

Kathy Wallace, by Julie M. Luker

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August 19th, 2022
Minnesota

CS: Cole Steinberg

KW: Kathy Wallace

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 August 19th, 2022, and I'm here with Kathy Wallace. My name is Cole Steinberg, and I'm an undergraduate student at Concordia University, Saint Paul. Today, I'll be talking to Kathy 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 or 17 years of age. To begin, please state and spell your full name, including a maiden name, if applicable.

KW: It's Kathy K-A-T-H-Y. Jean J-E-A-N. Wallace W-A-L-L-A-C-E. Maiden name Peterson P-E-T-E-R-S-O-N.

CS: Please identify your race and gender.

KW: Caucasian female.

CS: Please state your date of birth.

KW: November 21st, 1956.

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

KW: Birth to about two years old-- Well, actually, I've got dates, too. From 1956 to 1959, it was in East Saint Paul. We lived, I don't know the address, but it was on Iowa, East Iowa, I think, near White Bear Avenue. From 1959 to 1962, the early years, I was about 3 to 5, we lived at 140 East Annapolis in West Saint Paul. From 1962 to 1963, February of 1963, I was about six years old. We lived at 250 East Hurley in West Saint Paul. I lived in a house with my great grandmother and my great aunt. From February 1963 to December of 1967, probably 6 to 11 years old, we lived at 973 Oakdale Avenue in West Saint Paul. And then from December 1967 to after high school, we lived at 985 Bellows in West Saint Paul.

CS: 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.

KW: Okay. I grew up in a family of five kids. My dad's name was Neal. My mom's name is Carmella. My dad's family is Danish and French-Canadian. My mother's is German and Italian. My father had 11 brothers and sisters, so I had over 35 cousins that we got together with quite often. My mother's family pretty much came from West Saint Paul. Her paternal family, she had many aunts and uncles, but there weren't many of hers for cousins. She had one brother, and we had some cousins from that family. In my family there were three girls. My sister Vicki was born in 1955. I was 1956. My sister Julie was 1957. Then I had two brothers, Steve in 1960 and Kevin in 1962. So, my mother had five kids before she was 30 years old. And we did move quite a bit there. Pretty much in West Saint Paul. Memories. It was a great family. I did a lot of things with my mom's family since they lived mostly in West Saint Paul, South Saint Paul, and Inver Grove Heights. But I said equally it was very family oriented for holidays, and Sundays, get togethers. We were always with cousins. It was very good. I didn't have grandparents because my paternal grandpa was killed in a car accident in 1958 with one of his sons. And my grandma from that side, her name was Ermine. We didn't see her very much until the seventies, and then she was dealing with some dementia. So really no connection there. And my mom's side, her father died when she was three years old of influenza, and her mother died one week before she got married. So, I basically grew up with a great aunt on my mom's side, who we considered our grandma, and then my great grandma on my mom's side. So, it was, you know, we didn't have a lot of older people, but, you know, uncles and cousins were pretty good; we did a lot with them.

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

KW: Well, my own family, my basic family unit. And then, you know, I guess it was both sides of the family. I mean, there were times we spent with my Peterson cousins, and there were times we spent with my Gibis Verderosa cousins. So, yeah. I can't even remember holidays without spending time with one side of the family or the other. Same thing with vacations, picnics. We were always getting together. So, I'd say both. Both sides.

CS: Did you have any family pets? If so, please describe them.

KW: Oh, my Pape! [Laughter] When we moved to our last house, we got a poodle, like a few months after we moved in. It was actually supposed to be a birthday present for my sister, and it ended up taking to me. So, Pepe was with us from 1968 'til about 1981, and he was like my companion. I used to have to call the dog if I was on vacation. Well, when I went to college and told the dog to eat because it missed me. So yeah, that was our little pride and joy, Pepe. [Laughter] That's all we had. My mother had enough of five kids. She said we didn't need a bunch of pets.

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

KW: Well, I love this. Kind of a typical, you know, Baby Boom generation, I think. My brothers did a lot of the outside work with my father - mowing the grass, raking leaves, whatever was going to do outside. And the girls did things inside - dusting, cleaning, doing the dishes. So, it was somewhat traditional that way, but my mother and father both cooked. My dad babysat. I mean, those parts were interchangeable. But the kids, I laugh when I think of, you know, we weren't allowed to go out and help with the yard work. It was that was the boy's job. So, like, on holidays, the girls always went to the kitchen to do the dishes. [Laughter] We would sing and have fun with our cousins, but it was never the boys that did that kind of stuff. So yeah, they were kind of those traditional roles that would have probably come from the fifties.

