

INTERVIEWER: Today is September 3, 2009. I'm Karen Arenson. We are in Maryland talking with Mary Frances Wagley who graduated from MIT in 1947. She was one of only 12 women in her class, the daughter of the founder of JC Penney, the retailer. She earned a doctorate in chemistry at Oxford, taught at Smith, Goucher, Johns Hopkins University; she served as headmistress at St. Paul's School for Girls, and as executive director of the Episcopal Social Ministries in Maryland. She married and she and her late husband, Philip, a physician raised three children. She has also been a path breaker at MIT. She was the first woman ever to become a member of the MIT Governing Board, the Corporation, which was in 1970. And she was the first woman to serve as president of the MIT Alumni Association. She was selected to that post in 1984. Thank you for talking with us Mary Frances.

MIT seems to be a place that attracts the daughters of successful men. What drew you to MIT?

WAGLEY: Karen, I think I discovered that I was much better in math and science as a student than I was in English and history or languages, so I was headed in a scientific direction. And my good friend and fellow school classmate, Paddy Wade had gone to MIT and she asked me to come up and visit her and I did. And that about signed, sealed, and delivered it.

INTERVIEWER: Did you apply to any other colleges?

WAGLEY: I did not apply to any other colleges, so I had all my eggs in one basket.

INTERVIEWER: A good basket. Let's go back to your childhood. Where did you grow up and attend school?

WAGLEY: I grew up in White Plains, New York when the population was still 27,000. And it was mostly country. We lived on a mini farm. From about the age of 10 onward I had freedom to go and come as I pleased. As long as I turned up for meals they assumed I was somewhere on the place and usually riding my horse or in the tomato patch raiding the ripe tomatoes.

INTERVIEWER: You went away for high school. Where and what was that like?

WAGLEY: I went away to Foxcroft School. At that point I had been at Rye Country Day School and almost all of the girls went off to boarding school and all of the boys had to go because Rye Country Day didn't go past ninth grade for boys. My mother sent my father and me one spring vacation of my eighth grade year to do a school hunt and this included Virginia schools and New England schools. And we were back in three days and my mother said, well, how did you get home so soon? And my father said, I've found the school. So I had no part in the decision, it was his decision. He fell in love with the headmistress Miss Charlotte Noland and determined that's where I was going to go, so that's where I went.

INTERVIEWER: What was your reaction?

WAGLEY: They had horses and so that was very important to me, and I could take a horse. That kind of made it all right for me.

INTERVIEWER: Was your father a big influence on you when you were growing up?

WAGLEY: My father was. He was really my parent. He was retired when I was born. He was about 54, but he'd retired from the company to make room for other people. He always thought there should be room at the top, so he was always available. He was an outdoor man and I was an outdoor child, so we got along well. I followed him around cutting weeds and collecting rocks and building walls and doing outdoor things, which was my pleasure.

INTERVIEWER: Were you always interested in science? Were you interested in it as a young child?

WAGLEY: Yes, I think so, Karen. I remember reading *My Weekly Reader*, which was I guess par for the course in third grade and there was a story about chemical engineers. And I thought, that sounds absolutely fascinating. I think I'd like to do that.

INTERVIEWER: Did either of your parents have an interest in science? Is it something you discussed with your father, for example?

WAGLEY: No, in good MIT tradition, neither one of my parents went to college, so I'm a first generation to go to college in my family, which I understand is pretty standard for MIT.

INTERVIEWER: You majored in chemistry at MIT, where did that interest come from?

WAGLEY: Well, I started out as a chemical engineer, but I was called in to the chemical engineering executive offices one day and they said they had a problem with me because chemical engineering summer camp was required between your freshman and sophomore year or sophomore and junior-- I forget which. But in any case, they didn't have any facilities for me. They didn't expect to have women. And would I just assume major in chemistry? And I'm really not one to rock the boat and I thought, sure, I'll manage in chemistry. So that's how I majored in chemistry, but I started out as a chemical engineer.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find you were well prepared when you entered MIT? That you had as much math and science as the boys?

WAGLEY: I think I did, Karen. Foxcroft was a very small school, but if teachers want to teach and if students want to learn they will go out of their way to teach, and I had wonderful math teacher, Mrs. Kepler who made math courses for me my junior and senior years because she wanted to prepare me for math. Whether it was MIT or somewhere else and so I was in fact, tutored through math. The science was reasonably good.

INTERVIEWER: So you were studying things that your classmates weren't?

WAGLEY: The classmates weren't. No.

INTERVIEWER: Were you a typical student at Foxcroft?

WAGLEY: I don't think there is a typical student at Foxcroft. Some were interested only in writing, but we had a lot of diplomatic students. And many of them came already fluent in French and German so they had to invent courses for them. Also, I was a wartime student and we had about 10 percent of the school were English girls who had been evacuated to the states, and they added a lot to the school. They were very proficient in reciting poetry and things that we weren't.

INTERVIEWER: Did many of the girls go on to college?

WAGLEY: Maybe about half went on to college and the other half went on to amuse themselves one way or another.

INTERVIEWER: When you were thinking about college, you knew you were interested in going on. Did you get any kind of counseling from--

WAGLEY: I did.

INTERVIEWER: --people at the school?

WAGLEY: Foxcroft had a wonderful dean, Mrs. Frederick Hoppin, who went on to be principal of the performing arts school for the children who were in performing arts. What a very wise woman. I had thought of Bryn Mawr College as a possible place and she had told me that many of my classmates from Philadelphia were going to go there and she suspected I wouldn't have a good time there because I would be torn between competing interests. One, doing things that my Philadelphia classmates were doing and the other, tending to the books and the labs. And she said I just don't think you can do both. And that was very good advice, so I ended up applying to MIT and MIT alone.

INTERVIEWER: Because your previous classmate, Paddy Wade, who I guess was Paddy Vanderbilt then?

WAGLEY: Was Paddy Vanderbilt then. She was two years ahead of me and she seemed to have a wonderful time and so that--

INTERVIEWER: At MIT?

WAGLEY: At MIT.

INTERVIEWER: Did you go up and visit her to see if you would like it?

WAGLEY: I did go up to visit her and I knew by that time that was where I wanted to go and so that was fine.

INTERVIEWER: What was the entrance process like?

WAGLEY: The entrance process, I only remember the final bits of it, which was you could have an interview if you wished. And I did wish, and I talked to a dean who spent about a half hour telling me why I didn't want to go to MIT. And I told him I did and I said to him, I think my scores are as good as any guys you got there in your filing cabinet and he had to admit they probably were. And finally, he said, you're a very stubborn woman. I will let you in, but you're not going to like it one bit. Well, I proved him wrong. I was happy from the moment I stepped foot in the Institute.

INTERVIEWER: Did you never go back and talk to him again?

