

## Sally Corwin Transcript

Susan Goodman: Okay. Today is May 6, 2001, and I am Susan Goodman. I am interviewing Sally Corwin, who is part of the Jewish Women's Archive project. Sally has agreed to talk with me today to talk a little bit about her life and events that were important to her. Sally, do you want to begin by telling us when you were born, where you were born, who was in your family at the time of your birth?

SC: Okay. I was born on May 24, 1917, in Washington, DC. I had a brother seven years my senior. My mother and father were both immigrants from Russia, and they owned the little corner grocery store, which most immigrants did, who came over about the time they did. Seven years later, my younger brother was born, and that comprised the children – the older brother, I was in the middle, and my younger brother. My older brother has since passed.

SG: Who were you named for?

SC: I was named for my mother's half-sister, and I was named Sarah, interestingly enough, which I was all my life, until I went to work when my supervisor said, "I don't like your name." She said, "I'm going to call you Sally. [inaudible] And then I had changed legally when I realized it was important to do it. That's how it happened.

SG: What prompted her to say that?

SC: I don't know. I have no idea. I was sixteen when I went to work in the government at night, three in the afternoon until eleven. We called it the night shift. It was a time when we were just beginning to have [inaudible]. Jobs were very important, and I got the job in a government agency that paid me [inaudible]. My job was to be what they called the stenographer in a pool. There was a big legal division, a lot of attorneys, and they would

call the pool for stenographic assistance. They didn't have private secretaries. It was a wonderful experience, but nerve-wracking [inaudible]. This woman was in charge. She [inaudible] different ones. Some were kinder than others. Some were very patient, talked to you [inaudible]. After a while, all of us began to realize [inaudible] cut my political teeth [inaudible], and it was very, very exciting.

SG: The fact that she didn't want you to be Sarah, that wasn't antisemitic —?

SC: I was so young and so happy to have a job that it never would have occurred to me [inaudible]. I remember telling my parents about it. My mother said, "If it makes her happy. Get along with your employer. You do what she says." She was very kind. She taught me a great deal. She was the one who really gave me the courage [inaudible] to apply to law school. In those days, you didn't have to go [inaudible] law school. Now you do.

SG: So, you went to law school without going to college.

SC: That's right. Today, you can't do it.

SG: Right. That must have been fairly unusual for a woman.

SC: It was. There were two women in my class. I was one, and the other one, who turned out to be a lifelong friend over the years, [inaudible] just died a few months ago. I went to school. The first class for the first couple of years was at nine in the morning, and I had to arrange my schedule, so I was out at two, which gave me an opportunity to go to work. That's what I did.

SG: And the name of the school?

SC: Washington College of Law, which is American University's Law School now. That was the name of it then.

SG: All right, before we go further, let's go back, because we skipped over the first sixteen years pretty quickly. What section of DC were you in? Was it in the district?

SC: Right in the main section, in the Northwest [inaudible] suburbs. [inaudible] it was an economic [inaudible]. We managed and ate all right, but there were no dollars to spare. When I was in high school, I was dying to go to medical school, but when I got out, I realized [inaudible]. I didn't tell you this. I therefore went to something called the [inaudible] Business College. In three months, I learned shorthand typing. [inaudible] After I left, [inaudible] New Deal was then going strong.

SG: Were there a lot of Russian immigrants in your neighborhood? Jewish Russian?

SC: The Russian immigrants, my father and mother's peers, were not really equipped to do much [inaudible], but they did veer to a little grocery store. You don't have them now. They're very unusual. Even when they're little, they're little [inaudible]. They're part of a whole group. These were independent. It was easy for them to slip into that. From the time the kids were old enough, we were working in the store. I didn't work in the store after I got into this job. [inaudible] I hear so much [inaudible]. I didn't do particularly well in law school. I was a C student, but I graduated and passed the bar in my senior year, as most of us decided we wanted to really see if we could work at it. I didn't work at it for a long time. I had a very rare opportunity to this generation [inaudible]. But one day, I was called to the office of a name that meant nothing to me: Benjamin Cohen. I went on to work there [inaudible] eleven o'clock [inaudible] they did send you home by ten. Ben Cohen was one of a team of Cohen, Incorporated, who were presidential advisors. Not that we had anything to do with that. We did the typing and all that kind of work, but it was very exciting. He taught me a great deal about [inaudible]. I guess he taught more retrospectively. I was pretty young then, and my father was excited at my reports. I'm not sure I really realized the implications [inaudible]. I typed. That's all I did. In those days, these guys were always the [inaudible] shorthand. There was a typewriter in everybody's

office [inaudible] dictate to the typewriter. As a result of which – my girls were ten and eleven – I got them a typewriter.