CS: Can you share a memory to help describe what mealtime was like in your family?

KW: Oh, goodness. Well, we would sit at the kitchen table in the kitchen no matter where we lived, no television. And I laugh when I talk to other people in my age group. We all had our own spots at the table, and you never varied from that. Nobody would sit in your spot. So, yes, we'd all be around the table, the seven of us. And it was always a sit-down meal. My mother usually would cook... and again, typical fare. I mean, we had casseroles, and because she was Italian, we had a lot of Italian meals. And she worked part time, usually at night. So, she'd have dinner ready when my dad came home and then we'd eat and then she'd go off to work and we'd do whatever. So, it was always a family gathering.

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

KW: Well, I would say we were considered middle class. My dad worked for St Paul Companies for over 35 years; he was a printer there. Probably making a median wage. I mean, we never really lived in fancy houses, or my parents didn't drive fancy cars or anything. But we again, we had whatever we wanted. I mean, there was Christmas, there were birthdays. It was always a big celebration. And my mom would make sure that, you know, we had everything. I mean, my dad, too, but my mother was a bookkeeper. She controlled, you know, she was the money person. Always new school clothes, always clothes for Easter. I mean, I can't remember ever wanting for anything. We did just fine.

CS: Who in your immediate family was employed and what did they do for a living?

KW: My father was a printer at St Paul Companies. He also would do part-time jobs. In the summer, he worked at the state fair taking tickets for the horse show. So, we always loved that because we got to go watch it for free. That was about the only, I think it was the only job my dad had that I could recall. My mother worked a lot of part time jobs. Before she had kids, she was a bookkeeper. And then afterwards she worked at a grocery store. She worked at a movie theater. As we got a little older, she worked for accountants, and I think she worked for some lawyers. So, it was always part time, though, for her. She was home with us and then would go to work like on weekends or in evenings. And my dad was like a five day a week worker.

CS: Now, I'd like to know about your experiences with religion, such as Catholicism there, Nazism, etc... Describe what you can recall about your family's religious practices when you were growing up.

KW: We were raised Lutheran. My mother was a Catholic who turned Lutheran. My father's family was very steeped in the Lutheran church. My mom's family, many of them wanted to disown her because she switched to Lutheran. But we belonged to my dad's family's church. It was St Mark's Lutheran over at West Seventh and St Paul. And many of his family members were still there, so we were there till 1968. We would go to Sunday school every week. We all attended church together. We laughed because we always had the last pew in the sanctuary with the big family. We always had the back pew. And then, when we moved to our house on Bellows, we switched over to Salem Lutheran, which was about four blocks away, and have been lifelong members there. It was nice to be closer when my sisters, brothers, and I were going to start confirmation. We could walk to classes. So, we did that too. Family time, every Sunday in church, Sunday school, confirmation. My sisters and I belonged to the Lutheran League. So, it was very... It was not overly religious, but I mean, we were good Lutherans, put it that way. But we like to sing at church. We would do choirs and all that kind of stuff, too.

CS: Okay. How important or relevant is religion to you now as an adult?

KW: Um still important. I probably don't attend services as often as I'd like, but I go to another church. I switched churches when my kids were young to have the programs for them. And I've been a Sunday school teacher for many years. I have four boys who kind of went to church and didn't so often, nor my husband, but I still go as regularly as I can. It's still important to me.

CS: What, if any, impact do you feel that religion has had in your life?

KW: I think it's grounded me. A lot of traditions. And I said, it's not really staunch Lutheran. I also taught for seven years at a Catholic school when I graduated from college, so I had kind of a mixture there of both. So, it's just been a part of my life.

CS: Okay. Now, I'd like to learn more about the neighborhood in which you grew up. If you move 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.