WAGLEY: I didn't. No.

INTERVIEWER: When you entered MIT did you have a clear idea that you wanted to have a career or what did you think you would do with your MIT education?

WAGLEY: I guess it never occurred to me, Karen. At that point was just ready to soak up all I could learn and from the day I walked in those doors at 77 Mass Avenue and they opened by themselves it just seemed to me, this is the place I belong.

INTERVIEWER: You arrived at MIT while World War II was still going on. What kind of place was it in those years?

WAGLEY: MIT was full of Naval personnel. I've forgotten exactly what program they were in, but we had American Naval personnel and we also had some Chinese Navy. And I used to study in the Eastman Lab with the Chinese Navy, and they would sit there absolutely ram rod still, memorizing everything. And I thought, I can never compete with these guys because I had to get up and stretch my legs and walk around the block and they were still sweating away at the books. But I then discovered they memorized everything, but they never thought what the professor was interested in. And I would instead go and read the professor's recent papers and figure that's what he was interested in, so that's what he was going to ask us about. So I didn't have quite as much stuff in my head, but I usually got better grades than the Chinese Navy.

INTERVIEWER: Did you live on campus while you were there?

WAGLEY: I did not live on campus because there were no accommodations for women on campus, so I lived in Boston for the three years I was at MIT. Cooking for ours-- Paddy and I lived together for the first year. Cooking for ourselves, we often wished for a dorm and for a commons because it was a lot of trouble taking care of yourself. We devoted Saturday morning to cleaning up our apartment and I could've used that time to do some studying.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like you worked hard. Did you have any fun?

WAGLEY: I had fun working hard. I did work hard. In the summertime Paddy and I would look at each other and say, do you think we could spare time to go down and listen to the Pops on the Esplanade because the Shell wasn't far away. And maybe once a week or so we did. We worked pretty hard. I put myself to bed at midnight every night saying it was more important to be up and at 'em in the morning than it was to stay up and do the last problem of the problem set.

INTERVIEWER: What were you doing there during the summer?

WAGLEY: We had three 16-week terms a year and so one of those terms was in the summertime.

INTERVIEWER: And you just went straight through?

WAGLEY: We just went straight through.

INTERVIEWER: Was that something that happened during the war or had it always been that way?

WAGLEY: That was something that happened during the war. It was fine as far as I was concerned. I think the only negative is that I think students today who have an opportunity to do summer work in an industrial lab or to go overseas had an advantage that we didn't getting through so quickly.

INTERVIEWER: How were you treated by your male classmates? What did they think of the small sprinkling of women who were there among them?

WAGLEY: Goodness, I guess there were a whole gamut of opinions. I think MIT was always very thoughtful. In the first two years when we all took the same program there were always two coeds as we were called in the same section, so we were never entirely alone. And I competed furiously with my classmates, be they male or female. And so that was not a concern of mine is what they thought about me.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get to know many of them if they were living in groups together and fraternities or dormitories and you were off in an apartment?

WAGLEY: I didn't get to know them. You did ask me a bit ago and I didn't finish answering whether I was prepared for MIT. The one thing I was not prepared for was mechanical drawing. And I sat next to a man who'd gone to the Bronx High School of Science and I literally would be in tears over I could not figure out what this right side of the machine looked like if you gave me the top and the front. And he occasionally would lean over and say, well, the zero goes here or the hole goes there. Yes, we knew one another as colleagues and fellow students, but it was mostly work.

INTERVIEWER: Not a lot of socializing?

WAGLEY: Not a lot of socializing.

INTERVIEWER: Parties, did they exist during the war years?

WAGLEY: Karen, they did exist. I went very early to one fraternity party and there was a lot of drinking and I didn't find it very much fun. My father was a teetotaler and I guess I was of that mind when I was a student. And I thought, this is no fun. It's just a waste of time and I'll wait till I get out of MIT.

INTERVIEWER: What did the professors think of you and your female classmates? How did they treat you?

WAGLEY: I think there was an advantage in being a girl in some respects. In large lecture halls, 10-250, the girls were always sat in the front row and so the professors ticked us off and they knew who we were very quickly, Where the guys who sat way up in the middle of the classroom they didn't know. So they knew who we were and we got to know who they were. And as a matter of fact, I never felt any shyness about stopping in to see a professor during his office hours if I didn't understand a problem or didn't understand something in the lecture. And I considered them good friends and called some of them uncle.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

WAGLEY: I did.

INTERVIEWER: Why did the girls sit in the front row?

WAGLEY: We had assigned seating, so the professors could tell whether you were there or not.

INTERVIEWER: And they put the girls up front?

WAGLEY: They had a chart with the names.

INTERVIEWER: And everyone simply--

WAGLEY: Everyone had assigned seats.

INTERVIEWER: --put the girls--

WAGLEY: But the girls were--

INTERVIEWER: --in the front row.

WAGLEY: --in the front. Front and center.

INTERVIEWER: How interesting. Did you like being up front?

WAGLEY: Sure.

INTERVIEWER: Where did your competitive streak come from?

WAGLEY: I guess both parents, both parents were competitive.

INTERVIEWER: Horseback riding? Did you do that as--

WAGLEY: I did some horseback riding and showing and yes, I was competitive for that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get to know the other girls very much, other than Paddy who was your roommate?

WAGLEY: I knew Paddy. Hester Stickley was my section mate and we've lost track of each other. Ginny Grammer, I've forgotten Ginny's maiden name. I kept up with for a while. I'm afraid I was very antisocial. There wasn't time to do everything.

INTERVIEWER: But there was a room for women students to congregate on campus?

WAGLEY: There was a room, the Margaret Cheney Room. We had keys and that was really a lifesaver because when you've had enough of MIT and its male atmosphere, to retire there was a great blessing. And we did indeed eat our lunches there and congregate. It was a very pleasant oasis.

INTERVIEWER: Did you lean on each other or everybody kind of kept to themselves and just went through?

WAGLEY: I really don't have a feeling that we leaned on each other. We were pretty independent--

INTERVIEWER: Interesting.

WAGLEY: --individuals. And enjoyed the comradeship and collegiality, but it was not the main reason we were there.

INTERVIEWER: Were there extracurricular activities at MIT during those years or was it all straight academics?

WAGLEY: There were no planned athletics for the women. I think I could have swum in the swimming pool if I had so desired, but I didn't. My father was worried that I wasn't getting enough exercise, so my first Fall term he sent seven unbroken colts to somewhere in Jamaica Plain and said, why don't you go and break them in? That would be good exercise for you. But that only lasted about a month. I couldn't find the time with labs to go ride his seven unbroken colts in Jamaica Plain.