SG: That's great. A good skill.

SC: They both found it useful.

SG: Now you need that same skill for [inaudible].

SC: [inaudible]

SG: Now, that's a big jump from parents that are running a little grocery store to sending a daughter to law school in the years that you went, which were so –

SC: Well, I'll tell you, I remember from the time we were old enough, my father was very insistent that we do well in school, [inaudible] very patient. I didn't have too much trouble. I was pretty much an A student. My older brother was smart but lazy. I remember if he came home with a D, my father would just [inaudible]. I don't remember when or how, but I remember at the time I was thinking about what I would want to do. I remember my father saying, "You must go to college." So, when you say – when I went, I was lucky because I had the means. It was just always understood. I can't explain it, but it was, and this was true, by the way, of our cousins, who had a grocery store. A lot of them went to college at night. There were a lot of night schools [inaudible] that was the way it was going to be.

SG: That's really impressive. How much before your birth did your parents come from Russia?

SC: My mother came at the age of fourteen [inaudible], landed in New York, and had a piece of paper that told [inaudible] someone wrote the words.

SG: Wow.

SC: My father had come, I think, when he was sixteen. Both also [inaudible]. He got a job in a cigar factory, where a lot of them worked. And they met. I think she was nineteen, and he was twenty-one. It turned out they both came from the same village. It's true, but did not know each other. Vilna. [inaudible].

SG: Now, was that a large –? I mean, I've heard of Vilna. How large –?

SC: I don't know. They never talked too much about – it was not a good marriage. It was difficult for the children, but they were both very supportive about their kids getting an education. They didn't care what it was in. I've jumped a little. When I was in high school, I know all of us came home from school, changed our clothes, [inaudible], and it was no big deal. You just expected to be [inaudible]. It was a difficult childhood, in a sense, and my brothers would both have told you this. You never knew whether they were going to go through a siege of not speaking for a week or whatever. [inaudible] one would think, "Oh, what psychological damage that we do [inaudible]." But I remember [inaudible] because that's where I got [inaudible]. When I got older and more mature, I realized [inaudible].

SG: [inaudible] was provoking her.

SC: Yes. I don't know what made me push forward to law. I think because you go – it was the kind of thing you could go to school and work. You couldn't really do that in medical school. Besides, I couldn't afford [inaudible].

SG: But knowing that you were only one of two women, I mean, that's pretty gutsy. I mean, did you feel like you were kind of breaking a mold there, or that you didn't quite belong yet, or you felt welcome?

SC: I didn't feel anything but glad to get in, that the tuition was only 210 a semester. [inaudible] I'm not aware of our being looked at differently. Naturally, we gravitated to each other. We got [inaudible] with a few of the boys. We used to have study sessions. I

felt [inaudible] because I felt I should study [inaudible]. Never felt anything from any of the professors. As you will hear later, I never felt that in my career, although when I went into the courtroom, they were very few. We had fun in the sense that when we got together for these studies, we asked each other questions. So, we enjoyed it. We really did. I don't mean to give the impression that everything was hunky-dory all the time because it was not. I remember once I got a C in [inaudible] property, and I was unhappy. Not that I got A's. I didn't. It was mostly B's. I found that law school took me into a world [inaudible]. We lived upstairs over the store, or the kitchen was downstairs, and our life revolved around helping out at the store or that kind [inaudible] open the store [inaudible] rarely closed before then. Sunday was the big day [inaudible].

SG: But you were open seven days.

SC: Yeah.

SG: Very encompassing. [inaudible] your life.

SC: That's why law school [inaudible] opened up an entirely different world. She took me to art museums. She introduced me to art about which I knew nothing. She taught me how to dress, and I remember her saying, "There's one shop I want to take you to." I remember the dress. It was 19.95. In those days, [inaudible]. She taught me a lot [inaudible] really never been exposed to, which I never really [inaudible]. It opened up a whole new world.

