Q: All right.
A: Okay.
Q: So my name is Bethany Cromwell. I’m a senior at the University of Texas in Austin and I’m here today at the home of Dr. Emma-Lou Linn, who I’m interviewing for Professor Laurie Green’s “Women, Gender, and Sexuality and Sexuality in Postwar America” class. Today’s date is October 31, 2017. So, hello, Dr. Linn.
A: Hello. How are you today?
Q: I’m doing good --
A: Good.
Q: -- how about yourself?
A: I’m doing great, thanks.
Q: Good. So thank you for allowing me into your home to interview you. I appreciate it.
A: Well, you know, I -- I’m with students all day long. I love (laughter) new students.
Q: Good. Good, good. So -- how I’d like to start out with my interview is just kind of ask you some basic information --
A: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.
Q: -- like what do you do, for instance. We can start with that and then I’ll move on from there.
A: Well, I’m a professor at St. Edwards University; I have been out there, oh, over 40 years, probably 45, 45 or 47 years, I don’t know. I’d started -- went out there and I was just helping them write some grants. I was at that time working at UT. And one night I was at the Admiral’s Club, which was at the Commodore Perry Hotel, which isn’t there anymore. And I had been at the attorney’s office and there was attorney office right downtown. And we were all sitting there talking and we decided to go to the Admiral’s Club and have a martini. And so we went up there to have a martini and we’d had about two. In those days when you got a phone call they brought it over to the table -- it was a big old black phone, you know -- (laughter) and they brought it over to the table and plugged it in. Well, it was this Sister [Mary Marcy Dohegan?], the nun who was the chairman of the BSS, Behavioral and Social Sciences. And she said, “Emma,” they talk kind of funny, you know, (laughter) nuns can talk funny -- said, “Emma, would you like to teach a course?” And I said, “Well, what is this course?” and she said, “It’s Abnormal. Do you know that area?” and I said, “Oh, yes, ma’am.” I didn’t. (laughter) I think I had taken an undergraduate course in it, (laughter) you know. Anyway, so I said, “Well, that would be great, sure,” and I said, “Well, when would you like for
me to start?” and she said, “Well, tonight,” okay -- I’ve had two martinis right now (laughter) and so I said --

Q: (laughs) You’re raring to go.

A: Raring to go and I said, “Well, yes, ma'am, I’ll be right there,” and she said, “Yes, there are 50 police officers sitting and waiting for the adjunct who just called and he’s not going to show up.” It was seven o’clock, okay. So I had a little Karmann Ghia convertible and I get in it and I zoom out to St. Edwards and walk into that room and it was, you know, 50 police officers. They were doing a special program with St. Edwards, the police department. So I go up to the front of the room and a guy in the back row raises his hand and he said, “Dr. Linn,” and he stood up. He said, this is what he said, the exact words, “We had to arrest the preacher at the” -- and he said -- “holy roller Pentecostal church out on 52nd Street because he was molesting a 16-year-old girl -- and guess what we charged him with?” And I said, “What?” and he said, “Assault with a dead weapon.” He was 87. (laughter) And I thought, gee, this Catholic university is really going to be something. (laughter) He was -- a preacher was 87 years old, so assault with a dead weapon. So that was my first introduction to St. Edwards.

Goodness.

A: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: (laughs) A very interesting day. I’m sure -- (laughs)

A: And that was at seven o’clock at night and I just, I was stunned. (laughs) And I just stood there and all of them just hee-hawed and laughed and yelled, you know, a rowdy, rowdy --

Q: Oh, interesting. Did you continue teaching that class from then on?

A: Yes, I taught that the whole semester and then -- I was really good so then what they did was they then hired me to teach three classes and I was always in research and never had any intention of being a professor and I loved it. You know, it was so fantastic. I had had an experience before at a university I won’t name because -- they wanted me to help three guys pass their examinations to become licensed psychologists and I failed at that job, but they did let me teach a course. So I knew I loved to teach, but then I decided that would, that would be the greatest career for me.

Q: That’s awesome.

A: But I had to promise St. Edwards that I’d stop my research. They said, “We’re a teaching university. You, you know,
we’re not research-oriented.” Now that has changed over the years. Yeah. Interesting.

Q: Very cool, very cool. So I’m going to -- go back in time a little bit and I’m going to ask you where you’re from and kind of where you grew up, and if not Austin, then what brought you to Austin?

A: Well, I grew up in a tiny little place called Rocksprings. And it had no transportation going in or out. No buses, no trains, nothing. And I was born in the 1930s, during the Great Depression and then in the ’40s, early ’40s and that was World War II. So we were very, very isolated and we sort of had our own language. For instance, when I first went to UT (laughs) as a freshman, I spent about, I was a great writer and I tried -- worked and worked to try to figure out how to spell. I was writing this paper and I wanted to use the word “biggernuff” -- (laughter) B-I-G-G-E-R-N-U-F-F. And I looked in every dictionary and then finally somebody said, “Well, you crazy? It’s two words.” It’s “big enough” (laughter) and I never knew that. Another one was “directly” and I thought D-I-R-E-K-L-Y, directly. And that meant 15 minutes, exactly 15 minutes. And then I was stunned to know it was “directly.” (laughs) But anyway, it was a tiny little town and that, during that time, because there weren’t, there wasn’t transportation in
and out, we were really isolated. And basically you had a lot of what was called “genetic drift” -- where the people that are average and above-average breed with each other and the people that are average and below-average breed with each other. So you had, rather than an average distribution of intelligence, you had a bimodal distribution, where you had real smart people and then people who weren’t so smart. So -- like in my graduating class, there were seven and three of us were professors. And so that was very strange that it was like that, but it was, you know, it was really unusual.

But anyway, so -- in the ’30s we had to trap for money -- varmints. Rain tails. Whatever. Foxes. Whatever we could catch. And we, you know, trapped and also hunted, you know, and that’s, you know, there wasn’t any frozen foods or -- and we had plenty of cattle that we could, you know, eat cattle -- ate their little baby cattle. (laughter) And pigs, you know, we had pigs and so we learned as little kids how to kill the animals and gut the animals and you know, to trim the animals and that kind of thing and how to, you know, get the pelts and dry the pelts from the animals and sell those things. It was pretty interesting. Pretty interesting. And in school, the
courses, the classes were very, very small. But we had
really, really smart people.

Q: That’s really cool.

A: And some really good teachers, so -- when I graduated there
were seven -- (laughs) seven people in my graduating class.
I was the valedictorian. So I first came out to the
University of Texas (laughs) and they said, “Well, you’re
in the top 10 percent of your class,” and I’m thinking, how
(inaudible) does that make me? (laughter) I only had 10
people. (laughter) You know, but anyway, so I’m, you know,
went to school and about the only time we ever went
anywhere was once a year we would have a little bus and we
would drive to Dallas and go to the State Fair. And so I
just, I can remember, we had tickets to go the SMU Texas
football game and I traded my tickets and my cousin did,
for tickets to The King and I, which had Yul Brynner in it.
And we thought we were so smart and we’re sitting up there,
you know, (laughter) and we got box seats. From my cousin.
My cousin and I did. And we’re looking across and there
are two more girls from Rocksprings sitting (laughter)
right across. Anyway it was, that was really crazy but --
that was great. So anyway, that sort of introduced me to a
little, a lot of the outside stuff and -- you know, read a
lot and then I had a really fantastic teacher who was a
really well known writer, [Russ?] (inaudible), so I took courses from him and I was, oh, I guess you would say -- really, really smart and he took me and gave me special classes. So that was really nice. You know, kept me out of trouble.

Q: Okay. By “special classes” do you mean kind of like an honors-type class or something?

A: Yeah, it would be honors now, you know, in chemistry and biology and English, that sort of thing. Yeah.

Q: Okay. So you mentioned that you liked to write and were very into writing. Did that teacher you mentioned influence that? Or --

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: Were you interested way before then?

