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Oral history interview with Alice Rooney, 2011 Aug. 5-12

Contact Information
Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington. D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/askus

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Alice Rooney on August 5 and 12, 2011. The interview took place in Seattle, Washington, and was conducted by Lloyd Herman for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The Archives of American Art has reviewed the transcript and has made corrections and emendations. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

LLOYD HERMAN: This is Lloyd Herman interviewing Alice Rooney for the Archives of American Art in her home in Seattle on August 5, 2011. And, Alice, I think since we're going to kind of go from the very beginning, if you would give your full name and when and where you were born.

ALICE ROONEY: My full name is Alice Gregor Rooney. Gregor was my maiden name—G-R-E-G-O-R. I was born in Seattle in 1926 on July 5.

LLOYD HERMAN: And would you tell a little bit about your parents, because I think that's an interesting story too.

ALICE ROONEY: My parents came from Norway. My father was the third of six brothers on a farm in Northern Norway. And he—they have, actually, the largest farm in Northern Norway. And I discovered recently it's been in our family since 1854, which is quite a long time. My father decided to come to this country because he—although primogeniture is not the law, it's certainly the tradition, so he knew he wasn't going to get the farm, and he also didn't want to go in the Norwegian Army. So he came to this country and he worked on a ranch in Santa Barbara, and he worked in the woods in Oregon. He went to Bering Sea as a fisherman and then he came back to Seattle. And in the meanwhile my mother, whom he had known in Norway—and actually he asked her to wait for him when he left for America and she said, "Nothing doing." [Laughs.] She wasn't going to sit out the best years of her life waiting for somebody who might not come back, which he did come back. And she happened to have a cousin on Bainbridge Island. And they got together and they got married in 1925 and they moved to a house a block away from Ballard High School. And that's where they lived when I was born. And so, my father started out as a laborer in the building industry and then became a carpenter, and then a skilled carpenter and then a contractor. And he decided to leave the contracting business. He was building a house for William J. Bain of the famed Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson architectural firm. And a woman literally changed the location of her kitchen four times, and even though my father got paid for it, he said, "That's it." And he started building houses on a speculative basis and did very well. I think that he probably had no idea he would do so well. [00:02:40]

LLOYD HERMAN: When you—were you the firstborn, then?

ALICE ROONEY: Yes, I'm the oldest. And then I have a brother who's two years and nine months younger than I am.

LLOYD HERMAN: Of course, as a child you probably don't know whether you were being taught any traditional Norwegian ways, but I'm curious.

ALICE ROONEY: Unfortunately, they didn't teach me Norwegian. Actually, my mother was a great cook and she cooked both Norwegian and American, but they both really wanted to raise an American child.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And, in fact, I think they were really proud of my brother because he was a football player and they got lots of—and once, when I grew up, my mother talked about how hard it was to raise a child in this society after growing up someplace else because, she said, "You never knew whether you wanted them to not do something because it was really the wrong thing to do or because you just weren't used to it and it was a different part of your culture." And she was—my mother was really beautiful, and they had a very nice life.

LLOYD HERMAN: Do you remember—she, I assume, didn't work out of the home.

ALICE ROONEY: No, she didn't.

LLOYD HERMAN: And what sort of chores—and tell me a little bit what home life was like, if you had chores or—[00:04:04]

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah. I did the dishes every night. My brother didn't, but I did. And I think I made my own bed. I don't recall—I don't recall a lot of home chores, just that we lived—let's see, I remember one, two, three—three places we lived. In the third place my father built our house during the Depression over on Sunset Hill in Ballard for $3,000. Recently, meaning a couple of years ago, I happened to be talking to Dick Mitchell, who is a real estate man in Ballard, and I said, "I'd love to know what the last price that house sold for," and he said, "Give me the address and I'll look it up for you." It sold for $489,000. [They laugh.] And it's a little house. You know where the outlook is on 77th and 34th, up in Sunset? Well, you—

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah, I live there.

ALICE ROONEY: —oh, and we just lived two blocks over on 32nd right there.

LLOYD HERMAN: Did you learn any of the kind of home arts, like sewing? Did your mother sew?

ALICE ROONEY: Well, my mother was very talented, and my aunt, my father's sister, was a great weaver. In fact, she was president of the Weavers Guild.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh. Well, what I'm really getting at is what was your earliest exposure to the arts, and how did—since your career has been—

ALICE ROONEY: Actually, I did think, when I was in grade school, I was going to be a writer. And, actually, I gave it to Robin otherwise—we did a little book, which was really funny, and I included a couple of—a story and a poem and did the illustration. And the story was about the Revolutionary War twins of 1786. [Laughs.] But handcrafts and home, domestic arts and any kind of arts skipped a whole generation with me. My mother had—in fact, you can even see some of her embroidery around here. And she was very good at it, and Robin is very good at it. [00:06:06]

LLOYD HERMAN: Robin is?

ALICE ROONEY: My daughter.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And it skipped a whole generation with me. I'm lucky I can type and cook.

LLOYD HERMAN: So your earliest aspiration, then—thinking about the arts or anything—was to be a writer.

ALICE ROONEY: Right. And when I grew up and went to the UW [University of Washington], I remember the first paper I ever wrote at the UW was a review of—our paper about Richard Wright's book, *Native Son*. And that also cemented my feelings about race at that time.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh. And tell me about that.

ALICE ROONEY: Well, I just have always been very strongly, you know, in favor of equal rights and all that kind of thing. So then, when I graduated from the UW, four of us from Seattle decided to live together in New York. And I have to say I was still romantic about writers like Scott Fitzgerald. Um—

LLOYD HERMAN: Let's backtrack a little bit and do more about your education. Did you go to a large school, elementary and high school or—

ALICE ROONEY: I think they were kind of average for that size. When I graduated from Ballard, there were 484 students—

LLOYD HERMAN: Ballard High School?

ALICE ROONEY: —in my graduating class. And I did get a certificate calling me an "Outstanding Girl of Ballard High School" because I headed a committee for the Girls Club. I even got a letter, believe it or not, for athletics and I am not the least bit athletic, but I did get one.

LLOYD HERMAN: What sports were you doing?

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, badminton—

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: —volleyball, field hockey—actually, all those things you had to do, but not because I loved them, but for some reason I thought I should do them.

LLOYD HERMAN: What about any performing arts or visual arts experience in school? [00:08:02]

ALICE ROONEY: I was on the newspaper, the *Talisman*. I wrote for that.

LLOYD HERMAN: Spell that name again?

ALICE ROONEY: T-A-L-I-S-M-A-N. It's still—

LLOYD HERMAN: *Talisman*, oh.

ALICE ROONEY: It's the name of the paper. And I do remember being on a radio program that my history teacher got me into where we were a team opposing another high school team, talking about current events. That's all I remember. But I liked trying to—then I worked—actually—[laughs]—kids do really crazy things. I was selling ads for the *Talisman* in Ballard, and what used to—what is now Tully's Coffee used to be Sears Roebuck. And the manager not only bought an ad in the *Talisman* but offered me a job. And I didn't know it but—so I accepted. I said, "Of course." And school was going to be out in a few weeks so I reported for work right after school let out. And we were all very disappointed to learn I couldn't work because I was only 15. And I was going to be 16 in two weeks.

LLOYD HERMAN: And you were graduating from high school?

ALICE ROONEY: No, I was a junior.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, a junior, yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And so when I came back, unfortunately the job had been filled, but they sent me down to the main store.

LLOYD HERMAN: And what was the job?

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, I guess it was supposed to be a retail clerk.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And when I got down to the main store, they put me to work in the plumbing department. And I really had this wonderful boss. And I sold things like plumbing parts, believe it or not. And I did that, and they paid me 50 cents an hour.

LLOYD HERMAN: This would have been about what year then?

ALICE ROONEY: '42.

LLOYD HERMAN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

ALICE ROONEY: And I do remember that one time—and of course they were shorter, you know, parts and supplies and whatnot because everything was going into the war effort. [00:10:00]

LLOYD HERMAN: And probably short of male employees too.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, absolutely.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yes.

ALICE ROONEY: And so then—I remember one day a man came in and he wanted some help, and I didn't—I told him I didn't know what he needed. And he said to me, "What do you know?" And Frances [ph], who was my boss, came over and he said, "Get out of here. You can't talk to her like that." He was very protective of me. [They laugh.]

Well, I worked there until my senior year in high school, and it's hard to remember—or hard to believe that Frederick & Nelson, the big department store here, was a very romantic place for high school girls. And they made it kind of a privilege to be there. If you were really pretty and really good, you got to be an elevator operator. And if you were pretty good and pretty-pretty, you got to work in—what did they call it? It was the fashion department for high school girls.

LLOYD HERMAN: Juniors or something like that?

ALICE ROONEY: Well, it had a really—my friend Phyllis [ph] just died. She would remember because she worked there. Well, I didn't get to be in any of those but I did get offered a job. And, believe it or not, I left my job at Sears, where I got paid 50 cents an hour to go work at Frederick's for 42 1/2 cents an hour. [They laugh.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Now, this—

ALICE ROONEY: But I also got a 15 percent discount.

LLOYD HERMAN: Were these part-time, after-school jobs or—

ALICE ROONEY: You know, they were open Monday nights and Saturdays, so that's when we worked.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh. So that's, I assume, where you would learn a work ethic or—

ALICE ROONEY: Probably.

LLOYD HERMAN: Coming from Norwegian parents you probably had that instilled quite a bit too.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah. Well, I worked there until—and I discovered I really hated being a salesgirl.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: I worked there until the spring of my senior year, and I went to work at the *Seattle Times* in the classified advertising department. But I was the copy girl. And the reason they allowed girls to be copy boys or copy girls, because all the boys had gone out to war. [00:12:03]

LLOYD HERMAN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

ALICE ROONEY: And so I worked at the *Times* for a year or two and helped—you know, in those days—excuse me, can we turn it off for a just a—I've got to go in here.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

[Audio Break.]

ALICE ROONEY: It's bringing back a lot of memories. [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah. Well, that's good. That's what this is about. You know, I'm not sure now if this is—okay, yeah, time is—not quite sure about this equipment.

ALICE ROONEY: I worked for the *Seattle Times* for two years.

LLOYD HERMAN: So you were using some writing skills.

ALICE ROONEY: And that, you know, was the copy girls—we took the copy from the departments up to the composing room, and they—you know, very different from the way it is now—and then they printed out the proofs and we took the proofs back down to the reporters or the writers, or whoever—and they were corrected, and then we took them back up again, and then they were finally put in the paper. So, you know, it was a very traditional—

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah, of that time, yeah. Well, what got you interested in—did that contribute to your interest eventually in writing more or—

ALICE ROONEY: Well, actually, I think—I didn't really know what it meant to be a writer, I think, but it struck me that being a journalist would be a way of being able to write and make a living. [00:14:07] But, unfortunately, when I started at the UW in the English—in the journalism department, my first composing teacher told me I wrote the worst newsletters—the worst news stories that she's ever read, [laughs] which was kind of ironic given my history later. So I changed, my second year, to economics and business. And then my third year I thought, to hell with her, or words to that effect, and I switched to creative writing. And I did quite well, actually, with it. And I do think the combination of economics and business, and creative writing meant I was probably going to be an arts administrator [laughs] because I did like the business part of it. And actually I took some accounting.

LLOYD HERMAN: In high school, what were your best subjects?

ALICE ROONEY: English, literature, history, not math, not science.

LLOYD HERMAN: Did you take any art—individual, performing arts, things like that?

ALICE ROONEY: No, I've never been—

LLOYD HERMAN: Never?

ALICE ROONEY: —never, ever been good at—I don't use my hands very well.

LLOYD HERMAN: Hmm. So, did you have career aspirations when you were in high school? Were you thinking of writing at that point? Not to put words in your mouth, but—

ALICE ROONEY: I don't know whether I did or not. I don't know that I—you know, Lloyd, I've always very much lived in the present, unlike my friend LaMar Harrington, who had her eye on art history for a long time. And I realize it's still true today. I really don't think I'm going to die, you know. [They laugh.]

LLOYD HERMAN: That's a good attitude. So you've gone to the University of Washington and had switched around a little bit.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, an interesting—on that point, I switched to English in my junior year. My mother said, "If that's what you wanted to do, why didn't you do it at the beginning?" It was interesting about my mother. She really didn't understand—maybe she understood me better than I thought. I thought she didn't understand me very well, but she let me go. [00:16:12]

LLOYD HERMAN: Did you parents influence you at all in terms of the practicality of what you were studying?

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah. Actually, when I—when I wanted to start the UW—and, like I say, I'd just lived through the Depression and there were lots of jobs available. And, in fact, some of my classmates at Ballard High School, I do remember they taught a drafting class for prospective employees at Boeing. And several of my friends took it and went to work for Boeing.

LLOYD HERMAN: Maybe we should mention here that Boeing certainly was the important business in Seattle, I assume, then.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, absolutely—

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: —absolutely.

LLOYD HERMAN: What were the other—just to think, if you can, about the other great employment opportunities during that period—this would be during and right after the Second World War.

ALICE ROONEY: Well, during—yeah. Actually, a lot of recruiters came through, recruiting women into the armed services.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And, actually, when I was at the UW, a friend and I chaired a filming at the old Meany Hall where we showed films from all the branches of the service about women and the armed services. So, coast guard, army, air force. I mean, they—actually, the air force was not separate at that time—navy. And my other war effort was I played bridge a lot with the boys in the service. [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: That wasn't how you met your husband.

ALICE ROONEY: No, no, no. I met him long after the war.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, tell me about social life during high school and college. What sort of activities did you have?

ALICE ROONEY: Well, I didn't date—I didn't date very much in high school. I had a crazy boyfriend—not much. And then during World War II—actually, let me tell you a little bit about the UW because it's really interesting, I think. When I went to the University of Washington, there were 8,000 students there, mostly girls—a few navy on the campus. And so this is during my freshman and sophomore years. So it's really a very small school. [00:18:19]

LLOYD HERMAN: Big for the time, I would think, though—8,000?

ALICE ROONEY: Well, this is during the war.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, during the war, yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah. And then when I was a junior, the boys started coming back, which was a great day. In fact, I had a—I actually got engaged when I was a senior at the university. But by the time the war ended and the boys came back, and especially with the GI Bill in effect, I was an upper-division student so my classes were still small. So I really had a really good education in that regard, that the classes were small. I wasn't subject to all the big, huge classes they have now. And we had some very good writing instructors. Actually, what was the name of the woman who wrote a book called *Blueberry Hill*? And she was touted as Betty MacDonald's successor. [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Betty MacDonald, the author of *The Egg and the I*—

ALICE ROONEY: Right.

LLOYD HERMAN: —who is from here.

ALICE ROONEY: From here.

LLOYD HERMAN: From Vashon Island.

ALICE ROONEY: Right.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And, anyhow, so during the war we did a lot of, oh, going to USO dances. And actually there were navy—there was navy on the campus and so they would—we'd have dances with them too. And our transportation was limited. You know, gas was rationed so you couldn't go very far. And, actually, you know, I didn't learn to drive until I was out of college, and that was not unusual. You know, I didn't have a car of my own or anything.

LLOYD HERMAN: When you were living—or where were your parents living at that point? Were you living at home or on the campus? [00:20:00]

ALICE ROONEY: I was living at home, and we lived up on Sunset Hill on 32nd and NW 77th. And I took the bus everywhere and didn't think anything of it, you know. It was the way we did things.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And actually that's—

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah, I'm curious about—because you had mentioned reading Richard Wright and, you know, racial equality, what about the role of women growing up, and how do you see that changing and maybe helpful to you as you became a professional?

ALICE ROONEY: You know, I don't think I was very conscious of that. I think I just kind of accept—I never thought there was anything I couldn't do. And I always had a job. I worked at Sears and Fredericks. And after—and the *Times*. And after—and I decided to take some time off, so I quit working at the *Times,* and decided I hated not having my own money. So I went to work when I was a junior for People's National Bank and it was the best job I ever had. I was the mail girl, and I'd come to work at three o'clock and pick up the mail and work until it was done and go home. And they gave me bonuses and paid vacations, and treated me royally, and hated it when I left, when I graduated. [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: And how did you spend all that money of your own?

ALICE ROONEY: [Laughs.] Oh, well, actually, talking about the arts, my friends and I, even though we didn't have a resident professional theater or ballet, or opera, we went to a lot of events, and we watched for them, the touring shows that would come to town: Broadway shows, touring opera, touring dance. I remember seeing the Monte Carlo Ballet Company and Frederic Franklin doing that wonderful leap in whatever ballet that was. And so, we did go to a lot of things. And, in fact, that was a great incentive for going to New York after I graduated. [00:22:05]

LLOYD HERMAN: Were most of those at the university or just in the city?

ALICE ROONEY: The Moore.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, the Moore, yeah, the old theater.

ALICE ROONEY: And the old theater in the Olympic Hotel.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And then we did go to the Penthouse and Showboat at the UW—went to a lot of movies. And of course there were all kinds of neighborhood movies at that time. You know, there were two in Ballard.

LLOYD HERMAN: Neighborhood movie theaters, yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And of course the Uptown was just closed down at the bottom of the hill. Anyhow, all over town.

LLOYD HERMAN: So when did you leave home?

ALICE ROONEY: I graduated from the University of Washington in June of 1947, and my parents decided at that time to make their first trip back to Norway since they had arrived here. And my brother graduated from high school that year, and I graduated from college, so it was kind of a combined graduation present. So we drove to New York, which I think everybody in this country should drive across the country at least once, just to get a feeling of the scale and the diversity of it. And we sailed. My father flew over because he didn't have much time. We shipped our car on the [*MS*] *Gripsholm*, which we sailed on. And my brother and my mother and I sailed on the *Gripsholm* on my 21st birthday, July 5, 1947. And we were in Norway for five months, and in the meanwhile my best friend, Kathleen Kiefer [ph] and Daphne Berlin [ph] and Barbara—I forget her last name, a fourth Seattle girl—the three of them rented an apartment in New York and kept a spot for me, so when I got back home—well, I came back to the United States at the end of October, I think it was—I just moved in with them and looked for a job. [00:24:03]

LLOYD HERMAN: So this is right after college you went to New York—

ALICE ROONEY: Right after—oh, yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: —without—you know, taking a chance on finding a job in New York.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, no, I—I honestly have to say it never occurred to me I wouldn't get one.

LLOYD HERMAN: [Laughs.]

ALICE ROONEY: And, actually, what was interesting, Lloyd, is that I was looking for jobs euphemistically titled "editorial assistant" because I thought I would maybe get a chance to do some editorializing—editing or writing. And I was interviewed by a man at Schenley—is it Schenley distributors for whiskey?

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And he said to me, "Are you interested in writing?" And I said, "Yes, I think so." And he said, "Well, you know, you remind me of somebody who's very dear to me. And I can't hire you for this job but I'd like to refer you on." So he did, and he referred me on to an advertising agency called the Biow Advertising Agency—B-I-O-W—and I was hired as a typist. And I worked there for two weeks on trial, and when I came in the following Monday I said to my boss, "I presume you'd like me to come back"—or on Friday I guess it was, the end of the two weeks. And she said, "I'm sorry to tell you but you just don't type fast enough." And so I didn't keep—

LLOYD HERMAN: So that was a trial period for you.

ALICE ROONEY: It was a trial period. And that made me so mad that I went to—everybody went through employment agencies at that time, and I said to this women who interviewed me, I said, "You know, I know I can do anything." And just the fact that she didn't give me another few days, I think I probably would have typed faster. [Laughs.] Actually, I was not a bad typist when it came right down to it, probably not for advertising. And she—this second employment agency sent me off to the best thing that happened to me in New York, to Mutual Broadcasting. And Mutual Broadcasting had a department called Cooperative Program Department. And it was national network shows sold to local sponsors. So they had shows like—believe it or not, like Fulton Lewis, Jr.—do you remember—[00:26:15]

LLOYD HERMAN: Sure, I do.

ALICE ROONEY: —*Kate Smith Speaks*. Actually, *Meet the Press* was a cooperative program at that time. And I've forgotten the rest of them. And I was hired to do three things. One is I kept track of sales spots that were sold at the various cities. I wrote a monthly newsletter and sent it out to all the radio stations. And I wrote promotion announcements—commercials in other word—to promote the programs that were there. And I had a boss, and at the time I thought she was probably a hundred years old, and I realized much later that she was probably 35.

LLOYD HERMAN: [Laughs.]

ALICE ROONEY: I was 21. [Laughs.] And she really adopted me and really watched out for me. And I had an absolutely wonderful time, and I made some very good friends. And my roommates and I had a wonderful life. We first lived up in Washington Heights in what is now Spanish Harlem. Then one left to come back, and came back to go to graduate school. And we moved down to 38th and Lexington. And so I walked to work because my office was in Times Square. And we had an absolutely wonderful time. And then I decided to come back to Seattle. I decided I wanted to teach, which I discovered I really didn't want to do. I liked everything about teaching at that time except teaching. I mean, it was a very good place for a woman. We got good pay, good, you know, surroundings, good colleagues, good subject matter.

LLOYD HERMAN: What would you have taught?

ALICE ROONEY: Probably English—

LLOYD HERMAN: English, not writing?

ALICE ROONEY: —I was in the literature department. So I dropped out. And also, I've always liked having my own money. It may not be a lot of money, but I liked having my own. [00:28:00] And I decided—and my father, I think he was generous but it went against his grain that a grown daughter would set home, getting supported again. At least I thought that. Later he told me that wasn't true, but I think it was. So I started looking for a job, and it was kind of in a recession. And a friend of my mother's called and said, "One of our friends who works for an advertising agency in Seattle. Why don't you call him up? I told him about you." I called him up. They interviewed me and hired me at what was then called the Wallace MacKay Advertising Company. And I was hired to write radio announcements—commercials.

LLOYD HERMAN: You mean you were hired after you came back to Seattle? Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And it was a very interesting agency. The man—the agency had been started by Wallace MacKay, Sr. during the '20s, and he was a good Catholic who had a lot of kids, and he supported them all on just the advertising agency. Well, then after the war, his son Wallace, Jr. and Jerry Hett [ph] and Milo Hartline [ph], who had all been journalism majors at the UW together then went off in the service and then came back decided to become partners in this advertising agency. And so, it was a perfect fit for me because Jerry's parents were friends of my parents, which helped at least to the extent that we knew about each other. But also, for some reason Jerry was very impressed with the fact that I'd been in New York and made my living in New York. [Laughs.] Whether I deserved it or not was another thing. And so, after I had been working there—just a few months, one of the clients—agency's clients was the American Institute of Architecture, and Jerry was the public relations council for it.

And the AIA decided that they wanted to hire their first staffers, and they wanted that person to work with Jerry. He was—he's a very impressive guy, even to this day. He lives over in Sunset West, and he's got to be 90. [00:30:20] And so Jerry asked me if I'd be interested because, you know, I do have a big mouth [laughs] and I talk about what I'm interested in. And I allowed as I would, and Jerry said to me, "Well, I'm going out of town, so why don't you cover for me at some of the AIA committee meetings I have to attend, and board meetings and see how you like it?" Well, I went to one, and John Detlie—does that name mean anything to you?

LLOYD HERMAN: No, it doesn't, no.

ALICE ROONEY: John Detlie's one claim to fame was that he was a set designer for Paramount Pictures in Hollywood and he was married to Veronica Lake. And then he came up here during the war, and he was part of the team that created the camouflage for Boeing.

LLOYD HERMAN: [Laughs.]

ALICE ROONEY: He worked at Boeing, the Boeing plant. And then he decided to stay here, and apparently that didn't sit very well with Veronica Lake and they got divorced. And John stayed here and became a principal in the firm of Young, Richardson, Carleton, and Detlie, architects who happened to be in the same building as the advertising agency that I worked for. And when I went to this committee meeting that John was chairing and he talked philosophically about Aristotle and Sophocles, and philosophical reasons for doing things instead of the bottom line, I was blown away. I mean, I was 23 years old, you know. And when Jerry came back I said, "Yes, yes, yes, I'd like to do it." So I was hired presumably to be executive secretary for the AIA part-time, a radio commercial writer for part-time, and whatever else—oh, and then the agency was the only Democratic—capitol "D"—Democratic advertising agency in town. [00:32:05] And they managed the advertising campaigns—not political campaigns but advertising campaigns for Senator Magnuson and Senator Jackson, and along the way when Stim Bullitt ran for the—he ran for the school board, something. Anyhow, the third part of my job then was—Jerry said to me, "How would you like to find out what goes on in those smoke-filled rooms and help me write speeches for Maggie and Jackson?" So I, of course, thought that was absolute heaven, and I did that for—let's see, two or three years I think. And then I decided I was restless and I—oh, the Foreign Service people came

through town somewhere along that period, and I went down to find out about it and left my name. And they said if I would get a medical exam—physical exam and something else—I needed some—I don't know what it was, some idea of some kind—they would place me for wherever it was that they would have—

LLOYD HERMAN: In whatever country or—

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: So you had no—well, one day I was covering the front counter at the agency when everybody else was out to lunch—

LLOYD HERMAN: The ad agency?

ALICE ROONEY: Uh-huh [affirmative]. And this man came in and said, "I'm so-and-so with the FBI and I'd like to talk to Mr. MacKay." And I thought about it and I said, "Well, he should be in shortly. Do you want to wait or do you want to come back?" And he said, "I'll wait." I thought about it and I went to him and I said, "I'm Alice Gregor. Are you here by any chance here about me?" And he said, "Why do you ask?" And I said, "Well, I don't want them to hear that I'm looking for another job from you. They've been so good to me I want to tell them myself." And he said, "Well, let me check." [00:34:04] And I hadn't gotten the physical or anything. And so he went away and he called me back and said, "It's okay. I won't tell them." Well then, somewhere in that period, I can't remember the exact chronology, I had met Bob. I was getting to do all these things that were really fun, and why did I want to leave Seattle? So I called and put myself on hold for the Foreign Service. And then Bob and I decided to get married, and the agency decided to resign the account because providing an executive secretary was not part of their advertising agency function. And AIA actually asked me if I would come with them and start their own office.

LLOYD HERMAN: Where? Their own office where?

ALICE ROONEY: In the same building.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: They actually did start—

LLOYD HERMAN: AIA.

ALICE ROONEY: AIA. And I don't know if you know the name Paul Kirk—

LLOYD HERMAN: I do.

ALICE ROONEY: —but he was a really wonderful man. He and I used to ride to board meetings together. And he's the one who asked me if I would come and work for them, and I said, "Paul"—and I do remember these words—I said, "I'm going to have enough trouble with one man, much less 500. I don't think I can accept." So I stayed with the agency, and fortunately for the AIA because a year later I quit to have my first baby. And so that was the end of the initial phase of my—

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, tell me now—let's backtrack to when you met Bob, your husband, and say a little bit about him.

ALICE ROONEY: Well, he's really handsome, very funny, very smart. And, as a matter of fact, you know, Julie Anderson [ph] just died. And, actually, she and Bob kind of reminded me of each other in a funny kind of way in that they both thought in this really brilliant or unusual way. I never quite knew how—you know, Bob would tell you in a minute that he knew nothing about art, but if you went to an exhibition with him, he had far more to say about it in many ways than a lot of people who did know more about art. And he was a great writer. [00:36:12] In fact, when I came back from Washington, D.C. in 1978 and—because we hadn't exchanged many letters, but when I was there he did write to me, and also he wrote to Robin and she—she's kept every one of his letters, I think. And I told him if he would write some sample political columns, I would peddle it for him. And I didn't care whether it was in the *Argus* at that time or the *Queen Anne News* or whatever. He was a very good writer. And he didn't do it, and it was because it took him forever. But he was very analytical, very skeptical, very kind of scornful of a lot of—

LLOYD HERMAN: Both of you were out of college and individually employed.

ALICE ROONEY: I met him his last year of college. He had—actually, he'd been stationed in Seattle during World War II at Sand Point and he finished high school here. He had dropped out of high school to join the navy during

the war. And then he went back to Cleveland and went to Western Reserve for a year, and thought, what am I doing here? And he came back out here and went to the University of Washington. Then he decided—he always loved—he was a radio man in the navy—air force, and he always had wanted to fly. And so he decided to put his name in again to rejoin the air force. Well, funny, funny reaction to it. So he dropped out of the UW then and went back, and he actually worked for the Institute of Living. Have you ever heard of it—

LLOYD HERMAN: I don't, no.

ALICE ROONEY: —it's a mental hospital for very rich people in Hartford, Connecticut. And people with the name of McCormick [ph] and a lot of apparently—rumor was that Judy Garland had been through that kind of thing. [00:38:00] And the aids didn't wear white jackets; they wore tweed jackets and all that kind of—he worked there for a year. And while he was working there, he heard from the air force that they had changed their rules so that if you flunked out of flight school, you had to stay in, you wouldn't get discharged, which was what the rule had been before. And Bob thought at the age of 25 he was too old to take a chance, so he declined to continue and came back here. And when I met him, he was finishing the UW.

LLOYD HERMAN: And what was he finishing in?

ALICE ROONEY: Political science.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And so, then he—we got married. Oh, he started law school, and he really liked it but he really, for some reason, couldn't continue it. So he dropped out of law school. And we were living in Union Bay Village in married students housing. I got pregnant almost immediately.

LLOYD HERMAN: So he was in college when you were married.

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And I was still working for the advertising agency.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And so, then he went into education and got a teaching certificate. And so he taught for four years, something like that, after he got out.

LLOYD HERMAN: So, that must have been a difficult time if he was in college, you were working and then pregnant.

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Actually, you know, our rent, though, was $35 a month. [Laughs.] Oh, let me put the syrup [ph] in the oven.

LLOYD HERMAN: For some reason, it says this is supposed to pause and stop blinking, but I'm not sure it's stopped at all, so we may have some interesting things on the transcript.

[END OF TRACK AAA_rooney11_1233_r.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Okay. We're talking again. So tell me about early—you know, that early life when you were—after you were married, where you thought all this was heading with—you're pregnant with your first child.

ALICE ROONEY: Well, I quit working months before she was born. And then Bob got—his first job of teaching was up at Orcas Island, and we went up there when she was nine months old. And actually I liked living on Orcas Island. It was really interesting for a couple of big-city kids to live on that island. But Bob didn't want to stay there, so we came back. And my father, meanwhile, had built a small development of houses in Edmonds with 19 houses, and he offered us one to buy. No, we rented one. That was it. We rented one of his houses as a place to land when we left Orcas Island, and while we were there a house came up for sale so we bought it. And we stayed there for 10 years, actually. Then he taught in Marysville and Redmond. And—

LLOYD HERMAN: And he was teaching at what level, high school?

ALICE ROONEY: He taught high school. He taught social studies and—social studies and history? Maybe English. I can't remember exactly. And then he decided to drop out of teaching. He just didn't make any money, and he really hated that. And so he did a number of things and eventually ended up in his first love, which was—when he was going to the UW, when he stayed in Seattle, he worked in the woods in the summertime, and he became a very skilled tree topper. And apparently he had no fear of heights because he could climb anything. We had some firs on the back of our yard up in Edmonds, and they had to be 70 feet tall. And every summer he would go up and trim them just for fun. And the kids would come running and say, "Mr. Rooney is up a tree again." [They laugh.] [00:02:06]

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, I don't hear anything about the arts yet in your—[They laugh.]

ALICE ROONEY: I stayed off work for six years, and then I decided that I really needed to do something on my own. So I looked around for a part-time job. And I'd done some volunteer work, like I did the publicity for the Cascade Symphony while I was a housewife. And—

LLOYD HERMAN: As a volunteer?

ALICE ROONEY: As a volunteer, yeah. And then I looked around for a part-time job and there really wasn't anything. So I called Rose Frazier [ph], who was the office manager for the Wallace MacKay advertising agency.

LLOYD HERMAN: You were probably now, what, about 1950 or—

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah, it was—no, Robin was born in '54.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: So this was like when she was—so in 1958, '59 by this time. And so I said to Rose, "I'm looking for a job but I can't seem to find anything that's really interesting." So she and Jerry Hett, my boss, got together, and there were two jobs available that year that they talked about. One was to work on Governor Al Rosellini's gubernatorial campaign, and the other was to work for Allied Arts. And they decided Allied Arts would be better for me. And Bob Block, who was the president of Allied Arts, was a good friend of Jerry's. So Rose called me and said, "Call Bob Block. He's looking forward to interviewing you for the job of executive secretary for Allied Arts in Seattle." So I said, "Okay." So my mother bought me a new hat—I remember that—and I went in. I didn't have a car of my own at this time so I took the bus from Lynnwood.

LLOYD HERMAN: To—where was their office?

ALICE ROONEY: At that time Bob Block's office was in the Logan Building down on the corner of 5th and Union there. So he interviewed me and—oh, I'd had to call—oh, I had an appointment with him. [00:04:03] I had to cancel it because I got the flu. And he said to me, "I was afraid you wouldn't come in." And I said, "Well, here I am." And so he told me about the job and I said, "Well, you know, I live out in Edmonds." And he said, "Do you have a typewriter?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Would you mind working at home?" And I said, "No." [They laugh.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, and Robin was probably in school at that time, so—

ALICE ROONEY: Right, and Scott was a really perfect child, I have to say.

LLOYD HERMAN: Scott is, then, how much younger than Robin?

ALICE ROONEY: He's four years younger.

LLOYD HERMAN: Four years younger.

ALICE ROONEY: And he was a perfect child. He was on a perfect schedule. He never gave me any problems. And I have to—I must tell him that one of these days [laughs].

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, that was one of my questions in reading your résumé, how you managed to juggle bringing up children and working, because it looked like you had always worked.

ALICE ROONEY: No, I didn't. I was off for six years. And then when I did go to work, as I say, I worked at home. And so what I did, I got out enough to go to meetings and really met what I thought were fascinating people. And Bob—you know, Bob Block hired me and he took full credit for absolutely everything I did for the rest of my life—[laughs]—which is wonderful. He was so protective of it. And so I—and I managed to find babysitters of course easily for that infrequently. It might be once a week, so I had—

LLOYD HERMAN: Not like regular child care today.

ALICE ROONEY: Right. And so I did that for six years or so, and then Bob said to me, "Alice, would you rather have an office or a divorce?" [Laughs.]

[END OF TRACK AAA_rooney11_1234_r.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, I can't really tell how much time's expended, but anyway, to continue, so we were talking about how you were able to juggle being a mother and wife and working at home. Were there—what were the other—I'm just thinking about other families and wondering how common that was to have a job like that.

ALICE ROONEY: I didn't know of anyone. Well, then, of course, you know, most of these things happened after I moved here. I started in 1960 at Allied Arts. And, actually, this is my week to be interviewed. Richard Campbell interviewed me for the History Project for Allied Arts. You know, and I was reminded—he asked me about some things I really didn't have a lot of memory of because they were very early on, and really kind of minor things but with intriguing titles. Anyhow, Bob said to me, "Alice, would you rather have an office or a divorce," because, you know, things are so different now than they were then. We shared a telephone. And so, poor Bob, here he'd call me every day, and then he couldn't get through to me when I started working at—

LLOYD HERMAN: At least it wasn't a party line. [They laugh.]

ALICE ROONEY: No, it wasn't. So then we also needed a bigger house because we, by now, had two children. It was not a very big house. And we couldn't quite decide where we wanted to live. I know where I wanted to live, but Bob—

LLOYD HERMAN: Which was?

ALICE ROONEY: Which was in the city. And Bob kept saying, "What's wrong with fresh air and trees," you know. [Laughs.] And so we decided we would settle on the house rather than the area. Well, that was really loaded because I was the one looking. [They laugh.] So we found this house and moved here. And of course it was perfect because we have three bedrooms upstairs. We have four bedrooms upstairs and one of them was a perfect office.

LLOYD HERMAN: And you moved into this house what year?

ALICE ROONEY: August of '67.

LLOYD HERMAN: And the children were how old then?

ALICE ROONEY: Eight and 12.

LLOYD HERMAN: Eight and 12. [00:02:00]

ALICE ROONEY: And so then between that and—well, let's see, what happened first? Oh—

LLOYD HERMAN: Allied Arts. You'd just started there.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, Allied Arts, and then—what's her name? Sue Teufel—who acquired another name along the way—was on the board of the Bellevue Arts and Crafts Fair, and I used to play bridge with her. And she called me one day and said, "We are looking for a publicity person for the Bellevue Arts and Crafts Fair. Would you be interested?" And I said, "Well, you know, I have one job." And she said, "Well, this would be part-time too." So I did the publicity for the Bellevue Arts and Crafts Fair for a couple years.

LLOYD HERMAN: And you could do that at home as well?

ALICE ROONEY: I could do that at home. I'd occasionally go work—I thought it actually was a disadvantage for them in that day and age to not have somebody from Bellevue that worked with the Bellevue papers and whatnot.

LLOYD HERMAN: And as I remember, the fair preceded the museum.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, absolutely. Oh, yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: The Bellevue Arts Museum grew out of the fair.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, absolutely. It was during the time when there really was a Crabapple restaurant there, and Frederick & Nelson was there, and it was a very—

LLOYD HERMAN: There in Bellevue?

ALICE ROONEY: In Bellevue, a very informal kind of shopping center, and the fair took place in all of that. And, actually, the attendance to the fair increased by 30,000 over the year I did the publicity. And, actually, Lloyd, I think I may not have been the biggest expert on the content of art, but I was better than a lot of people at the other things about running an organization. I wasn't afraid of the press. I really liked doing the accounting and managing the money. I didn't like asking for money at first, but I got to do that pretty well. And I learned how to write grants.

LLOYD HERMAN: Which your writing experience would have been very helpful.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, absolutely. And—

LLOYD HERMAN: Doing the accounts, though—I mean, bookkeeping and that sort of thing is entirely—

ALICE ROONEY: I didn't do that very often or—[00:04:03]

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: Actually, I did it for the Glass Art Society, oddly enough, the year or two before I retired. But of course by that time you had the computer and you had to be brain dead not to be able to do Quicken, you know. [Laughs.] But, anyhow, so I did the publicity for the Bellevue Arts and Crafts Fair, and it entailed—you know, that was before the freeway, and so it meant going the long way around over to Bellevue on occasion, but—

LLOYD HERMAN: You would go the north route, then, around through Bothell and Woodinville?

ALICE ROONEY: Right. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And then, actually, the way I left it was really funny. When I was hired, nobody quite knew how to pay me. I was not an employee, as such. I was a consultant of a sort, and so I suggested that we do it the way I did it with Allied Arts. I'd keep track of the hours I worked, and then I'd send them an invoice and they'd pay me. And they paid me two-and-a-half dollars an hour. [Laughs.] So they agreed to that. Well, after I'd done this for a couple of years, Joe—what was the president's name, of the board? The president of the board and I were talking, and he said, "Well, you would just put together a budget." And he was going to go off and get it approved by the board of trustees. And I said, "Well, while you're at it, why don't you include a raise for me," because I'd worked there for two years. And he kind of paused and said, "How much of a raise would you like?" And I said, "How much do you think I'm worth?" And, see, at that time the publicity was year-round because the Pacific Northwest Arts and Crafts Foundation, PNACF Foundation, did other things during the year. This is before the museum. But they did start the shop at that period and they also had a big custom ball that you did publicity for, and all kinds of stuff. So I said, you know, "You figure out whether I'm worth more to you and act on it." And he said, "Well, you know, those ladies on the board are going to not like this." And I said, "Well, you do your best." [00:06:05] So on my way home I thought, "Oh, to hell with it." And so I went home and I sat down and I typed out a letter of resignation saying I really had liked working there and I'd learned a lot, but I thought maybe they might do better with somebody who was in the community and could work directly with the press and the other power venues, and thanks a lot. Well, it turned out the ladies on the board were not very happy. Did you ever know Carol Duke?

LLOYD HERMAN: The name is familiar but I don't think I know her.

ALICE ROONEY: Well, the year that—the first year I did the publicity, I was—actually, Bellevue had—the fair had the first film festival anywhere around.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, really?

ALICE ROONEY: And Carol Duke was the chairman of it, and we worked well together and we both loved movies, and we were looking forward to doing it again. And then when I quit, I wasn't there, and so she was really sore. But that was the end of my experience there at the Bellevue—

LLOYD HERMAN: So they didn't lure you back with more money? [Laughs.]

ALICE ROONEY: No, no. I realized I really hated driving over to Bellevue, even for the rare times I did it. And well then along came the Washington State Arts Commission.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And they had gotten money to hire a director in Olympia. They'd hired Jim Haseltine.

LLOYD HERMAN: About what year would this be, then?

ALICE ROONEY: It's on my résumé.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah, that's okay.

ALICE ROONEY: But Jim couldn't get here for a few months, so they asked me to fill in as interim director, I presume, out of my house here. And so I did, and actually I put 20,000 miles on my car that year, working for both Allied Arts and the commission. And Jim was in Portland, I guess. And I thought that was a really fun job because I knew it was short term, and I got to know the people in the governor's office. Neil McReynolds became a lifelong—oh, I haven't heard anything from him for years and years, but he became a good friend. He was one of the governor's assistants. And I learned a lot, you know, just by being an interim director. [00:08:15]

LLOYD HERMAN: Under what governor was—

ALICE ROONEY: Dan Evans.

LLOYD HERMAN: —Dan Evans started that.

ALICE ROONEY: In fact, I think Dan Evans must be really having problems with the present Republican Party. I can't imagine him—or Joel Pritchard, who has died, of course—but both two men I really respected a lot, and here I am a lifelong democrat. Anyhow, so I did that. And then I guess those were the end of my other separate jobs, along with Allied. In the meanwhile, Allied Arts was growing and getting more members. But what's so interesting about Allied Arts I think, in retrospect, is, you know, it never was a very big organization. But for some reason it always seemed to attract the romantic attention of the public, and of the press.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, tell me, were the members then individual artists—visual artists? Were they performing arts groups or—

ALICE ROONEY: They were everybody. John Detlie started it. He was concurrently president of Allied Arts, president of the AIA. And the first thing Allied Arts did was start the original Seattle Arts Commission. It was called Seattle Municipal Arts Committee.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And he became chairman of the Seattle Municipal Arts Commission. And then—and the group that started it had been a group of friends in college. John was an architect. John Ashby Conway taught scenic design at the University of Washington Drama School. A guy named Russell somebody was a designer. I forget who was a representative, so-called, from the art museum. Somebody from Cornish. [00:10:08]

LLOYD HERMAN: And they were the board or members?

ALICE ROONEY: They were kind of a group of friends who would get together and talk about what Seattle needed.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And they are the ones who called themselves the Beer and Culture Society. And then they said they used to talk—this is a very old story about how it got—used to talk about why "they" didn't do something, and they suddenly decided they were "they." And that's when the formed Allied Arts of Seattle. And, actually, soon after my first child was born, I ran into John Detlie at a bakery nearby where we were living. And they had just formed Allied Arts of Seattle, and I said to John, "I'd love to come work for you." And he said, "It's possible. Give me a call." Well, it took a few more years. And so they formed Allied Arts. And they started on a couple of big projects. One was they thought Seattle should be characterized by water: fountains and scenic views and all kinds of things. And John Detlie had this great plan for a welcoming part of Seattle right outside the harbor with big fountains coming up in the middle of Puget Sound, or whatnot. And then they also got started sometime—

LLOYD HERMAN: Now this is after the 1962 World's Fair.

ALICE ROONEY: No, it was before.

LLOYD HERMAN: No, before.

ALICE ROONEY: They started before.

LLOYD HERMAN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Okay.

ALICE ROONEY: Actually, Allied Arts started in '54, which is the year after I got married, and I wasn't working at that time. And I'm not sure I can tell you a lot of the chronology of it, but for some reason it always did attract the attention of people. And there was no one—talking about the people who were there. So these were the people who started it, but then it also attracted—in subsequent years it attracted more architects, lawyers, landscape architects, artists, and a lot of volunteers and kind of patrons—[00:12:13]

LLOYD HERMAN: So really a combination of patrons and—

ALICE ROONEY: Absolutely.

LLOYD HERMAN: —and performing and visual artists.

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Absolutely.

LLOYD HERMAN: Were they thinking primarily of larger-scale enterprises like the fountains in the—

ALICE ROONEY: Well, actually we did spend a lot of years, you know, on the Highway Advertising Control Act, keeping billboards off the freeways, and then regulating signs in Seattle. And we—

LLOYD HERMAN: So it was the visual environment in the bigger context.

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah. Well, they said they wanted to create the kind of city that attracted the kind of people that loved the arts and attracted the arts. And the architects—oh, and Victor Steinbrueck of course was a very colorful—

LLOYD HERMAN: Victor Steinbrueck?

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah, the father of the Pike Place Market.

LLOYD HERMAN: I'm going to ask you for spelling on a lot of these names later. [Laughs.]

ALICE ROONEY: And so, you see, we started in the '60s to talk about saving the market.

LLOYD HERMAN: Pike Place Market.

ALICE ROONEY: The Pike Place Market. And we had—we used to have—I always thought it was such an interesting contradiction in terms—we would have champagne breakfasts at the Pike Place Market. [Laughs.] But, you know, we tried every which way to get protections to save the market, and of course the property owners wanted nothing to do with it because they all had their eye on that—I mean, gee, prime property right there at the edge of the downtown core, overlooking the sound, and absolute wonderful view and property. And —

LLOYD HERMAN: So they were more interested in having it redeveloped—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah—

LLOYD HERMAN: —and earning money from—[00:14:00]

ALICE ROONEY: —or done away with. And the city kept coming up with kind of ridiculous solutions to whatever, and Allied Arts kept turning them down—Allied Arts, led by Victor Steinbrueck. Victor was a college professor at the UW, and we got to know each other when I worked for the AIA way back in the early '50s.

LLOYD HERMAN: Was he a city planner by profession or—

ALICE ROONEY: No, he was an architect.

LLOYD HERMAN: No, architect.

ALICE ROONEY: He taught architecture and design at the UW. And I always—I described him as being kind of the Walt Whitman of architects. He wore plaid shirts and flowered ties, and dark suits. But I love Victor. I really—I've got to get a drink of water.

[END OF TRACK AAA_rooney11_1235_r.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Here we go.

ALICE ROONEY: Victor had a lot of knowledge of it—and Carol—a lot about historical buildings and whatnot. And so, we went through the '60s without accomplishing very much. Actually, during that period Victor and his wife Marjorie Nelson, who was an actress, went to London, England for a couple of years. I swear Victor called me every week to find out what was going on with the market and whatnot. So, nothing happened that seemed to be a solution for anything.

LLOYD HERMAN: Now, this had been in what period?

ALICE ROONEY: In the '60s.

LLOYD HERMAN: In the '60s. But this was—I keep bringing up the World's Fair in '62 because I've often heard that that was Seattle's coming of age as a city in many ways.

ALICE ROONEY: I'd like to talk about that—

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: —but let me finish—

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah, sure.

ALICE ROONEY: —about the market because it does really reach a conclusion. Finally—oh, during this period Victor and Allied started something called Friends of the Market. And, actually, this was kind of a typical pattern of Allied Arts, and sometimes I always hated this process, but in the long run I think it really paid off, and that is instead of keeping everything under Allied Arts, we would form organizations that would pursue that particular interest. So, for example, when the writers wanted a writers' conference, Allied Arts didn't do it. We formed the —what was it called, friends of the writers? Something—I've forgotten what it was called—no, Pacific Northwest Writers Conference, and they would hold the conference. So then, instead of having one octopus kind of organization, we would have a number of little—and we all kind of worked together. So Friends of the Market was started to pursue entirely alone, the market, and then Allied Arts of course was there to back it up with presumably more power [laughs].

LLOYD HERMAN: How many more of those organizations—those kind of spin-offs, then, which would be a little like many organizations that are umbrella organizations may have standing committees that deal with a particular topic? [00:02:02]

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, I'd have to think about that.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, it's not that important.

ALICE ROONEY: So, anyhow, reaching this impasse and not accomplishing anything, the Friends of the Market, with Allied Arts right alongside, started an initiative petition requiring the city to buy the seven core acres of the market and maintain it as a historic district. And so everybody was against it. The mayor was against it, the Downtown Development Association was against it, the Department of Community Development was against it, our chamber of commerce was against it. Everybody was against it but the people, and on election night it was voted overwhelmingly to save the market. And, of course, you know the follow up to that is so ironic. First of all, it brought in millions of dollars of federal money to fix up the market. And then what's the biggest tourist attraction in town?

LLOYD HERMAN: Pike Place Market. [Laughs.]

ALICE ROONEY: And every newsletter you read, whether it's the Downtown Development Association or the chamber of commerce talks about our wonderful tourist attraction. [They laugh.] And so, that's why Victor is called the father of the Pike Place Market and why that park there was named after him.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yes. Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And so then, of course, interesting things followed. The Pike Place Market Historic Commission has made up a specified formula: two members from the AIA, two members from Allied Arts, two members from Friends of the Market, and I can't remember the others. And Allied Arts of Seattle is kind of moribund, and they haven't even—

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, that's—you know, I haven't heard of Allied Arts, really, for a long time, and that's the reason I wonder what the—how it started, and how it changed during the time, the 20 years I think it was, that you were there as executive director, and how this has changed now, because I think of Seattle as a city with great visual art and performing arts institutions, and clearly that wasn't always so. [00:04:12]

ALICE ROONEY: Well, you know, in the '70s of course we did kind of remarkable things that—in 1971 we got the ordinance passed to create the—the Seattle Municipal Arts Commission had kind of died. It never had a budget except what the Parks Department was willing to loan it, kind of, and so it kind of died. So we got an ordinance passed to create a new Seattle Arts Commission, and it did start out with kind of a minimal budget, like $75,000 or so. That same year we got the 1 Percent for Art passed.

LLOYD HERMAN: What year was that again?

ALICE ROONEY: '71.

LLOYD HERMAN: '71. And the market was saved in what year?

ALICE ROONEY: '72.

LLOYD HERMAN: '72.

ALICE ROONEY: And then, in '73, Paul Schell became president of Allied Arts. I don't want this quoted, but he

was probably the best president we ever had.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And he started a committee made up of representatives from the performing arts—Peter Donnelly from the Rep and Andy—no, Dean Falls from ACT. Norm Hoagy [Hogue] was head of the musician's union. I've forgotten who else. Oh, John Graham from the symphony—very important. And then a couple of kind of political types: Morton Kroll, who taught political science at the UW, and Marguerite Sutherland, who was on the council of Mercer Island but also had started something called Citizens to Save Classical Music—Classical Music Supporters. KUOW had decided it was not strictly a music station, and they objected to that, the Classical Music Supporters, and tried to get them to change. Anyhow, so we had this committee that met for a year and a half—the most fun I ever had on a committee. [00:06:10]

LLOYD HERMAN: And this was the classical music committee or the—

ALICE ROONEY: That was the Performing Arts Committee.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And what we did is we wrote a report that started out, "Even Buffalo has more money contributing to the arts." [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Was Buffalo already scorned? [Laughs.]

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah, it was. And so, we put together this proposal to the city to fund the Seattle Arts Commission to the tune of $350,000, which was a lot of money at that time. And Paul was so smart that we went to both the mayor and the city council to get their approval before actually getting it to a vote. And the mayor had learned a lot from the Pike Place Market election because what he discovered was that his former business support had kind of eroded, and that coming to the fore were the environmentalists and the arts people and—

LLOYD HERMAN: A new political force.

ALICE ROONEY: —a new political force. And so, he approved, in advance, this idea of this appropriation. Norm Hoagy, on the council at that time, was a very strong council member who is a labor person, and Norm Hoagy, who had no fear of anybody as head of the musicians union, took him on and persuaded him. And the rest of us took on—listen, I went to council meetings at midnight during that period. And you know that old saying about you better be there when they're voting? I was. And so we got it passed—not for $350[,000]—I think it was $300[,000], $300,[000] maybe, or so—but it was more money than they'd ever had. And—[00:08:00]

LLOYD HERMAN: And how was that money used? Was it—were grants being given at that early stage?

ALICE ROONEY: And then the 1 Percent generated money. And of course what was ironic about that is City Light became the biggest art buyer in town because of one of the really interesting things that happened, when the ordinance was being drafted—

LLOYD HERMAN: 1 Percent for Art.

ALICE ROONEY: —the 1 Percent for Art—it included not only buildings but capital improvements. So every time City Light buried a power line, one percent of that money went for art. And our idea was that, our fallback position would be to the budgets of buildings. Nobody ever asked—

LLOYD HERMAN: So, that's the reason that the sewer system has wonderful covers for the manhole covers. [They laugh.]

ALICE ROONEY: Right. Actually, I think that was Paul's idea.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: I don't think that had a lot to do with them. And so, anyhow, then Judy Whetzel, who was—and Judy has never gotten enough credit for this. I don't know why. You know, she went on to become head of PONCHO, and then loved that. But she also was married to Jonathan Whetzel, who was a state senator. So at that time their kids were young and they would—she and her kids would go down to Olympia while Jon [ph] was in the state legislature. And Judy passed the 1/2 of one percent in our name and hers and everybody's. So that's why the state has two—

LLOYD HERMAN: I didn't realize there were two different percent programs?

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah. And, actually, one reason I took on, as a volunteer, the job of being the art chairman for the Ballard High School Foundation is, you know, we just built a new building. And I knew the new building cost $40 million and I thought 1/2 of one percent, gees, I'll have $200,000 to play with for art. Well, it turned out it's 1/2 of one percent of the state share of building budget, so we got $18,000. [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Now, I don't understand. How do the two programs differ, then? [00:10:01]

ALICE ROONEY: One is a state program and one's a city program.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, I see. Okay. So you can get both of them.

ALICE ROONEY: You could get both of them.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yes.

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, and that is the reason that Seattle is acclaimed for its 1 Percent for Art programs, yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And, actually, what I thought was interesting, I didn't go down and see the exhibit, but as I understand it, when the city recently had celebrated its 40th anniversary of the Seattle Arts Commission, they didn't mention Allied Arts at all.

LLOYD HERMAN: Let's backtrack a little bit to the 1962 Century of Progress Exposition—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, the fair.

LLOYD HERMAN: —as the World's Fair here was called.

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah. One thing I've never quite known how it worked—as I understand it, John Detlie was one of the people who suggested the World's Fair. He was a great idea man, I'll tell you. He was a spellbinder too. And so, I think that's right. I was not very much involved in the World's Fair. In fact, when I think about it, I only went a couple of times. I was living out in Edmonds and I had young kids, and all that. But in retrospect, you know, I think the '60s and '70s were a lot more fun than today. And the reason I think so is, you know, Seattle's needs were very clear, I think. As I told you, when I was in college we watched for scheduled shows and concerts, and whatnot. It seemed to me very clear that everybody knew we needed a resident professional theater and ballet company, and opera. And there was one—

LLOYD HERMAN: Symphony? Was there a symphony?

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah, the symphony has been around for a long time. There was one gallery—two galleries, one out at—Seligman Gallery—

LLOYD HERMAN: Commercial galleries?

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]—in the University District, and Zoe Dusanne's, which was known for contemporary, up on Lakeview Boulevard, and the art museum. And—

LLOYD HERMAN: Which at that point was in Volunteer Park.

ALICE ROONEY: Right, and Dr. Fuller was the director of it. And so there was a great—if not meeting of mind on details, I think the goals were fairly well-accepted by almost everybody who cared about art and culture. [00:12:12] And the World's Fair brought a whole bunch of people together, and I was not involved in it at all—but brought them all into—Dr. David Hughbanks brought that. He really did—I think that's how David got his start was being part of the World's Fair. And I think it brought together a whole different way of doing things in Seattle. And then following the World's Fair of course, it lent that great heritage of the buildings that housed the Rep and the Northwest Crafts Center. And the art museum had a branch at the Seattle Center at that time. And what else?

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, the Henry Gallery at the University was already established—

ALICE ROONEY: Right.

LLOYD HERMAN: —at that point, but—

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. It was.

LLOYD HERMAN: The Frye Art Museum came along in the '50s?

ALICE ROONEY: I can't remember.

LLOYD HERMAN: Anyway—

ALICE ROONEY: Anyhow, so I was wrong when I said there wasn't another gallery. I think of the Henry Gallery as being a museum more than a commercial gallery.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, that's why I was thinking the museums that were in existence were really the Henry Art Gallery at the university and the Seattle Art Museum in Volunteer Park, and the Frye Art Museum came along kind of at that time, but it was really kind of a closely held museum.

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah, I don't remember.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, it's interesting because when you were talking about saving the market, I remembered when I was stationed here briefly in the 1950s that it was really kind of a slummy area—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: —downtown along 1st Avenue where the market is. And when the Seattle Art Museum built, then, a new facility downtown, that that was heralded as really a kingpin that would bring back that part of the downtown area. So, at the time the market was saved, the arts really weren't at all involved in the downtown area—[00:14:17]

ALICE ROONEY: No.

LLOYD HERMAN: —because the Seattle Art Museum and the Benaroya Hall came much later.

ALICE ROONEY: Right. I guess that's one reason why Allied Arts provided an interesting arm for everybody because it did include people who cared both about the city and the arts, as they laid it out. And even though architects may not be formally urban planners, they certainly are, I think.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah. Well, I'm really interested in the history of Allied Arts, but interested because this is an interview about you, and how you saw and perhaps helped bring about change in Allied Arts and, with the arts commission, the arts scene in Seattle.

ALICE ROONEY: You know, I don't think I had any great design. I loved to—if you'd asked me anytime during that 20 years if I were ever going to leave Allied Arts, even though I make no money to speak of, I would have told you you were crazy. I loved that job and I never wanted to leave. But 20 years proved to be the time when it was time for me to go. But I loved the—you know, in the *Seattle Times* recently somebody was talking about happiness, that funny thing they're talking about these days, and it said that most Americans—any American who has a job that involves creative materials, stimulating colleagues, and a fair amount of autonomy is usually happy in his job. And I thought, you just described my life, you know. And I had—always had a lot of autonomy. And I seem to have an instinct for that kind of organization.

LLOYD HERMAN: Is it because your first jobs—well, with the part-time jobs, I was thinking when you came back from New York to Seattle, allowed you to work at home pretty much on your own schedule. [00:16:20]

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah, at Allied Arts certainly, yeah. And, actually, that was a blessing for me because I really could do both, you know. And, for example, my daughter happened into a bad patch in junior high school where two or three girls took it upon themselves to make her life miserable, so I made it a real point to be free of everything at three o'clock when she came home.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And probably one reason we're such good friends now. But it really worked both to my advantage and to Allied Arts. They didn't have to—and they didn't—they did pay my Social Security. Yeah, they did.

LLOYD HERMAN: How did your husband Bob feel about your employment? Did it create some friction at all, or—

ALICE ROONEY: [Laughs.] As I said, at one point he said, "Would you rather have an office or a divorce?" [They laugh.] Actually, everybody I worked for really owes Bob a lot because I didn't make much money at Allied Arts, and it was because I had a husband supporting me, you know. And, actually, he was kind of like my mother, in a way. They both let me go. And I don't know how I was so lucky, you know.

LLOYD HERMAN: Remarkable.

ALICE ROONEY: And, actually, one thing about Bob that—he was an odd combination of traits. In one way he was really kind of a loner. On the other hand, he really liked women, and I mean not in a sexual way, but he just plain liked women, and they knew it. And we'd go to a party and he might be sitting by himself, but some woman would inevitably come over [laughs]. And he would say to me, "Oh, go off and talk to all your friends." [They laugh.]

LLOYD HERMAN: He wasn't going to suffer for a lack of company. [00:18:00]

ALICE ROONEY: No. And, as I say, he was very funny, and very—and, actually, what's interesting about him too—the kids and I talk about him—he had a drinking problem for 10 years, and we came very close to not staying together at that point.

LLOYD HERMAN: Was that when the kids were still at home or—

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Oh, yeah, when they were—when we moved here. And, in fact, it profoundly affected Scott, I think, because he was—Robin was really secure enough to know it had nothing to do with her. But, you know, Bob wouldn't show up for his games and things like that.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And, actually, Scott was directly responsible for Bob stopping drinking. When Scott was 17, he was up in his room one morning and Bob was in the bathroom, and Scott went in and said to Bob, "You're nothing but a fucking drunk." Bob never had a drink after that for the rest of his life.

LLOYD HERMAN: Wow, that was powerful. [Laughs.]

ALICE ROONEY: Well, actually, for a long time he thought his kids didn't know he drank. Here he was the son of an alcoholic, and he said when he was seven he could spot a drunk a block away. He thought his own kids weren't as smart as he was. But, anyhow, he was also a natural born disciplinarian, which is probably why he was such a good teacher. He never laid a hand on any of—either of his kids, but, boy, he'd say something in a certain way and they'd jump to.

LLOYD HERMAN: There were rules.

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And, actually, the only time—I said to Scott the other day, "Do you remember the only time you ever got a spanking?" And he said, "No, I don't remember." And I said, "You were five and you set the backyard on fire." [They laugh.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Ow.

ALICE ROONEY: And the fire department came and the police came, and he got a spanking. [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Wow. I would think that that would be memorable. [They laugh.] So, Allied Arts, during the course of 20 years, why did you then finally leave? [00:20:05]

ALICE ROONEY: Well, things began to repeat themselves a little bit.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: But I got to know a lot of people. And, actually, one of the things that—I really got to be—it's an odd thing to say—I really got to be very good on the telephone. I could ask anybody anything on the telephone and have any kind of conversation. And that stemmed from when I worked at home, of course, where I really couldn't get out.

LLOYD HERMAN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You relied on that.

ALICE ROONEY: And I also—I guess I just—I loved the arts and I loved thinking we could do something about them. And, actually, I was—Jerry Thorn [ph] and I were—you know, along the way of course the Allied Arts Foundation was started. Allied Arts of Seattle was a 501(c)(4) organization—

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: —which meant it could lobby without problems.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ALICE ROONEY: And then the Allied Arts Foundation was started as a 501(c)(3), which would allow us to apply

for grants through them. And we also, to this day—

LLOYD HERMAN: —can receive donations and your tax deductions, yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: —receive donations, right. And to this day we sponsor artists and organizations that don't have their own tax status for grants.

LLOYD HERMAN: That's very interesting. Why don't I hear about Allied Arts anymore, I wonder?

ALICE ROONEY: Well, Allied Arts of Seattle seems to be totally inactive. In fact, I wish that they would formally declare themselves sunset-ed. I think it's perfectly fine to say, "We've had this great run and it's time for us to —"

LLOYD HERMAN: Or maybe merge with something like Artist Trust or something like that.

ALICE ROONEY: But the Allied Arts Foundation is still going, but we don't do the same kinds of things. We don't lobby.

LLOYD HERMAN: Are there programs that Artist Trust initiated during the 20 years you were there that you're particularly proud of?

ALICE ROONEY: Artist Trust or—

LLOYD HERMAN: I said Artist—not, Artist Trust, I mean—

ALICE ROONEY: Allied Arts?

LLOYD HERMAN: —Allied Arts.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, I think there are whole bunches of them. I think, you know, for example, driving along the freeway without billboards is an accomplishment. [00:22:06]

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: I think starting the Seattle Arts Commission—we started the state arts commission. When we were down in Olympia lobbying for the billboard ad—

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: —we just happened to get the ordinance—or the statute—laws to pass the statute for the state arts commission. And, oh, I think all the things we did—the 1 Percent for Art, the 1/2 percent, the money—and after we got the $350,000, or $320[,000], whatever it was, every year until I left we had a lobbying committee that lobbied for the Seattle and King County Arts Commission budgets, and got them passed. And then along the way we started the Arts Alliance of Washington State. Oh, one year we had a campaign, when Paul was president, called $2 for the Arts—$1 for the Arts? And we were aiming for a $6 million budget for the state arts commission. Well, we didn't make it. And that's when I talked to Paul and I said, "You know, unless we really want to totally change the nature of Allied Arts, I think we should spin off an organization to really do the lobbying for the state arts commission," and that's when we started the Arts Clients of Washington State. I don't even know if it's still in business. But its goal was to be the lobbying group—the kind of—the Allied Arts of Washington State.

LLOYD HERMAN: Now, did the—I don't really know the sequence of when the National Endowment for the Arts was established, and I think as a result of that there were many state arts commissions that came about, so they could receive federal money.

ALICE ROONEY: Right.

LLOYD HERMAN: Is that correct?

ALICE ROONEY: Right. In fact—was I working—yeah, I worked for them. That period I worked for them was when the state arts commission did their first round of grants.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh. [00:24:00]

ALICE ROONEY: And Gene Keane, who had the Cirque Theater over on 34th, and Marjorie Phillips, who was a very unusual woman, and I, and who else—oh, a guy named Bill somebody who was an artist—a commercial artist—graphic designer we called them—and I can't remember who else—had a committee where we decided

on who got this little bit of money that was around. And, as I recall, the biggest grant went to the Seattle Center. I think that may have been when they had a huge deficit incurred by putting on *Aida*. I hope I haven't confused —

LLOYD HERMAN: *Aida*?

ALICE ROONEY: Uh-huh [affirmative].

LLOYD HERMAN: So, were they doing operas before the opera—oh.

ALICE ROONEY: Well, it was a symphonic presentation.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh. Hmm.

ALICE ROONEY: But no, we didn't have an opera company. We had amateur operas but not anything professional.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, you know, you said you weren't really involved with the World's Fair. I just wonder how much of these organizations may have come about after that with the aspirations of Seattle to become a world-class arts city.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, absolutely. I think—as I say, I think that's why the '70s were more fun than the ones now because you had your neighborhood communities, but then up here you had a community—arts community and cultural community, and civic community where a lot of us knew each other—a lot of us knew each other.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And I remember when ACT was being formed, and I went to some meetings—I was invited, I guess, by somebody—

LLOYD HERMAN: A Contemporary Theater.

ALICE ROONEY: Right. And there were all kinds of people interested in seeing it succeed, not just because they were friends of Greg's or Gene's, but because they wanted another theater besides the Rep. And, oh, we did have the Cirque, which was over, as I say, on 34th, and the two university—[00:26:02]

LLOYD HERMAN: Cirque, is that spelled C-I-R-Q-U-E?

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. He's the one who did—oh, God, what was that play from Broadway that he did that was so big? I'll think of it. Anyhow, he never quite got credit for having the only professional theater. I don't think it was considered quite artsy enough for—but—and that's too bad because he was a great theater guy.

LLOYD HERMAN: Now, when was it that you had that assignment in Washington, D.C. when you and I met? That was in the '70s.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, I took a leave of absence. In 1976, I was invited by Joel Pritchard, a congressman from my district, actually, to come back and spend two weeks in Washington. He was starting an intern program, and I was the first, which was really nice because I got a lot of tips that I don't think subsequent ones did because they got used to having them. But I went back to Washington for two weeks and I spent my time going to the GSA and the NEA, and I can't even remember what all I did. And every day I'd come back and report to the staff —

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, you were an adult intern as opposed to—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, very much so.

LLOYD HERMAN: —kids right out of college that—

ALICE ROONEY: Actually, what Joel did was he chose people from areas of interest in the city. So, for example, I think it was the dean of the nursing school who went back to represent nurses. So we were all mature. And so, how old was I—50? Yeah, I was 50. And so I spent two weeks there and I—and among the people I got to know was—one was Elena Canavier.

LLOYD HERMAN: Who was at that point—

ALICE ROONEY: The crafts—

LLOYD HERMAN: —the crafts coordinator of the National Endowment for the Arts.

ALICE ROONEY: Right. And so then the next year I decided—I'd been working at Allied Arts for 16 years and I really had to get away. And so I decided to take a year's leave of absence, not knowing anything of what I was going to do. And LaMar Harrington, then the director of the Henry Gallery, and my best friend, happened to be talking to Elena Canavier at the NEA and said, "Oh, did you know Alice is going to take a year's leave of absence from her job?" And Elena said, "No. I need to call her." So she called me, offered me this job virtually sight unseen and—you know, editing that funny little artist/craftsmen information bulletin that I did. And so, I accepted without knowing anything about it. And by sheer chance, Alice Klang, who was—[00:28:33]

LLOYD HERMAN: Alice Klang?

ALICE ROONEY: Uh-huh [affirmative]—who was a board member of Allied Arts, was going back to Washington to get her PhD at Georgetown, was it—I think—and we decided to become roommates. So we shared a house in Georgetown. And she turned out to be difficult.

LLOYD HERMAN: And that was how long a stint?

ALICE ROONEY: I was there from September of '77 until July of '78, not quite a year.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh. Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And—

LLOYD HERMAN: Your kids were both out of the nest by then?

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah. Robin moved back home and they got along perfectly well without me. And from that day to this I've never ironed anything for anybody. [They laugh.] I iron a tablecloth now and then but no clothes for anybody. I came home for—my father died that November, and I came home for Christmas, and then I came home in July for good. And I had a great time there. I learned a lot, I thought, and met a lot of interesting people. And it was perfect. And then I came home and stayed for another couple of years and decided to move on.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah, I wonder if whether that Washington experience helped shape ideas about what you might do next, or what you were looking for after your leave of absence with Allied Arts? [00:30:01]

ALICE ROONEY: It could have. I don't really remember that as being the motivation. I think I just had to move on. And, actually, you know [laughs]—I don't know that I've ever told you this story before, but I was one of the three finalists for the job of director of the Washington State Arts Commission when Jim Haseltine left. Yankee Johnson, who was director of the King County Arts Commission, was the other one. And the guy who finally got it, his name was Mike—God, I've forgotten his name—he came from back East. And so, I was turned down, obviously, and Yankee and I both were, and Mike got it, which I'm not sure that everybody was always very happy about it, but that's a whole other story. And the week after I was turned down, I was walking down Jackson Street and somebody—a member of the Washington State Arts Commission came out of the parking garage and hailed me and said, "Do you want to go to lunch?" And I said, "Sorry." I really didn't want to have lunch with him. I said, "Sorry, I have a meeting," and I pointed over to the Smith Tower. And he said, "Another time?" And I went over—I really am not much of a liar, so I looked in the—and here was a—who is a guy who reads charts for you? A—

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, a—

ALICE ROONEY: I was going to say horticulturist. [Laughs.] Horoscope—

LLOYD HERMAN: Horoscope reader.

ALICE ROONEY: Right. And I thought, oh, I've never done that; I'm going to do that. So I went upstairs, and he said, "Have you ever had your chart read?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Would you like to?" And I said, "Sure, why not?" So I gave him my birthday and he said, "Come back Friday." So I came back Friday and he looked at my chart and he said, "I see you're going to be offered a job." And I said, "I was just turned down for one." And he said, "Well, maybe the guy that got it will change his mind." And I said, "I don't think so." And he said, "Well, nevertheless"—this was like in May or early June. And he said, "I see you're going to be offered a job." And he was very specific. He said, "You're going to be offered a job on either June 29 or 30." [00:32:09]

LLOYD HERMAN: This is what year?

ALICE ROONEY: 1980.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And then he said, "I see you're going to be doing a lot of traveling." And I left then, said, "Sorry, I have neither the money nor the time to do that." And he says, "Nevertheless, I see you're going to be doing a lot of traveling." Well, on June 29, believe it or not, John Hauberg called me. You know, his office was across the street from mine in Pioneer Square.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: And he said, "Tom Bosworth and I would like to come over and talk to you." And I said—I said, "John, I've got all kinds of people here. It's really kind of a mess. Why don't I come over there?" And he said, "Let me call you back." And I assumed that because I'd—after I'd come back from Washington I'd see all kinds of people ask me, whether rightfully or not, how to get a grant from Washington, D.C., and I'm not sure I was able to tell them very much but we had a lot of fun talking about it. And I said—when John and Tom were going to talk to me—in fact, Pilchuck had never, ever, to my knowledge, done very much in the way of raising money because John paid all the bills. So his secretary called me back and said, "Could you come over here about two o'clock?" And I said, "Sure." So I went over, and here was Johanna [ph]—

LLOYD HERMAN: Minsky [ph].

ALICE ROONEY: No.

LLOYD HERMAN: No.

ALICE ROONEY: No, from Tacoma.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: One of the board members.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, yeah, I know who you mean but I can't think of her name either.

ALICE ROONEY: A very pretty woman—and a couple of other people. And John introduced them and said, "Tom Bosworth is taking a leave of absence, a sabbatical, next year and he suggested we hire a full-time director of Pilchuck, and we wondered if you'd be interested?" [00:34:00]

LLOYD HERMAN: Had he not been full time?

ALICE ROONEY: No, he was part time during the winter and full time—

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, and teaching—yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And all I could think of was that damn horoscope reader and that this was the 29 of June.

LLOYD HERMAN: Traveling up to the campus 15 miles.

ALICE ROONEY: And I said, "I'd really like to think about it and I'd like to send you my résumé." And they said, "Fine." And so I did and they hired me. And so I was due to start October 1st, although I went to a couple of board meetings during that summer. And I gave my notice at Allied Arts in September. And somewhere during that summer—do you remember John McLean [ph], who worked—

LLOYD HERMAN: Yes, I do.

ALICE ROONEY: John called me and said they were forming this task force, you know, that was going to head out across the country, and would I be interested in being on it? He talked to me about it, but I just assumed that they were going to be inviting all kinds of other people, not me. He said, "The only thing is you have to be free to travel for six weeks."

LLOYD HERMAN: There it is. [They laugh.]

ALICE ROONEY: I went back to this guy and he never was able to tell me another thing. He told me I was going to divorce my husband but that was not true. But anyhow, that's how I got started at Pilchuck.

LLOYD HERMAN: I think that's probably a good spot to end this first card.

ALICE ROONEY: Okay [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: End of card number one with Alice Rooney.

[END OF TRACK AAA_rooney11_1236_r.]

LLOYD HERMAN: This is Lloyd Herman interviewing Alice Rooney in her home in Seattle on August 12, 2011. Alice, when we stopped at the end of the last card, we were up to 1980. [They laugh.] So I think that was an important year, wasn't it?

ALICE ROONEY: It certain—

LLOYD HERMAN: Why don't you tell me what comes to mind when I say 1980?

ALICE ROONEY: Okay. Tell me if I'm repeating myself. I was one of the three finalists that year for the director of the Washington State Arts Commission. Yankee Johnson, who was head of the King County Arts Commission, and I, and Michael—who got the job actually, and I can't remember his last name, which is terrible—all were in the running for the director when Jim Haseltine stepped down as director of the Washington State Arts Commission.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, wait a minute, Alice. I just—I need to—I think maybe I didn't have that going, because I think maybe it was supposed to flash. Let me just check that recording.

[Audio Break.]

ALICE ROONEY: That's probably not in—I probably didn't put that in writing at all.

LLOYD HERMAN: It was fine.

ALICE ROONEY: Okay.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yes, we're moving forward. So, just continue.

ALICE ROONEY: So that was in June of 1980, the early part of June. About a week later, after this interview, I was walking down James Street in Pioneer Square and one of the members of the state arts commission came out of the parking garage and stopped and asked me if I'd go to lunch with him. I really didn't feel like having lunch with him, so I pointed to the Smith Tower and said, "Sorry, I have a meeting over there," and went on my way. Well, I'm really not much of a liar, so I actually went over—did I tell you—

LLOYD HERMAN: You did tell that story, yes. Thanks. [00:02:00]

ALICE ROONEY: Okay. Alright. So, anyhow, at the end of June I was offered the job at Pilchuck on the day this astrologer told me I would be offered a job, which is astonishing. So I accepted. And during the summer I went to a couple of board meetings and I went up to Pilchuck. And the first time I ever [laughs] went to Pilchuck on my own I backed into a ditch and [laughs] the glassblowers had to come out and get me out, which I thought was kind of humiliating, but it made them feel good. [They laugh.]

LLOYD HERMAN: This is the Pilchuck Glass School near Stanwood, Washington.

ALICE ROONEY: Right. Exactly. So I started on October 1—oh, I left Allied Arts after 20 years, and I started at Pilchuck. And I worked at home until we found an office. Pilchuck never had had an office before. Tom Bosworth, when he was director, was part time during the winter, or during the rest of the year, and full time during the summer, and he operated out of his home. And I thought it was very important for Pilchuck to have this building in Seattle. I also thought it was important for the artists to have a place where they could drop by if they wanted to. And I deliberately chose Pioneer Square as a place that would be attractive to a lot of different kinds of people. And it was kind of at its height at that time. So we ended up renting, actually, an office just a floor above where I'd been at Allied Arts. And, actually, there's kind of a remnant of that story left. Wally Toner, who had been a political consultant in the city, had the office that we rented before we did. And when we were interviewing he said to me, "Do you have office furniture and desks?" And I said, "Well, I'm going to have to get some." And he said, "Would you like to borrow this desk?" And it was an old oak—old-fashioned, traditional oak desk. And I said, "I'd love it." To my knowledge, it is probably still at Pilchuck. [Laughs.] And Wally died but maybe one of his heirs will come in and say, "You've got my uncle's desk," or something. [Laughs.] Anyhow, so we were in Pioneer Square from the time I started until the time—in 1980 until I left in 1990. And, actually, we did it kind of differently than they do it now. Every summer the whole staff would move up to Pilchuck. [00:04:40]

LLOYD HERMAN: Because it is only a summer program.

ALICE ROONEY: It's only a summer program, starting in late May, ending—and when we were there it ended after Labor Day. I think now it ends on Labor Day, I'm not sure. And of course our staff was smaller too. I always had a year-round staff of maybe six or seven. I think there are 18 now, or something like that—the same number of students. Anyhow, we produced our first brochure in the winter of 1980. And my first summer at Pilchuck was 1981, and we filled up—I think for the first time in the history of Pilchuck we filled up, and did ever after. And it was—Dale was the artistic director.

LLOYD HERMAN: Dale Chihuly.

ALICE ROONEY: Dale Chihuly was the artistic director and put together the program. And then we, meaning the administrative staff, did all the work of getting people's tickets there and getting them organized—

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, transportation tickets?

ALICE ROONEY: —and all that kind of thing. And so we then proceeded. And I also, of course, learned that—I mean, John Hauberg, the president of the board at Pilchuck, had announced the summer that I was hired that he was no longer to be expected to pay all the bills. [00:06:00] And he learned a very great deal, he told me, from Dr. Fuller at the art museum. Dr. Fuller had founded the Seattle Art Museum, had worked as an unpaid director for many years, and in fact had even contributed a lot of the art—Asian art—to the art museum. And John was president of the art museum board, John Hauberg. And he had also benefited from Mrs. Webb at the American Craft Council. And he thought it was unfair to an organization to wait until the primary donor dies or leaves and they don't have anything in place. So, he expected me, obviously, to establish and develop a development program for Pilchuck, which I started to do. And so we started—I think it was actually in 1980, maybe '81—I can't remember now—that we started the Pilchuck Society, which was a membership organization of donors. And I started writing grants. And I think the first grant I got was from the NEA and it was, like, for $30,000, and everybody was really impressed at that time.

LLOYD HERMAN: So this would have been—Pilchuck would have been established for eight years by the time you got there.

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. And I don't know—if I told you this story, tell me and I won't repeat it. After I'd been working there a month—Tom Bosworth, the previous director, and I overlapped for three months. And after I'd been working there for a month, I called Tom and I said, "What do you do when you ask John Hauberg for money?" Did I tell—

LLOYD HERMAN: You did tell that anecdote.

ALICE ROONEY: Okay. Okay. So then, as I say, we developed the Pilchuck Society. John made it pretty clear to the board that they were expected to donate money, which they really hadn't done before. [00:08:00] And I remember Frank Kitchell saying to Peter—my God, I've forgotten his name, I'll think of it in a minute—"Do you think we're expected to give a thousand dollars?" And Peter said, "Yes, I think so." And Frank said, "Well, don't you have kids in college too?" [Laughs.] And so they were all a little surprised. Everybody had had—I don't mean this in a nasty way at all, but they'd all had a free ride. They didn't really have to give anything unless they wanted to.

LLOYD HERMAN: Was it common at that time for boards to anticipate being asked for money—

ALICE ROONEY: Yes.

LLOYD HERMAN: —as it is now?

ALICE ROONEY: I think a lot of them. Now, certainly not in the amounts that they're probably asked for—like, I was really surprised when I heard that maybe you're expected to give $10,000 to the Bellevue Art Museum, either in-kind or in cash or in getting—give or get out, maybe. So we started in and actually did pretty well. It certainly had helped that I had been back in Washington during the '70s and gotten to know people. And so, as I say, our first grant was $30,000, which was kind of a lot of money at that time. Maybe in comparison with the art museum—or museums and symphonies it wasn't that large, but for something like Pilchuck, that had never—that to my knowledge they'd never gotten a grant before—no, I take it back. When Mimi was director in the early '70s, I think they got one then.

LLOYD HERMAN: Mimi Pierce.

ALICE ROONEY: That was the only one. So, we proceeded to do development, to work on the artistic program, to put—bring it all together, and do all the things you need to do to make a viable organization.

LLOYD HERMAN: How did this—how did your work at Pilchuck differ from what you did at Allied Arts?

ALICE ROONEY: Oh—

LLOYD HERMAN: What were the challenges and the changes that you—[00:10:00]

ALICE ROONEY: Actually, Allied Arts was more of a catalyst for things. You know, we didn't run a season of any kind. We occasionally would have projects. Like, we once had a project called "I've Never Been Before" series, where we put together a small performing arts organization of places that people may not have gone to, like the

First Days of Empty Space, or the First Days of Northwest Chamber, things like that. But, by and large, we were not sponsors or creators of the arts themselves. We were advocates and lobbyists for the arts, for historic preservation, for all—you know, sign controls.

LLOYD HERMAN: So this was very different than running a school.

ALICE ROONEY: This was very different. And it was really interesting to me to see how the studio glass movement was functioning with all its—I even got the feeling that glass artists never stayed home. They travel everywhere and stayed with each other. [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Teaching or doing workshops?

ALICE ROONEY: Right, yeah. Or what was also interesting—because hot shops were not as ubiquitous as they are now. If they could find a place to go and blow glass, they went, you know. And so it was wonderful to get to know the founders of the studio glass movement, not only Dale but Fritz Driesbach and Marvin Lipofsky, and Henry Halem. And soon after I started, *Life* magazine published a big color feature on glass, and Henry Halem was in it—he said his mother loved it [laughs]—and Dale Chihuly, and was it—maybe Billy Morris as a very—I can't remember—big full-page photographs of these artists. So that must have been in 1980, '81, something like that.

LLOYD HERMAN: Was Pilchuck mentioned?

ALICE ROONEY: I think so. I can't—

LLOYD HERMAN: Did this give a boost in applications? [00:12:00]

ALICE ROONEY: I think so, although it was more about them than about Pilchuck. And, you know, it was very exciting for—people thought of it of course as being a very new art form, even though everybody knew it had been around for centuries, you know. But glass programs were growing around the country. And under my tenure we started the scholarship program—and I can't remember if that was the second or third year—and it became very clear to me that even though the tuition was nowhere near what it is today, given inflation over the years and whatnot, it was still hard for a lot of kids to be able to afford to come. And so I talked to John Hauberg. What John wanted, John got. And what John didn't want usually didn't happen. And so, he was really opposed to a scholarship program, and I'll tell you why, because he thought, you had to raise the money for the scholarships, why not just raise the money period and let the students pay for themselves? And my point to John was, "You've got some really good artists and teachers here, and if they don't have good students, they're not going to come back, I think. And this way you don't have to take only the kids who have the money, you can open it up to the really talented students around the country." And so he said, "Okay, if that's what you want to do." And so [laughs] we got a grant from PONCHO and we paid 25 percent of their tuition, which in that case was not a whole lot of money—

LLOYD HERMAN: But still—

ALICE ROONEY: —but it was a start. And so the program, of course, has grown widely since then. And then we set up kind of a program—and I notice in the recent brochure they not only expanded it but—or continued it but expanded it—where we would leave a slot for a student from various glass programs around the country. So that they kind of had priority over just the ordinary applying student. [00:14:10]

LLOYD HERMAN: But by 1980, the school already had a lot of people from other countries. They weren't all American.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, it really started after that.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: There weren't very many when I was there. Then we started getting students from Japan. We had some Korean students. We certainly had students from all over Europe. And when the Libenskýs came from Czechoslovakia, that was so wonderful.

LLOYD HERMAN: And that was still during the communist era.

ALICE ROONEY: Right, it was. And, actually, just to jump ahead about that, after the so-called Velvet Revolution, one of the most touching evenings I've ever spent was outside—outside of one of the buildings there is kind of a lawn—grassy terrace. And Stanislav and his wife, Jaroslava, and their son, and another artist talked to us about the Velvet Revolution. And he said, "If it weren't for the students, it would never have happened," which makes me wonder where the students are today. Here, but that's a whole other story [laughs]. So, we really had some really wonderful things happen over those 10 years. Charlie Parriott and Dale both knew the Libenskýs very well,

and Charlie actually went to Prague for a year, and he was the one who really pushed a lot to have them come back. And they taught wonderful classes. And they were, you know, there for a month, you know.

LLOYD HERMAN: Now, who chose the faculty and students? Was that part of your job or did you just do the contracts and—

ALICE ROONEY: The students—Dale was the one who was the artistic director and chose the faculty. He really collaborated—or consulted with a lot of people. And people would recommend—but he and some of the other artists were the ones who came up with the idea of the artists in residence not being glass artists, you know. So, you know, a lot of them who came over the years who really learned about glass, and it was very important for them. And then the student—actually they're really kind of, by and large, first come-first served, except we did jury the scholarship students. [00:16:25]

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, after—it became important to have scholarships when the enrollment, or the applications exceeded the potential enrollment. Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, I'm wondering what kind of difficulties you as the executive director rather than—say not artistic director, not making the creative decisions—had to deal with particularly with students and faculty members from other cultures, and their expectations coming up to the campus in the woods, which was—and, you know, I would think that you would be overseeing the kitchen and food service and all of that.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, and the students actually. Now, Dale—actually, Dale was not very much around.

LLOYD HERMAN: Once they were—once the scholarship recipients were selected and the faculty was in line—although you would have a role, certainly, in what they were paid, and the budget for all of that.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, absolutely. I established the budget every year and hired the staff. That's not quite true. Sometimes, like, John Reed, who was the assistant director for the campus, if he needed somebody, he would—for the summer crew to clean up and whatnot, he would make recommendation to me, and technically I hired everybody, but you know how that works. People find good people and they want to hire them, and so that's how it works sometimes. But I certainly seemed to be in charge of everything. I really liked being in charge of everything, as a matter of fact. [They laugh.] [00:18:04]

LLOYD HERMAN: That really was quite a change, then, from Allied Arts and being the person to make decisions —

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: —on, really, a day-to-day basis, because once you're at the school and it's ongoing—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, and actually I don't know how people could run that school without being there. I mean, there were some really interesting and scary things that happened, and if you weren't there, how you'd ever know about them—you know, I do have—I'll have to show you before you leave. I've got upstairs a piece of glass by Robbie Miller. Did I tell you about this?

LLOYD HERMAN: No, no.

ALICE ROONEY: Robbie—And I came across it the other day, and actually I'm going to send Robbie an email. What he did, he painted on gallon glass jugs and just kind of painted it all over. And on the one I have, he had left the front passes of the jug clear and he had written on it, "Who's going to tell Alice?" [They laugh.]

LLOYD HERMAN: So that was something that was said often, I guess.

ALICE ROONEY: Yes, I think so. And I remember, for example—I've forgotten exactly what the problem was, but it was Erwin Eisch from Germany that we had some kind of problem with, and Ben Moore said, "Let's meet in your office, Alice, and you can call the shots." And sure enough—of course, Germans, you know, really do like discipline and authority, and whatnot. But, you know, the first summer I was there, for example, we had a student from Seattle—and Pilchuck, the last night of each session, always had a party with dancing and whatnot. And this kid—I went to bed at—I don't know, I never stayed up for the whole party—and Walter Lieberman came down to my house and said, "I think you better get up there. There's a student with problems." And I went up, and the student from Seattle was in the hot shop, and he refused to leave because he thought God was there. [00:20:02] And in a funny kind of way, I related to that. [Laughs.] And we later discovered that he had wandered up the hill, and a student who had packed—you know, because cars were not allowed above the parking area usually, and when they were packing to leave they'd take them up and load them up. A student was packing up his car, and he opened the door and somebody slugged him right in the jaw, and it was this kid from Seattle. So

he started to chase him, and the kid—I think it was Steve—continued running up the hill and ended up in the TA's—the teaching assistants' cabin, and made the mistake of waking up Mark Weiner, who was a great, big, tough guy, who got up out of bed. And it was like a bad Groucho Marx movie with them chasing these people all down the hill, and Steve ended up in the hot shop where, as I say, he thought God was there. Well, you know, before I came to Pilchuck, Pilchuck had not listed kids' emergency numbers or their parents or anything. Fortunately, I had instituted that. And I looked them up and he was from Kent. And I called his parents, like at two o'clock in the morning, and told his mother, you know, what was happening. And she said, "We've never seen him like that. We'll be there." So while we were waiting, we were all in the hot shop, and Billy Morris said to me, "I don't think we should have to deal"—oh, I know—I'm skipping a step. Before I got there, somebody had called the county sheriff, and he arrived with his big, burly deputies with guns on their hips. And I had thought they could take Steve down to the county hospital and get him looked at. And the sheriff said, no, they'd have to take him to jail. And I said, "Well, we don't want to do that." So they left, and Billy Morris said to me, "You should have let them take him to jail. We don't have responsibility for him." And I said, "Yes, we do. We take his money, we have responsibility for seeing that he's taken care of." [00:22:08] So at dawn his parents arrive, take him—went up and got his stuff and his motorcycle. [Laughs] And Ben Moore was fishing by the pond and couldn't believe it that somebody was leaving at dawn with his motorcycle and car behind. Well, we came to find out—and it made a profound change in the Pilchuck schedule that—people assumed he'd either been drinking or he was on drugs or something, and it turned out he had a—we had blowing slots around the clock. He had a middle-of-the-night blowing slot. He stayed up with his partner for second blowing slot. He stayed up for breakfast. He stayed up for classes. And he was strung out for lack of sleep as much as anything. So, the next summer, because of this, we eliminated the middle-of-the-night blowing slot, and had to hire a night watchman. So things like that—

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh.

ALICE ROONEY: Now, if I hadn't been there, I might just have thought, oh, well, it's a bunch of excited glass blowers, what do they know? And I was absolutely convinced, you know, that this was the right thing to do and everybody agreed on it. No problem. Another really weird story that happened—and this was later in the decade—we had a class called Graduate School, and it was for—and anybody who wanted—had to have attended Pilchuck before. And instead of people signing up for classes—a class, the way they did usually—they could sign up and go to any class that was open. And so we hired Walter Lieberman to be the coordinator of it all and work with me. And it was really a very interesting way to do it, and we got a lot of interesting people there. Well, we had one student from Australia who was really a problem. And I started getting reports from the instructors that they weren't quite sure what was the matter with him. And finally, one night—I don't know if you remember the house I lived in. I had to go across a bridge over a crick—[00:24:15]

LLOYD HERMAN: I do remember.

ALICE ROONEY: —and I was crossing the bridge, and I looked down and here was this student. And at first I thought he was meditating. And then he looked up and tears were streaming—

LLOYD HERMAN: He was sitting or lying or—

ALICE ROONEY: Sitting at the edge of the crick, down below the ridge, and tears were streaming down his face. So I talked to Walter and I said, "I'm really concerned about this kid. I hope he's not suicidal," because he was so depressed, and so exacerbated by everything. Well, I looked—[laughs] I just looked up in the phone book and here was a counseling service for alcoholics and drugs—and people on drugs. And I called up and I said—I told them who I was—"I have this student and I'm not at all sure what's the matter with him. Can I bring him in to be evaluated?" He said, "Of course." So I said, "You don't think I have to worry about him tonight?" And he said, "Tell me more." And I told him. He said, "Well, I think we can take a chance." So the next morning I took this kid to Mt. Vernon, cooled my heels for two or three hours while he was being counseled. And interestingly enough, they didn't charge us for it. But, anyhow, as we're driving back he told me—it turned out he was so delighted to be coming to Pilchuck and so elated that he'd given up sugar and coffee and nicotine, and marijuana. And apparently his wife had been baking brownies—proverbially—the proverbial brownies for him, and he'd gone off that too. And he was strung out.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, he was—withdrawal.

ALICE ROONEY: He was in withdrawal. [00:26:03] And the counselor said to him, "Do you think you should maybe go back on marijuana for the rest of your stay at Pilchuck?" And this kid said to me, "Do you think I ought to?" And I said, "You're asking me, the legal representative of this corporation, to condone an illegal act? I don't think so." [They laugh.] So, as it turned out, he really was pretty much through the withdrawal by this time. Then he got arrogant. And he came to see me one day—and, you know, not only is there a party at the end of each session but there's a small auction. And the kids—the students make pieces as well as the instructors. He said, "I'm giving you the best piece of your whole auction." And I said, "Well, that's really nice of you." And he went on

and on and on, and I thought, maybe I liked him better when he was in withdrawal. But, anyhow, we did get through—so things like that really are so informative, how you could not be there to know what's going on, I don't know.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, given the time of the 1980s when drug use and things like that were beginning to be more commonplace and a problem in many places, I was just wondering what, during your tenure, rules were brought in or what kind of policy changes might have happened?

ALICE ROONEY: We didn't have any policies about drugs. There were two things I decided I had nothing to do with. They were all 19 years old or older. One was whatever they did privately in their sex lives was not my concern. And the other, I wasn't going to worry about their smoking marijuana out in the woods. And, actually, at the back of my mind, of course, was the thought that if things started getting to be a real overt problem, then I would have to deal with it, but for the moment it was—and it seemed to work pretty well. I didn't have—now, what they were saying away [laughs] from me I have no idea. You know, all kinds of things could have been going on. [00:28:00]

LLOYD HERMAN: During the time that you were there, did the whole glass program change? Was there a need for different kinds of equipment or things that—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: —you know, because it is an artistic program in evolution.

ALICE ROONEY: When I started we had two—well, several buildings, but the two main buildings for the classes was the hot shop and the stained glass building, which were built in, I think, '78. And then in '86 we did the first public capital campaign. John Hauberg had paid for all the other buildings. And we did the first public capital campaign, hired Dick Collins—do you know Dick? He was a fund—

LLOYD HERMAN: Dick who?

ALICE ROONEY: Collins.

LLOYD HERMAN: Collins. No, I don't.

ALICE ROONEY: He at one time had been the development director for the Rep. Then he established an independent consulting business. And we decided to build three more buildings—two more buildings—three more buildings. And I said to the board, "I cannot do it by myself." I'd really been the development director. I had a development officer, but I did a lot of the work of raising money. I couldn't do that too, so we hired Dick and we raised $900,000 in something like two years. But I wrote the grant for the NEA, where we got $100,000, and from the Kresge Foundation, where we got $100,000. John Hauberg gave $100,000—maybe $125,[000]. And so at the time Dick started we had about $400,000 already.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, was most of that, because of your experience with Allied Arts and your knowledge of the arts community in Seattle, raised in Seattle—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: —or by that time was there a more national—

ALICE ROONEY: For Pilchuck?

LLOYD HERMAN: —presence for Pilchuck? [00:30:00]

ALICE ROONEY: Well, part of it was I'd been at the NEA in the '70s, as you know, where I got to know people. And also I had—I raised the money, whatever money was—we didn't have a very big budget at Allied Arts, but I was responsible for it, by and large. And we didn't get many grants, but whatever we got I did. So, I felt pretty good about that, and I think I was a pretty good grant writer, actually. And so we raised this money, and we built the studio building, and the cold-working building. And—

LLOYD HERMAN: How about housing? Did the housing change then too?

ALICE ROONEY: Not then, but later it—oh, we did—we built a couple of new dorms, small dorms, right. And so that was a fairly substantial—and, actually, it's kind of like somebody was describing a painter I know as being the best-known unknown painter. And this is kind of the best-known unknown capital campaign [laughs]. We didn't get a lot of publicity for it but we sure did well. And then—oh, then Penny Berk and I put together—or Penny actually did it, founded—I can't remember the name of the foundation. It was a foundation that funded the crafts in Washington State and—oh, God, what was it called? I'll think of it.

LLOYD HERMAN: Was she already executive director of the Glass Art Society at that point?

ALICE ROONEY: No, she was the—

LLOYD HERMAN: Or was that later?

ALICE ROONEY: She was my first development officer at Pilchuck.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, she was?

ALICE ROONEY: Uh-huh [affirmative]. And so she founded this foundation that funded the crafts, put together a grant. [00:32:00] And one of their representatives came out here. I took her up to Pilchuck, and, boy, within a week we had $100,000 grant from them. And I don't think they any longer fund—they were very—they kind of pinpointed the states where they would give money. I'll call Penny and find—I just can't remember the name of it. And so, we did pretty well in raising money at that time. And Penny stayed three or four years. And—

LLOYD HERMAN: How was your staff growing then? You said—

ALICE ROONEY: When I started I had two people—John Reed up at the school and Carolyn Silk who is an architect, actually, but she'd fallen in love with—she was a student of Tom's.

LLOYD HERMAN: S-I-L-K?

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Her former husband is Stuart Silk, who just happens to have designed the house my son just bought. [Laughs.] Small world. Anyhow, Carolyn was my assistant. And then we had a part-time bookkeeper—no, she did the bookkeeping. And so she was full time during the summer and part time during the winter. And then she got pregnant, so she left in the fall of '81, the end of my first summer. So, in the meanwhile I hired a registrar. And so, it would increase maybe a couple of people a year until we had about five or six.

LLOYD HERMAN: But it was really up to you to figure out what the needs were—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: —for a growing organization—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: —and to really get a staff in place for those needs. I'm just wondering how the increased facilities—but that didn't increase the number of students.

ALICE ROONEY: No, it didn't.

LLOYD HERMAN: —only the number of things that could be offered.

ALICE ROONEY: In fact, they still have the same number of students today.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah. Well, I kind of remember that that was all based on environmental concerns, from an interview I did with John Hauberg, that I think he had told me that because of the impact on the land, that it could never be more than 100, and maybe that even included kitchen help and staff too. [00:34:12]

ALICE ROONEY: A hundred people a session, yeah, so 500 a summer.

LLOYD HERMAN: For summer, yeah, five sessions.

ALICE ROONEY: But also, you know, you get a Glass 1 class with more than 10 students and it's really hard to really do it. And so, we never did ever talk about increasing it more.

LLOYD HERMAN: Now, you would be the person that students or faculty would come to to complain, I'm sure. What were the complaints [laughs] that you got most often that you had to deal with?

ALICE ROONEY: Actually, I got one sexual harassment complaint in the 10 years I was there, and it was a very funny one. I had an intern from Evergreen State who was going to get a degree in masters of crafts administration.

LLOYD HERMAN: I didn't know there was such a thing.

ALICE ROONEY: And it was during the middle '80s or late—maybe the late '80s. And one day she said to me,

"Can I talk to you?" And I said, "Of course. Come on in." You know, I deliberately had a glass door put in—oh, I know the building we built during that capital campaign. We built what is now the office, and I presume there is still a gallery there.

LLOYD HERMAN: The gallery, yes, right at the entrance of the campus.

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah, and I deliberately had a glass door put in my office so that people could come in and see me, know I was there, and make it more welcoming. Anyhow, she came in and she said, "I have a complaint of sexual harassment." And I said, "Really? Tell me about it." I don't know that I want to mention the name. Anyhow, one of our nicest, most attractive, and most talented male artist had propositioned her, and she turned him down. [00:36:06] And I said, "Well, what did he say when you turned him down?" She said, "He kissed me on the top of my head and said, 'If you ever change your mind, let me know.'" And I said, "Well, has he given you any kind of problem since?" "No." "Has he threatened your job?" "No." "Do you feel safe around him?" "Yes." I said, "You know, Martha, it may surprise you to know that I remember those days, and I didn't mind being asked, I only minded if they didn't take no for an answer." And I said, "It seems to me—

[Audio Break.]

LLOYD HERMAN: It's started it again.

ALICE ROONEY: Anyhow, so she was very disgruntled that I didn't take her more seriously, but I said to her, "I don't think you have any basis for any kind of claim of sexual harassment." And, actually, you know, Pilchuck did have a reputation for a lot of really healthy males. [They laugh.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, and they were all probably mostly in their 20s and—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And living out in the woods that way and living this—and everybody very excited about—I mean, I don't remember a whole lot of complaints.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah, that's good.

ALICE ROONEY: We tried very hard to have good food. And the cook who was there when I left—I don't think she stayed after I left, but she had been running—or been part of the culinary arts program at Skagit Valley Community College during the winter and then came and ran our kitchen during the summer. And she really used a lot of—kind of before her time. You know, La Conner and Skagit Valley is such a wonderful place for fresh foods—vegetables and fruits. We had good food. People didn't get paid a lot when they worked there, but they could—they got a chance to do their work, they got a chance to associate with people that they thought were kind of gods. [00:38:11] Every night of course we had a lecture by the instructors there. I don't know if Jim Baker does it or my successors yet—I introduced everybody when I was there, for the lecture. I thought it was an important part of my job to give them their due. And I didn't really talk a lot as critic. I tried to put them in context: where they taught, or where they'd had shows, or where they'd gone to school, whatever, and brief—you know, kind of telling an introduction about them. And I thought that—and I do remember a lot of things [laughs] from the lectures, oddly enough. One of them was Dante Marioni, who wasn't very old—his first teaching job at Pilchuck. And he was giving his lecture, and he talked about how he'd always wanted to be a glass artist. Lino Tagliapietra was a great inspiration to him, and he felt so lucky that he was able to do it. And he talked about how he had started doing work. And then he developed the *Whoppers*, these big, beautiful, very expensive pieces that he had, and he said, "So here I was, all of a sudden I was 24 and unemployed and rich." [They laugh.] And he was on his way. So, Pilchuck gave a lot of people chances and started them on their way. And, you know, I don't think I mentioned this to you the other day, but The *New York Times* recently had an article about happiness, and happiness in work. And it said if you—the people who have creative materials or subjects to work with, have stimulating colleagues and a fair amount of autonomy are happy in their work. And I thought, that describes my life. [00:40:10] [Laughs.] And it describes a lot of the—like, I have always had pretty wonderful people who worked there as staff people. They were all artists, of course, with very few exceptions. They valued the opportunity to be there, probably were willing to work for less, although they certainly never told me that.

LLOYD HERMAN: Because don't I remember that even the people in the kitchen were artists as well.

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah. In fact, you know, Paul Marioni's daughter—they no longer do this, and I was kind of sorry when they eliminated—we used to have scholarships for kids that worked in the kitchen. And the reason—and they gave it up—you know, it was obviously not as efficient as we could just hire a dish washer. But what it did, it gave scholarships to kids with no experience, beginners, and the other scholarships were juried and given

to talented, experienced kids. And I thought it was kind of too bad not to have one slot for—or one or two slots for scholarships for kids who were just starting.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: But they were all artists in the kitchen. And then we've have staff meetings every week. We had a lot of meetings. You know, when I retired I said I was never going to go to another meeting, and I was never going to raise a dime for anybody. [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, that was a lie. [They laugh.]

ALICE ROONEY: Anyhow, as I recall, I never had any trouble at all finding good people to come to Pilchuck, and that included staff people, who really had to come during the summer. One year we tried it with Penny Berk, who was the development officer staying in the Seattle office, and she missed it so much that she'd come up, you know, for half the week. But of course as the staff got bigger and housing became more precious and whatnot, it was harder to do that, and harder for people to adjust their lives to being away every summer. I could do it because I had an understanding husband. [00:42:12] [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: How much did the—in your tenure, did the budget grow to meet these new needs with more buildings and—

ALICE ROONEY: Well, as I recall, the budget was like $250,000 when I started, and it was just under a million [dollars] when I left.

LLOYD HERMAN: I remember being told once before that the cost of propane is a significant amount of the budget.

ALICE ROONEY: You bet. You bet. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: And glass equipment is expensive and buildings are expensive. As I say, things happen like changing—when you had glassblowing slots all across the clock, you didn't need to have a night watchman because people were there.

LLOYD HERMAN: Always up, yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: But we had to hire a night watchman. And it turned out he was—actually he worked there for a long time after I hired him, and it turned out to be very useful because the staff members going off duty could leave him assignments to watch the annealers or whatever they needed to have done. And so it was not just a matter of his wandering around making sure everything was safe. We had some [laughs] kind of odd things that happened. We had a French cook who had sharp knives that she threatened somebody with, and I had to send her off to a hospital. [They laugh.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, it sounds like a lot of very curious things that happened. Now, how many years were you there? Tell me about—

ALICE ROONEY: I started October 1 of 1980 and I left September 30, 1990.

LLOYD HERMAN: So it was just 10 years?

ALICE ROONEY: Just 10 years.

LLOYD HERMAN: And did you expect to stay more than that time—

ALICE ROONEY: Well—

LLOYD HERMAN: —or what was your expectation in that job as it grew?

ALICE ROONEY: You know, I expected to stay—I wasn't sure—I never—I actually never thought I would retire. That was just not something I thought much about. And I probably would have stayed on longer except that the board asked me to retire, to resign. [00:44:10]

LLOYD HERMAN: And what was their reason given?

ALICE ROONEY: Well, they gave me no reason. Oh, actually they did. In fact, David Hughbanks reminded me of this the other day, and they're just lucky I didn't sue them. John Hauberg told me that the board had decided to

ask me to resign, that I was too old. I was 60. No, was I 60? No, I was—yeah, I was 60. And they were going to combine the job of director and artistic director, and they didn't think I could handle it. And so, I was going to sue them. And I went to a lawyer, and when I told him that John Hauberg said I was too old—[laughs]—his eyes lighted up. And they offered me a year's salary. And so Bob and I talked a lot about it and—

LLOYD HERMAN: Your husband, Bob.

ALICE ROONEY: My husband, Bob. And I finally talked to my lawyer and I said, "How long would it take to get on the docket for the case?" And he said, "Probably two or three years." And I said, "I don't want to be—I don't want to live with Pilchuck that long. I'm going to take my year's salary and run." And of course what I didn't know was that the next week Ginny Ruffner called and offered me the job as director of the Glass Art Society. So I was out of work for a week. [They laugh.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Now, tell me about that, and what was Ginny's role?

ALICE ROONEY: She was president.

LLOYD HERMAN: President of the Glass Art Society.

ALICE ROONEY: She was president of the Glass Art Society's board, and the woman who was my predecessor, I think she was maybe part time.

LLOYD HERMAN: And she was based in Corning, New York.

ALICE ROONEY: In Corning, New York. And she decided to leave. Actually, I think the reason she left was because there was no—there's no social life in Corning that she cared about. And so Ginny asked me if I'd be interested. I went back to New York, to Corning, and spent a couple of weeks there, and told the board that I would accept. [00:46:14] But I thought that it was very important for me to go back there because Bonnie—no, what was her name? Bonnie Pul—no. Her last name was Pulver. Linda Pulver, the person who was left, had no experience with the Glass Art Society. She had a lot of experience working for the chamber of commerce in Rochester, New York, so she knew a lot about conferences, and the conference in '91 was in Corning.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, and conferences really were the major activity—

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: —of the Glass Art Society.

ALICE ROONEY: You bet. And so I told the board that if they would pay for my apartment rent, I would go back in February and stay until June. And we organized the conference and moved the—oh, that was part of the agreement. I said, "I'm not interested in moving to Corning. But apart from my personal desires, I think that you would be better off having your office in Seattle because I'm obviously not going to work forever, and I think you'd have a better chance of finding good people in a city like Seattle than in Corning. And, also, Seattle really is a headquarters for glass." So they agreed, and agreed that we would move the office from Corning to Seattle after the Glass Art Society conference in Corning. So I moved back, had an apartment, and really had a great time. We had the conference in April, and then, thanks be to my son—did I mention what he did for us before?

LLOYD HERMAN: No, I don't think so. [00:48:00]

ALICE ROONEY: Oh, my son is freight-forwarder, and a freight-forwarder is somebody who's a middle man between the customer who wants something shipped and the carrier. So I hired a couple of—Linda, my assistant, and another person, to pack boxes of stuff, files and whatnot, and left a lot in the archives but took what we needed to. And I called Scott one day and I said, "I don't have a place to put all this stuff." He said, "Well, use my warehouse, Mom." So he shipped—UPS picked up all this stuff, brought it to Seattle and we put it in his warehouse. I had also, that winter, talked to the Seattle First Foundation about the possibility of getting free office space. And sure enough, when I—I came back in June from Corning. In July we were notified that we had free office space in the Cobb Building, which is part of the University of Washington tract. And the foundation had access to it, and they gave us this office. We had it for 12 years.

LLOYD HERMAN: What is the Seattle First Foundation?

ALICE ROONEY: Well, it used to be—it's a predecessor to Bank of America. And they gave a lot of grants, and they had office space in the Cobb Building and they gave us this office space. And, as I say, for 12 years we had free rent, which was really a—when you think—I don't know what rents were then, but, say, $1,000 a month, that's at least $150,000 I got for them.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, and how long had the Glass Art Society been established?

ALICE ROONEY: The same year as Pilchuck, interestingly—'71.

LLOYD HERMAN: '71. And was it international from the beginning or did it grow into an international glass artist organization?

ALICE ROONEY: I think maybe it had a small international component at the beginning, but—

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, now, tell me how many years you were there—

ALICE ROONEY: I was there—

LLOYD HERMAN: —and what you feel were the major accomplishments?

ALICE ROONEY: I started in October of '91 and I retired in September of '96. No, 1990s—October of 1990—[00:50:04]

LLOYD HERMAN: '90.

ALICE ROONEY: —right after I left Pilchuck. And we really organized the office. I used a lot of interns when I was there, so we didn't have a lot of salary overhead. And I raised the level of attendance from the—or the conference every year from—actually, I'm really kind of sad when I think about the fact that our Mexico conference in '92 only had, like, 300 people. Well, what I discovered when I started was that the—[laughs] these are administrative things but it's interesting how important they can be—the way the Glass Art Society had organized their communication with their members, if you were a member, a current member, you got an invitation to send money and go to the annual conference. All of a sudden, after the first conference, I realized that we had a mailing list of 17,000 people that wasn't being used. [Laughs.] And so, if I didn't do anything else except to realize that and change the whole way of informing people about what was going on, that was—made it all worthwhile. And after that our conferences started—our membership grew and our conferences grew, and more and more people got interested in what was going on.

LLOYD HERMAN: And did then—was that an international list—

ALICE ROONEY: Yeah.

LLOYD HERMAN: —so the international membership grew too, then?

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And Bob Carlson—let's see, my first president was Stephen D. Edwards, then Josh Simpson. Josh was a great president—great negotiator, I have to say. When we had our conference in Mexico, boy, he negotiated with the Mexicans and got us a very nice arrangement with them. And then Bob Carlson became president, and Bob was an absolutely wonderful president.

LLOYD HERMAN: Well, that was probably easier having a president who lived nearby as opposed to the predecessors. [00:52:15]

ALICE ROONEY: It was. And I have to say that—and this is not to say other presidents didn't have this, but Bob was a very good decision-maker. And I remember—and, actually, one reason I left—decided to retire when I did, we were going to have a conference in Japan. I really didn't want to take it on. But when we were making the decision about whether to go to Japan for the conference we had a woman there, whose name I forgot, who had raised a lot of money for us, was really determined.

LLOYD HERMAN: In Japan?

ALICE ROONEY: In Japan. And so we had this—I remember this board meeting where we were discussing it, and Bob said, "We decided today to go or no go." Nobody has a right to not—make that decision. And so they decided to do it. And I thought, that's the way it ought to go, and I don't want do it. And I was 70 years old, so it seemed time. So that's when we hired Penny—Penny Berk—and she did a fantastic job. The conference in Japan was wonderful.

LLOYD HERMAN: Was she hired only as the conference coordinator?

ALICE ROONEY: No, she—

LLOYD HERMAN: —or as the executive director?

ALICE ROONEY: As executive director. And she stayed for six years, I think.

LLOYD HERMAN: The same amount you stayed.

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And she left because she and her husband were going to go around the world on their sailboat. I left because I was retiring. [Laughs.] Anyhow, the six years I was there were really fun, really exciting. And, you know, GAS is a very flexible organization, when you think about it. It's open to artists and curators, and educators, and manufacturers, and collectors, and patrons of all kinds. And we started a newsletter. We just were really a very interesting kind of service organization, I think.

LLOYD HERMAN: And were those changes that took place under your administration?

ALICE ROONEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah. Let's move on, then, to—you retired and then—I know you are still very busy. Tell me about what you've done since your retirement from the Glass Art Society.

ALICE ROONEY: Well, let's see. I was on the board of Pratt—

LLOYD HERMAN: Pratt Fine Arts Center.

ALICE ROONEY: —Pratt Fine Arts Center for two terms, I guess. And then I also was asked to serve on the board of the Ballard High School Foundation, Ballard High School being the high school I graduated from. And they started a foundation to support the high school in 1998. And C. David Hughbanks, who was a former president of the Pilchuck board of trustees—he's been a president of every board in town, as a matter of fact—called me to see if I would like to serve on this board of this foundation. And [laughs] that's when I said to him I was never going to go to another meeting or raise a dime for anybody. And he said, "Well, we were hoping you'd be chairman of the art committee." And I said, "Oh, okay." [Laughs.] So, I became chairman of the art committee and pulled together a committee of board members and some people in the community whom I knew who were involved in the arts. And we pulled together a structure to create an art collection at Ballard High School. I have just stepped down after 12 years as chairman, but in the meanwhile we put together a collection of about 60 pieces, two-dimensional—two pieces of sculpture and the rest are all two-dimensional, and probably valued at somewhere between $150[,000] and $200,000, I would think. [00:56:17] We haven't had it appraised but I'm guessing, based on what the values were when we received the art. Very interesting collection, I think, from a lot of points of view. One woman who joined our committee dropped out. She'd gotten a top award as a docent at the Seattle Art Museum, and I think Sally thought our standards weren't quite high enough for her. But I said to her, "We're not a museum, we're a high school that's trying to put together a historical exhibition and art collection, but with a particular point of view." In the guidelines we adopted—first of all, everything is curated. It's amazing—not amazing to anybody else but it was [laughs] amazing to me how many water colorists wanted their work in their old high school. [Laughs.] Anyhow, our guidelines are that the artists selected either have to be alumni who have become professional artists, or professional artists who have lived and/or worked in Ballard, the community of Ballard, or artists who do work that relates to the culture of Ballard. So we have a couple of really nice paintings of fishing boats, for example. And what's interesting about the collection is that it's called the Orre Nobles Art Collection. Orre Nobles was a very gifted art teacher who taught at Ballard from the late '20s until the '50s. And he kind of—he didn't create, but a number of his students were kind of the second wing of the Northwest School, for example, Richard Gilkey, Art Hansen, James Miller, Jack Stangle—a whole bunch of them who did really wonderful work. [00:58:04]

LLOYD HERMAN: And the art is displayed throughout the school.

ALICE ROONEY: It's on the walls of the high school. And we also actually—actually [laughs], one of the carrots for me when David asked me to be chairman of the art committee, I knew the school had cost $40 million to build it. That's actually one of the important things about the story I didn't mention. The old school was razed and a new building was built, and it cost $40 million. Well, I multiplied in my mind 1/2 of one percent of $40 million and came up with $200,000 that I thought we were going to get to buy art for it. The 1/2 of one percent is the Washington State Arts Commission Art in Public Places. Well, it turned out that what the 1/2 of one percent applies to is the state's share of the building, not of the total building cost, so we got $18,000. But we got some nice things. We got a serigraph by Gwen Knight, who is Jacob Lawrence's wife, and one of his. And we got a piece of sculpture by Lee Kelly from Portland. And what was the fourth thing we got from them? I can't remember now exactly. So that's very nice, having a Jacob Lawrence right in the library. And the collection included six photographs of the old school taken by a couple of the artists who actually weren't on the board. And it's really a very nice collection. And we got an interesting contribution. For example, the Ballard branch of the Seattle Public Library built a new branch, and they, for whatever reason, decided not to continue hanging a piece they'd had in their library since the '50s, a piece by Archie Graber, and it's called something of the world [*Tree of Knowledge*]. [01:00:05] And it's a piece made up of all different kinds of trees and woods—oak and pine and walnut and whatnot. And for years it hung over the check-in desk at the Ballard branch of the library. We know have it hanging up next to a clock by the library—a very handsome piece and very—the kids drape—Matthew Kangas is on my committee, absolutely hates it. The kids drape things all over it and whatnot [laughs]. And I said, "Matthew, what do you expect? They're teenagers, you know." And you've got to hand it to them,

they've very creative. So, anyhow, the one thing we didn't get to that I kind of regret is that we don't have any three-dimensional work. And there are lots of good potters and glass artists, and even jewelers in Ballard. And I actually was going to do that and we somehow haven't. Now the program is going to go off into working more closely with the faculty and students. And we've just done a wonderful video catalogue of the whole collection that includes not only, you know, videos of the pieces and a description, but interviews with artists, and with some of the key players like Matthew Kangas, and David Hughbanks, and me and the principal, and whatnot. So it will be—it's going to be on the Seattle Channel one of these days.

LLOYD HERMAN: Ah.

ALICE ROONEY: It has been once, but that was for a very different reason. And so, the kids are going to be drafted into conducting tours. And, actually, Michael Harris, the producer of the video, film, is a very gifted filmmaker, and he's doing it so the kids can actually get it on their cellphones when they tour the collection, you know.

LLOYD HERMAN: Oh, that's a good idea. So did you say you're off that now? [01:02:00]

ALICE ROONEY: I stepped down as chairman. I'm supposedly still on the committee but I haven't gone to—I'm still on the bo—

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ALICE ROONEY: —board.

LLOYD HERMAN: So what are you spending your energy on since then?

ALICE ROONEY: Well, I play bridge. [Laughs.] I belong to a book group. I belong to an investment group. I go to the theater and I go to movies. And I just pretty much do whatever I want to do. I cook more—I cook more than I used to. And so that's really something I still do enjoy. I garden. I go out to dinner with friends. And I just had my 85th birthday. [Laughs.]

LLOYD HERMAN: Is there anything else you'd like to add to the interview, Alice?

ALICE ROONEY: [Laughs.] I have to say, I think I've been very lucky in my life that I've loved every job I've had, by and large. People have always been very generous to me and watched out for me in odd ways, you know, like when I—[phone rings]. I'm not going to answer that, Lloyd, but it will ring for four more rings.

[END OF TRACK AAA_rooney11_1238_r.]

LLOYD HERMAN: [Inaudible.]

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LLOYD HERMAN: Okay.

ALICE ROONEY: You know, when I left Pilchuck I was overwhelmed with the number of people who got in touch with me. And, you know, the artists had a big party for me, which was wonderful. And this has been true, I've met more wonderful people who really have brightened my life and made it more interesting and taught me a lot and inspired me. And of course the other part is my daughter, on the Fourth of July, said, "Mom, why don't you come live with me in Texas?" And I said, "Wash out your mouth." [Laughs.] I love Seattle. I was born here. I feel it's my city. Part of it was because of all the things we did in Allied Arts that really had to do directly with the city, and partly being part of the arts here and seeing the city fulfill—you know, it used to be more fun here than it is now because it's more corporate, I think. And the reason it was more fun is that when Seattle was growing, it was very clear what its needs were. We needed—you know, we needed a resident professional theater, we needed ballet and opera, and more art galleries. You know, when I was growing up, we had the art museum and two commercial galleries. I think that was all we had—Zoe Dusanne and Otto Seligman, and maybe there was one that had seascapes [laughs]. And so what happened then—we talked about this before, didn't we, when we were talking about the World's Fair? I think that lots of people came together for lots of really good projects, whether it was creating the Seattle Rep or ACT Theater or the ballet, or whatever. [00:02:04] And so, what you had were you had communities at the neighborhood level like Ballard and Wallingford, and Capitol Hill, but then you kind of had a community at the top which was made up of—architects were very active at that time, and the environmental movement started, and you had the arts people, and so a lot of us knew each other through a lot of different things. And it was really fun. And the other night when we were at Ginny's party, and Peter

Steinbrueck and I were talking, and I introduced him to Jim Baker, the new director of Pilchuck and said, "Peter is not only a former city council member and a practicing architect—and I'm sure he doesn't want to hear this all the time, but he does happen to be the son of Victor Steinbrueck, who saved the Pike Place Market." And Peter said to me, "And so did you."

LLOYD HERMAN: [Laughs.]

ALICE ROONEY: So it was fun to have that kind of recollection and iteration.

LLOYD HERMAN: Yeah.

ALICE ROONEY: Anyhow, that has made my life really as wonderful as it's been.

LLOYD HERMAN: I don't think you're through yet, Alice, but thank you very much. This concludes the interview with Alice Rooney.

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[END OF INTERVIEW]