SG: What prompted her to take you under –?

SC: I don't know. We both just [inaudible], only two girls in the class. And we liked each other. My schedule was such – I could only see her on Sundays, [inaudible] half a day Thursday. She came to my house. I went to her house. [inaudible]. We liked each other. We kept in touch until she died.

SG: Wow, that's really impressive.

SC: We didn't see each other. But we talked once every couple of [inaudible].

SG: Fantastic.

SC: Very enduring [inaudible].

SG: What kind of law did she end up doing?

SC: This is [inaudible]. She took the bar three times, but couldn't pass. She married a wonderful man, a lawyer for the Department of Justice. As a matter of fact, when Joe and I were first married [inaudible]. She did a lot of volunteer work in hospitals. It sounds like a book, but it's true. Museums. She did a lot of what they call guide tours.

SG: Docent?

SC: Yeah. She had gone to the University of [inaudible]. She had three wonderful kids. One had a learning disability [inaudible]. She lived the life that women don't live anymore. It's unusual now [inaudible]. I'm not saying it's wrong; I'm just saying.

SG: So, you didn't know your grandparents, or did you?

SC: Never.

SG: Never. Or aunts and uncles?

SC: Oh, yes. My aunts and uncles – and there were three sets [inaudible] Sundays, we either got together there or they came out to my mother's house. My mother's house [inaudible]. It was really his house. They enjoyed being together. I don't mean to imply that their lives were hunky dory. My father didn't just have one store. I remember three different stores. I think the stores were sold. Why'd he do that? Because he wasn't [inaudible] tough stuff. Whenever that happened, I remember his being so adamant

[inaudible]. In a way, I would say my father was my first inspiration. I was a girl, but I remember his words. I must have been in fifth or sixth grade. He's said to me, "[inaudible] You can do anything you want." That's a father's [inaudible] words. [inaudible] confidence. It took me a long time to really get it. [inaudible] decided to go into private practice. The girls were [inaudible] school. Eventually, I went into the firm. I didn't go in right away. I worked part-time because I felt they needed [inaudible]. I don't mean I was a perfect mother. [inaudible] There were problems there, too, which [inaudible]. I think that I got my original feeling of confidence from my father, and Joe nurtured it. I would never have gone into the [inaudible]. I was afraid of that. [inaudible]. But there was no question [inaudible] and when I got into [inaudible]. Let me tell you something. [inaudible] What I have to tell you is, from the time I was in [inaudible], I was always very prepared. Joe said [inaudible]. I don't mean to suggest I always [inaudible] one good thing I found absolutely [inaudible] was that the total lack of discrimination [inaudible]. I never ever encountered a judge who I felt was unfair, except once. I was in a motion session. That's not a trial. That's where you asked the judge to make the other side. [inaudible] Judge Reuben Lurie. You wouldn't know him. When I got to the office, he said, "Mrs. Corwin, would you mind telling me where did you train?" When I told this story to the girls, they said, "Oh, that's ..." I never thought of it that way.

SG: Right. It's very arrogant.

SC: It was that, but it was also [inaudible] complimentary. That's all I heard. So, that was it. I never had anything like that.

SG: That's pretty amazing.

SC: But part of it was my gratitude [inaudible]. Apropos of that – I know I'm jumping, but I have to tell you [inaudible] the first argument I made in the Supreme Court, that is [inaudible], you were seated at a table, and to your left is the assistant attorney, or the attorney that was involved in the case. I got up and argued. After I said a few words. But

then she just said, “Mrs. Corwin, are you asking us to find [inaudible] as your dear husband has done many times before?” [inaudible] I said, “No, I’m not.” [inaudible] what I was doing. That’s the closest thing it ever came to. But the interesting thing is, his son became Chief Justice [inaudible]. When he retired, I wrote a note telling him how wonderful [inaudible], and he wrote me back a note that said [inaudible]. “I remember well when I was at the dinner party, my father talking about [inaudible] who had argued.” He said, “I never knew whether it was because you were a woman” – well, it was new – “or whether it was because you were good.” Now I know [inaudible]. But I repeat: I have never ever felt discrimination [inaudible], and I didn’t feel [inaudible].

SG: For a female to be so involved in such a male-based profession at that time required a great deal of self-confidence. How did you –?