KW: Okay. Now, remember, I've got a few neighborhoods. The very first one, when I was very young in East Saint Paul; really, no memories. Just things I see through pictures because I was only like two years old when we moved or three. Then we moved right on the edge of Saint Paul, in West Saint Paul on Annapolis Street, and it was a great big old house. My family always had swing sets and we had kiddie pools. And my dad would... I can still remember my dad making a little tent like by the door or something. We had little sandwiches and things that he'd bring out to us. There were older neighbors on both sides of us that I just remember going to their homes once in a while for visits, and everybody was really nice. On that street too, a couple streets over is where my great grandma and great aunt lived so we could go over there with our family. So, it was very early. I mean, I was five years old. I think, what, five or six were moved from there. But it was always fun times. We spent a lot of time outside playing. And I do remember at that house too, my dad would take us with him when he would play softball, and we'd go down to a playground called Belvidere down on the West Side, kind of by Concord Street, and we would play on the playground while he played softball, and my mom would be at work. We always were going with my dad if my mom was working. And then when we moved, just for like a year or so, up to Hurley Street in West Saint Paul, where my great grandmother and great aunt lived. And they had a big house and they kind of converted part of the upstairs - was like our... Must've been like a duplex, and we used it for the bedrooms and such. And then we would have our meals and everything and converse down to the main level with my great aunt and great grandma. And my great grandmother was like in her middle eighties, she was kind of a grumpy Italian lady. She could scare you. But we enjoyed that. I don't know. It was just another fun experience of being there. And then my cousins would come over. And on Sundays especially, we always had an Italian meal. We watched my grandma in the basement making handmade ravioli. She'd speak in Italian. It was good memories there, too. And I know they had a big yard. We always had our swing set. She had a big garden. We'd help her with the garden. There was like an empty lot next door that we always played in. Again, one of those times where we were outside a lot. I think you're going to find that out from people. I think of my generation. We spent a lot of time outdoors. First of all, there wasn't much TV on, so we went outside all day, came in for lunch, came in for dinner. And then our first basic house, that was just all five of us kids with my parents, was again in West Saint Paul at 973 Oakdale. We had a nice fenced-in yard. We had our swing set. My dad had a garden. A lot of neighborhood children. We played. I had neighbors, like across the street, down the street. That was what I started kindergarten. The local school was like three blocks away. So many kids in the neighborhood. We'd go to somebody's house and play outside. Our own family would be in our yard. We'd have picnics. My

dad would put the little pool out. Everything was good. I mean, we just had. It was a great childhood. Always doing something. We had fun with neighbors and cousins. And then when I was in fifth grade, we moved over to Bellows. We still got to go to the elementary school that we had been at. So, I rode the bus with people in this new neighborhood. It became friends with them. Again, good neighbors on both sides of us. We had a lot of picnics outside, gathered with the neighborhood kids, trick or treating. It was always either our family and our extended family or us and neighbors and neighborhood children playing together. My dad would take us sledding over on this hill at Cherokee Park. Ice skating, whatever. My dad and mother were very involved with us doing activities, but not overly so. I mean, we played a lot. It was just basically outside tag in. Games called Seven UP and Red Rover, and whatever we did, we played outside.

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

KW: Well, at each house we were at, my parents made sure that they knew the neighbors. [Laughter] Maybe not to always do activities with them. But if there were elderly neighbors, my dad would always help out shoveling snow or mowing grass or us kids would help with things. But always nice neighbors and we got along and socialized with them most of the time.

CS: How safe was your neighborhood when you lived there? What factors made it that way?

KW: We probably didn't worry about too much growing up in these different houses, except once the house had Oakdale. I might have been about eight years old, and our house was robbed while we were at Christmas. [Audio cut out for about 30 seconds] But I think after that we kind of became more aware that there could be danger. I mean, a time when people didn't lock their doors very much. But we felt safe outside. Usually at night we could walk up to the corner store to get things and it was dark. We were like, you know, a block away. And there wasn't a whole lot of fear. As I got a little older, you know, maybe late elementary, junior high, we were becoming more aware of violence, maybe not so much in West Saint Paul, but in other areas of the city. I just remember my father would be very wary of us if we went on the bus downtown or we were always told we couldn't go by Selby-Dale because that was a bad area. We couldn't go over there alone. We couldn't go down to the bus station. I mean, just things that you kind of heard through people we never personally experienced anything except that little break in back probably about 1967. Otherwise, safe neighborhoods didn't fear much.