Paddy and I did walk across the Harvard Bridge, the Smoot Bridge, almost twice a day every day. The trolley fair was a dime and we were saving money so we would walk across the bridge and deposit dimes in a milk bottle we had on a mantel. And if the Red Cross or somebody came soliciting we would pour out a handful of dimes and say, well, we really worked for this. We've walked across the bridge-- some were in winter-- and this is our contribution.

INTERVIEWER: Cold in winter.

WAGLEY: It was cold in winter. Admiral Bird I understand said it was the coldest place on earth and he's been to some cold places.

INTERVIEWER: Did the boys have to take gym, but girls were excused?

WAGLEY: I think the boys had a physical education requirement. I'm not sure of that, but we did not because there were no facilities for us.

INTERVIEWER: What would you say you learned at MIT?

WAGLEY: I learned to work hard. I learned to manage time. I learned sufficient to go on from there. One thing I didn't learn is I didn't learn to learn on my own. I learned that at Oxford. At MIT in my era, it was very much here's the lecture, here are the problem sets, do the problem sets, come back to the recitation section, and go over the problems. And I remember my first months at Oxford thinking, goodness gracious, nobody's giving me any problem sets to do. How do you start? I think MIT has changed enormously since then, so that now there is a lot more emphasis on the skill of learning rather than the rote learning, which was all too prevalent when I was there.

INTERVIEWER: Did the students have any opportunity as undergraduates to do research then?

WAGLEY: There was no UROP. UROP was after our time and now there were certainly lots of labs, but they were canned ones. You had to go through the experiments and write them up. And this was a place where I did envy the boys because especially those in fraternities had files of old exam reports and many times the guys didn't come to labs and didn't do the experiments, but they went back to the fraternity files and there was something to go on. But since there were no girl's housing we had to do all our experiments ourselves and learn to write them up.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any kind of women role models at MIT?

WAGLEY: Not that I can remember. I don't think that we had a female professor. Paddy and I got to know Margaret Compton a little bit because as the president's wife she had teas for coeds once a month. And Paddy and I went whenever we could and she was a lovely lady. We enjoyed talking with her and occasionally, Karl T. would come and have a cup of tea, too. So that was a plus of being a coed.

INTERVIEWER: Did they have children or daughters? Did they kind of relate to you as you and your classmates?

WAGLEY: I don't recall that there were children in the Compton household, or at least they weren't running around the president's residence. They're probably too well behaved to do that.

INTERVIEWER: Did they have any reaction to the notion of girls studying there and whether this was a good use of MIT's facilities and resources, or what were these girls going to go on and do?

WAGLEY: Karen, I don't honestly know whether that was something that the faculty pondered. Maybe so, there were not very many of us, so they weren't wasting a great deal of money on the coeds.

INTERVIEWER: Did any of the men, the male faculty, take on women students as protégées? Did they become mentors either to the boys or to the girls? Were you aware of it at all?

WAGLEY: I'm not aware of that. I think that more happened for graduates. I do remember-- I've forgotten his name now -- taught us physical chemistry. Had what he called the batting order and he would tell you the three people who were going to have to do the problems on the blackboard the next time, next recitation session. And I remember the first time I got to the board in my turn at the batting order. I made a mistake and he swore at me and I burst out into tears because I had three older brothers and they didn't swear and my father didn't swear. It was the first time anybody had sworn and this was the first time anybody had broken out into tears in his class. His name was baldy Joe Mallard I now recall. So he asked to see me after class and he said, we just can't go on like this with your crying when you make a mistake. And I said, well, I would not cry if he didn't swear at me. And so he agreed that if I made a mistake he would say horse feathers. And so we went through a year with that. So we had a good time.

INTERVIEWER: You reached an accommodation.

WAGLEY: We reached an accommodation.

INTERVIEWER: You went on to do graduate work. At what point did you decide that was what you wanted to do and why?

WAGLEY: Karen, I grew up with a grandmother who was born in Germany and whose family were connected with the University of Heidelberg. And was always told as a little girl, if I was a good student in school and college that maybe I could do graduate work at the University of Heidelberg. And when I graduated in 1947 that was no time to go to Germany, even though Heidelberg was not bombed. So that's when I applied to both Oxford and Cambridge, and eventually, ended up at Oxford.

INTERVIEWER: Why Oxford over Cambridge?

WAGLEY: Well, I would have gone to Cambridge because reputedly their science was better than Oxford, but Cambridge University at that time told me you'll have to get your degree from Trinity College Dublin. Cambridge didn't give degrees to women in 1947. So I said a pox on you and went to Oxford. Two years later Cambridge did give degrees to women, but at the time I didn't go there. But I was glad I went to Oxford.

INTERVIEWER: So you were kind of interested in going abroad just to have a different experience as you did your academic graduate work or--

WAGLEY: I think so. Oxford was a distinct substitute for the University of Heidelberg, which I had my sights on from a youngster onward. Although, the hopes of going there got dimmer and dimmer.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that the way you studied at Oxford was quite different. Can you talk more about what it was like to be a student at Oxford? Were there more women in science? And how did the faculty relate to you there?

WAGLEY: Well, Oxford has a different system than most American universities in that you're admitted by a college and a college is part of the university. My college was St. Hilda's and it did have a chemistry don but her interest was organic chemistry and my interest was in physical chemistry. So she had to find me a don in physical chemistry who would be my thesis mentor. And she became my moral tutor. Don't know that we ever discussed morals, but you had to have a moral tutor as well as an academic tutor.

And I met my academic tutor early in the game and we talked about a research project. And he asked me if I knew any statistical mechanics, and I said, no I didn't. That was not something that I had taken at MIT. And he said, oh you shall need some. Take six weeks and learn it. And so I went off to the library and I found maybe a dozen books on statistical mechanics, but this is where I wasn't trained. I didn't know how you went about teaching yourself a subject like statistical mechanics when there was nobody to guide you. So at the end of six weeks I'm afraid I learned nothing except my way around the library. And that's when my chemistry tutor told me, well, I think you better go to some lectures and I'll help you learn, but he realized he had an American student on his hands. I was the first one I think that he had had.

INTERVIEWER: So the lectures were aimed at undergraduates or--

WAGLEY: Lectures aimed at undergraduates and none of them required-- in the British system students probably do the equivalent of an American first and second year in college as part of their undergraduate-- not undergraduate, but schoolwork. So many of the students at Oxford in the sciences had already written original papers and done original research at their schools. And they were just more advanced than I was. But I had to learn to learn on my own and that was one of the gifts of my Oxford training.

INTERVIEWER: And you undertook research really, for the first time then?

WAGLEY: I did research for the first time.

INTERVIEWER: What did you study?

WAGLEY: My thesis subject was the thermodynamics of nonaqueous solutions. I knew a lot about that once upon a time.

INTERVIEWER: Did you like doing research?