SC: [inaudible]

SG: How'd you overcome that?

SC: Well, by being prepared. By being prepared. You may be skeptical. I have had several occasions where I’ve been asked to [inaudible] young women in litigation firms, and I said, “You won’t like what I’m going [inaudible].” I remember the first time. It was a rather large firm I really don’t prefer to identify. I said, “My husband taught me nobody [inaudible]. And if you’re on the right side, you’ll win. Just go in there with your [inaudible], not shuffling papers when you have to answer a question. Take a week off [inaudible]. Study, study, study. You will never ever have any discrimination. [inaudible].” Now, don’t misunderstand. I’ve been a member of NOW [National Organization for Women] for ages and continue to be. I suppose there is some of it, but it is so hard for me to advise them because I can only judge by my own experience. There are a lot of women out there now. I would say forty, maybe fifty percent [inaudible]. They had to be. But I have not been received well at a few law firms. No, but I’ve talked to the young people.

SG: Because why?

SC: Well, because they feel they're – the women I talked to – don't you feel [inaudible] there is an innate discrimination, a feeling that we just aren't as good as the men [inaudible]. I said, "It may be there. I don't know. I have never felt it." Maybe it's because I'm so happy that I'm doing well on the case. You call it confidence; I call maybe a little lack of confidence, but I don't look at it that way. [inaudible] It's an interesting phenomenon, I will tell you. I was part of Governor [Michael] Dukakis's judicial nominating committee for four years. Eighteen people were appointed. That was an exciting time. We had people come up. We would interview them. We did it very carefully and as relaxedly as possible. We would name three nominees for each post, send it up to Dukakis, and he at least always took one of the three. It was interesting to see people come up, and they knew somebody was going to say, "Why do you want to be a judge?" And we got such interesting responses. You met so many interesting people. There was a judge who was Chief Justice in the Supreme Court, [Paul J.] Liacos [inaudible] name. But when he was applying for chief justiceship [inaudible]. [laughter] I was like this with him. But in any event, I said, "Well, I know why you want to be chief." By then. I really had confidence. "You worked at the court for a number of years, and you feel like you have a real familiarity, and you have some ideas on how to run a court." He said, "You're only partly right. I want to lead the court more in the criminal area." I said, "Richard, there are a lot of people who don't like your feelings." He is pro-criminal. I don't mean he's pro-crime. He said, "Well, I know that. They don't have to go [inaudible], but I'm going to try." It was such a human thing for a guy who ended up being Chief Justice to do. Now you know the first woman Chief Justice is Margaret Marshall. I served with her on this committee. [inaudible] She is very able. My daughter happened to be in her law school class at Yale. So, occasionally I sent Laura, who happened to be [inaudible], an opinion she's written [inaudible]. She married Anthony Lewis, that very excellent writer. Women have come a long way. There's no question about it. They work hard. They have to work hard. I don't mean all women lawyers [inaudible]. That's not so. But there are really lots of

outstanding [inaudible] lawyers. No question about it. I think partly it is because they want to show that they can do it, and the more you prepare, the better [inaudible].

SG: Sounds like your father, in some ways, was a bigger influence, too, than your mother.

SC: He was. My father was an intellectual. He was the kind of person – on Sunday, when Franklin Roosevelt was talking – and I could have cared less; I was a teenager – and he'd say, “Shush, I want you to listen. He's going to be the best president we've ever had.” Now, I don't mean I admired him more because he cared about that. My mother made wonderful [inaudible]. Don't misunderstand. He was politically interested. He was interested in individual accomplishment. He was a very kind person, as my mother was. But when somebody says to you, “You can be anything you want to be,” [inaudible] you've got to try to live up to that. He was a great influence. Later –

[Recording paused.]

SG: Do you think a lot of your contemporaries were getting that message? Females?

SC: I have no idea.

SG: I think that's something men told their sons.

