown was pretty dismal at that point. And certainly Tom made that a priority, and I represented the downtown. So Tom and I worked very closely on those issues. Traffic was a big concern. And the campus community, you know, Naglee Park got older.

Moon:

And you also served as Vice-Mayor under Tom right?

Hammer:

Tom, um-hmm. Did I do that twice? I think I served two two-year terms.

Moon:

Yeah, I think it was between '85 and '86, that's what I have down. Is the vice-mayor a yearly sort of thing?

Hammer:

Yeah, I think I did at least two years.

Moon:

Year, I think you did two terms. It might have been between '85 and '87.

Hammer:

So representing when we went to district elections, and district elections as you know were first held in 1980, District three because it represents, and it still does today, downtown, became in a way more important; or I don't know if it was more important or if the District three councilmember had more visibility if you will, because of the downtown, and God knows there was a lot we had to do, but you also become sort of the focal point; when we had to relocate people in poor neighborhoods, built the Convention Center, and that was handled very poorly by the city. I used to take a lot of public abuse for that—the councilmen at redevelopment meetings and all. But I tried to bring a sensitivity to that too but it didn't always work. So those were the issues. And then when I ran for Mayor in '90, it was sort of the same but really expanding—actually it was not only more of the same but really making economic development a focus; because it was that tax revenue that you know, was gonna be generated from San Jose, which was

most successful, and still is today, generator of redevelopment funds. So I made economic development an issue, as well as moving forward on what Tom had started or continuing and extending on what Tom had started in the downtown.

Moon:

Now you worked prior to—I just want to go back a little bit: talking about a political model, and you said that Janet Gray Hayes was a really important mentor to you. Can you describe how she mentored you, and how that relationship developed with her over those years?

Hammer:

Well, we had a personal relationship before I got interested in running for public office. I had co-chaired for her reelection campaign in '76 I think, because she was mayor from '72 to '80. So in '76, I co-chaired her reelection campaign, and that was successful obviously. And then she—I still stayed close to her when she was reelected, and like I said before, she encouraged me to seek employment on the six month seat on the Council. When that was over in the end of 1980, because they got the district elections and those elections were already in progress, so even if I wanted to—which it hadn't, occurred to me to run for city council. I worked for her as a special assistant for downtown in the arts and then I was encouraged to run for city council in '82. So I stopped working for her to campaign full-time. And she just was always very encouraging, and Susie too and [Iola Williams?], she'd be an interesting person for you to talk to.

Moon:

Yeah, I tried to contact her but she is living, I guess, in North Carolina—

Hammer:

She is living in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Somebody should be able to get you her contact information, maybe Janet Gray has it.

Moon:

Yeah, I talked to [Terry Christenson] and he gave me the most recent contact information that he had, but I don't know, I haven't got any response from her. But it could be—you know, I'll send her another letter and see if it gets returned or not.

Hammer:

Yeah, and I'll talk to Janet Gray, I talk to her regularly and I'll try to remember.

Moon:

Yeah, because I would like to talk to her, I'm sure she'd be really—especially since she represented some of the diversity of the Council.

Hammer:

Yeah, yeah, first African-American elected; well, she was appointed then elected. So Janet Gray was always very encouraging—and oh, I know what I was going to say, I think especially going back twenty-four years, that women mentoring other women was really important for the success of women becoming or not becoming, but being elected to public office. I think it was a totally different world than—it's important today, it's still important, but it has a different meaning today than it did twenty-four years ago.

And I, you know, certainly have encouraged women.

Moon:

Yeah, you were endorsing Cindy Chavez and all.

Hammer:

Yeah, I endorsed [Judy Chuko?], and helped her win. Linda and—and who else—

Moon:

Well actually Linda told me—I asked her how she got into politics in San Jose, and she said, when she decided to run she knew she needed to talk to two people: one person was Susie Wilson, and the other person was you; and she said she couldn't have done it without both of your support.

Hammer:

Yeah, and I had a tough time when she and Ken ended up running against each other. But I'd known Ken much longer and was closer to him than Linda. It was painful, you know but—

Moon:

Yeah, well you have to make your choices.

Hammer:

Yeah, I know, I know.

Moon:

Yeah, but I think the whole mentoring part of women in politics is probably a really important process; particularly in experiences where there was a long period where women—there was some women still involved in maybe local, county, maybe even the assembly sort of working different states; but between like 1950 to the 1970s, there was a real absence of women in local politics. They were very—

Hammer:

School boards.