WAGLEY: I did like doing research. I found it was a tad lonely at times. I did have a lab mate who was a Welshman and a very private fellow. And we inhabited the same lab for about a month without saying more than good morning to each other. At that time I was purifying benzene, which was the basis of my nonaqueous solutions and I had to get ice every morning and it was rather unpleasant because the lab was saving money and they used the ice that the fish came on. So it was always quite smelly and I didn't like having to chip my ice with fish smell on it. So one morning I got into lab a little bit late and my lab mate, Brian Pinson said, I've got your ice for you. And that broke the ice and after that we had quite a good time working side by side in the same lab.

INTERVIEWER: When you decided to work on a PhD did you plan to teach afterwards or were you thinking about what you were going to do next? Or why you were doing it?

WAGLEY: I didn't. You make me sound as if I'm very unpurposeful, but I kind of did the next thing and I didn't really think until I was close to getting my DPhil which in Oxford is a research degree. I didn't have to do any course studying, which makes it a lot shorter than an American PhD. But I had two job offers in the States. One was doing research at Princeton and the other was teaching at Smith College. And I thought, well, I've done research for three years. I've never taught, so I'll take the Smith College job opportunity. And I did, and I found I loved teaching.

INTERVIEWER: How many places did you apply to after you were finishing up Oxford? Like dozens or just a couple?

WAGLEY: Well, no. I called back or wrote back to MIT's chemistry department and they led me to these two possibilities. It was a little hard to be interviewed across the Atlantic Ocean, so I only pursued two. The previous president of Smith College was an Englishman and he was back at Oxford, and so he interviewed me. And I guess gave me a good bill of health, so when I did tell Smith I'd like to come it was with his blessing.

INTERVIEWER: And you spent several years there?

WAGLEY: I spent three years at Smith. By that time Philip Wagley was commuting between Baltimore and Northampton, Massachusetts. And he said one day, I can't do this anymore. It's too far to drive and you'll either have to marry me or we'll have to call it off.

INTERVIEWER: How did you meet? He was a research scientist at one point at MIT, wasn't he?

WAGLEY: He was at MIT, yes. He worked in Francis Schmitt's lab under Irwin Sizer and enjoyed it enormously.

INTERVIEWER: Did you meet there?

WAGLEY: We didn't meet there, but I think it was Ted who asked me whether I was at MIT when Winston Churchill was there. But Philip, who is my father's cousin asked my parents to come up to MIT for that Churchill visit. So my parents knew him and I had just gone to Oxford and he had just turned down an appointment at the Radcliffe Infirmary, so I left MIT and he came to MIT. I went to Oxford where he had just turned down an opportunity. We decided it was all providence because we would have met because our families knew each other, but we didn't meet and that was good because we wouldn't have liked each other at all. Because he was in his lab and I was in my lab and it was a good thing we met three years later when we had time for each other.

INTERVIEWER: So you met him when you came back from Oxford?

WAGLEY: I met him when I came back.

INTERVIEWER: And he was a physician already?

WAGLEY: He had just gone into practice.

INTERVIEWER: In Baltimore?

WAGLEY: In Baltimore, yes.

INTERVIEWER: And you took your job up at Smith.

WAGLEY: And I was at Smith and he was commuting to see me at Smith.

INTERVIEWER: It strikes me that MIT and Oxford and Smith are all so different from each other. What did you think of Smith when you arrived or did it remind you of Foxcroft?

WAGLEY: Smith was wonderful for me. I was the faculty resident in a small house, Parsons Annex. There were only 14 girls. And in a way I was responsible for them, but in a way not. I was only a few years older than they were. So having had almost no social life at MIT because we worked so hard, it was fun to be in a community again at Smith, and I still keep up with some of those girls in Parsons Annex. As a matter of fact they invited me back for a portion of their 50th reunion because we had come the same year. Although I left after three years and they stayed on for four years.

INTERVIEWER: How focused on careers were they? In other words, here you were at a time when not that many women went into the workforce, you were very directed academically, you whizzed through MIT. You went on for your PhD. You took a teaching job. Were you their role model or were they on a different course?

WAGLEY: Karen, I think the women's colleges have a remarkable history of women who have done productive things with their lives. Whether it is been volunteer or paid, of course, we're now talking about the early 50s and I think most of them did not expect to have paying jobs. But they fully expected to make their mark one way or other, and many of them have. And I think Smith continues in that tradition of turning out women who intend to use their education for some good purpose.

INTERVIEWER: So you had common ground with them even though you had gone off in this direction that they might or might not be following? They took life seriously?

WAGLEY: They took life seriously. Not all of them took the sciences seriously, but the chemistry was known to be one of the better sciences. The department was congenial and fun and we tried to make things interesting for them.

INTERVIEWER: Did you like teaching?

WAGLEY: I loved teaching. Yes. That was a great surprise to me that I liked it and all of the chemistry individuals in the chemistry department at Smith had to teach a section of chemistry 101 or whatever it was called. And we used to compete because the exam was made up and we would compete to see how well your section did against how well the other instructor's sections did. So we didn't know what the exam was going to be, but we all tried our best and we told our students, you've got to do well because my section has to do as well as the professor's section.

INTERVIEWER: Were they motivated by that do you think?

WAGLEY: I think so.

INTERVIEWER: How interesting. Were they required to take science or to take chemistry?

WAGLEY: They were required to take science. And I've forgotten whether-- I think it was a whole year, but chemistry and geology were the ones that were most often elected.

INTERVIEWER: Including laboratories?

WAGLEY: Including laboratories.

INTERVIEWER: And were they kind of textbook recipe type labs or did you try to give them room to innovate? You talked about how at MIT a lot of it was kind of pro forma.

WAGLEY: Well, I think this was pretty cookbook labs, but I do remember going around and asking each girl when I was proctoring a lab, what are you doing? And I expected a thoughtful answer, so they learned that they ought to know what they were doing and why they were doing it, and what results they were expecting.

INTERVIEWER: You've said in the past that as you went through MIT you occasionally stopped yourself and said, why am I doing this? You know, should I be focused on a career or on getting married? How much did that run through your head then?

WAGLEY: Karen, I guess not terribly frequently, but I do remember-- you know, if the homework were difficult and the problem sets intractable, I would occasionally say, why am I doing this? You know, I'm going to get married and I'm going to have children and it won't make any difference. And then if I occasionally relented and went to a fraternity party I'd say, why in the world am I doing this? I don't really enjoy it. I don't enjoy the drinking. I don't enjoy the carousing. I'm going to have a career and this doesn't make any sense. There was that tension. I guess it persisted all of my life. You know, hard to juggle three children and a husband and a household and a job. And yet, I had six years at home when the third baby came and I just couldn't juggle anymore. And I realized then why I was at work because I just can't stand being house bound. And when he finally went to kindergarten that was when I wanted to go back to work.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting. Did you never think about entering industry? You seemed to stay in academe-- many scientists today go off into business. Did it cross your mind then?