SC: Now, isn't that interesting that you should say that. We have two daughters. My husband [inaudible]. As a matter of fact, she truly is the smartest lawyer [inaudible]. He's very smart. He's very open-minded. He thinks those girls were [inaudible]. I have seen this with the fathers of other daughters. I've never had sons, but I have seen fathers favor daughters, whatever it is. I don't know. There's no question that my father was partial to me. No question. When I grew up, I said to my brother, Nathan, [inaudible] visit in Washington every weekend for a while [inaudible]. He said, “Do you know how many times I ever wanted to be like Sarah?” It was. It was a favorite thing. I knew he expected

good work. I don't know whether that – I suppose that was instrumental. [inaudible] yet, when I graduated high school, he said [inaudible] three months. I think it was nineteen dollars a month. I think he borrowed [inaudible], but it was great because [inaudible].

SG: That sounds like a growing up that was fairly hard-working and serious. Do you remember vacations, fun family outings, or fun holiday gatherings?

SC: There were holiday gatherings with the cousins, and they were very, very close. I remember my mother had a brother who landed in Boston. I was married then, living in Boston, and one of the kids had scarlet fever, so I couldn't leave, and Joe went to the boat to meet him. Joe cannot even talk a word of Yiddish, but somehow, they got together. My mother had called and said, "The chocolates and donuts [inaudible] going to put them on the train, and chicken [inaudible]." So, all I know is he came with his two sons. Joe had him call me from the station where he took him, and he talked in [inaudible], and I could understand him. This guy, his wife, and two others – between the cousins – he came to live with my mother. I don't know how they did it. Between my mother, father, and cousins, the kids got tutors to teach them English. They knew nothing. They couldn't go to school. They fed them. They helped him with the language. They got him a job. I think it was a year and a half or two before they could even afford to look at a little place [inaudible] so close. It was just wonderful.

SG: That's really nice.

SC: When it came to family, if anybody came, they really chipped in. This is not to say they didn't have their disagreements; believe me, they did. But when it came to people coming from the [inaudible], and none of them had very much. They really didn't. It's interesting, that kind of thing. Maybe it's because the necessity for it was gone. We're all so much better off. Joe and I [inaudible] her younger brother was fifty-five. He has already retired as [inaudible]. Would you believe this? They have taken a year in London.

SG: [inaudible]

SC: And then a year in Italy, and they're coming back here. What do you suppose she's doing in [inaudible]? She found a children's shelter where [inaudible]. Oh, she's also an usher in a theater where she sees all the good plays.

SG: Good for her.

SC: They worked very hard, the two of them. [inaudible]

SG: Unbelievable.

SC: At this age, we're just trying to figure out how to pay for all these graduate students.

SG: Now, how religious was your family?

SC: Well, we belonged to a shul, and I remember that I used to sit upstairs with my mother.

SG: Orthodox.

SC: Yeah. Papa was downstairs. We had a kosher house for a while. I'm not aware of any praying. There would be a Seder, and the prayer part would be accelerated. I'm really not aware of Jewishness at all, really. I knew we were Jewish. My best girlfriend was [inaudible]. But I tell you [inaudible] aware of it. In 1966, [inaudible] said, "Sally, let's go to Israel." So, we took an American Jewish Congress tour. [inaudible] remember the money. It was so cheap, but we didn't know. 750 apiece. We went for ten days.

SG: Wow.

SC: We were absolutely [inaudible]. It was the most unbelievable experience [inaudible].

SG: What was it?

SC: Well, you saw what these people, what the Jewish people, had done with nothing. We would be on buses. After the third or fourth day, you didn't have to be told. You knew [inaudible]. trees. The farmers were absolutely thriving with [inaudible]. When you went over to the outside, [inaudible] you, but you saw that the [inaudible]. We were so impressed [inaudible] and Joe [inaudible] always, every year, before the year is up, sit down [inaudible] charity. But from then on, it was different. I don't mean we didn't give to [inaudible] all these Jewish [inaudible] when Temple Shalom was turning from a little house into a building, we gave with excitement. We went back three more times. The fifth time was our fortieth anniversary. The kids said, "We're going to plan a party for you two." Joe and I talked about that, said [inaudible], "We have a proposition for you. We want to show you the land of Israel." So, the two girls – and one was then married. Her husband [inaudible] called [inaudible]. We had two weeks. Each time we would go to the same places, and we would also see things we had never seen before. The growth there. The time we got into [inaudible] for several hours through a friend. I tell you, I don't mean that Jews are the best, but there is something we saw [inaudible] why I'm so furious now. I pick up the paper, and I see [Ariel] Sharon had the headline – "Sharon has disagreed with Israel [inaudible] you see two days before, the Arabs have killed a number of people on a bus. Terrible. I don't know what the answer is, but I just don't [inaudible]."