Moon:

Yeah, and that was it, but in the 1930s, there was a number of women who were elected to you know, office both in the state level as well as all over.

Hammer:

Post the war, and then after the war.

Moon:

Right, it's almost you had to learn—relearn how to enter politics after they had—because they were absent.

Hammer:

Right, and one of the big issues again, was going back, is the mentoring. There weren't really any women to mentor the other women to do this. But I think the same thing is true whether you want to be a doctor or a woman in business. If you were going to go around and interview the [inaudible], Meg Whitman and all, I bet they would tell you similar stories; that there were women who were significant in their deciding to go into business.

Moon:

Yeah, I would imagine there would be a lot of consistency in looking at different kind of professional experience of women working in different more male orientated professions, definitely. Now, going a little bit forward, let's talk a little bit about some of the issues you have been involved in. I know that you have a really interesting history as a mayor and some of the issues that you were involved with, you know from the "Giant Two", to the redevelopment issues. But one of the areas you were especially involved in, seems to me, was trying to eradicate the poverty and the gang problems that were present in the city at that time. And as part of it you were kind of on the tails of the Clinton

Administration, also in trying to improve the city initiatives through federal funding. I know I have come across a photograph and an article of you with Al Gore, on this one city initiative that you had been recognized as being really important to. So could you talk a little bit about some of the social issues that you had really tried to promote in your—

Hammer:

Sure, I will. And it really goes back into some of the things that I observed that was going on in some of the neighborhoods in or around downtown District three that I represented for eight years. And it became very clear that the gang issue was increasing in San Jose, and there was—and is, a community group called People Acting in Community Together, PACT. And they came to me in the campaign and wanted me to know how their neighborhoods, a lot of low-income neighborhoods were being destroyed by gang activity: people were afraid of coming out of their homes and all. So I made a commitment to them that I would do something about it. So soon after I took office I formed something called the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. And it really became quite an amazing group of people. I started out by inviting the usual suspects, like the police chief, the chief of the Juvenile Probation Department, the sheriff, and the presiding judge of the Juvenile Court, and maybe fifteen people that came to lunch in my conference room; and we agreed we would work together and so that began the process. And obviously somebody from the city manager's office, I can't remember exactly who that was, the district attorney. And we had several meetings in my conference room, and it finally just grew and expanded the more: we had to meet in this huge room in the building across from city hall, in the health building; it's called the health building, I'm

not sure, I guess the old health department used to be there. And it, in about a year, anywhere from thirty to forty people would show up at these Friday meetings. And it ended up—it was totally informal, you know I said, Whomever was interested in this come along. So it ended up being people who worked at community based organizations, like the Filipino-Americans Youth Group, it was represented. And we worked with some former felons that served a little bit of prison time. We worked with some church groups: places like faith based groups. And we didn't ask much of them other than we were gonna not have any turf issues: we were going to work together, we were going to share information; we were going to put people on the streets that could—that had the respect of the gangs, and when they heard you know, that there was going to be a fight at Pioneer high school, they could intervene. We had—then we did some things that were not popular with the kids, we decided to get—to ask the city council to implement a curfew, it's still going today, I think its eleven-thirty to six-thirty or seven-thirty in the morning; they can't be hanging around on the street corners. And every time I went out to a high school, I was—it was the first question when I'd go out to speak to the kids, you know, at classes or something, Why did you do this? You're taking away our liberties. And I'd say, "It's to get you out of harm's way. Did you read the paper two days ago when a kid was shot standing on a street corner at one o'clock in the morning?" Not committing any crime or anything, but still in harm's way, you know. So we did that and we started a really neat program that again, is still going, tattoo removal program, and that was just amazing: when I go to see these mothers and fathers with their kids signing them up for this program, like on a Saturday morning at Roosevelt Community Center; mothers with tears in their eyes saying, "You turned my child's life around." Got rid of the tattoos, you

know. Programs like that—and a lot of these programs [Dick de la Rosa], in my office this is all he did. He was on loan in my office from the East Side Union High School District. And Dick is retired now from East Side, he was in my office for all eight years I guess, at least seven. And he still goes to conferences and talks about these programs and the gang taskforce, gang prevention taskforce still going today. I don't know who, you know, who shows up and all. But I do know, and not to toot my own horn, but one of those things that kept this thing going was I was in every single meeting unless I was out of town for some reason. You know I made this a real priority and I'm real proud of the fact that in the first year I think, we reduced the incidences of gang violence by like thirty-nine percent.

Moon:

Right, it was a phenomenal number.

Hammer:

Yeah, and this was just by making it a priority, having a police chief that was willing to establish a gang unit and commit resources, I-E personal, you know to work on it, a lot of good people out in the community; people that had experience working with this population, which I didn't. I lived a pretty cloistered life but I sure got out there: I did ride-alongs, I went out to tough neighborhoods, I saw kids getting their tattoos removed, you know, just start doing it.

Moon:

Yeah, that's a hard thing to do when you're coming from a whole different cultural sort of environment—

Hammer:

Yeah, who is this white lady trying to tell us, you know—

Moon:

Yeah, and your thinking, What am I doing here? [both laugh]

Hammer:

But yeah it's a program that probably anything that I did I got the most satisfaction out of it. I feel very, very good about the results that we had.

Moon:

What were some of the other contributions or legacies that you think you left as being mayor?

Hammer:

Well, certainly that's close, top of the list. We worked real closely with the schools in a sort of a separate program than this but there was a connection. I reached out to the schools; I was on the school campuses a lot, I had quarterly, I know it was quarterly, invited all of the seventeen-eighteen principals in the city of San Jose in to my office for lunch and said, "What can I do for you? What are you working on? How can we be more helpful? What are your needs?" We established homework centers. I think we were in about 150 schools or community centers, you know a safe haven for kids to go after school. The city funded and again PACT behind the [Community Together?] was an organization that came to me with, "We got to do something to give our kids a place to go after school." So we worked this out and the first year I think we put about a half a million dollars into it. And then they beat me over the head and said, We need more money. [Moon laughs] And so my next budget I put a million dollars and I think when I left office it was about two million.

Moon:

Was it hard to juggle? It seems that in a city of this size where you have such a divergence of issues and conflicts and problems—the economics of that and all; and trying to maintain the budget and be the fiscal manager on some level, How did you juggle those sorts of issues with the big business sort of issues?

Hammer:

It was done particularly in the first couple of years the two or three years of my tenure in the early '90s, because we had a pretty deep depression—or recession, I mean—

Moon:

Well, some people were depressed. [both laugh]

Hammer:

—recession. And so it was hard to do that but then again it was priorities, and working closely with the city manager on what I, and the council thought were important. I was very lucky to have a council who was very supportive by and large. I think every one of my eight budgets passed unanimously, which was pretty much unheard of, but it was the council that was willing to work together to address these problems. I don't mean to make it sound like it was easy because it wasn't, we had to make some really tough budget decisions. Our revenues were down because property taxes were down and redevelopment, and so there were projects that I had initiated not switching from the city, things that we had been talking about on the redevelopment side. I had for a long time been involved in the arts in San Jose, I was certainly known in some circles as the "Arts Mayor." In my first in-city address I said, "I would like to build a new theatre—I would like the city to build a new theatre for the Rep [Repertory Theatre]. Well, that was very

hard to keep online when the body dropped out of the real estate market, but we had some creative people both on my staff, a terrific staff, a terrific staff; I believe that electives are only as good as the staffs that work for you.

Moon:

Who were some of the people that worked for you?

Hammer:

Well, a guy named [Gary Robinson] was my chief of staff for several of the eight years. He is now working on—runs a small foundation that he and I are involved in, he lives out of town. [Bob Brownstein] is a name you may have heard of, he runs working partnership for the Central Library Council, and [Sean Morley] as the A-N [inaudible]. When Gary left after seven years to do something else, Shawn who had been with me for eight years was the top land use person. He was my chief of staff and he's a lawyer and a land developer now with his brother in San Jose: Morley Brothers. [Eva Terrazas] who was sort of my arts person and she is now at the redevelopment agency and has been for quite a while—

Moon:

How does she spell her last name?

Hammer:

T-E-R-R-A-Z-A-S

Moon:

I think I've come across her name a number of times.

Hammer:

Yeah, so it was an extraordinary group of people who were very smart and very loyal who had the best interest of the people at heart, of the folks here, you know, they just epitomized what a public servant should be.

Moon:

Yeah, because prior to your tenure there had been a lot of acrimony within some of the councils, you know who didn't like the point when Janet Gray first started serving and then going forward. Did you find that there was a big change from the point when you entered city government in the '80s to the point when you became mayor? Did it seem like there was more consensus building that was taking place in the newer sort of council members?

Hammer:

Yeah, I think with the district elections there was pretty much harmony when tom was mayor. We had people like Blanca Alvarado and me, and [Shirley Lewis?], I can't remember all of them, but I think it started then. We worked very hard with the council. I met for eight years with the council members regularly, I was in and out of their offices daily. Maybe not all ten of them, I don't like to sit in an office behind closed doors. So when I wanted to communicate with people it wasn't by computer or telephone, I'd just get up out of my chair and walk down the hall and knock on the door and have a conversation [Moon laughs]. I met with them regularly, and when I did I said, it was like, it was sort of their meeting, "What can I do to help you? What's going on in your district? When do you want me to go out to your district? When do you want me to come out and do something?" I think both I and my staff, went out of our way to build a team and consensus, and I think that served the city very well. I mean, there wasn't a lot

of—there was a couple of exemptions, two council members. Sometimes it was difficult with Pat and with David. But by and large, we all worked well together, respected each other, and I think that that helped me be a more successful mayor and helped them be good council members.

Moon:

Do you think the district elections had a significant impact on the whole aspect of the political process or representing smaller areas?

Hammer:

Yeah, I think that people are better represented with districts in a city with almost a million people, you know, you just can't be everywhere. I guess mayors are out everywhere, but I think for 70,000 people or 80,000 people, they have one person whose office they could call and hopefully, get their concerns addressed, works better. It certainly, I think, takes a lot of skill and work on the part of the mayor and his or her staff, to you know, work with ten people. I mean, I won't tell you that it's not a challenge but it is very important to do it. I guess you read the newspaper, as well as anybody, the charge is today that they are all mini-mayors and everything; and I think that that has happened because they have been—I was going to say allowed, but there has been a vacuum so they have just done that. But um—

Moon:

Well, there are a lot of obviously controversial things going on right now involved with the administration.

Hammer:

Like, you know, we had garbage contracts and a lot of people were on our case about redevelopment with the [Schakter organization] they didn't want, what they saw as revenue that could be spent on other—social issues and everything. But you know we worked with them; we worked a way to put redevelopment money into homework centers and neighborhoods; as well as a Rep Theatre, and refurnishing the arena and the tech and building the library, you know.

Moon:

Well, that was the one that I was hoping to a colleague of mine at Bancroft, and I think there is some sense that there is some sort of racism that was part of the charging of some of the things going on with Gonzales [Ron] right now; but I don't know if that's true or not, but it's easy to target somebody who is speaking a second language which happens to be Spanish; when everyone seems to be up in arms about—

Hammer:

Well, he doesn't speak Spanish? [both laugh]

Moon:

Oh, well, I guess I assumed he did.

Hammer:

No, I don't think Ron admits to that; he is not fluent in Spanish. But, anyway I know what you're trying to say—

Moon:

But, you know what I'm saying. Yeah, you know, just because he happens to be Hispanic, you know, somehow he is not as credible because he is a part of this immigrant group that you know, we're so interested in right now. And I don't know how I feel

about that actually, and I don't know if that's true or if the allegations are actually true or whatever, but you know—

Hammer:

Well he is having a rough time, there's no question.

Moon:

Yeah, well I guess that's part of being in politics too you know, is dealing with all these controversies to some degree.

Hammer:

Yeah, I was not free from controversy, I just worked very hard to avoid it. Actually I can't even you know, you're memory is more fresh than mine because you've looked at the news articles and I haven't paid much attention to it, but we had very few controversies. You, maybe can remember one of them—

Moon:

Well, I think Johnny was one of the things that was mentioned, you know, as a major controversy. [phone rings]

Hammer:

Let me just get rid of this so that—"Hello, hey I'm in the middle of an interview, can I call you back? Where are you? Okay, bye." Uh, well, the Giants [San Francisco] were—yeah, oh yeah! If you want to say that was a controversy, it was certainly an issue that people had strong opinions about, and several people advised me not to take this on two years into my term you know, that it would keep me from being re-elected; thinking at that point about being re-elected you know, I just took office and all. But, I would have done the same thing over again, I think it would have been great for the city, great for the

city: it was in the middle of the recession and a lot of people thought that spending taxpayer's money, you know, they're money, for a rich guys—baseball team, you know, it's just hard to sell.

Moon:

I think one person called you a “woman new liberal”—it was one of those reports that came out—“and that you only had a visceral understanding of working class issues.”

[Hammer laughs]. And I'll find that citation for you [both laugh]. You know how the newspapers likes to use kind of sexy terms to you now categorize people—

Hammer:

[inaudible] liberal.

Moon:

But, I guess they weren't ware of some of the gang work that you were doing and some of the other things you had going on, but you know it's politics.

Hammer:

It's politics, that's right.

Moon:

Now, looking backwards or maybe forwards, Were there particular groups that you were associated with: women's groups that helped motivate you in the political process or helped you as you were going along? For example, one of the big organizations in this area that was very active but not so active anymore, was the national women's caucus.

Hammer:

Yeah, I was never—I was a member of it but I was never a real active member; they certainly endorsed me, and some of their individual members work hard: walked precincts, made phone calls and all, But, I was never real active in that.

Moon:

Right. Were you ever real active with the National Organization of Women or any of those? Did you get involved at all with the battle for the Equal Rights Amendment?

Hammer:

Yeah, you know I used to speak at rallies and stuff. I mean, I certainly— but it wasn't real, real active.

Moon:

Yeah, I understand. Well, it's one thing to be a member and it's another thing to actually be a part of the organization where you're you know, dealing with precincts—

Hammer:

No, I wasn't doing that. But, certainly as mayor or as on the council too, you know, I spoke at race rallies; they'd ask me to come out. And same with Planned Parenthood. One of the things that I did, one of the things that I was very, very proud of and bless— thank God for having Joe Callow as our city attorney then, was the “Bubble Ordinance”: and that was that real right wing group, on the anti-abortion—uh it's got a name—

Moon:

Oh, I know what you mean.

Hammer:

—and they were coming to San Jose and they were really nice—

Moon:

Terry—

Hammer:

Yeah, Terry right, exactly. So working with Planned Parenthood and some of those organizations we got the council to adopt an ordinance that said, that the demonstrators had to stay 15 feet or so many feet away from Planned Parenthood and allow people: men and women, free access. And our house was picketed.

Moon:

Have you been active previously with the Planned Parenthood or was it more of a mayoral sort of relationship?

Hammer:

No, no, Phil and I have been supporters for—I don't know when it started maybe somebody could tell you, but we've been—

Moon:

Well, Planned Parenthood evolved out Margaret Sanger, you know, birth control, and she was the one who actually organized Planned Parenthood.

Hammer:

Yeah, but we—and that was not—that was in the summer, it was like June or July. I spent that summer break with lots of members of the San Jose P-D, who were with me every where.

Moon:

I have to remember the name of that organization. I know who exactly who your—

Hammer:

Right to Life?

Moon:

It's something else it has a another sort of special name. But—

Hammer:

Geez, I should never forget that thing, it made my life miserable!

Moon:

Well, it's just an awful way to try to fight for a cause, I mean, whatever, you can have your opinion on things, but you don't bomb clinics and kill doctors.

Hammer:

And, so many of the people who, then and now, go to Planned Parenthood are going there for medical care—

Moon:

Or birth control.

Hammer:

—or birth control, yeah (both laugh). But, not—most people aren't going through their doors to have abortions.

Moon:

Right, right. Well, one of the things that [Janet Flammang?] talks about in her book a little bit—she talks about how important the redistricting was for women politicians because it opened new doors for women.

Hammer:

Absolutely, yes, it did. I think it was much easier for women, you know, to run on a smaller area than compete city wide. You know, raising money was not the issue then that it was today. When I first ran in '82 for council I can't remember what I spent but it

was probably—the race spent 30,000 to 40,000 dollars if that. And, I worked real hard at doing that, and there was no question that men still have a bigger advantage; I think they still do today.

Moon:

Yeah, so you think that's because they have more contact with business community?

Hammer:

Sure, yeah. And it's the "Good Old Boy's Network", there really is—and there may be a "Women's Network" but it's, uh, uh—

Moon:

Colorful [both laugh].

Hammer:

Yeah, it has a little different dimensions. Different dimensions and different dynamics.

Moon:

Now, [inaudible 01:06:41] has also looked at some of these various women that have been involved in politics, and its connecting some of the organizational connections they had; like with the National Women's Political Caucus, NOW, and some of these other groups. It sounds like you got a lot assistance from like the NWPC, but you didn't necessarily have like a direct sort of—you didn't move like from the League of Women Voters into politics like Janet Gray had done—

Hammer:

Yeah, no, I didn't.

Moon:

—to some degree, and now she credits the LWV as being important to her. Um, the other—kind of looking at it more globally to— kind of the Democratic party, I know that you have been very involved with that party and obviously you started with you going to Washington and coming back here and doing all the work that you did and locally. After, one report said, that you didn't try to get—um you couldn't be reelected because of term limits; and so, I was wondering, Would you have wanted to be reelected to a third term if there wouldn't have been term limits? And then, What other sort of political opportunities would you have liked to pursue? Or were there assembly slots that you would have liked to apply for?

Hammer:

Uh, if there were a third term, I probably would have done it. It was a job that I loved, and I was relatively young, and probably would have done it. Soon after I was reelected in '94, Norm Maneta gave up his congressional seat, and I—was that the seat that Mike Honda holds? Yeah, that's the seat that Mike Honda holds. As a matter of fact, I happened to be in Washington on business and I started getting all these calls. Uh, encouraging me to run. And so, other women in congress, in fact, I still have the letter: all the women in the congress and the senate signed a letter encouraging me to run and they'd give their support. And so, I forgot who it was, I think it was Barbara Boxer or somebody, arranged a meeting with me and [Dick Gephardt] who was the speaker then, we went to his office. And I got back to San Jose—and it was nothing that I really wanted to do; I loved the job I had. Anyway, I was in my office one morning, and one of my assistants said, that vice president Gore was on the phone and wanted to talk to me. So, I pick up the phone [Moon laughs], He's calling from Air Force One or Two or

something, saying, that he and the president really wanted me to run. And, the reason why I was in Washington was because President Clinton appointed me to chair the President's Advisory Commission on Trade Policy and Negotiations. So I was in Washington very frequently and I had gotten to know both Clinton and Gore pretty darn well, you know, from the first campaign. I had spent some time with each of them. And so, I had to thank him for his call but tell him that I was not interested; that I was flattered and all, and then that's when Mike ran for that. And, I did it for a lot of personal reasons: I liked my job as being mayor, I had just been reelected, this is the city I care a lot about, we have family here, and I didn't want to have to commute here—

Moon:

Yeah, you know a lot of people I talked to around here said the same thing, Janet gray said the same thing.

Hammer:

Yeah, I just, you know, Phil and I had a good life and I didn't want to spend—and you know I think it became very clear too, everything time I'd go to Washington I'd chair these meetings and I'd have something—I'd come home on a Thursday night, and it seemed like I was flying around the world to leave D.C. at four in the afternoon to get home.

Moon:

I know.

Hammer:

And why? You know I had the greatest admiration for Zoe; I just couldn't do that. I just couldn't do that. And, I think also, all personalities are different. Zoe has got a

tremendously positive impact in Washington, I mean she's a real star. I don't think I would have done well—became, you know the Democrats became the minority party, and being a freshmen member of congress, 435 people and the minority party, and that just didn't work. I said then and I say now, "Being mayor of a city like San Jose, I think is the best political job in the country." And I say that with all sincerity.

Moon:

And, why do you say that?

Hammer:

Fist of all, you live and work in your home, your home town. You're out daily able to see and touch and interact with the people you represent, and you can make something happen like that (snaps fingers), well maybe not that quickly but you can get an idea and work with people and effect change much quicker than working and going through congress and the state and the Assembly or Senate. Oh my gosh. You know, a lot has to do with your personality and make up, I don't have a lot of patience for process and doing—and it's a growing city a dynamic city. I mean, look what has happened in the last twenty-four years, you know, since I was first elected to office.

Moon:

Well, I think a lot people have said this and a lot of the women I have spoken to kind of said this also, That anything that is really dynamic in politics, is local; truth Politics is local, you know, it is locally grown, and that anything that our legislators are doing is based on the local and political environment and the needs of the constituents. And, I think, that's really very true.

Hammer:

Um-hm, yeah it is.

Moon:

And, this one woman that I have been doing this research on who lived—who died in 1961 but was born in 1874, and lived her whole life with the—you know two wars and everything; she said the same thing to Alice Paul, who she felt wasn't being very responsive to the Equal Rights Movement, which she was a supporter of; but she didn't like Alice Paul. That last thing comes through in almost every instance where I have spoken to people who have been engaged in politics, and I think that's really probably a good lesson for the legislators to pay attention to. And, then looking at Don Edwards' work that he had done in congress, he seemed to really—if you look at the magnification of the work he has done in congress, everything is very localized in the issues he was trained to support.

Hammer:

Don is still one of my heroes. I mean personally, he is a dear friend, we spent you know, six months here and six months back there; and so, we always [inaudible 01:14:44] and talk in between. And interestingly enough when we moved back here in '64, in early '64, Phil was looking around for a job at some place to practice law, and Don had been a friend of Phil's brother who died by the time we got a career in early '63, his older brother. So, I don't know we ran into Don somewhere and he—well, I guess, in Washington, because we saw him—came to Washington, and he offered Phil a job to organize his first reelection dinner. So there was this funky place up in Fremont, and I know until this day, that the only reason he did that was because he wanted to help us put bread on the table and we have been lifelong friends ever since; he's an amazing guy.

Moon:

Well, he had an amazing career.

Hammer:

Oh yeah, there will never be anybody as well respected, I don't think.

Moon:

Well, I've had the opportunity to meet him through some of my work from San Jose State, and I'm hoping when he comes back from Washington or like I said Chesapeake, that I could interview him with Terry Christenson; but you know he was, of course, not well this last year.

Hammer:

Yeah, I know I saw him a couple times, but he's doing much better.

Moon:

Right, I saw him right before they were getting ready to leave for the East Coast, and he looked remarkable for his age and for just coming off of being in the hospital for a couple months.

Hammer:

Yeah, yeah.

Moon:

So, I really hope that will work out still and I'll be able to talk to him, because, of course, we have his papers also in our collections.

Hammer:

Yeah, that annual Don Edwards Lecture.

Moon:

That's right! And, that's great when he can come to that lecture and him, and all of the people that still follow him; all of the people that he helped get into politics are really, you know, he has quite a legacy I think just being a political mentor and—so, now going back a little bit about some of the things you did post mayor's office, actually not post, when you were working with the Clinton administration and you were appointed to this advisory committee on Trade and Policy Negotiations, Why did they select you? Do you have an understanding on how you—

Hammer:

No. Maybe somebody on my staff like Gary or Sean know that, but I really don't. It was like somebody—a call out of the blue as far as I know. I wasn't seeking anything. I was the first woman and first political person to hold that job. And, to say that, "I didn't know anything about trade policy", is certainly an understatement [Moon laughs].

Moon:

So how did you—because you actually chaired it—

Hammer:

Yeah, it was really weird. Imagine me, you know, chairing a committee that has sort of titans of industry: CEOs of Eastman, Kodak, and Coca Cola, and Caterpillar Tractor, and AIG, and you know all these companies. So, we immediately sent, about getting somebody in Washington that could help me with that; a woman lawyer who was still a dear friend, who, we became friends, whose specialty was trade.

Moon:

Oh, because that was an interesting thing to read, that you had been appointed to that, and Do you think it had anything to do with the success you had with the work you had done with [Amigo?] and some of the other companies?

Hammer:

Uh, Cisco?

Moon:

Yeah, Cisco.

Hammer:

Yeah, and I think that it was because I had gotten to know both the president and vice president during the campaign, and they saw that this was an important area for trade and all for obvious reasons; and I was the woman Mayor of the largest city, democrat or republican in the country; so I think that they wanted to showcase that.

Moon:

Right, and it seemed like they were also looking at local regions to try and get different types of programs, I suppose the Republicans do also. You were also appointed by Gray Davis to the State Board of Education.

Hammer:

Yeah, I started that right after my tenure as mayor was over in January of '91; actually I took office in the State Board, in February of '99, and served for four years. And when his office called and asked, "If [I] wanted to be reappointed?", I graciously declined.

Moon:

Uh-huh [Moon laughs]

Hammer:

I thought, I could be more effective doing stuff here, you know.

Moon:

So it's the same kind of idea as having to travel to Sacramento.

Hammer:

Yeah, I found it very, very frustrating. I mean, there were some—there was a lot of politics on the board, about testing, and textbook adoptions, and how English should be the language to be taught. And I thought, I could save myself a lot of grief by doing more here.

Moon:

Now, just one last question on the organizations, the Women's organizations, Were you involved at all on the commissions on the sex of women or was [CEWAER]?

Hammer:

I was a member of CEWAER, but I don't remember going to meetings, but I did because I met there a couple times and they're statewide, but I was not active in either one of those. I mean, I always supported them, they're dinners and whatever.

Moon:

Of all the women that you worked with through the years, Are there particular women, I know Janet Gray was one of them, that really, you would—you felt a friendship, sort of bond that you felt with some of these other political women?

Hammer:

Um, well I mentioned Zoe, and certainly, Susie—

Moon:

Are there—do you have any like funny stories that you remember from working with Janet or Susie or any of these other women, that would be you know—

Hammer:

Um, nothing's coming to mind. You know, Susie is the story teller, and Iola, oh my God, and even Janet Gray; you know most women, and especially Janet Gray, and Susie too, really have memories like elephants; I mean, they just could remember all this stuff; I'm not a very good story teller and I just, I don't know—

Moon:

Well, I don't know, you said quite a lot actually.

Hammer:

But, any funny stories, well, I could always get back to you if I should happen to think of any.

Moon:

Yeah, if you could think of any really good stories. I have this one woman who I'm working with, who is a documentary film maker and she has been filming some of the interviews, and she is always looking to find stories that we can piece together for some sort of documentary—

Hammer:

Yeah, that's a little—

Moon:

And, so the idea is to get different women to share: not talk about the politics so much or maybe the policy developments, that was part of their career, but what were some of the

special moments that they had, you know, working with other women in politics. I know if she were here, she'd ask you that question.

Hammer:

You know, one girl, and it's not a particularly a story or anything like that, and I came across the picture not long ago of a lady I was on the Council with when [Jolene Barraro] was the vice presidential candidate; I mean, that was an amazing moment in the history of women in politics. So um, and I forget what year it was in, but it was when Chelsea was at Stanford, and I was in office, and Hilary Clinton's office or somebody called me it was a White House call, and said that, "[She] was coming out...", it was the day before thanksgiving, "...to pick up her daughter and wherever they were going for family Thanksgiving, and [she] had some time, and was there something we could do?" You know, she could come down to San Jose and do something. So I guess it was somebody on my staff that started calling around, and we ended up going down to Sacred Heart communities, and every Wednesday before Thanksgiving they've got these food boxes; and just people in mass, and of course with Mrs. Clinton there, there was even a bigger crowd; and the idea was that we would help the volunteers, you know give out food: either one of us would do food boxes and the other would turkeys. Well, I mean, it was a mob scene, and after standing side by side with Mrs. Clinton I said, "You know, you've been here almost an hour, you know, people will understand that you can't stand and do this, you know (laughs) [inaudible]". And she goes, "I don't have to be at Stanford for another hour, and hurry up if you don't stand up!"

Moon:

What was she like?

Hammer:

Oh, terrific, just terrific. I mean, that was—I had seen her and been with her on other occasions too, but just the way that she engaged with these people coming through the lines; you know, she was so gracious and you know she must have been there at least two hours, you know, we still did this. And, of course I wouldn't go away before she left, that would have been a little inappropriate, but she was just wonderful.

Moon:

Yeah, I have always really been a great admirer of hers and I thought she really got a bum wrap in the first term you know when Clinton was in office, not to mention the other things that happened wrong.

Hammer:

God forbid huh, that strong men should have strong women as wives (both laugh). That spoke their minds down the line.

Moon:

Well, I think that this has been a really great opportunity to sit down and talk with you, and I hope that after I go back and do some more work there might be a point where we would talk again, particularly once we get to the point of processing your collection; but one thing I wanted to ask you, On the collection did you—um, you mentioned the letter that you received from all the congressmen, asking you to potentially serve in the Maneta term, did you include that letter in the papers?

Hammer:

You know, I don't know that. Um, I still got stuff I'm sure, in the basement, and I don't know where that is actually, I don't know if you have it or if I have it. For seven years,

every time I got down in the basement, which is a great deal of length, I keep the cat down there, she is probably outside now looking for dinner; but there still is quite a bit of stuff down there.

Moon:

Yeah, because I'd love to be able to come down there and help you look through that material, and we could always bring more into the collection than what's represented in it.

Hammer:

Yeah, I'll do that. It's not that I don't have the time, I think it's kind of—to decide, you know, there's a lot more than just my papers down there you know. If I come across it—

Moon:

Well, that would be a really nice letter to have a copy of. I'm actually presenting a paper in Minneapolis in November on this research and those are the types of things that make really great illustrations for you know, the importance of the Mayor's office for one, and San Jose and the role that women have played in that process.

Hammer:

Well, and I think this letter that Zoe had signed by the women in congress, it really speaks to how important it is to have that kind of women support and all—

Moon:

Right.

Hammer:

—I mean this letter, and what would be the Speaker's House. You know, they said they'd raise money, and make all their resources available.

Moon:

Well, if you do happen to go into the basement and you find that—

Hammer:

(laughs) You'd be the first to know.

Moon:

I'd love to have a copy of it even if you didn't want to part with it, I would understand that; but we could make copies of anything that you have, you know.

Hammer:

You should just write down your phone number or something here.

Moon:

Okay, I will, and I also have a card I could give you.

Hammer:

This must be a fun project for you to work on.

Moon:

It's really fun because I am a Women's Historian first and an archivist second, and so it just gives me an opportunity to do things that I haven'—

Hammer:

Where did you go to school?

Moon:

I've been to school at um, down south I was at Cal State Fullerton for the most of my program. Then I was at the program—

[End of Interview 01:29:02]