WAGLEY: I guess it did when I was at MIT. It didn't when I was at Oxford. Oxford is in all subjects, rather rarefied and the more useless the knowledge, the more precious it seemed to be. There was I think a distinct looking down on practical knowledge and going into industry, so Oxford did make a difference to me in that respect that it headed me in an academic direction. And I did not veer from that.

INTERVIEWER: You said you found you liked teaching a little bit to your surprise, what did you like about it?

WAGLEY: I liked trying to make things clear to the student. I liked trying to think if they didn't get my answer one way and they still looked puzzled, to try and find yet another way to explain that. I can remember a student asking me early on about liquid nitrogen. How could I say that it boiled when it was so cold? That was a real puzzler to me and I had to go home and think about it and then come back with an answer, but I was earnest about trying to get what I knew across to the students in a way that they could grasp onto it.

INTERVIEWER: And so how did your students do on those competitive department tests?

WAGLEY: They did well.

INTERVIEWER: Did the department then say to you, gee, can you share some of your magic in teaching?

WAGLEY: No, but the department did promote me to an assistant professor after two years of instructorship.

INTERVIEWER: It was probably sad to see you go. Did they try to keep you when you said I'm moving to Baltimore?

WAGLEY: I think not because they had met Philip and they had advanced warning that something was probably up.

INTERVIEWER: When you were at Smith were you expected to do research as well as teach, and did you have time to do any?

WAGLEY: You were expected to do research as well as teach and I did not find then that I was as good at research as I was at teaching. So that was another reason for staying in the teaching world.

INTERVIEWER: And the teaching sounds like it excited you more than the research too.

WAGLEY: It did.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. When you got married did you expect to keep working or did you at that point assume that maybe you'd pull back for some period? Did you think about it one way or the other or discuss it together?

WAGLEY: Philip let me have my head pretty well. I think he came to the conclusion he had married a rather head strong woman and since he was a seven day a week, 24 hour a day physician he realized I needed to have my own life and that it really wasn't going to be within the four walls of our house. I didn't really plot things out. I think one of the things of being a woman of my era is you have to be adaptable and you had to be opportunistic. Unlike a man or unlike Philip who could plot his life out and this is the course and this is what I'm going to do. As a woman I had to adapt to the circumstances that were available. I would like to have stayed at Smith College; I think I would've had a successful career there, but I couldn't compete with the Johns Hopkins Hospital. I did teach at Goucher one year as a substitute for a physical chemist who was on sabbatical, but I didn't have a permanent job there nor was there a permanent opening.

INTERVIEWER: How hard did you look for a permanent job or did you assume that it was better to sort of have flexibility and not to commit to something like that?

WAGLEY: I think Karen, there were enough babies that kept me busy and saying I'll take up whatever comes along. But I did not look for anything purposefully.

INTERVIEWER: How did you juggle one kid, two kids, three kids, and working, and you probably had some philanthropic activities at that point too?

WAGLEY: Fortunately I was very fortunate in having good household help. And so I think the children were well taken care of and probably better than a mother who didn't want to sit on the floor and play blocks.

INTERVIEWER: But you've had to administer it. You had to run it, set it up, tend to it. You still had to participate in school conferences and--

WAGLEY: I did.

INTERVIEWER: --go to games and so forth. So it didn't disappear.

WAGLEY: It didn't disappear. And I think the juggling was worthwhile.

INTERVIEWER: When and how did you reconnect with MIT?

WAGLEY: Jim Killian called me one day and asked me for a capital contribution to MIT and I had the brazenness to say, Dr. Killian, I only give capital contributions to organizations that I serve on the board. At that time it was the children's nursery school and the Bryn Mawr School and Foxcroft School. And I didn't think anything of it, but thinking of it later I'm rather embarrassed by the brazenness of my comment. But it must have hit a note with Jim Killian and it must have been the right time that the MIT Corporation may have been looking for a woman Corporation member. And subsequently, I was asked if I would join the Corporation. I was at that point headmistress of the St. Paul's School for Girls. I felt I had to ask the board if it was alright -- since my time was their time-- was all right and I got unanimous consent, so I said yes. And it was a very happy reconnection with MIT, which has gone on for many years now.

INTERVIEWER: When you were nominated though you apparently wrote to Jim Killian, who I think was chairman of the board at that point, saying that you were surprised and honored and a bit doubtful. Do you remember that and if so, why were you doubtful?

WAGLEY: I don't remember, Karen.

INTERVIEWER: In one of the citations along the way somebody cited that.

WAGLEY: Somebody cited that. Well--

INTERVIEWER: It doesn't stick in your mind?

WAGLEY: It doesn't stick in my mind.

INTERVIEWER: Did you know when you were named to the Corporation that there had never been a woman and that there were no other women on the Corporation at that time? That you would be the first.

WAGLEY: I don't think I did, Karen. I do vividly remembered walking into the room; I don't remember where the room was-- probably the president's house. But looking at the assembled company and my reaction was, they put them in uniform. Because there they all were in their blue suits and their white shirts and their conservative ties and their black shoes. And I thought, well, they must require them to dress this way, but it was the IBM era when you wore suits and white shirts and conservative ties and [INAUDIBLE].

INTERVIEWER: This was 1970?

WAGLEY: This was 1970.

INTERVIEWER: And how did the other Corporation members react when you walked into that room? Was there any reaction?

WAGLEY: I was totally ignored. And I have told the Corporation this, I guess when I got my watch for becoming a life member, two gentlemen came out of the pack and obviously realized how uncomfortable it was for me. And they in fact, took me in and shepherded me through some introductions and I've always been grateful for those two men. They were Irene du Pont and John Haas. Wonderful gentlemen, both of them, and they did realize how uncomfortable it was, and it was uncomfortable.

INTERVIEWER: Did you know either of them before that?

WAGLEY: I didn't know anyone on the Corporation.

INTERVIEWER: Other than Jim Killian [INAUDIBLE]?

WAGLEY: It was quite a formidable group. As a matter of fact, when I was-- you know you may get to this in questioning, but when I was president of the Alumni Association there's a year in which you are ex officio Corporation member and one of the members greeted me on my first Corporation meeting as ex officio member and said, I hope you will enjoy your time on the Corporation. I had been on the Corporation for years before and I've never been noticed. I thought--

INTERVIEWER: 14 years.

WAGLEY: --well, I'm going to wear a red jacket the next I come so people will pay attention to me.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. The year you joined the Corporation was actually a turning point for MIT in the number of women they had as undergraduates. So when you were there there were about a dozen, in the mid 60s they went up to about 50 a class when they built McCormick Hall, the first wing and the second wing. And then the number jumped again, I think around 1970 after MIT decided to start making some of the boy's dorms coed, which was a major decision. And I wonder, to what extent do you think they might have consciously decided it would be helpful to have a woman on board on the Corporation with this going on and especially, a woman who had graduated from MIT?