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

KW: I think pretty much the neighborhoods we lived in; the neighbors were somewhat similar to my family. We were raised well. Again, there was a religious base. We had a moral code. We were what I think about kids and families. My family. We were good kids. We were rule followers. I mean, my brothers get into some little scraps once in a while, but we were taught to be good citizens, good students. We were expected to do the best we could and to always help everybody. So that's why I said our example, our parents were very good with their own families and our extended relatives and neighbors with the helping, you know, helping everybody out. It's hard to. I don't know. We were a happy family and we all got along well. And I laugh when I think of, like, discipline things in families. I mean, when I see things now on Facebook and whatnot where kids relay things about their mother hitting them with hairbrushes and flip flops and whatnot. And I'm thinking, my mother never hit us. It was the phrase, wait till your father gets home. And then my dad would come home, and it wouldn't be anything major, but he might take his belt off and snap it

a few times. And that's all we needed to hear. [Laughter] I'm sorry. I'm sorry. So, I mean, we laugh about it now, but we really never got into any trouble. We were just expected to respect our elders. We never referred to our relatives other than their aunt and uncle's name, ever. It was just expected, and we did it. So, I mean, it was very cohesive. We were ethically and morally good people, I think, in my family. To this day, we are very honest.

CS: In what way were your values similar to or different from others who lived in the neighborhood at that time?

KW: Well, basically, I think a lot of my young childhood would have been spent [audio cut out--unclear] residents, and then in the Bellows. So, it was probably from about grade school up. And similar families. Dual parents. It was a pretty Caucasian neighborhood; I'm going to say that. We might - because we were so close to the West Side, which had a large Hispanic group of people living there. We might have been in school with Hispanic children. Very. I don't recall seeing an African American child near me, in my neighborhood, in my school, in my church, until perhaps high school. So, it was pretty much middle-class neighbors, kids in the neighborhood and a nuclear family. So, we were pretty much all raised alike. I mean, similar beliefs and whatnot. Everybody went to church, that I knew. Not maybe our church, but, you know, you'd have your Catholic children, your Lutheran children, Baptist children. And on Sundays, it was basically we didn't get with neighborhood kids. You were with your family.

CS: Now I'm going to ask you all about leisure time. Describe some of the ways in which you, your family and your neighbors engaged in leisure time when you were growing up.

KW: If it was with neighbors, it was probably picnics in someone's backyard, our backyard, or people on either side of us. Again, in summer, we basically played outside when we were doing activities. My family did travel - well, we didn't travel very much at all. Every summer, my parents would rent a cabin. We'd have a week of fun at the lake. My father's company always had a picnic at Como Park in June. We went every year. We got free rides, got to see the animals, played games and food. That was a standard. Always the fair. We always went on Labor Day because my dad worked there. We got to see the horse show for free so my mother would take us girls, would go around and my dad would keep the two boys by him. That was always a given. Basically, before probably ten years old, I don't recall traveling anywhere outside of the city area. Then, some of my cousins moved to Des Moines and we would take a long Memorial Day weekend trip there every year from... Oh golly, well, I don't even know how long we lived there. I had two uncles that lived there, probably from 68 'til about 72. We would go down there every year. We took a trip, which I laugh about. There was eight of us in a station wagon going up to Canada when I was in sixth grade, so I think it was about 1968. We took my great aunt with us. So that was two parents, a great aunt, five kids, and Pepe the poodle. So, we drove all up like by Grand Marais and into Canada. [Laughter] It was an adventure, let me tell you. Otherwise, the standard I could see us with our week vacation. Then my family bought a camper; then we went camping when I was a little older, which we enjoyed. That would be with my parents' friends and sometimes our relatives, and we'd take our camper and go to a trailer park thing and camp and have fun there. I mean, again, there were no malls. There was no... There was a shopping center. My mother would take the girls shopping or we'd go downtown. And that was kind of how we spent our time, our leisure time. Otherwise, we were neighborhood playing, doing school events, doing church events. I'm thinking. I laugh at the memories of my whole family. Well, my dad loved his little Brownie Movie Camera, and he took movie pictures of a lot of different things. And our enjoyment sometimes at night was we would sit and before we got a movie screen, he'd show these movies on the little side of the stove in the kitchen, and we would sit in the living room and be able to see. And we loved moving pictures of when we were, you know, babies and very young. So that was probably a once-a-week thing that we would get popcorn and sit and watch these home movies. And then we lived close to a

movie theater. And so, we always got to go there, too. My parents would let us go on Saturdays or whatever to watch movies. So again, didn't want for much, didn't know much outside of our area, but we didn't complain because we were having fun.