A: Well, I think it was really that guy. I never knew I was a really good writer and then it ended up I was a really good writer and so I was going to be a really great writer, you know -- as a matter of fact, poet. And -- then I discovered, I’d never make a living. (laughter)

Q: Sure. Fortunately. (laughs)

A: So what had happened, in the eighth grade we had to write about things and so I wrote to the University of Texas and I was assigned to do the Ps and pick out a “P” profession that I’d really like to do. And I didn’t want to be a
plumber. I didn’t want to be a physicist, so I decided I’d like to be a psychologist. So I kind of had that in my mind all along, so -- yeah, my mother was very against me going to college.

Q: Really?
A: She wanted me to go to [Drahn’s?] Business School and become a stenographer, which means I probably wouldn’t have any work today.

Q: Interesting. Was that a family business?
A: No, no. **Drahn’s Business School** was in San Antonio. My mother -- my dad was a rancher and they owned a ranch near the Mexican border. And -- my mother was a schoolteacher -- both of them were bilingual, which was real unusual, but she taught in what they then called the “Mexican School” -- so luckily I was in a family that had absolutely no prejudice. My father’s -- their ranch, the family ranch was near the Mexican border and when they ended, the Buffalo Soldiers, who were African American, some of them came to the ranch and worked. And I never knew they were black. (laughter) And so -- I’m top-fencing -- while I was in college -- Kinky Friedman’s mother’s Jewish park -- Jewish, what’s it called? Summer -- summer camp was at Echo Hill Ranch in Medina, near Medina, Texas. And so there was this gentleman there and he said to me, “Are you
Miss Emma Linn?” and I said, “Yes,” well, he was African American and he said, “Do you remember me?” and suddenly I remembered that when I was a little girl that he was there on the ranch and worked on the ranch and brought me presents all the time from Mexico. Yeah, so anyway -- it was really, it was really (inaudible). She taught what was called the “Mexican School” and she taught all the different, different grades -- not just one grade, but different grades. And so she taught there and so -- that was a really, well, I shouldn’t say it, but it was really a prejudiced part of the country in those days.

There was no integration between Hispanics and Anglos at all, except my family was totally different and -- the interesting thing was (laughs) (inaudible) World War II -- we had no sugar, because sugar was rationed in the United States. So we would go, my dad would drive in the pickup, my mother with him, and we’d stop at the border and pick up a cousin -- cousin [Ethel Dragoo?] who lived there and we’d cross the border and we’d go into -- it was in (inaudible) -- (inaudible) and went and buy sugar -- for all of the people who were getting ready, are going to have birthdays in Rocksprings, (laughter) because there was no sugar. So we would get all the sugar and put it in the back of the
pickup and I would have on this nice little dress and I had really blonde, blonde hair and really blue eyes and I’d sit on top of it and you know, habla Espanol and went “Bueno,” and so I would, we would go to the border (laughs) inspection and I’d speak all this Spanish to the man and then we’d go to the white part of the border and I’d wave and talk to all of the Anglos in English (laughter) and then we’d zip right across the border with all that sugar. (laughter) So I was a smuggler at a young age. And everybody got happy because everybody had birthday cakes, you know.

Q: Oh, that’s so fun. (laughs) So both your parents spoke Spanish then?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Very cool. So did you move up to Austin when you started going to UT?

A: Yes. The day that I got -- the day after I got back from our senior trip, I loaded up everything I owned in three cardboard boxes and got in the car and got my boyfriend, [Henry Baylor?], to take me with, and he was with [Jimmy Rowe?] and they were drunks. (laughter) And they were drunk by the time -- so what they did was -- I was furious. (laughter) Three cardboard boxes -- you know, my mother was not happy that I was going to the university. We drove --
and I thought they were taking me to Austin and first they went to this little tiny town, Dime Box, up by Smithville, where Henry Baylor played a baseball game and I had to sit there (laughter) and it was burning up, you know, it was in June. And finally they took me to the Commodore Perry Hotel. I got out with my three boxes and gave this guy that took the boxes up three dollars. I thought, I’d read a book where it was -- so I gave him one dollar a bag, which was a lot of -- but anyway -- so I spent the night at the hotel (laughter) and the next day I went to the university and enrolled.

Q: Wow. So you hadn’t even enrolled yet. You just drove up first?

A: Yeah. You didn’t. There was no pre-enrollment or anything like that. And you -- (laughs) you had to register and everything then and -- and I remember, I sat up on those steps and I think that summer, there were several thousand students around in that area sitting there, ready to go into Gregory Gym and, and I thought, oh no, God Almighty, this is six times bigger than where I even grew up, you know. (laughter) But I loved ever-- I loved it all. I had such a good time, yeah.

Q: That’s so great. And about when, about what year was that?

A: This was ’55.
Q: Fifty-five. Okay. So --

A: Yeah, I was -- and I was 19 at that time, because -- in those days you couldn’t -- when you started school, there was no kindergarten or pre-school and you had to be six years old when school opened. And the school opened I think probably on like September the seventh or something like that -- my birthday was September the fourteenth. So I didn’t turn six. So I had to wait a whole year.

Q: A whole extra year, oh man.

A: So that always put me basically a little bit more mature than the rest -- it didn’t help, it didn’t help -- (laughter) God Almighty, not a bit -- (laughter) I stayed in a lot of trouble -- let’s just put it that way.

Q: (laughs) Well, I think everyone gets in a little bit of trouble when they’re in college, just a little. (laughs)

A: I think in the second grade I called the teacher a son of a bitch. (laughter) Second grade. His fault. (laughter) And I think I only did it once after that, it was fourth grade and I got in bad trouble (inaudible).

Q: I know. (laughs)

A: You know, because growing up on a ranch and around the ranchers, you know -- and we would always, if it -- if it was a cold day, like in those days it got cold out there -- we would -- I would go with the ranchers and the men and
we’d go to [Via-Cunya?] and they would sit there all day and eat and drink cerveza and so they would give me a little tiny jigger (laughter) of beer and you know, when I had to go to the bathroom, the waiters would take me into the bathroom and it was at this wonderful place called [Mrs. Crosby’s?]. And it was a beautiful, beautiful dining rooms, you know and everything, so. And I heard all these wild tales, you know, (laughter) but I loved it, too. And I’d sit there quiet as a mouse and just listen, you know. Everyone would get in trouble there.

Q: Right, absolutely. (laughs) (inaudible) stories. (laughter) That’s fun. So during your time at UT, were you involved in any clubs or?

A: Well, we had a Democratic Club and we had a student government and I think at one time I was elected to some office like -- for the student council, something like that. And I was a member of the tumbling club. I was the -- the [choker joker?] -- because I couldn’t tumble. (laughter) I didn’t know which end -- my ass from my head, so I -- (laughter) they let me be there. And then I was a member of -- the university basketball team, women’s basketball team. And the volleyball team. And the tennis team.

Q: Just very well-rounded. (laughs)
A: Yeah. So I played all those sports and -- we won most everything we played.

Q: That’s awesome.

A: Yeah. So that was nice. And we had to buy our own uniforms. We had to pay our own way. And the coach had to, was a volunteer and we had to pay for our own rooms.

Q: Wow. Do you have a favorite of all your different sports that you played?

A: I think at that time it was basketball.

Q: Basketball?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: I like basketball, too.

A: Now that I -- belonged to all the UT sports stuff and my favorite now is volleyball. Because it’s so much faster than any other sports.

Q: (laughs) It really is.

A: And it’s real exciting. And I, I have seats right behind the team, on the second row. And I love it, I love it.

Q: That’s awesome. So you said you were involved with student government and --

A: Oh well, we had lots going on back in the ’50s. We demonstrated for integration.

Q: Really?
A: Yeah, we sure did. And we tried to -- I think we tried to get the -- if I’m not mistaken, God, it was so long ago, (laughs) yeah, it really was -- it seems like we tried to get -- the integration, and it seems like maybe even the movie theaters were segregated, like you know, on the drag and then it seems to me like -- some of the drug stores, you know, they had counters in those days -- downtown and we would cause trouble. (laughter)

Q: Good. (laughs)

A: Oh, yeah. And that was whenever we first had integration. And I was taking a huge -- many, many students -- I think it was a psychology course and I think Ira Iscoe was teaching it, who was really a famous guy. And there were three African American women in that course and you had to have groups of four and I was the only one who would work with them and we didn’t have a place to meet and I don’t remember why. There were some buildings we couldn’t go into or the library maybe was somewhere else or something -- I can’t remember. But I would have to ride a bus into East Austin, to where they studied. Yeah, so, anyway.

Q: Were they allowed to stay on the campus? Or was it --

A: I’m not sure.

Q: No? Okay.

A: I can’t remember. But they lived over -- I bet not.
Q: Yeah. If they’re not allowed in certain buildings, I would assume so.

A: I bet not. And I heard that they weren’t allowed in certain buildings. So anyway. And -- we caused some trouble.

Q: (laughs) Well, I would love to ask about some of the trouble you caused. But I will ask it in just a moment. I kind of want to ask first -- what kind of got you first interested in doing student government at all? Or things like that.

A: Oh my gosh. Are you kidding me? (laughter) It was in my blood. Both of my grandfathers, one of them, [Carey?] Linn, had been an advisor and confidant of several of the governors and -- my other grand-- that was my dad’s father -- my other grandfather, [Bob Barrows?] -- was a really tall guy and smoked cigars, you know (laughter) and everything -- gave me a little, a little jigger of whiskey on Saturdays. (laughter) A little hot toddy and a little tiny jigger of beer every day, you know. It’s wonder I didn’t grow up to be a drunk. (laughter) But anyway -- he was the man who delivered the vote. Now you don’t know what that means, but I don’t either. But this is what I think it means. I think that he, he would disappear during election times. And he would absolutely vanish. And so he
would go, what they call “deliver the vote” and I think he would go out to places and beat the bushes and load people up and you know, and there were buggies in those days and load people up and take them, you know, to vote or maybe -- (whispers) maybe pay them. Maybe there was something, money exchanged or something. I don’t know, but -- but we always delivered the vote. (laughs) I never knew quite how. That’s what he would do. He’d deliver the vote. What’s -- I said, “Grandpa, what do you do?” “I deliver the vote,” (laughter) and then he’d vanish and nobody knew where he was for, you know, he was almost a ne’er-do-well because he would just vanish, (laughter) you know, during election times and nobody knew where he was or anything.

But there were advantages to that for me as a little girl -- because my mother had anorexia nervosa and nobody knew what it was at that time. And she died of it when she was 62, so she’d had it all those years, but she was sick a whole lot. So I lived with two Mexican women that I dearly loved -- me, [Madonna?] and [Chica?] and -- I lived with my grandmother and grandfather, [Papaw Barrows?]. And -- I can remember W. Pappy -- they called him “Pappy”; we’d never call him Pappy -- but W. Lee O’Daniel was running for some office and this had to have been like, maybe the late
'30s, I think, and so Papaw took me and of course, he came in a, with the Light Crust Doughboys, who were later a famous band called the Sons of the Pioneers. And so he had them on a flatbed truck and he brought them right up there to the cent-- to the courthouse and stopped that truck and that band started playing, you know, and Papaw had me, you know, and I was standing there just watching them, watching them play, you know and everything. Pappy Lee O’Daniel saw me down there and then he hoisted me up (laughter) on top of that stage, you know, and gave me a 7-Up and a balloon. And it was the big depression and nobody had a 7-Up and a balloon. So anyway, yeah. So I started out really early and -- we never, ever -- and I still don’t miss a vote. I’ve never missed any vote. And we never missed a vote and I can remember my mother was sick and they, in that -- they took the ballot to her bed in our house and let her vote.

Q: So that’s cool. That’s very cool. So going back to our earlier discussion, so while you were at UT and participating in student government things, what were some of the things that you all advocated for? Or tried to put into place at the university?

A: Well, one of them was integration. You know, that was a big, big deal and it wasn’t so much about the university, because I think gradually the university, they were
integrating, but the town, the city wasn’t. You know, and we had businesses downtown, businesses on the drag there that were not integrated at all, so we were very vocal in that, you know, and -- something else, too. What in the world? Political. I think we were still pretty steamed over the McCarthy era. And the anti -- oh! (laughter) Whoa. I can remember -- we had to sign an oath. That -- a loyalty oath. That we had never been a member of the Communist Party and a this and a that and the other and I refused to sign it.

But I just -- this was -- this is what we did. I would go sit down and talk to the women at the -- you had to sign a -- everything was by hand in those days, so to register, the first thing you had to do, before you could even register academically, you had to register like socially. And there was a packet of things you had to sign up that had to do with housing and all that. But you could not sign that packet until you signed the oath. In other words, you could not register at the University of Texas unless you signed that oath. It said you had not been a member of the Communist Party. It could have been Socialist Party -- I don’t -- or any subversive group or anything like that. So what I would do, I would go and
schmooze (laughter) with those women at that, at that counter, you know. And then I’d get ready to leave and then hand me the packet, thinking that I had signed that oath. I never once signed that oath. (laughter) And so that also meant that -- I never was, you know, they never thought bad of me because I just said I had done everything. Yeah.

Q: Right. That’s funny.

A: But we did things like that, you know, and I think I remember that -- because I was just, I was just a complete, total Democrat and -- there were a lot of Republicans in those days. I think that was when John Tower was elected.

Q: Okay. So as a -- woman participating in student government at the time and being on a campus, did that affect anything within student government or in any of your activism projects?

A: Oh, the truth of the matter was -- but that was when I was in graduate school -- we had, I had a professor who said that a woman should not get a doctorate. Mm-hmm. When I was in doctorate -- (laughter) Yeah. (laughter) And another one told me he had never given an A and let me tell you, I sat on that front row and my brain was just burning. And I learned every single word he said and I made an A in that damn course.
Q: To spite him.  (laughter)

A: Oh, but here in those days -- of course, we didn’t even know about things -- I mean, we didn’t even think about things that were going on. In the ’50s. It was kind of a time of -- after the war, you know, and nobody -- and I had a lot of veterans that were in my classes, from the war. Yeah. But there was a lot of prejudice on the campus. I can remember a really horrible like Ku Klux Klan stuff that came up from time to time. On the trees, you know, and -- what did you just do, baby doll? (laughter) On the trees, you know. Placards and awful signs and stuff like that. And then there was a tremendous anti-gay thing that went on at that time. For the University of Texas, and it was, it was horrible. I mean, they kicked out professors. They kicked out students. And it would -- it was interesting what happened. It would -- there were a lot of gay people and they had a lot of big parties. And they would -- the police would put cars there to take license plate numbers and photos. There was a bar downtown, a restaurant, a really nice restaurant in the daytime, the Manhattan and then in the evening it was still a restaurant in front, but there was a deli in the middle and then just, you walked right onto the deli and it was a gay place, a gay bar. And so a lot of the university students and the people from the
gay community would come in and the police would be across the street taking photos of everybody that went in and the license plates. And then they would -- (clears throat) the university also did investigations and they kicked out all of the gay students that they could identify and they also kicked out professors. And that was in the ’50s and -- from time to time I would be called in to rat on some people. And of course, I would refuse. And -- (laughs) and there was one case of a professor who was really, really good and I ran into him later in -- I guess it was Houston or Galveston -- and his sister and I were really good friends and he had been fired.

And then I got -- after I had graduated I got a scholarship to UCLA to go out there and study. I had done a bunch of stuff in Houston with exceptional children and helped set up their first cla-- well -- tell you that later. (laughter) That’s after I finish -- (laughter) but anyway -- I got this scholarship to go to UCLA from -- and it was presented by -- from Houston Jewish Family Services [sic], which I thought was interesting -- that they would give me that -- set up the first classes for emotionally disturbed children in Houston. So -- and I had run into her. I was going to graduate school at night, at the University of
Houston and I ran into her and -- I said, you know, I was going out to UCLA this summer and she said, “Well, I’m going to USC. I’ve got a scholarship to go to USC,” and I said, “Great. You know, we’ll get together,” so I go out there and she had already got an apartment and a phone number and I would call and call and the number had been disconnected. So I didn’t know what in the world happened. So she had gone to UT and graduated from UT. And no, she didn’t. What she did was she, her last semester she transferred somewhere and graduated, I think, from the University of Houston.

And -- anyway, so then back in Houston I run into her at the University of Houston at night school; I was going to class. I said, “You know, [Jenny?], what happened to you?” and she said, the reason she -- then she told me this story. She said the University of Texas had written on her records that she had been dismissed for -- [centralized?] (inaudible) -- something -- turpitude or immoralities or something like that. And so that prohibited her from getting her scholarship at UCLA, I mean at USC. But she had gotten into the University of Houston before that was written on her transcript. So anyway. Pretty interesting but -- boy, there was, that was something else here in
Austin, because you had that kind of -- discrimination against gays. It was just absolutely horrible. And you know, they would have witch hunts, you know, in the dormitory and I was always sort of a marginal character that they’d call in and try to get me to squeal, (laughter) you know. But never, I never did. I never did.

Q: Sure. Hmm. Around -- as far as you’re aware of, around -- because today, I mean, there’s always going to be prejudice around -- today Austin’s well known for being kind of -- be, you know, more Democratic section of Texas.

A: It is.

Q: And being quite progressive.

A: It’s called, I’m a blue cowgirl in a red state.

Q: (laughter) There you go. And did that, had you noticed any change at all, like around when that happened? Because you said that it was pretty bad for a while in Austin.

A: It was. Uh-huh. And oh yeah, it was for a while. It was everywhere. Like Houston -- when I moved to Houston, they actually would raid, have raids on the bars. I think they did that here. But they’d have raids on the bars and then -- pull people out and they would beat them up in the squad cars -- the police department did. I mean, you know, stuff like that -- it was awful. Uh-huh.
Q: Goodness. So -- I suppose now, let’s take a peek and let’s see here. So about when, when did you graduate from UT?

A: You’re going to love this. (laughter) Okay. So I had taken -- I think in those days you had to have -- it seems like it was more than two semesters of Spanish. And I don’t really remember. But anyway -- I had my last classes, my last class in the summer, August, July-August of ’55, ’59, sorry, ’59. I went to school -- (laughter) entered one day and graduated the next.

Q: (laughs) There you go. (laughter)

A: It was -- let’s see, it was ’59 in August, and that semester I had summer session, I had taken -- the last course I had to have in Spanish. Well, the only one that was offered was like a literature class and I was not -- shouldn’t have ever tried to take it, but -- (clears throat) I had to because I had to have -- I noticed that she was over there by you -- (laughter) but anyway -- So I had to take this course and it was like the literature, where you had to read in Spanish and talk in Spanish and do a critique of Spanish novels. Well, I was totally unprepared and so I told the professor that, but I had to take it and he knew the circumstances. And he said, “Don’t you worry,” and I said, “I’m very devoted.” And he said, “You sit on the front row,” which I did, “you take, you
know, you -- every now and then contribute some sentence in Spanish,” you know, and this, that and the other thing, “and you sit there and take the test and you don’t worry because I will pass you. I know it’s your final semester and this is the last course you have to have,” okay. So great. So I sit up there and do just exactly what he tells me to do; strictly obedient, you know and -- okay, so I take the final and I leave. And it is my first big -- trip -- that I’d ever really taken and I go to Boston with a friend of mine and ate my first lobster, had my first rare steak. (laughs) You know, we cooked it till it was -- charred. (laughter)

But anyway -- and it was a wonderful trip. And so I get back and in those days you didn’t get your grades until maybe a week or two or three weeks later and it was on a card and you’d get it on a postcard with your address on it and you’d put your name, the course number and the, and a blank where they’d put the grade in it. I opened my mailbox up and got that out -- I started to say something bad. (laughter) It was an F. An F. I had failed. I had two jobs waiting for me -- either one I wanted in Houston – – I didn’t get my degree. That was ’59. Fall of ’59. (laughs) So I was -- [doing-doing?] -- my eyes were going
like that. Anyway -- so I did what any smart person would do. I just cinched up my belt and I sent telegrams. One was to Deer Park School District. It was real crazy. I had only a degree in psy-- I didn’t have a degree, okay -- but I had a major in psychology -- not quite my degree. (laughter) But anyway. So I -- it was a year (inaudible) -- Houston Independent School District was going to hire me; Deer Park was going to hire me. And I had decided, well, hell, I didn’t decide anything -- (laughter) but what happened was -- I sent telegrams to both of them, immediately -- and it said on there, “I have failed my Spanish. I will not get my degree. Will you still hire me? Emma L. Linn.”

And they both wrote back and said, “Yes, come on. At a reduced salary, but we’ll hire you,” so by then -- I just got on that bus and I took the Houston job, because I didn’t have a car and I knew I could -- they had a good metro system, so -- anyway. So I got to Houston and so I was going to finish that Spanish, that first semester that I was teaching in Houston -- I was teaching -- it was a great job and all -- but anyway -- I just messed around, didn’t finish it then. Next semester I sign up for it again at my -- what do they call it? Correspondence. Mess
around. Didn’t pass it. Didn’t -- I’m sorry -- didn’t even do anything and it didn’t even finish enroll in either semester. (laughter) So then that summer I signed up for Spanish and I lived in these apartments and then right across from me, in the same apartments lived one of the guys that was from the consulate of Venezuela and one of them from the consulate of Cuba -- and that was sort of iffy then, you know, there were problems with Cuba. So anyway -- I signed up for it, to take it in summer course and next to me sat this nice woman from Italy. She was really -- and spoke Spanish but with an Italian accent. She was an opera star and she’d say, “Como-mo esta usted?” (laughter) you know, and -- so I’d sit right close to her and every day I’d say something really smart in Spanish, you know. And so the professor took a shine to me. So we dated. We never even kissed. He was a very proper Spaniard, but his attitude was -- you know, there shouldn’t be a woman in college. You should be home making babies. But I was, you know, a hottie. I had a great body. I had big boobs, you know, (laughter) blue eyes, blonde hair and he was smitten by me. (laughter) So I made an A. And got my degree.

Q: There you go. (laughs)

A: And lived happily ever after. (laughter)
Q: Just get it and go. (laughs) Oh my goodness.

A: But that job, I loved that first job. I loved every job I’ve ever had. But that was a great job.

Q: Well, would you mind going into some more detail about that job? What it was and what you -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: Yeah. So I get to Houston. I was riding the bus, two hours, every day -- and so I go down to the Psychology Department in downtown Houston. Her name is Dr. [Sadie Aaron?] and she said, “Well, I want you to go out to the slums,” because they didn’t have any type of special education in the slums. All of it was in the richer part of town. And they said, she said, “I want you to go out to this school and it’s out where there’s a gang, the [Lower Propa?] gang, and I want you to meet with every teacher and look at all those files, for the children they think that need special education,” what they call then, “for mentally retarded,” mildly mentally retarded. Well, IQs specifically, they had to be between 70 and 50. Okay. I’ve never even looked at a record. I had never even -- nothing. I mean, I just was -- and I said, “Okay,” (laughter) so I went out there and I met with all those teachers and, and looked at the records of those students and I picked out -- there was maybe 47 or 57 folders -- and
so what they did was then -- they brought out psychologists to test them all and they tested them all and they all end up fitting right into that category, except for one.

[Diane Dennis?]. (laughter) I love Diane Dennis. Her score is in the 40s. So she was moderately, what they called “moderately impaired” -- so, I kept her anyway and didn’t tell anybody. (laughter) So it was just -- you know, she was never going to -- they didn’t even have anything at that point. So I just kept her in there and I just kept my mouth shut. And I also have a black girl to -- kept her in there and never told a soul. But I mean nothing. I never even had a course in teaching or anything like that.

So I -- made up a curriculum. They were from like six years old on up to 12. Twelve or 13. And so they gave me a barracks. And they said, okay, they’re yours. So -- I was there with those kids in that barracks and I fixed up this -- like curriculum. But I made it up myself. It was like reading and teaching the alphabet and then reading, teaching the reading and I did it using the catechism, because a lot of them are Hispanic and I knew they had to learn the catechism, so they were very motivated. And I know it’s against the law, but what the heck, (laughter)
you know. And then I also did all kinds of things like -- just to teach them, you know, to wash their hands and stuff like that. I’d give them prizes and I spent every cent I owned, made, on like combs and for the older ones, some deodorant. Some -- what do you -- clippers, fingernail clippers and stuff like that -- and so I did all that kind of stuff and they loved it and then I’d meet them on Sundays with their families at Hermann Park for barbecues and stuff like that. So that was fun, but -- Diane Dennis, who was my favorite, we were having lunch -- well, it was Thanksgiving and the day before Thanksgiving, Wednesday -- and I had saved up all my money.

There were no free lunches in those days, so I bought every kid a lunch that day. With the turkey and the dressing and the gravy and everything. And so we ate -- we sat down and we had those long tables with about 10 people at a table. And one end of that table -- we all had our trays and we sat down and I’m sitting here, Diane Dennis there -- the [Hoyes?] twins here and that end of the table falls down. And our trays just went zoom, zoom, zoom, zoom. A big pile of food all the way down there and me and the (inaudible) Hoyes boys are just about to cry. And Diane Dennis is standing there and she said, “Dr. Linn, if you had picked
up your tray like me, it wouldn’t have rolled down the
table,” (laughter) and there was there Hoyes boys said,
“Dr. Linn, she’s the dumbest of them all and now she’s the
smartest.” (laughter) Oh, so that was great. Anyway.
Boy, that was a good experience.
Q: Sounds great. And what were the age ranges of the --
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)
A: Those were elementary school ages -- and like I think it
was like six to 12 or something. Yeah, something like
that. Some of them were mature, sexually mature -- or you
know, prebu-- prepubescent -- some were just little bitty,
tiny kids, you know.
Q: Okay. So pretty wide range there.
A: Yeah.
Q: And about how long did you work at that job?
A: At that job -- I worked two years and I loved it and then I
got promoted out of it. I did so well. That’s when, you
know, I went to UCLA for emotionally disturbed children --
they didn’t have any in Texas. So then I came back to
Houston and set up the first classes for emotionally
disturbed children. To -- junior high and in an elementary
school. And I taught one year at one and one at the other,
and then I got a, a fantastic fellowship to UT
Q: Wow, that’s wonderful.
A: Never owed a cent and it paid for my room and I was able to buy a car and it was amazing.  (laughter)

Q: Oh my God. So -- I know that, you know, you were the councilwoman. Can I ask, what led up to that?

A: I was always involved in politics. Always. And here in Austin -- I first of all got involved with the -- it was then called, it’s now the Travis County Historic Commission [sic]. Yeah. And I was appointed to that by Richard Moya. I was really, really active in minority campaigns and helped to run those campaigns and helped get those people elected, you know, and we all worked together. Also I was really working with the Democratic Party, trying to get representation for women on all the boards of the Democratic Party and they elected delegates and so -- (laughs) the women were the alternates and their husbands were the delegates, and these were all mainly white people. And so -- well, we had still credentials. Take that out. I know you can’t. (laughter) But anyway, what happened was, we were able to get on the floor and vote and -- change the rules to where delegates -- what was happening -- all the husbands were the delegates -- and their wives were the alternates. And that was not right. And so we changed the rules of the party, that you had to have equal representation by minority groups, with females, with gays,
and all of this. And so we worked really hard and that was the Democratic Party. And that’s, you know, what led them to -- and I worked with a lot of the people, with the Democratic Party and so they suggested that I -- you know, run for office. And I was really involved in historic preservation at that time and Austin didn’t have any kind of a -- laws to protect really beautiful, beautiful buildings. And so I wrote with [Alan Minter?] -- we wrote the first ordinance that Austin ever had for the protection of historic buildings. And so I was appointed to that commission and then I ran for office and won.

Q: And when, what year was that?

A: That was ’75 and I was in the council ’75, ’76, ’77 and during that period of time we were able to get really good preservation. We were able to get laws that regulated the -- boards and commissions -- that they would have to be, you know, represent minorities. That we had to have senior citizens -- we had to have gays and lesbians -- we had to have mobility-impaired people and we really watched out for all those groups then, yeah. Human -- human rights is one of the things we did. And my assistant, Linda Cangelosi -- who’s an attorney here in town now -- she and I wrote the first financial disclosure ordinance that Austin had ever had. There was no ordinance to regulate financial
disclosure on -- and the sovereign boards or commissions -- or the council members. So that riled a lot of feathers. Yeah.

Q: Sure. Can you explain to me a little bit about what that is and kind of what went into creating that?
A: Okay. Financial disclosure was -- (clears throat) where is your money? What is your money involved in? In other words, if you did not have financial disclosure, I could own a piece of property out here and sell it to the city for much more money than it was worth, because I’m a council member and I can influence the other people. Or if I have a lot of interest, stock in some company and then the city wants to get a big contract with it and then I work to get that passed without anybody knowing that I’m connected to that company.

Q: Okay. And when did you all help get this financial disclosure agreement into place?
A: Well, it probably was in maybe ’75.
Q: Seventy-five as well? Okay.
A: Uh-huh. Could have been ’76. But I’m not sure. And we did -- some really interesting ordinances and started some really -- really good things that were going. Yep. But that was one that was really important. Yeah.
Q: A shining moment. (laughter) Would you be willing to share with me, whether good or bad, any stories during your time as a councilwoman? Just of things that went wrong; things that went right. Anything like that?

A: Oh sure, let’s see. Well, one of the shockers -- because it’s pretty funny today -- what’s going on in the world today -- but one of my assistants and I -- I have a building on Sixth Street and that’s where I lived, up on the third floor. Another official -- two officials from the city, two men -- came up and visited us after a long, long meeting and they asked us if we’d go to bed with them. (laughter) They didn’t mash on us or anything. They just asked us if --

Q: Right up. (laughs)

A: Right up. You know, that was -- (laughter)

Q: So classy. (laughter)

A: Let’s see. That was pretty funny. What else happened? There were so many crazy things that happened in those days. Well, two of the council members were getting into a big fistfight and I had to separate them. That was pretty exciting.

Q: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: (laughs) And I had just been elected and it was within the first month or two and we were having a retreat somewhere -
we stopped all that, by the way. This was when the council spent lavishly. This -- I mean, lavishly. And we’d go on retreats where -- you didn’t go on retreats. (laughter) Here, this really nice thing out here, you know. But anyway -- they were -- we were trying to save --

[Charles Betts?] and I -- he was the head of Franklin Savings and there was this beautiful, beautiful house that was over on 38th Street and they were getting ready to tear it down. It’s now on South Lamar and -- no -- South Congress and Oltorf and it’s a beautiful, beautiful Victorian house.

So we finally got somebody from St. Angelo who could move it -- a great mover. He came here and they put at that house -- on this huge, gigantic structure and, and took it across the Congress Avenue Bridge. Well, Congress Avenue Bridge had been condemned and it had to be -- part of it redone and everything. But anyway, so we got it okayed for this big movement of this giant house to go across there. And I had to slip away from the retreat and come to the city and then Charles Betts and I just sort of sat on one of the edges of that house as they were moving it. And somehow somebody got a picture of it, but thank God they didn’t publish it because everybody would have gone crazy
with me doing that. (laughter) But this one guy on Congress Avenue, we were standing there and he told us, he said, “My God, they’re moving the Capitol,” (laughter) oh Lord, that was so funny. My God, they’re moving the Capitol. (laughs)

Q: Moving it across the bridge. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: (laughs) Anyways. So that was pretty funny, but there were always things like that going on, you know. One of them was a big controversial thing was the drinking after the 2:00-in-the-morning drinking. And I think most of us were drinkers. And so (laughs) the people -- would come down there and they would -- the people that were against it, you couldn’t believe the things that people would say -- that their husband died of cancer because he drank. So and so became schizophrenic because he drank. And it would just go on and on and we would go, sometimes start in the morning and end at 2:00, 3:00 at night. I think they still do that sometimes. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) (laughter) But anyway, we had some pretty interesting things. I’m trying to think -- some of the things we did were very controversial. Like drinking. That was a big, big one. Like drinking. Another one had to do with Martin Luther King Boulevard. Changing the name. It was 19th
Street. And we -- changed that name and it just so happened that that was right when I got on the council. And at that point the vote was -- I think four to three. And if it’s four to three, or it may have been five, but I can’t remember, but anyway, it was stalled. And so then I -- my first vote was -- I broke the tie, whatever it was. So they then were going to name it. Well, what happened was -- Dr. [Seagrave?] -- was the president of Huston-Tillotson, which is the African American university. Now it’s integrated.

But he brought a whole group of his students and they were all dressed up in ties and dresses and beautiful and everything and he had always been a really good friend of the Mayor Butler. Mayor Butler was proposing that they could name it Martin Luther King Boulevard, but up to IH-35 and then the rest of the way it would still be 19th Street. So Dr. Sea-- I want to say Seagrave -- what is it, baby doll? Brought all of their students up there and of course, I would assume that the mayor, who was Mayor Butler, thought that they were going to support his proposal. (laughter) And so Dr. Sea-- (inaudible) that’s because I seen so (inaudible) -- anyway, the president of Huston-Tillotson would get up there and he started speaking
so -- a beautiful speech about how that would be divisive. That it would be united if you would name the street, all of the distance -- and speaking -- and suddenly he started to crumble -- and he died right there -- his heart stopped. So I go jump off of the (inaudible) and run down and start giving him mouth-to-mouth and a nurse, a male nurse, because we were doing a gay ordinance and (inaudible) was there, so he comes and he’s giving -- the heart -- resuscitation and I’m doing the mouth resuscitation. Well, there was a photographer who took a picture of that and it went out all over the country and all, you know, and man -- I got threats like you would not believe. I got like notes -- I saved them all for a while -- I think I’ve still got somewhere this -- “You are a nigger lover,” “You’ve fucked with niggers to get on the council,” you know, stuff like that. I mean, just awful, you know. And some poor mentally ill man tried to make a bomb and put it on my front door. I mean, it was just one thing after another like that.

Q: And this -- so did that eventually subside? Or did that continue? Did treatment like that continue throughout --

A: No.

Q: No?

A: Throughout my council days.
Q: Yes.

A: Well, you know, I was known as several things, but that was one of them. Yeah. But -- now I think, you know, most people who, you know, know about it now appreciate it. And probably the other people are dead. (laughter)

Q: Oh, man. Okay. So I would also like to ask you a little bit about -- kind of going back to what we were talking about earlier -- so you talked about how you were heavily involved with historic preservation in Austin. What got you interested in that in the first place and (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) joining some of the things --

A: Okay. I had visited a friend of mine in Philadelphia and he had -- and I don’t know if he had restored it, but he lived in a three-story building and had converted it into apartments and a business on the first floor and two apartments upstairs and I thought, gee, you know, that’s really an interesting thing. Anyway, so -- I had this friend who was interested -- oh, I know what it was -- she was an attorney for the people who owned this three-story building on Sixth Street and it had been started with the wrecking ball. You know, and there was a big hole in the back of it and everything and so -- she had bought that building for nothing, I think 10,000 dollars or something like that. So anyway -- she wanted to restore that
building, but she had to have somebody that had collateral
and a job and making money -- somebody that could invest in
it and get a loan, which was interesting because I said,
“Okay, I’ll do it,” and -- but the interesting thing was,
we couldn’t get a loan. A femme sole could not, no matter
how solvent you were, you could not get a loan. Femme sole
meant single woman. A single woman could not -- this was
‘68, I believe. And it even continued for -- you know,
it’s not true now, but then -- you had to be married and
not only that -- your husband had to cosign if you were
going to get a loan. So femme sole, you couldn’t.

So anyway -- she got me because I had enough money and
prestige and you know -- I don’t know what, but anyway --
so the two of us together then, amassed our fortune, which
probably was three or four dollars apiece now -- (laughter)
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible) not very -- but we, we
got together and then we got this guy who was -- a wealthy
man -- Eli Garza -- and his family owned all that Brodie
property out in South Austin. And he cosigned for us. And
so we then had it restored and he was the person in charge
of then the restoration of it and we got it restored and we
got it named historic and I did all the research on that
building. The library. And so I got really interested in
it and then I realized, you know, we didn’t even have an ordinance in -- we could -- anyway, we got it declared a state historic place, but the city didn’t have anything, so I worked and got that passed.

Q: That’s very cool.
A: With the help, by the way, of a bunch of people -- Alan Minter was the one who -- he and I wrote it together.

Q: That’s cool.
A: So that’s how it happened.

Q: That’s wonderful. Always appreciate --
A: And now it’s Roppolo’s Pizza and he leases it from me. Uh-huh. And it’s still three stories, but it, you know, it’s a great place. I loved living down there. The first Christmas I was there, there was a -- my doorbell downstairs buzzes upstairs and I went down and it was the Black Panthers, bringing me Christmas dinner.

Q: Oh, wow! (laughs)
A: The Black Panthers.

Q: Did you have any prior relationships or like -- friendships or anything with any of the Black Panthers or know anybody from the Black Panthers?
A: No, but recently I met Chance the Rapper. (laughter) I’m going to tell you --

Q: That’s cool! (laughs)
A: It was really crazy. I had to go down to Houston for checkups. I’ve had five kinds of cancer. And I’m fine; I’m healthy as a horse. (laughter) But anyway, I go down there -- so I was flying back and there were these two nice young black guys and they sat down beside me and we talked for probably an hour and a half or something like that and then I asked them what they did and they told me, but I couldn’t understand what they said, you know. Anyway, so we talked and everything and then because I’m a cripple, I get on the plane first and I go sit down and they come in the front and they said, “We want to sit with that woman!” anyway, so (laughter) I already had people sitting there.

Anyway, so everybody waved and everybody laughed. So they go sit down. So the next morning I go to lecture and after lecture I come out and I had brought my paper -- huh -- I had brought my paper there, the Austin Statesman and I pop it down and there, on the -- it must have been Thursday, where they have that extra section, with the thing on the front of it -- and there was this guy’s picture. (laughter) So I’m looking at it and there he is and I’m thinking -- and my teaching assistant is there and I said, “Oh my God, that was the boy I was talking to,” (laughter) you know, this young man, and I said, “We had the best
talk,” (laughter) and they said, “Oh my God, Dr. Linn, you’re shitting me, aren’t you?” (laughter) And I said, “No I’m not,” and they said, “That is Chance the Rapper,” and I said, “Well, I knew he said something about rap, but I couldn’t understand what he said,” you know, and it was Chance the Rapper.

Q: That’s so funny. (laughs)

A: No. No, I wouldn’t -- I didn’t know any of the -- I knew some really -- leaders -- young black people -- but I never knew any of the Black Panthers. But they must have known me.

Q: Apparently. (laughter) Did you work with any -- anybody in particular -- so many people of color -- during that time to -- any sort of like, to help any sort of activism on their front?

A: Yes.

Q: Yes?

A: Most of them are dead and I’m trying to remember their names.

Q: Well, if you don’t remember their names, just anything that you -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) if nothing else.

A: Yeah. One of them may still have a paper here in town and I worked with him. I worked with Jimmy Snell, Johnny Trevino, with -- and Rich Moya. I worked with -- Mrs.
Rice. And Mrs. -- that was [Friendly Rice and?] I can’t remember the other woman’s name. I worked with a lot of people at the precinct level. Yeah. Of the -- the black leaders and the Hispanic leaders, yeah. I was probably closer -- to those people than I was to -- probably Anglos. (laughs) It was really, really interesting was that my biggest supporters were the black precincts.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah. I would just win those overwhelmingly and -- what happened was, to get me defeated, the conservatives got a woman who ran as a family woman. Uh-huh. And that split the women’s vote and then of course, the guy -- we had to have a runoff. But anyway, yeah, so that was pretty interesting. Her name was [Francie Breyfogle?]. I never will forget her. (laughter) But I never had any bitterness (laughs) about politics. (laughter) Since I’ve been a little girl and seen everything come and go and come and go, you know, it’s just, it’s just amusing to me.

Q: Well, during your (inaudible) time as a councilwoman, again, were there any moments in particular you can think of -- I know I kind of already asked you this, but -- any moments in particular you can think of that -- where you being a woman has affected any decisions that were made or
-- how you were treated by other council people or by just
the general public?

A: Oh! (laughs) I’ll give you a good example. I’ll try and
disguise this in some way. Because the guys -- who said
this is well known.

Q: Give him a fake name. (laughs)

A: Well, it’s his position. I can’t give you a fake name --

Q: Okay, gotcha. (laughs)

A: But he was very important.

Q: Sure. I’ll trust you on that. (laughs)

A: There’s no way I can tell you this, but I guess I can.

Q: It’s whatever you’re comfortable saying. We can -- you
don’t have to if you don’t want to. (laughs)

A: Well, of course, it has to do with me being a woman and
it’s just they said -- let’s just say there was a doctor
who my campaign manager went to for his flight inspection
and this doctor said, if she had a good -- (laughter) fuck
-- I’m going to quote him --

Q: (laughs) That’s fine. (laughs)

A: She wouldn’t be like she is. And my (laughs) campaign
manager -- he laughed so hard about that. We laughed and
laughed and laughed. (laughter) But anyway. So that,
yeah, there was a lot of stuff about, you know, being a
woman and I was the second woman and the first woman got
treated as badly as I did, but she was much more -- I knew her real well, Emma Long. And boy, she was a pistol, too. (laughter) But anyway, that was something and then -- then of course, there were things which -- I’m not a Catholic -- but I’d get stuff about being a Catholic, you know -- and she’s a Catholic, you know, she’s a Catholic. And then of course, the -- liking, you know, Hispanics are liking black people, you know, and -- that sort of thing.

Q: Why did people think you were Catholic?
A: Because I teach at St. Edwards.

Q: Oh, for that reason specifically? Okay. (laughter) Well, let’s, I guess, move onto that then. So after your time as a councilwoman, did you start teaching at St. Edwards?
A: No. I was already teaching at St. Edwards.

Q: You were already teaching. Okay.
A: I was already teaching there. And -- St. Edwards was really good, because they let me off to teach, I think it was either one or two courses, which the full load out there, you teach four courses. And so I think I just taught one course out there and there was a good thing that happened, though, was it -- I was able to appoint, for the first time, one of the brothers out there to one of the commissions. He was the archives man and he went to one of the commissions and I was able to get other people
appointed to commissions and so it gave St. Edwards a little up in the community, because they kept seeing the name St. Edwards, so that was good. And -- What happened was, I was teaching there, then I was elected and -- so that sort of got really things -- helped out St. Edwards a bit, yeah. Anyway, it was, yeah -- so I was already teaching.

Q: Okay, you started teaching there and then you were an elected to council (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) after. Okay. So you did both. Was that a lot? Or was it, you were able to pretty easily handled that (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

A: Oh, it was easy to handle that and I had -- you had, in those days a council aide. But I was putting in about -- probably 60 hours a week for council stuff. But I was still able to do my St. Edwards work. But what was so fascinating was that -- I think we made -- I can’t remember how much we made -- it was like 600 dollars a month or something like that. And I mean, it -- people never realized, it was 24 hours almost. We were always on call, always on call. And when I first was elected, in April, I guess it was -- and there may have even been a runoff in May -- it was graduation at St. Edwards and it flooded that day. It totally flooded. And so I couldn’t make it to the
graduation and I called the dean and the dean was -- (laughs) he couldn’t make it either, (laughter) so I didn’t worry about missing it. But anyway -- I immediately went to the Red Cross -- the Red Cross headquarters and shelter, which was somewhere up around Breckenridge or something and it was -- so I go in there and there was this woman who was with the Red Cross and she was real tall. And she slapped the shit out of me. (laughter) I mean, you know -- and I said, you know, I’m in (inaudible) -- is there anything I can do for you?

Q: Oh my goodness!

A: Like that. Well, I was so stunned -- I didn’t say a word and I just turned around and left. (laughs) But Lord, you know. I had never had that happen.

Q: Right. Was -- do you happen to know like -- do you have an inkling as to why she did that?

A: No.

Q: No?

A: I could have stayed and asked. (laughter) Didn’t think so. She might have banned me another time. (laughs)

Q: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) -- [shook?] hands. Goodness gracious, wow. Well, that is interesting.

A: Yeah. (laughter) I don’t think I’ll ever forget her face. (laughter) Come to think of it, you know.
Q: (laughs) Yeah, I imagine not. Goodness. Let’s see. Let me see what other questions I have for you.

A: And I was on two different councils.

Q: Oh, were you?

A: They were totally, totally different. The first one, the mayor was -- was mainly was men. And -- they were, the majority was conservative. There was Roy Butler, who was a very wealthy man and he was the mayor. [Laurel Everman?], who was very, very wealthy. Bud Dryden -- who was a wealthy physician here in town. And -- Bob Binder, who’s an attorney, but was fairly liberal. And there was Jeff Friedman, who was very liberal. And -- gosh, I can’t remember who else was on it, but it was mainly very, very -- the conservative, the majority of it was with conservative. And then the next one, the majority were liberal. And that was -- Jeff Friedman was the mayor. And he was, of course, you know, the University of Texas students were really supportive of us. Mm-hmm.

Q: Okay. Was there anything -- that you’re most proud of having gotten, having done during your times as councilwoman?

A: I think so, like -- to be sure that all the different groups in Austin, the mobility-impaired, you know, I went and rode on their buses and went in a wheelchair to places,
to see what all needed to be done and we really did some changing and then for senior citizens, anti-discrimination was really important to me. That took in, you know, almost every group that you could consider. And the financial disclosure, I thought was really, really good. Yeah. And those were things I really worked hard on.

Q: Was there anything that you wanted to get done but weren’t able to? Or things that you just -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah. I had a big deal. I proposed -- and at this time the main weapon that was used here for suicides and robberies were Saturday Night Specials. And you could buy this little gun at the gun stores for almost nothing. And so this was one of the weapons that the suicide people were using -- people who committed suicide. And I proposed a 24-hour waiting period. Well, let me tell you, I woke up one (laughter) Sunday morning, opened that Sunday paper and there was a huge -- or a page, taken out on me -- Emma-Lou Linn is trying to take away our mothers, our pumpkin pies, our rights -- I mean, it was just incredible.

Q: Oh goodness, yes. Texas (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) (laughs) --

A: Let me tell you -- I never even got a second on that motion.
Q: Right. Oh, goodness. Did something like that ever get passed, afterwards?
A: Gosh, no.
Q: No? Okay.
A: In the United States? No.
Q: No. (laughs)
A: No. Uh-uh-uh. Boy, is that something. (whistles) And I sure got threats about that, too -- yeah, yeah, yeah.
Q: Yeah. Especially here in Texas. (laughs) Yeah, well.
A: (laughs) One of the most hilarious things -- no, I’m not going to tell you that. (laughter) I’ll tell you later.
Q: Okay. All right. Sounds good.
A: [Buzzy Butt’s Pizza Palace?] -- I’m going to tell you about later.
Q: (laughs) I’ll remind you. (laughs) So is there anything of note that you’ve noticed has changed over the years, as far as things that you -- were passionate about in politics or in activism or anything like that? That’s changed like in a good way or a bad way over the years? (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)
A: Well, I think, really -- just recently, with the politics -- has really, I think -- with Trump being elected and his rhetoric and his lack of intelligence and his -- inability to control himself -- I think that that has aroused the
worst of the worst in the United States. People who are bigoted and people who are prejudiced -- people who are violent -- people who are not intelligent and not educated -- you know, that’s really changed things. And I just never thought I’d live to see the day with such overt hate, you know. I mean, it’s worse than when I was a little girl.

Q: Really?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: Did you -- either growing up or any time during the ’60s and ’70s, ever witness anything -- overtly violent or shocking, as far as -- with political leanings and things like that?

A: Well, I’m trying to think. It’s trick or treaters.

Q: Oh yeah, it’s time for it, isn’t it? (laughs)

A: It is. I’ve seen some fights. But it was like at, by some of the people they used to put at the polls, to intimidate minorities from voting. They used to put -- and still do -- not here, usually, but in some rural communities they still do have people that go stand there like goons -- that intimidate minorities and you still see that, still do. Yeah, in rural communities, you know.

Q: Well -- let’s see. So now, your life right now, you’re still teaching at --
A: St. Edwards.

Q: St. Edwards. And you said, how long have you -- or you told me earlier, but how long have you been teaching there again? (laughs)

A: I'd say -- 46 years.

Q: Forty-six years?


Q: Okay. And you’re a professor in?

A: Psychology.

Q: Psychology. And so you’re still -- doing those kind of classes that you originally taught, back when you first --

A: Not at all.

Q: No? It’s very different?

A: About -- yeah. And I always think, well, I don’t want to stagnate. So -- what I’d do is -- because I have to take like -- 20 or 21 hours of continuing education every year, so I change my focus about every 10 years. So that I’ll get into a new -- now I do -- I’m doing a course right now on serial killers.

Q: Oh, interesting. Okay. Have you had a favorite course that you’ve taught before?

A: I have never, ever had a course I didn’t like.

Q: That’s good, that’s good. (laughs)
A: I have liked -- I’ve taught everything from introduction, which I loved -- statistics, research methods, senior research, abnormal -- all kinds -- I’ve taught everything. I’ve never had any that I didn’t like.

Q: That’s awesome. Have you had any experiences as a teacher than have just really stood out to you? Over the years? Maybe at this university in particular?

A: Well, you know, I have students who have been extremely successful and I absolutely love that and perhaps some of -- the most interesting two people I’ve had were teaching assistants of mine and I think I turned them into foodies. (laughter) With my teaching assistants, we always go and eat somewhere different, you know, like Odd Duck, places like that. East Side King. And these two women got their degrees and they moved to New York. And they both now have broken up with their old boyfriends, have new boyfriends. They’re both living in New York -- they started out, I think they lived together. They both went to Columbia, got their master’s degrees. They both now work in the city, live in the city and they are total foodies. (laughter) And so that is one of the most interesting -- then I have some that are professors, you know, and -- all kinds of -- and I love that. But one of the great honors I’ve had at St. Edwards is twice -- well, twice I was like -- the
Professor of the Year, which was wonderful. But then I got this really beautiful award as -- what’s it called? Career -- being a professor or something like that. You know. And it was -- that’s wonderful. And then one of my favorites is, I got elected to the St. Edwards Athletic Hall of Fame. And that was because -- when I first was at St. Edwards back in the ’70s, I was the assistant volleyball coach and we went to the national tournament and I was one of the first women on the Athletic Council and then I -- for the basketball team, the first basketball women’s team St. Edwards had, I had to go over town, all over town and get -- donations, to buy their uniforms and so got them their uniforms. And then the cross-country team, they didn’t have the money for warm-ups, and they were going to Wisconsin. And then I did that and -- drove the girls into, you know, different places and so I got this wonderful Hall of Fame. So that was real nice.

Q: Wow. That’s great. So you were a coach of?
A: Volleyball.

Q: Volleyball. Was that the only one you coached was volleyball? Or are you basketball as well?
A: I did also -- (laughs) I had forgotten that, yeah -- the basketball team, yeah, that’s right, yeah.

Q: How many years did you do that for?
A: Oh, God. Probably about four, maybe. Four or five, yeah. That was when they first started. And -- when they first started, the coach was also the P.E. teacher and she was also the tennis coach. So I was sort of helping, you know, her for several years until finally I think they let her teach maybe two or maybe one course and then we’d coach. Yeah. Many years ago. Uh-huh.

Q: That’s very cool. So now our -- you advocated for a lot of different issues as a councilwoman and (inaudible) your life and especially for -- anti-discrimination and things like that. Are you still involved in any activism projects today?

A: Any what projects?

Q: Any activism projects today or in your daily life?

A: Well, I’m still pretty picky about making sure that, that there’s representation on boards and commissions. For instance, I just sort of -- like the little worm, working behind (laughter) the scenes, you know. And one of the things that concerns me right now is -- that I’m going to look at the boards and commissions that the City Council has -- with this code that’s coming up now. And what the neighborhoods and make sure that the commission that they have set up has representation on it. And you know -- (laughs) I keep an eye out and I sort of like go beneath
the radar, you know, and I do little simple things like hint, and, you know, a lot of times if you do that, you can avoid the storm.

Q: Sure, sure. That’s good. That’s good. (laughs) We certainly need that. Dr. Linn, as we’re kind of wrapping up here, is there anything at all that you would like to have me include or mention in my final interview?

A: Well, I don’t know.

Q: No?

A: I guess you could say I like cats.

Q: (laughs) That’s a very good thing. (laughter) I like cats, too.

A: I also train animals.

Q: Do you train animals?

A: I can train animals and I’ve trained her to retrieve (laughter) and she retrieves too much.

Q: (laughs) She retrieves everything now.

A: And I -- I’ve really trained a lot of animals. And even in my office had rats before. In mazes, yeah, that we built. Because at St. Edwards we don’t have an animal lab at all. And I am -- treat them very humanely. I love rats.

Q: I do, too. I used to have rats as well.

A: I love rats. Uh-huh, yep. They’re big and I have a bunch of them. They’re right in my (inaudible) (laughter).
Q: Different kind of rat. (laughs)
A: I don’t want to hurt them, so I have -- they’re supposed to work, but they don’t, but these sonic blasts that the movement is supposed to -- and I don’t think it has anything in there. (laughter) Just a waste of money.
Q: (laughs) Well, I think that’s all I really have for you today, Dr. Linn.
A: Well, if you come up with something that you didn’t do or you didn’t, you know, and you talk to your professor, just give me a call.
Q: Absolutely. Thank you so much.
A: You’re welcome.
Q: I appreciate your time. This has been so fun and I really appreciate it.
A: I’ve enjoyed this.
Q: I have, too.
A: A girl from Conroe.
Q: Yes, yes, ma’am. (laughs)
A: That’s good. And what do your parents do?
Q: Well, I’m going to wrap this up real fast and I will get back to you on that, but -- but thank you so much for your time and -- that’s it. (laughs)
A: Thank you. Thank you.
Q: Thank you.
END OF AUDIO FILE