WAGLEY: Karen, I don't know what went through their heads. I do have the feeling that I've been most fortunate in all of my life in that I was there at the right time, and I do think doors were opening to women in the 1970s. Whether this was a product of the restiveness of the 60s or not, I don't know. But certainly, doors were opening and shortly thereafter I was asked to be a member of the Maryland National Bank Board and I was the first woman on that bank board and for many years, the only woman on that board. But I think that there was this feeling in the era that we need to have a woman's voice in our deliberations.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any issues about the increase in women at MIT coming up to the Corporation? Whether it was appropriate to have so many girls taking up spots in the class? How would they use the MIT degree? Anything like that or?

WAGLEY: I don't remember that, Karen. I do know that there were often discussions of how the women's grades compared with the men's, and I think the answer to that was maybe a tad better than the guys. And I think that as far as admissions went that it was blind as far as gender went. And as long as they weren't causing great waves that it was not a big deal. And then I think maybe the cohort of applicants went down as it does now as then, and the MIT admissions office decided it was better to fish in a pond twice the size than it was restrict yourself to a male only pond. It's not been a bad idea.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel that your perspective differed much from that of the men on the Corporation? Do you recall any issues where you might have had that feeling?

WAGLEY: Karen, I have not honestly asked myself that question. I think I have asked myself the general question of since I've been retired, why so many presidencies of colleges and independent schools have gone to women? And I think maybe the answer is that we're a might better at relationships and thinking less hierarchically than men do. And that this is perhaps called for in these last decades. Of course, MIT has its first woman president and although I've been put out to pasture during her time, I hear she's doing a splendid job, and more power to her.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever have any particular agenda for your tenure on the Corporation or issues that you felt that you needed to speak up on because other people weren't?

WAGLEY: Karen, I guess through visiting committees I did have some feelings in the two visiting committees that are late in my career as a Corporation member at MIT-- were humanities and athletics. And an agenda item for me in humanities was to do what I could to dispel the second class citizenship that the humanities struggled under. I had no solution of course, but I think the graduate program has helped and I think simply, attitudes towards the humanities have maybe become a little more appreciative among the rest of the faculty.

INTERVIEWER: You served on a real range of visiting committees besides chemistry, which was your field-- biology, philosophy, the libraries, nuclear engineering, psychology, sponsored research. It goes on and on-- athletics, you also served on the Executive Committee for two terms. How effective do you think the visiting committees are as a governance system at MIT?

WAGLEY: I think they're wonderful. I speak as a governing board member, but I have talked to enough department heads to think that if nothing else, getting ready for the visiting committee is a wonderful exercise for them and they have to pull their socks up and they have to get their ducks in a line and they do have the former two years ago visiting committee report to look at. I've often talked to people from other universities and said how much I think they benefit MIT and I think every university should have them. They're very useful.

INTERVIEWER: Of all those committees did you have any favorites?

WAGLEY: Athletics is clearly my favorite because I think it's the last one and it's the one that I have chosen to be a guest on. And I did go to my last one or maybe last two as an invited guest. I worked very, very hard on that committee; it was touch and go as to whether the Z Center got built or not. And I consider it a part of my achievement that it did get built.

INTERVIEWER: It's interesting that you went through MIT really without any athletics as part of your time there and yet, became very involved in the question of what should be the role of athletics at MIT and how to make it more of a presence, or create more opportunities for students. What was your [INAUDIBLE]?

WAGLEY: I've always been physically active, Karen. And I guess I regretted that there were no opportunities for athletics for the women at MIT. I loved the Oxford system of athletics. There are no coaches, every team is self coached and it is done for the fun of it. And the tail doesn't wag the dog, it is something you do from 2:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon and you do it because you enjoy the sport. It seemed to me that MIT was more like that than some of the Division I schools where you buy your athletes and they compete and winning is everything. And it isn't just fun and sportsmanship. But I liked the MIT ethos. Philip served on the athletic visiting committee before I did and he was absolutely sold on it.

INTERVIEWER: Was he athletic?

WAGLEY: He ran and was very interested as a physician in running as a way to keep fit and to exercise in a reasonable amount of time that a busy physician has.

INTERVIEWER: What sports did you do at Oxford?

WAGLEY: Again, I didn't do any sports. It was not something that-- I bicycled to and from my lab, which was quite a distance. But I guess I have always been interested in recreational sports and it seemed to me that, especially for MIT, athletics was very, very important.

INTERVIEWER: And so when you came on to this visiting committee, you had the feeling that there weren't enough opportunities or enough physical facilities or what? What was your perception?

WAGLEY: I guess it was really the swimming pool, Karen, that interested me most because I had read through the old visiting committee reports and Howard Johnson had been a chair of the athletics visiting committee. And report after report says we've got to have a new swimming pool, and it just didn't get built and didn't get built.

INTERVIEWER: How come? Why did you think, what was the perception about needing a new one and then, why didn't it happen?

WAGLEY: The perception is if you need a physics building it's more important than a swimming pool. So it was always easy to push the swimming pool off to the side.

INTERVIEWER: And the one they had was what, too small?

WAGLEY: Overused.

INTERVIEWER: Overused.

WAGLEY: Overused.

INTERVIEWER: And so how did it finally-- were you there when it finally took off?

WAGLEY: I was, and interestingly, we were going to make a strong recommendation at the visiting committee, that we must start building the swimming pool. And Chuck Vest called me the night before I took off for Boston and he said, now, don't give me a hard time, but we're not going to give you a go ahead on the swimming pool. And he said, there's just too many things on the plate and just, I ask you, don't give me a hard time. So I went through the whole visiting committee meeting and said nothing about the swimming pool until the very end and my committee was almost up in the arms saying you haven't said anything about the swimming pool. So I told them the story about the telephone conversation and I said I trust Chuck that he said he will put it on the agenda as soon as he can. A week later he told me, I've got it through. So being a good sport and saying I won't give you a hard time was worth it and it gives me great pleasure to think that that Z Center is not only a swimming pool, but is a community center and a place where faculty and students meet when they're on their side by side treadmills. That it's an important facility for the community.

INTERVIEWER: And the key that unlocked it was getting the promise of a gift that would cover a significant piece of that construction?

WAGLEY: Yes. And I remember sitting next to Alex d'Arbeloff at a visiting committee Friday evening dinner or Tuesday evening dinner and he said, you know, if you wanted some money for something what would you ask for? And I said, I would ask for money for the swimming pool. And he ponied up that night at dinner. He said it was the most expensive dinner that he'd ever had, but we did have the gift from the Zesiger's as well.

INTERVIEWER: Which had come before or after the [INAUDIBLE]?