SG: Awful.

SC: That's what really made me aware of Judaism.

SG: So, it was pride that you felt?

SC: It was pride, not so much in the physical land. [inaudible] what these people had done, not just with their schools, the hotels. I remember [inaudible]. I remember in Jerusalem – I can't remember the name of the hotel. We were on the 19th floor, and we looked out and saw both the old side and the new side. It was what we saw the lawyers had done. We always went to the courts [inaudible], and because one of our kids was a

social worker, we went to a couple of places [inaudible] elderly people [inaudible]. To us, what they had done in twenty, thirty years was unbelievable, and it still is. It still is. A lot of things are going I don't like, but that's relatively unimportant. I was hoping that Clinton could really do something. I'm not sure [inaudible].

SG: Came close. It will be a while [inaudible]. When did you meet Joe?

SC: In my last year in law school. I worked for [inaudible] full-time, and I was working for them [inaudible], but even I didn't have enough courage to say [inaudible] very important [inaudible] United States Supreme Court [inaudible]. When it was over, I said [inaudible] I go to take these exams [inaudible]. So, they got me a job, a day job [inaudible] in the evening for a guy. He happened to be the head council. There were about 120 lawyers, and Joe was one of them. We met, really, through work. It was not that we saw or dated. It was not, "Oh, isn't this wonderful?" right away. I remember when my mother met him [inaudible]. I said, "Oh, I'm not thinking of getting married." [inaudible] I think we were [inaudible]. By then, we'd been seeing each other [inaudible]. I was listening to the radio [inaudible]. Joe was picking me up. When he came in, I said, "[inaudible] Pearl Harbor has been hit. I don't know what that means. [inaudible]. In any event, to make a long story short, we were married on January 30, 1942. Do not laugh. Franklin Roosevelt's birthday.

SG: Oh my god.

SC: [laughter] Enough already.

SG: And that was deliberate, right?

SC: Enough already. [laughter]

SG: You chose that, right?

SC: I did.

SG: Or was that a coincidence?

SC: No, no. [inaudible] Joe was very excited about the fact that I worked for [inaudible]. We married, and I was working. [inaudible] very short time, Joe's mother got sick, and we came up. She had cancer, and the doctor told [inaudible] be a year or two. We both said we have to [inaudible]. So, I got a job first. I worked in the Office of Price Administration through a friend of Joe's, and I came up here about three months before. I stayed with his mother, who was a lovely [inaudible]. But there was a big problem. Joe had an older sister [inaudible] had a nervous breakdown, taught at Boston Girls' Latin, and then had a nervous breakdown. So, his mother was [inaudible] father had died early. The younger sister, Mary, had gone off [inaudible] younger sister. [inaudible] I stayed with her and her cousins. They were very kind.

SG: What part of Boston?

SC: West Roxbury. Occasionally, we drive by [inaudible]. And then Joe came and [inaudible] short term [inaudible]. One day, he said, "You know, kid, I ain't getting any [younger]. I want to have kids." [inaudible]

SG: How old were you when you got married?

SC: Twenty-four. Linda was born in October of '45 [inaudible]. Then Laura came on the scene. I will answer that by telling you many years – oh, so many years ago. Oh, she was nine or ten. She said, "Mommy, I want to ask you a question." I said, "Okay," thinking [inaudible]. She said, "Was I an accident?" I don't know where I got the strength of mind. I said, "Well, let's put it this way. I wouldn't put it that way. I would say you were a surprise." She said [inaudible]. [laughter]

SG: That's a great answer.

SC: It's the best that could ever happen. We never had a rainy day problem. Until they got to be ten or eleven, they turned into what I call the (bicker?) girls. I was home.

SG: For the first –?

SC: For the first five years, I was home. I would do some work for Joe. They both loved school. Did very well in school. Joe worked for the governor for a long time, and then they decided to move to New York. I make it sound very casual. We were scared to death. Joe said, "What do you say I take the job? [inaudible]." I said, "I'm game. Let's do it." [inaudible] This is what I mean by [inaudible]. My older brother and I had not had the best relations. It was my fault. I did not realize what he was [inaudible]. