

Jody Cohen Press
Narrator

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Interviewer

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Transcriber

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Minnesota

JCP: Jody Cohen Press

CS: Cole Steinberg

CS: This is an interview conducted as part of a larger faculty and student research project initiated by Dr. Julie Luker of Concordia University, Saint Paul. Today is July 7, 2022, and I'm here with Jody Cohen Press. My name is Cole Steinberg, and I'm an undergraduate student at Concordia University, Saint Paul. Today I'll be talking to Jody about what life was like growing up in the Twin Cities. During this interview, I'm going to ask you to reflect on your childhood life experiences as they relate to a variety of social topics from that time period. For the purposes of this interview, we have defined childhood as birth through 17 years of age. To begin, please state and spell your full name, including a maiden name, if applicable.

JCP: My full name is Jody Anne Cohen Press, and my maiden name was Jody Anne Cohen.

CS: Please identify your race and gender.

JCP: I am white, and I am female.

CS: Please state your date of birth.

JCP: August 8, 1958.

CS: Finally, please share where you grew up, such as the name of the neighborhood or a nearby street intersection. Include any major moves that you made during this time.

JCP: I grew up on St. Clair Avenue. The cross street was Griggs until I was 13, and at 13, my family moved to Itasca Avenue in Highland Park, and the cross street was Cleveland.

CS: Thank you. I would like to learn more about your family life. Let's begin with the memories you have for immediate and extended family. Please share some memories that you have about these relationships.

JCP: I was very close to my maternal grandmother. She also lived in Macalester-Groveland on Stanford near Albert. I met my grandfather, but he died when I was eight. I didn't know him as well, maternal grandfather. My maternal grandmother died when I was 20, and when I was a child and used to run away from home, I'd go to her house. *[Laughter]* I'm sure that once I left

my house on my way to my grandma's, my grandma and my mother were in contact with each other, and my grandmother would say, "I'll let you know when she gets here."

My dad's parents, my paternal grandparents, his mother died when he was about 18, so I never met her, but I am named for her. Her English name was Jenny, and my name is Jody, and I did know my paternal grandfather. He died when I was about seven or eight, as well. The thing I remember most is he taught me how to play casino. *[Laughter]* He used to live in Florida for the winters, and I think he probably played a lot of card games when he was in Florida. All my ancestors came from Ukraine. My maternal grandparents came through Canada. My paternal grandparents came through the Port of Galveston, so none of my ancestors came through Ellis Island, which I always thought was interesting.

CS: Okay. Which family members did you engage with the most growing up?

JCP: Obviously, that would be my parents. We also had other relatives living nearby. I mentioned my maternal grandparents. One of my mother's—both of my mother's brothers lived in Macalester-Groveland. One lived on St. Clair along with us, just a few blocks away. The other lived with my grandmother on Stanford. He did not get married until my grandmother died. He was seeing a woman not of the same religion, and he didn't wanna do anything until she was gone because he knew how much that would upset her.

I had two cousins that lived on St. Clair that were about seven or eight years older than me, and I looked to them as big sisters, and I always wanted to be with them, and do what they were doing, and they were really nice. They actually hung out with me, the little kid, so I was close to them, and as it turns out, my older cousin, one of her friends became my babysitter. She was about 17 years old, as well, 7 years older. Her parents had died, and she lived with her grandparents, and she was just always at our house, and I think the reason we got a babysitter is because when my little brother was born, my mother said she didn't know she had a baby in the house, but she sure knew I was in the house.

I was a handful, so the babysitter, her name was [Jean 04:30], she helped either with me when my mom wanted to be with my brother or took care of my brother when my mom needed to be with me, or just whatever needed to be done. One of the best memories I have of my babysitter is on Saturday mornings, we would go downtown St. Paul to the public library and the children's room, and we would see a puppet show, and then we would go to one of the candy stores, and I would get these—now when I think back, these awful fruit slices. They were real jelly-like with sugar on the top, and they were like a half-moon. Apparently, I loved those, the red ones, and then we would go down to the First National Bank building and go up to the top and look around, and so I just remember going to downtown St. Paul from a very young age and just loving doing that.

I also remember when I was about 10 years old, I decided I wanted to go downtown by myself. It was a different time and a different era. Then, I got on the 10-A bus, which stopped two doors from our house, went downtown, walked around Dayton's, and got myself dessert at the River Room, and went back across the street, across from Grant's, and got on the 10-A bus and came home. Can you imagine today someone doing that or parents letting their kid do that? *[Laughter]* I did.

CS: Wow. Did you have any family pets?

JCP: We did not, and we always wanted one. My mom told me that when she was little, she had many dogs. One of 'em was a German Shepherd named Duchess. Even though it was a male dog, she named it Duchess, and the dog would wait for her every day when she went to nursery school 'til my grandmother could pick her up, and my mother told me she saw the dog get hit by a car, and at that young age, she said, "Never again. I'll never have another pet." We borrowed my cousin's dog, the one that lived just down the street on St. Clair. Whenever we'd go over there, I'd take him for a walk. I knew the buzzwords to get him all excited to go for the walk, and one time my uncle was walkin' the dog by our house, and he came up to visit, and my mother gave him a piece of salami, and every time my uncle took the dog for a walk after that, he would stop and tug on the leash to try to go up the stairs to our house because he wanted a piece of salami.

I also remember when my aunt and uncle took their daughter to college, the younger daughter. The dog stayed with us. The name was T-bone. He was a—not a Bassett Hound. Beagle, he was a Beagle, and my dad came home from work one day, and he had the flu or wasn't feeling well, and that dog laid down by the bed by my dad and didn't leave for days. He just sat there and laid at my dad's bedside 'til he was up and about again. I always thought that was just fascinating. That kind of started my intrigue with dogs. I love dogs, and both my husband and I have allergies, so we can't have a dog, but we know all the dogs in the neighborhood, and when we go out for a walk, we take treats and tennis balls, and we think it's okay to buy the affection of a dog, just not of a person. *[Laughter]* So, no pets for us.

CS: Okay. How were household chores divided between members of your family?

JCP: It was really interesting because my parents did not make my brother or I do chores, and as I think back on that, I think, wow. We could've really grown up to be lazy people, but we didn't. My parents wanted us to have fun, and they took care of the chores. I remember even when my brother was a young adult, he was living at home for a while, and my dad was out cutting the grass. My brother was in the lawn chair sunning himself, and the neighbor came over and said to my dad, "Why are you mowing the grass? Let him mow the grass." My dad just kinda laughed it off. It's like, "I'm fine. Let him relax." Chores were done by our parents.

CS: Okay. Thank you. Next, please describe the ways in which your family's economic status influenced your childhood.

JCP: I would say my parents were middle-class. They were not wealthy by any means. We were not poor by any means. Neither my brother nor I ever asked for anything extravagant. We always

got what we wanted, but we never asked for anything, like I said, extravagant. Maybe financially weren't in that great of shape, but we didn't know it. We always had food, clothing, toys, activities, whatever we wanted.

My mother didn't drive a car. She never learned, and my dad tried to teach her at one point, and that's a huge mistake. Spouses should not teach each other to drive, so we only had one car, only needed one car, so the cars were not an issue. Could we afford a second car? It just wasn't an issue. We had a one-car garage. Again, not an issue. I wanted a certain bedroom set for my 13th birthday. I got it, and as I look back now, what that probably cost in those dollars compared today's dollars, I'm sure it was a lot of money. My parents knew I wanted it, and they got it for me, and I still have it. It's still in a spare bedroom. I still have that furniture.

CS: Cool, okay. Who in your immediate family was employed, and what did they each do for a living?

JCP: My mom worked up until the time, almost 'til the time I was born. She worked for the State of Minnesota in, I guess now what would be called the—it was the unemployment area. I think it's Economic Development now, or something like that. Then, she was a stay-at-home mom. My dad was in sales. He worked for the liquor industry, and he was a sales manager, and we hardly ever had any liquor in the house. Neither of my parents drank, which was kind of unusual. My dad would always bring home samples and things like that, but they would just sit in the basement. They weren't in the house proper.

He would do a lot of wine tastings, and so I remember him coming home and talking about the wine tasting, and some people might've wanted a little too much, and he also was at the opening of First Avenue when that opened, and I think it was First Avenue back then. Joe Cocker was the opening act, and this was I think 1968, something like that. My dad came home and said, "There was this awful singer. I can't believe he's gonna go anywhere, be successful. Just the worst." Well, it turned out to be Joe Cocker, so he did have a successful career. My dad was totally wrong on that one. So, he was always in sales. I always say my dad could sell a drowning man an anchor, not because he wasn't ethical, but because he was just really good at what he did.

CS: Okay. Now I would like to know more about your experiences with religion, such as Catholicism, Lutheranism, *et cetera*. Describe what you can recall about your family's religious practices when you were growing up.

JCP: My parents were Jewish. My grandparents were Jewish. We were Jewish. We were raised Jewish. We were conservative, which is kinda the middle of the road. There's also conservative, Orthodox, and some other different divisions, so we were kinda the middle. We grew up at the Temple of Aaron in St. Paul. It's on River Road. As a matter of fact, just last week it celebrated it's 113th year of existence. It started in the—I think it was on Holly Avenue near Summit, kind of an older neighborhood. They built the current building, I wanna say about 1958, somewhere around there. That was my foundation for my religion. Always I have been raised Jewish. I live Jewish, identify as Jewish.

I am on the board of directors at the synagogue now. I like to think back when I was in nursery school and Sunday school, and now here I am on the board of directors. I'm also the president of what's called the Sisterhood, which is the women's league, and when I first was voted president, I thought, "I am now the president of an organization that my mother used to belong to, and now here I am," and hoping they would be proud of the things that I've done in the synagogue.

CS: Okay, that's great. How important or relevant is religion to you now as an adult? I think you sort of answered that for me.

JCP: Yeah, it's still important to me. I am not ultrareligious. I am very Jewish. I keep the rules of kosher kashrut. I don't eat pork. I don't eat shellfish, but I'm not so religious that I keep two sets of dishes, which very religious Jews do, one set for meat, one set for milk. I don't do that, but I follow the traditions. I follow the holidays. I live the life that I think I'm supposed to. There's a phrase called [*foreign language 13:33*], which means repair the world. Those are our marching orders, so to speak, and—this is hard. I know I can't change the world, but I can try to change my little corner of it. I try to do that every day.

CS: That's great. Now I would like to learn more about the neighborhood in which you grew up. If you moved during childhood, you may wish to reflect on more than one neighborhood. This is fine to do, but please indicate as you do it. Please describe what comes to mind when thinking about the neighborhood in which you grew up.

JCP: I grew up on St. Clair Avenue, but I pretty much lived my life at Edgecumbe Playground. Edgecumbe Playground was in Griggs just off of Jefferson. Almost all my free time and my friends, our time was spent there. I started taking tumbling lessons there when I was five, and my mother said, "Ah, she'll never stay with it." Well, I stayed all the way up until sixth grade. I competed. I won some medals. There was a junior Olympics, I think in Mankato somewhere. I competed in that. My dad was always one driving us to the meets. We also had workouts in the old firehouse at the—oh, I can't remember the name of the club—Turners, the Tuners Society. It's a German Society, and they had a gymnastics area set up in an old firehouse on the west side just over the high bridge. I went there every Saturday for that, and one of the people that I was there with—I think she was there after me, but her name was [Colleen Casey 15:12]. She went to the 76th Olympics in Canada. I think she was the alternate, so I had a very good coach.

In the winters, ice skating. There were two rinks plus a hockey rink. I was there all the time. I used to even do cartwheels on the ice from my tumbling. I don't think my parents knew that, but I did. Summertime, there was things for kids to do. It was an all-around place. We spent a lot of time there. If we weren't at Edgecumbe, we were at our friends' houses who lived nearby. Again, our parents, there was no evil in the world. We just went. We were outside. We'd come home at dinnertime or come home when it was dark. They didn't worry about us. We didn't worry ourselves about being out. It was a very safe environment, as far as we knew. I never heard of anything bad happening. Maybe it did, but I never heard about it.

I went to Randolph Heights Elementary School, and I loved my education there. I loved the teachers. I loved my classmates. My brother and I and four other kids were the only Jewish kids in the school when I was there, and the teachers were very open-minded, and they would have me talk about Hannukah or some of the other holidays to expose others to it, and if we didn't wanna sing a Christmas song, we didn't have to, but we felt kinda like we were on the—I felt like I was on the outside looking in. when I got to junior high, I went to Highland, and there were many more Jewish kids there, and so I widened my base of friends to include people that I would see in Sunday school or at the temple, but maybe just once a week, and now I was seeing them every day, so that expanded my religious group of friends, and many of them I'm still friends with today.

CS: Okay. Describe what you can recall about your home, such as the layout and other features that come to mind.

JCP: Our St. Clair house was a colonial, or a four square. People call it different things. It was a big, white house, two stories, two pillars in the front. It had a huge hill in the front, and my dad used to have an awful time trying to cut the grass. He'd start at the top of the hill and go down. Then he'd go to the bottom of the hill and cut up, and he said, "If we ever move, we're gettin' a flat surface house. No more hills." You'd walk in, and there was a big living room with a fireplace. We didn't use the fireplace, but it was there. My parents had bookcases built into the sides where little windows used to be, and then they had shelving when you first came in.

We had a dining room with corner China cabinets, which I loved, and I wish today I still had. They don't build houses like that, but I used to always look at my mom's China collection. The house didn't have central air conditioning, but it had a big, huge air conditioner in one of the dining room windows, and that thing would cool the whole first floor. We had a small kitchen. It wasn't an eat-in kitchen. I remember one day my dad wanted to replace the floor for my mom, and he'd never really done that. Well, you're supposed to start in the center of the room and work your way out, so the pieces get smaller as you get to—he started at the end and worked in the middle, so it was like little, tiny pieces in the middle of the floor. My mom was not happy about that. *[Laughter]*

Didn't have a dishwasher, just a stove and a fridge. I remember growing up, I always wanted a side-by-side refrigerator 'cause I thought that was so cool. I finally got my side-by-side refrigerator when I moved in my current house 25 years ago, so I finally made that. The upstairs had a bifurcated landing. You'd go up two stairs, and there was a landing, then a few more stairs, and a landing, and then a few more stairs. It was only a two-bedroom house. The master bedroom was huge. It ran the whole width of the house. It had two gigantic walk-in closets, which were good for playing hide-and-seek. Had a linen closet and then a bathroom. No shower, just a bathtub, and I thought, "Someday, we're gonna have a shower," 'cause I wanted to take showers. I thought that was more fun than a bath.

Then, my parents moved from that house in 1971 into Highland Park, and then we got the house with the shower, and it had three bedrooms, so we all had our own bedroom. My brother and I had a bedroom, and I remember, we all had our own televisions, too. I had this little television that looked like a space helmet and even though we were all watching the same channel, we'd all have our own TVs, but we each had our own room. Parents were in one room, me in one room, my brother in another. Yeah, I remember those houses. I call it the old house, the first house on St. Clair. I can still see it.

We were the house where all the kids congregated. We had the swing set, the jungle gym, and the tether ball. We had the bikes, the scooters, and I remember in the summer, one of the games we would play was the "Gas Station". One of us would sit on a bench with the hose, the garden hose, and you'd ride your bike, or your scooter, or whatever, up to the gas station. You'd take the hose and fill up your vehicle with air, nothing. We didn't turn the water on or anything, but we played gas station. We played kickball, tag, loved playing hopscotch, chalk on the sidewalk. We did that a lot. You know, there were no electronic games back then, obviously. We just made stuff up. We used our imaginations. We used to build a fort around the jungle gym with blankets and boards, and just had fun. We were never bored. We were never bored.

CS: Okay. How well did the residents in your neighborhood know each other, and what were some of those relationships like?

JCP: I think pretty much everybody knew everybody. We had two elderly ladies living on either side of us on St. Clair, and one of them had a dachshund that was really active, and I used to be afraid of it. Then, one day I went up to the fence and pet it, and then I really liked the dog, so I'd go in her yard, and she'd let me play with the dog. The dog's name was Fritz, and she was a widow, but she was a painter, and she painted pictures for everyone in my family. I still have the one she painted for me. It was a winter scene, and the one she painted for my brother was of a little boy next to a little dachshund, which was really cute.

Then the other lady on the other side of us, oddly enough, was Jewish. Again, there weren't many in the neighborhood. She'd never married, and I remember my parents kinda watching out for her a lot. The one with the dog had family, but we kinda just always watched out for her and they were just really nice ladies.

CS: Okay. Next, I would like to learn more about the values shared by your family and your neighbors. Values are principles or standards that help guide behavior. What memories come to mind that demonstrate what these values were for your family and your neighbors?

JCP: You needed to be respectful of others. You needed to be nice. You didn't talk back to adults. You didn't sass adults. If you did, you learned not to. Yeah, we were punished as kids if we did things wrong, but we were just always told, kinda the Golden Rule, treat others like you wanna be treated. Again, just following what our faith said. Help others, tzedakah, which is charity, and that Tikkun Olam helped to repair the world.

CS: Okay. Now I'm going to ask you all about leisure time.

JCP: I'm sorry, what? Leisure time? Leisure time, you said?

CS: Yeah.

JCP: Oh, okay.

CS: Yep. Describe some of the ways in which you, your family, and your neighbors engage in leisure time when you were growing up.

JCP: Very simple, out in the backyard barbecuing. My dad bought a boat when I was probably about 10 or 11. He kept it on the St. Croix. Me and my brother, or my brother and I, I should say, were not fans because all we would do is go up and down the St. Croix, and we found it kinda boring, but my dad apparently always wanted a boat, so we got the boat. I think he sold it about two or three years later.

My parents were friends with a man named Walter [Dubiner 23:34]. He was the man that invented the shopping bag. He patented the shopping bag, so he was a big part of St. Paul history. He lived about a block from us, and he loved birds. Whenever we would go to visit him, he had these gigantic, huge trash cans, metal cans filled with bird seed, and my brother and I would just—we would love to fill the bird feeders with the bird seed 'cause you got this big scoop, and you put it in, and then you poured it in, and he and his wife, Lydia, were childless. They didn't have children, but they had a cabin up at Lake Itasca State Park, or Itasca, Minnesota, and they would always send my parents a gift card to stay at the Lake Itasca, the headwaters of the Mississippi, so at a summer vacation, we would go up there a lot.

Then when he died, I think when—the wife died after him. I'm sorry, but I'm not sure who died first, but they left their cabin and their land to the Courage Center for children with disabilities to have a campground to go to or a vacation place, and I always thought that was kinda cool. He was just a—he was just the most generous man, and just very softspoken. I always remember when I would be there. He was always just so soft-spoken. My parents were vocal. They were not.

CS: Okay. Describe some of the activities engaged in when you were with your friends.

JCP: Well, as I said, in the summer, we played tetherball, gas station. We went to Edgumbe Playground. There were swings, monkey bars, one of those things that—not a tilt-a-whirl. I can't remember what it's called. We would get really dizzy if you went real fast. There were tennis courts. We would hide in the bushes and play hide and go seek. Bike riding, loved to go bike riding. I had the coolest bike. I had the basket, the fringes, the streamers, the bell. I loved my Schwinn bike. It was purple. I still remember it.

I remember when my dad taught me how to ride a bike. I was about five. You always had the training wheels, and then you'd get the bike, and then come off. Of course, I fell and skinned my knees, and went home, and I was crying, and my mom said, "What are you doing? She's gonna hurt herself." Nah, it'll make her tough. My dad was a feminist before there was such a thing. He

raised me to, "You can do whatever you want, and you're going to college," not, "Do you think you wanna go to college? You're going to college." It was just implanted.

I also remember—I know this is off the track—but him telling me when I was about seven or eight. He says, "Don't have a big wedding. Buy furniture." Okay, dad. I'll make a note. I'm eight years old, whatever. It turns out, I did have a small wedding, and we did buy furniture. I must've listened to him, but we just did stuff around the neighborhood. I never wanted to go to summer camp. My parents offered to send me. I just never wanted to go. It didn't seem fun to me, and I had all my friends. None of them went to summer camp, so in summers we just did stuff outside, and then during the year, I would do my tumbling and my gymnastics, every Thursday night. Came home and had a TV dinner. *[Laughter]* Swanson TV dinner, the chicken 'cause everybody else had eaten by the time I got home.

CS: Okay. At types of toys did you play with growing up?

JCP: Had Barbie, lots of Barbies. Had the different—there was a carrying case. There was the Barbie dreamhouse. That was the pinnacle, and I always thought, you know, if I'd saved that Barbie stuff, I could've retired early 'cause it was a classic. Loved playing with the Barbies. I had some other dolls. I remember having dolls. Whatever was on TV, that's what I wanted. There used to be—what were those things that—creepy crawlers, I think they were called. This was before your time.

It was you bought this stuff called goop, okay, and you put it in the mold, and you plug it in, and you'd heat it up, and it would be like this rubbery jelly-like thing, like bugs and things. Then, of course, the ultimate was the Easy Bake Oven. Every girl wanted an Easy Bake Oven. I got an Easy Bake Oven. I was so excited. You bought these little packets of probably fake food, and you mixed it with water, and you slid it into the over slot, and there was a lightbulb that heated it up. I don't know if it was plugged in or not, but there was a big lightbulb, and you'd take it out, and that was your food. I remember, I think there was an apple pie and maybe a couple of other things. That was the cool thing, the Easy Bake Oven.

My brother had Matchbox cars. I used to play with him with the car. He's five years younger than me, but I would play with the cars with him sometimes. My parents had this one set of friends, and whenever we'd go there for dinner, we would dress my little brother up like a girl. I don't know why. We just did, and then we'd take him upstairs to show the parents, and they all got a kick out of that. My brother was so young, I don't think he knew what we were doing, that he was kinda the butt of the joke, but he went along with it. Just normal kid stuff.

CS: Okay. What television shows did you watch growing up?

JCP: Well, Saturday morning cartoons, whatever those were. I loved watching "Bewitched," "That Girl." I think every little girl wanted to be Marlo Thomas. She was cool. She was beautiful. She lived in New York. She had a cool apartment. She had a boyfriend. She had great clothes, so everybody wanted to be here. Then, when I got a little older, I wanted to be Mary

Tyler Moore to be Mary Richards. You got a cool job, cool clothes, good looking. I'm tryin' to think. What else did I watch? All those '60s shows, "The Adams Family," "The Munsters," "Beverly Hillbillies," just whatever was on the network, just a couple of channels. That's what we watched.

I did like watching "American Bandstand," and there was another one, "Where the Action Is," and that was because my babysitter, [Jean], who I mentioned earlier, she was a teenager, so I watched all those shows with them, and I knew all the '60s music. I still love the '60s music. It's my favorite, probably 'cause it reminds me of my childhood. In the summer, my babysitter would take us to the lake. We used to go to Turtle Lake, I think it was, in Shoreview. I hung along a lot with older—with teenagers when I was not one yet, and so I just got exposed to teenagers a little younger than most, I think, and just really wanted to be one of them. I just thought that was so cool.

CS: Okay. Which bands or music genres were your favorite? You kinda touched on it a little bit

JCP: Well, of course, the Beatles. I still remember the "Ed Sullivan Show" and the Beatles. I had all the albums when I was, what, six, seven, eight. I just gave them a couple years ago to my niece 'cause she discovered the Beatles through my brother. Obviously, she was born—she's 20 years old. I had all those—they were on VJ Records. It was before they were even on Capital Records, and a lot of 'em were scratched up, but I kept 'em anyways. I knew all the Beatles songs. I also liked the Beachboys. I liked the Monkeys, pretty much any of those '60s groups, but of course, the Beatles were just it. There really was no one else.

CS: Okay. Next, let's discuss your experience with schooling. Please describe what it was like going to school as a child.

JCP: I loved school. I still remember all my teachers' names from Randolph Heights, went there for kindergarten through—it was through sixth grade at that point. I was a good student. I didn't have trouble with school. I know some kids did. I got good grades. I liked my teachers, liked the subjects. I didn't find school to be troublesome at all. I was a school patrol for, I think, fifth and sixth grade, and I was the corner right by the school, so there wasn't a whole lot of traffic. Some people had patrols on St. Clair or the busier streets. There really wasn't much going on where I was, but I really wanted to be a school patrol, and at first, my parents were against it, but I guess I whined enough that they let me do it. So, I did that for two years.

CS: Okay. As best as you can, try and recall the schools you attended during your childhood, including the grades in which you attended them.

JCP: It was Randolph Heights, as I mentioned, K through six. I did go to preschool at the Talmud Torah. I was three and four, I think. That was preschool. Highland Park Junior High, 7 through 9th, Highland Park Senior High, 10th through 12th.

CS: Okay. Which teacher stands out to you most in your memory and why?

JCP: My sixth-grade teacher—well, my fifth-grade teacher, her name was Mrs. [Blomgren 33:06], and my parents told me that she told them, "Expect great things from [Jody] someday." That was nice to hear. My sixth-grade teacher was a man, Mr. [Hegman 33:20]. It was the first

time I'd had a male teacher, and again, he treated everybody the same, boys, girls, didn't matter. He was in charge. If you got in trouble, you had to go see Mr. [Hegman] before you saw the principal. Every morning before class, there would be the kids lined up outside the door who had to talk to Mr. [Hegman], so the rest of us would just kinda laugh and, "Glad it's not me."

In junior high, my English teacher was Ms. [Olson 33:45], and I remember coming to her. One of the other teachers yelled at me for something 'cause I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. I thought, "I'm in a new school." What was I, 11 years old? I went to talk to her, and she made me feel better. Told me not to cry. I can still remember. Yeah, 50 years ago.

In high school, it would be my English teacher, Betty Richardson. She was killed in a car accident about maybe 10 years ago. She was on the highway, and a car was on the wrong—going the wrong way, and she was killed. She made people do the work, and she was the volleyball coach, and she also was in charge of the marching group, and there were a lot of football players in her class, and sometimes she couldn't get through to them, so while she was trying to teach grammar, she analogized to your position on the football field. I don't know anything about football, but she would name the fullback, and the halfback, and you help this guy do that. Well, that's what this verb does. It helps this noun do that or whatever. She got through to these guys, I think. I really admired her. We called her Ms. Betty. Everybody called her Ms. Betty. She knew we called her Ms. Betty. I don't think she cared.

CS: That sounds nice. In your opinion, how diverse was the student body of the schools you attended?

JCP: Grade school was not. I think we had maybe one or two black children. The neighborhood we lived in was predominantly white and so were the students. I didn't know of any discrimination against any of the very few that were there. I remember them being in our class, being on teams. It might've been there, but I didn't know it. My junior high was integrated. We had bussing in St. Paul at that time, so we had a significant number of black children, white children. We were also the school—we had ramps in our—no, that was at the senior high. I'm sorry. The junior high was just kind of a regular school.

When I got to senior high, we had ramps, so it was built for people with disabilities and wheelchairs, and they also had a program for hearing impaired students, so they had—I think it was ESL, an ESL instructor, so we had a lot of children with disabilities, so I think we were pretty integrated both based on race and on ability versus disability. Again, there were probably fights. I wasn't a part of it. I didn't know about it, but I suspect there was some. There were fights.

CS: Okay. For our final topic, I'm going to ask you to reflect on local and global issues, such as war, poverty, discrimination, social unrest, *et cetera*. In your opinion, what were some of the biggest local or global issues affecting the people in your neighborhood when you were growing up?

JCP: The neighbor that I mentioned with the dachshund, that lived on one side of us, she had a son, a grandson, who was about to go to Vietnam. I was probably about 10, so this would've been about '68, and we invited—my parents invited him over for dinner before he left, and I was part of the dinner table, but I wasn't really part of the conversation, but I just remember my parents talking to him, and asking about what he was about to do, and how did he feel, and that we wished him well, and I wish I could say I remember if he came back. I don't know. I don't know if he survived or not. I can't remember. I always hoped that he did. I remember the Democratic Convention in Chicago, '68, about the unrest.

Again, I didn't really understand it, but I remember knowing about it. I remember riots, and I remember my parents having a discussion with my older cousins, and they, of course, were very liberal 'cause they were the young people. It was a young people's time, and my parents arguing with them about different positions. Again, I didn't understand it, but I remember. That was very upsetting to me that my cousins and my parents were arguing and yelling at each other. I also remember Woodstock a little bit. Woodstock happened on my birthday when I was 11. Just again, remember hearing about it, and seeing it, and hearing about the music. Just more somethin' kinda cool, and now as an adult, I have a good friend who was there, and now she's extremely Republican, *[laughter]* to put it mildly. It's like, "You were at Woodstock. How can you believe this way? How do you think that way?" but people change, I guess. Those were the three things. My neighbor's grandson going to Vietnam, the Chicago Convention, and Woodstock.

CS: Okay. How safe or unsafe did you feel in light of these issues?

JCP: I felt completely safe. It didn't involve me. It wasn't a part of my life. It was just somethin' I heard about. It didn't affect me personally. I think I was too young to be personally affected. I don't think you can understand things fully at that age. Now I have very different feelings about all of it, but back then, I felt completely safe.

CS: Did your family or your neighborhood have a bomb or fallout shelter in case of a nuclear war?

JCP: My grade school did, and I remember the teachers taking us down. We'd go down to the gym, and then there was a door, and you walked into this shelter area. It was dark, and dank, and dust was all over, and they showed us these boxes of crackers and water, and again, I couldn't really understand it, but we do the trip to the fallout shelter, I think once a year to see that it was there and know about it. We never did tuck and duck, or duck and cover, whatever that was. We never did any of that.

I remember being young, and there would be civil defense drills on TV, and they would have that piercing sound. We still have those now. It always scared me, and I asked my mom once, "What is that?" She wasn't gonna tell me it was we're checkin' to make sure that we weren't having a nuclear holocaust. She said the TV people are checking to see if there's birds on the

line. *[Laughter]* I still remember that. For most of my life, when I see a bird on a wire, I think, "Oh, that could cause interference with the TV." *[Laughter]*

CS: Okay. What sticks out to you as some of the most serious health threats to people in your community, such as specific disease or illness?

JCP: You know, I remember getting all the vaccines. I had all those childhood diseases. I had chickenpox. I had the mumps, I think, the measles, all those. I'd heard the word cancer. Didn't really know what it was when I was younger. Obviously, high school, that made more sense to me. I understood, but as a child, I don't wanna say my parents sheltered us, but they didn't tell us anything that we didn't need to know, and of course, there was no internet. There was no social media.

The only way you learned things was the newspaper, or your parents, or other people telling you, and it seemed like there was no need for adults to tell children scary things. My dad had a heart attack when I was 21, so that was the first real scare I had in my life. My grandparents had been deceased by that point, but when it was really close to a parent, I was 21 the first time I had something very scary happen in my family. He survived that, but that was the first time I was really scared. Again, you know your parents are gonna die at some point, but until there's an event like that, you don't really think about it, but in terms of community illnesses, again, I wasn't aware of any, or contagions.

CS: Okay. Is there anything else that you can think of as far as local and global issues, or yeah?

JCP: As a child or just kinda in that 1 to 17, that whole—

CS: Yeah, that was relevant during that age.

JCP: Yeah. I really didn't. Maybe I was oblivious, or maybe I was privileged. To some degree, I know I was. I grew up in a house with a mom, a dad, food, clothing, shelter. We didn't face discrimination. I just really probably wasn't aware. I don't think until I got to high school, I really hadn't interacted with people of other races. I guess I just didn't know.

CS: Okay. This is the end of our interview. Your responses are invaluable, and we really appreciate that you took the time to do this today. Thank you so much for participating.

JCP: Thank you.