WAGLEY: I think it'd come before, but we also--

INTERVIEWER: But you needed more.

WAGLEY: --also had Chuck's promise that it was on his agenda.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think he knew any of that when he told you to lay off or did it just serendipitously come along?

WAGLEY: It may have been serendipity; I didn't ask. It worked out.

INTERVIEWER: Choosing MIT's presidents has to be one of the most important tasks that the Corporation has and you served on two presidential search committees. Can you tell us which ones they were and a little about those processes?

WAGLEY: Yes. I served on the committee that selected Paul Gray and that was interesting because Paul Gray was the heir apparent, and I think we could've wound up our deliberations in a week and might have saved the Institute some money and saved us some time. But I think it was really essential for Paul and for the Institute that we do a national search and that we do this seriously. And we did, and I think we felt good about it and felt exceptionally good coming back and saying, yes, the heir apparent is the one and we really have looked. The search committee that looked for Chuck--

INTERVIEWER: Let's back-- so he had been chancellor under Jerry Wiesner?

WAGLEY: He was chancellor under Jerry Wiesner and really, second in command.

INTERVIEWER: Was there much tension? I mean what if you went out and looked and somehow other people had popped up and all of you liked him and knew him? I mean was anybody torn over that? Was there--

WAGLEY: I don't think anybody was torn over that. I think maybe the bottom line, Karen, was this place is so complicated that it's going to take somebody 18 months to get up to speed and here we have somebody who's been second in command and knows it thoroughly and is an alumnus and we'd be crazy to do more than just look and be sure we've got a good man.

INTERVIEWER: Did it take any selling to get him to agree to do it? It's a hard job.

WAGLEY: I don't believe so. I think he was ready to step in.

INTERVIEWER: It was a different period from when Jerry Wiesner came in. I guess before him the social ferment had probably simmered down some.

WAGLEY: Simmered down, right.

INTERVIEWER: But there were more financial issues by then? What were you looking for, did you know?

WAGLEY: I can't tell you that, Karen.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So you were on that committee, was there much faculty input on that?

WAGLEY: Not as much as there was on the next committee, which was the one that chose Chuck Vest. And the faculty played a much larger role in that. In fact, there was a parallel search committee of the faculty and they met separately and we met together and that was a very interesting process because of course we chose Philip Sharp first. I think we were impressed with the Nobel Prize that he'd won and thought it would be nifty to have a president who was a Nobel Prize winner. And clearly, he had run a large lab and shown that he was able to administer things. And so we were clearly shocked when after a week he came back and he said he had made a mistake and he couldn't do it. And of course, then we were back to square one. I think all of us wondered where we had made a misstep. I don't know what other people thought, but I can remember somebody asking Philip Sharp what he did when he wasn't in the lab or wasn't reading biology papers. He said he had a cabin in Maine and he used to like to go up there all by himself and just read and think. And after he changed his mind I thought that should have been our clue because as president you want somebody who's out there in front talking to people, whose joy is being with people and selling himself and selling the Institute. And here we had chosen a man whose greatest pleasure when he wasn't restricted by something he had to do, was to go sit in a cabin all by himself and read and think. That's not the person who should be a college president.

INTERVIEWER: But this was hindsight?

WAGLEY: This was hindsight.

INTERVIEWER: Nobody said, whoops? I mean it didn't send up any flags while you were--

WAGLEY: Didn't send up any flags. We all had tin ears when it came to that. We didn't hear that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

WAGLEY: Well, then we did start all over again. First met Chuck Vest in a terrible basement of a hotel at LaGuardia Airport and he had flown in from Michigan. And Carl Mueller had picked him off the plane and brought him to this dismal little room and we sat around for several hours. We had read two papers beforehand that Chuck had submitted and one was about how he got money out of the Michigan State Legislature, which was passably interesting, but didn't seem pretty germane. And the other was what his role was as vice president of the University of Michigan. But anyway, the conversation was back and forth. I didn't really feel it was getting to any-- showing us what Chuck was like, and being quite conscious of how we had missed the ball on Philip Sharp. And so I remember asking him apropos his second prepared speech of how-- he said he had good relationships with the junior faculty and that pleased him. And so I thought, well, I'll ask him about that and I asked him to elaborate on how he established relationships with the junior faculty in such a large institution. And Chuck started out and said, Becky and I-- and I saw Carl Mueller lean back in his chair and smile because we had not figured out how we got to ask this candidate what his wife was like, and he just gave it to us-- Becky and I have dinners for the junior faculty. And he went on and it was all so warm and so natural. We thought, we got the right man now.

INTERVIEWER: I mean it was that clear from that meeting?

WAGLEY: Well, it was clear to me that we have a man who has a wife who's going to be interested in this job.

INTERVIEWER: Was the whole committee there for this meet and greet?

WAGLEY: As many of us as could come. Now the faculty was not there. I think they sent a couple of representatives to be there, but we were kind of burned out as a search committee and eager to be on with it. And this was, I think, a break through.

INTERVIEWER: And he was the first one you talked to after the Sharp--

WAGLEY: I can't tell you, but he sure was the most impressive.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have to then go on and interview others too?

WAGLEY: I think we did interview a few others.

INTERVIEWER: Were there many reservations about his coming-- I guess he had attended a public university, West Virginia, and then Michigan, and worked at Michigan. I think he did his doctorate at Michigan.

WAGLEY: Yes, I think so.

INTERVIEWER: About the fact that his experience had been maybe totally at publics and he'd never been at a private, was that an issue? Do you recall?

WAGLEY: I don't think that was an issue. I think the insider/outsider was an issue. Again, because MIT is a very complicated place and there has been a preference for insiders. I think we reminded ourselves that Karl Taylor Compton was an outsider and that that was very successful.

INTERVIEWER: As you watched him get into the office, do you recall any thoughts about gee, he's taking hold or he's got that to learn yet, or anything like that?

WAGLEY: I remember thinking he is a Midwesterner, isn't he? And he had a very Midwestern voice, and a very, very serious demeanor. I think as he went along and was obviously in control of what he was doing and having a good time he relaxed. And I think he was really one of the most effective presidents that we've had.

INTERVIEWER: Did he call you for advice along the way? Were you part of his kitchen cabinet so to speak?

WAGLEY: I wasn't part of his kitchen cabinet, but I think we always got along well and I certainly respected him and I've told you the story of the visiting committee. And I think he trusted me and I trusted him and that's one of the most important aspects of any relationship.

INTERVIEWER: You've seen in some way or other I guess eight presidents beginning with Karl Taylor Compton, who was president when you were a student and was at the teas that his wife hosted some of the times and--

WAGLEY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Up through others. Do you think the role of president has changed much over the years at MIT?

WAGLEY: I think it's probably much more the outside person, the person who deals with the rest of the world and I know Jerry Wiesner had a chancellor, but I think Susan is the first one to have a chancellor again in Philip Clay. It's gotten enormously complex. But I think it's still a small enough institution that, well, I guess is that the president knows most of the faculty and a few of the students and that's the way it should be.

INTERVIEWER: Backing up again, I guess it was under Paul Gray in 1984 when you became president of the Alumni Association. I suppose there was the year leading up to it when you were president elect. Were you surprised when the Alumni Association told you that it wanted to nominate you as president?

WAGLEY: I was surprised. I think that the person who really gets credit for this is Margaret Coleman who-- I don't know whether she is still with us, but she was very effective in AMITA and I think she was the one who had decided that there should be a woman president of the MIT Alumni Association, and that I was a likely candidate.

INTERVIEWER: So was she on the staff at MIT or the Alumni Association? Or just an active alum?

WAGLEY: I think just a very active alum, but I'm not sure.

INTERVIEWER: And started lobbying to--

WAGLEY: I believe that's--

INTERVIEWER: How interesting. And they didn't say, OK, you're it to her?

WAGLEY: I don't know. But I do know that she called me and asked me would I accept if I was nominated. And I think after some thinking I said yes, I would.

INTERVIEWER: Was it a hard decision? I mean what did they say you would need to do?

WAGLEY: It was a hard decision because I left my job at Episcopal Social Ministries to do it thinking really I can't do both. Both are full-time jobs at least for me and I can't do both so it meant leaving one and then taking up the other, which was only a year long and I knew that.

INTERVIEWER: What was that year like as president of the Association? What did you do with it?

WAGLEY: It was a fun year, it was fun preparing for it. As the first female president, obviously my topic was women at MIT. And I had to do some research on that and I went to the Institute and stayed at McCormick Hall; and I did swim in the old swimming pool, which was one reason why I was convinced that we needed a new one. The archives in 1984 were in bad shape. I hope they're in better shape now. But I did collect, I hope, the accurate information and Shirley Picardi helped me with pictures, which I had to put together with a script. That was my basic dog and pony show. That made it easy because that was about maybe 15 minutes long and that prompted questions that I could answer. And I think as I've said, Bill Hecht, the executive vice president of the Alumni Association went with me. And if I couldn't answer a question I'd just defer to him and he could answer the question.

INTERVIEWER: Did the women graduates you met as you went around ask you to do anything in particular? Did they lean on you in any way?

WAGLEY: No, I think the audiences were very respectful, very interested. The only difficult questions I think were when children of an alum had been turned down by the Institute. And I remember one who had twins-- twin daughters I think. And the Institute turned them down and Stanford took them. But those were the only difficult moments I think.

INTERVIEWER: As you did your research at MIT about the women were there any surprises, do you recall?

WAGLEY: I guess how thoroughly integrated the women have been for a long time, either around that time of the early 80s, a woman had won the mechanical engineering 270 competition and we featured her very prominently. I think there's just been steady growth in women's participation on all levels of the Institute.

INTERVIEWER: You've had these firsts for women at MIT, on the Corporation and as president of the Association. Do you think of yourself as a pioneer? You mentioned also being the first woman on a bank board and do you think of yourself as a feminist?

WAGLEY: I guess I think of myself as a pioneer and whenever I was conscious of the fact that I was the first woman, I really have tried to do the very best I could give to the job. And I think as we've said at lunch, I'm now one of two resident representatives to the Broadmead board of trustees. I will try to be faithful to going to the meetings, to reading whatever comes across my desk, and to participate as well and thoroughly as I can. So yes, I do think I have been a pioneer and I've tried to do a good job thinking that that paved the way for women who came after me. I don't think of myself as a feminist and maybe it's because I have a view of the 60s and early 70s feminists and they were rather shrill and sometimes one-sided. I think that women deserve to have glass ceilings broken through and to do whatever they can and want to do. I just ask for a level playing field I guess.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that having more women at MIT as students, faculty, staff, president, has changed it? And if so, how?

WAGLEY: Karen, I'm not there of course on a day to day basis. I'm sure it has changed it. I remember Nancy Hopkins' study of the women at MIT and the fact that their office space wasn't quite as large, their lab space wasn't quite as large as a comparable faculty member who happened to be male. Probably their salary wasn't completely commensurate. I also remembered Chuck Vest's response to that in that he had always heard there was a perception that female faculty were not treated equally, but he thought it was just a perception. And now, there was the data that proved it was real and he said we've got to do something about it. But I thought that was just a wonderful reaction from an Institute president of here are the facts and we've got to do something about it. It's not right.

INTERVIEWER: As headmistress of the St. Paul's School for Girls you had an opportunity really to influence the way young women were educated and what happened to them. Do you think your MIT education affected how you went about that or what you did and what you thought should happen?

WAGLEY: Karen, I do think it did and I think the timing was just very propitious for me. It was a time of great ferment in the educational curriculums, especially in science and math. It was a time when Jerrold Zacharias at MIT was particularly interested in science in the high schools, and so I tried out all those new math courses-- IPS, Introductory Physical Science, even MACOS, Man: A Course of Study. And I think helped St. Paul's School for Girls get a good reputation as a solid math/science prep school. And we did send an alum to MIT.

INTERVIEWER: Did many of the girls take to the math and science more than at other girls' schools do you think?

WAGLEY: I don't have that comparison in my head. But yes, they did.

INTERVIEWER: As you were raising-- you had two daughters, right?

WAGLEY: Two daughters, right.

INTERVIEWER: As you raised them did you ever talk about your unusual path and the things you had done, and do they remark on it? Are they aware of it?

WAGLEY: No, I tried to let them be themselves and I've got a human rights lawyer in Berkeley, California who's usually suing the State of California for not being equitable to undocumented persons. I've learned not to call them illegal aliens, they're undocumented persons. I've got a public health daughter in Providence and an MIT real estate graduate from MIT-- son.

INTERVIEWER: The son? He's the only one of the three that went--

WAGLEY: He's the only one that went to MIT.

INTERVIEWER: And as you go back to the campus, as you've been back in recent years, besides the women, what do you think are the biggest changes? Does it seem very different from when you went through?

WAGLEY: Well of course the Infinite Corridor is always the Infinite Corridor and I don't know that in my day we had people on unicycles, but I have seen them these days. I think an absence is nobody has slide rules anymore. And that was certainly part of the equipment when I was there. But, still enormous energy. The place is just humming with activity and I hope it never loses that spirit.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much. It's been fun talking with you and we appreciate your taking the time.

WAGLEY:

Well, I enjoyed it and Karen, thank you very much for coming to Maryland to do this. I'm not as mobile as I used to be. But my days at MIT and following on were wonderful ones. And I have to thank you for the opportunity of talking about them. It's been a great pleasure.