CS: Growing up. How did you meet new friends?

KW: Basically, walk out the door. There was always when you moved in, there were kids that came around. And through school. And I said, because it was a neighborhood school, most of the kids... I don't even think there was busses until I was in sixth grade. But most of us walked from probably a four-block area. So that was basically the friends we had. And it wasn't lived in your neighborhood, or you met at school or church at again, church. The very early years, we went to a church outside our neighborhood, but we had friends and cousins there. And then when we moved closer and joined a church in our neighborhood, then we met other people through that, that became very, you know, very good friends. So, it was basically a neighborhood kind of a thing. That was who our friends were, whoever lived by you.

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

KW: Pretty much playing outside. We would go to someone's house. If you were inside, as a girl, we were playing Barbie dolls or baby dolls or pretend cooking, whoever had whatever in their house. Usually, it was in a bedroom or downstairs. And if we were outside, you were in someone's yard playing this game that was called Seven UP and you'd do a rubber ball against the house. [Laughter] It was some kind of a game, or we'd be jumping rope or playing tag. And again, we... not even what we were that old and we stay out too much in the dark to play. It was basically a daytime thing. We didn't have any like lakes or anything quite right around our neighborhood, but we would go up to the school and play on the playground if we wanted to. It was pretty much centrally located to your homestead, is what we did with neighbors.

CS: Okay. Was there a local hangout spot in your neighborhood where you could be with your friends? If yes, describe it.

KW: Um, it would probably have been the playground at the school. It was called Oakdale Elementary. There was a little grocery store up the street that sometimes we'd meet there to get penny... And actually, it was penny candy! It was exciting! But we didn't have there was no, like, rec center or no place that we went to. It was usually somebody's house.

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

KW: Oh, gosh. Like, we could be out here for an hour with that. I'm still watching them today. Leave it to Beaver. And there was one called My Little Margie. There were a lot of comedy shows, let's put it that way. Sitcoms. We had one television. It was black and white. And we laugh today, that we were the remote control. At night, I could just picture it. My dad was sitting in his chair with his Schmidt beer and his bowl of popcorn that we all got to share out of. And he was the one who determined what we watched. [Laughter] And I think thinking Tuesday night Combat! We would all sit there and watch that because dad wanted to watch it. So that and I laugh to this day, which I still watch. Lawrence Welk. That was the Saturday night staple at our house. Bath, hair curling, or whatever had to be done. And my mom and dad doing the polka around the living room. For years, that was our staple. And we laugh about it today. But golly, that was some good family time. So that, you know, and we watch TV 'til... I mean, we had strict bedtimes like whatever, 8:00 or whatever. But we were a TV family. I mean, my mom and I could still see this even when I was like four or five years old. My mother would have American Bandstand, like at 4:30, 4:00, whatever, in the afternoon, and she'd be dancing the stroll around the living room, and we'd be

dancing with her. So, we liked television. But basically, you know, like I said, basic sitcom comedies and shows that my dad liked to watch. And my mother watching the Whirlybirds. These are shows that people today never even know about unless they come back on TV. The old black and white.

CS: As an adult, have you kept in touch with any friends from your childhood?

KW: Oh, yes. Yes. Pretty much on Facebook. We don't see each other physically too much. Some have moved away, but we do the Christmas cards. We'll do Facebook, connecting with people again. A lot of us that in the neighborhoods went to the same schools. Some of us actually from my high school, four or five went to the same college. So, I connected with these people well from childhood through now, even if I don't physically see them, we keep in touch.

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

KW: Loved school! [Laughter] I was one that never wanted to be absent. I would probably be considered what you'd call a "teacher's pet". I was a good rule follower. I was a good student. I was smart. I always had good grades. And I love to laugh. I think you could tell that. I was always the kind of friend at school that would tell jokes. My father was a great storyteller, joke teller, and most of us kids have inherited that. So, I always had friends wanting to sit with me and be by me because I always had good stories and I have a great memory so I could recall things that other people couldn't. So, by elementary years, I loved all my teachers. Like I said, I enjoyed going to school. It was my passion. I became a teacher because of the teachers I had. And I loved school so much that that was always what I wanted to be. And again, we walked to school for elementary with our friends. One of the unusual things I think about when we had teacher conferences, my dad was the one that usually went. He would take off work and my mother might be home with the younger kids or if she was working part time. Once we all got to school, my dad would be the one that came to school and, you know, did the conferences, which was highly unusual back in the sixties. Junior high, my mother worked as a secretary in the junior high when we... That's after we moved to Bellows Street and again the junior high was basically a block away. So, we walked. I loved having my mother there. I would stop in and see her all the time. My sister, one of my sisters, hated it. But junior high was great. We were the largest class when I got to seventh grade. We were the largest class to come to this junior high. It was called Grass Junior High. We had to spend part of our day at the elementary school up the street because there were too many kids to be in the seventh grade. So that kind of an unusual... That was the only year I believe they did that. So, like 250 of us went to the grade school in the morning and then we come back for the afternoon at the junior high, and then the other group would go over to the elementary. So, it was kind of a weird year. Senior high. We went to Henry Sibley, now called Two Rivers, and took the bus. Loved it there, loved all my classes. Like I said, I was a school person. I mean, in my family, I was probably the most schoolish person of all. And part of that, my dad expected me to help everybody out. I do remember that. Not always happy. I wasn't always happy about that, but I was expected if anyone was struggling in my family or couldn't get something done that I would, you know, jump in and help because I was such a good student. And, you know, at times I didn't mind it. And other times I did. I've said even since I graduated, if I could go back to school, I'd do it all over again. I'd love to. That was my happiest time, it was being at school.

CS: Which teacher stands out to you most in your memory? Why?

KW: I could tell you all of them. I remember everyone and everything that I'm thinking probably the most, because I was a little older, it was my fourth-grade teacher, Miss Daniels, and my fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Alberts. And they were both older gals who a lot of the kids thought were too

strict. You know, I loved them. They were very inspiring. As a kid, I loved to draw and color and do all kinds of art things. And they inspired me with that. But I always loved any teacher I had, put it that way. I mean, they were all favorites of those to stick out the most for elementary, junior, and senior high. Again, I liked everybody. I every class I had; I appreciated the person that was teaching it. And I always learned a lot and I did the best I could.

CS: What was your favorite subject in school?

KW: Well, it would have been art. But I loved social studies, history, and social studies for my favorite, along with art.

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, etc... In your opinion, what were some of the biggest local or global issues affecting the people in your neighborhood when you were growing up?

KW: Well, I wrote this down so I could remember a lot of this. [Laughter] First of all, when I think of first grade 1963, the JFK assassination, I had just turned seven the day before that. And I remember on that day, our first grade - it was first grade. Our teacher came in crying from lunch. And those days we all went home for lunch. So, we were at home coming back. And again, the information about presidents and whatnot would have been really thought about too much for a first grader, although I didn't know who the president was. And that affected me. I have been a JFK researcher and conspiracy theorist or whatever since that day because it was so profound in my young life. And then in 1965, we lived at Oakdale Avenue, where we were high above the river. But we had terrible floods that year. Must have been a bad winter. And I was in second grade. I remember that we'd drive down and see the Mississippi River had flooded everything over by the airport down there. And the west side, Harriet Island, everything was covered, and we were kind of like that was a big deal to first and second graders at my gosh, would they the floods come up to us? And my parents continually reassured us that wouldn't happen happened. We were high enough. But it was scary. And then that same year in our May 6th were the terrible tornadoes that hit the Twin Cities. And again, you know, we experienced storms, but it wasn't like today where you had all these warnings. My mother and us girls had been at a church event, a mother daughter banquet, and my dad came and picked us up and we were driving over the high bridge, which was not scary enough in in normal times. And when it was storming, it was really scary. And so, five of us kids in a station wagon with my mom and dad heading to our house, in West Saint Paul. And we were not really aware of where these tornadoes were as kids. We didn't understand how far away they were from us, but we spent a considerable amount of time at night in the basement, and then we headed upstairs, and my parents would let us sleep up there because there were tornadoes around all night. We slept in the living room and then my dad would not let us go to school the next day until the "all clears" were given. So that was a real profound... I mean, weather at that time was kind of scary to a lot of us because you didn't get a whole lot of advance warning. So those two things for local were very impacting on my life. 1968, the Martin Luther King assassination. The Bobby Kennedy assassination. I was in fifth grade. Big topic of concern, the Democratic conventions. A lot of that unrest that was going on, especially to the Vietnam War, that was basically like, I would say, fifth grade through eighth grade that we were influenced by the television coverage. Watching the news every night, I had some cousins that were in Vietnam, older cousins. And we didn't really discuss things politically a lot in our family gatherings or anything, but there were kids at school that it was kind of the long hair, hippie type time, junior high kids wearing protest banners protesting the war. And we in my family, we were Democrats, but we were not really radical people that, you know. I mean, hearing about Kent State, I look back, I think we were like, oh, my gosh, how could these people be doing this? And these protesters and draft dodgers, we were all like against all of that. We didn't quite understand the background with Vietnam and all the different things that were going on. So, we were more on the probably conservative side of that argument. It wasn't until I got to college

and took some classes in East Asian history and kind of delved into the Vietnam War business that I had a different perspective on it. But it's amazing that as a kid you kind of went along with what your parents believed. So that was that was an unusual kind of a thing with us that as we got older and you researched a little more, I would have had different opinions had I known more. Also, there was a lot of the rioting in the cities, the racial tension. And again, for us in West Saint Paul. Yeah, really, we were kind of insulated from all that. And there was another and again, it could have been a misconception. It was due to what we were told by adults that it was the black neighborhoods that all this was happening in. Again, Selby-Dale came up many times and I remember my parents were not going there or not driving there. We stay away from African American neighborhoods. There's too much violence. It was, you know, a dicey time in political and racial history type events. Better things. I remember the moon landing. We all gathered around the television set. That was a big thing, the space program. We were excited for that. That was fun. It was also around the early seventies, late sixties, early seventies, when there were a lot of bomb threats going on. I know there was an incident. I think it was probably the early 1970 something in downtown Saint Paul and Dayton's. There was a bomb that exploded in a women's bathroom, and someone was killed. So, there was fear of going like almost now when you think of terrorist things. Like going to the mall or going wherever. We were afraid of going to places where there could be bombs. There were bomb threats called into, I remember, our junior high, and that's when my mom worked there. And they would send us kids home or we wouldn't go to school. And I remember them telling us, if you see anything strange with your locker, don't open it. Well to a, you know, 12-year-old kid, that was frightening. Nobody wanted to open their lockers. What if there was a bomb in there? So, it was a lot of. Scared feelings about you were going to get hurt in places that you had previously thought were very safe. That kind of subsided probably in the mid-seventies somewhere. I think the war was de-escalating. The whole junior or probably senior high was the Nixon Watergate fiasco business. So that was a lot on people's minds and in the news. So, a little of it probably trickled into friends and things at school. We would watch these events, but probably not get very involved in them physically. I mean, we didn't go to protests. I again, I was the goody-goody girl. I could not do anything that was against the rules at school involving protests or sit-ins or walkouts or whatever. Those were the kids that, you know, you stayed away from. In my family anyways. So that's I mean, it was a turbulent time. The sixties were turbulent. So that's kind of my spin on it. I mean, I remember it and after I go back now and I said, I love history. I like to go back and reflect on the different things that happened and how we reacted to them and what really maybe was the root cause or whatever. So, it's interesting think, for us that we're in our grade school. I mean, elementary, junior high and high school years during those sixties was a lot going on.

CS: Okay. Does anything else come to mind from that time period?

KW: I'm thinking again, politically when I think of the Watergate... We were, I don't want to say die hard Democrats, but it was always if you were going to vote for somebody, no matter what it was my parents were going to do Democrat and they would tell us we're all Democrats. And that was how we did things. And again, middle class. We were a middle-class family. We wanted things done for middle class families. I mean, basically, that's what I could think of as major things. Locally, there wasn't much, like I said, the weather. And I mean, that was kind of what life centered around. What happened with your blizzards and your floods and your inclement weather in the summertime. I don't recall anything locally except those bomb threats that were everywhere. It wasn't just in West Saint Paul. But we did have that.

CS: 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.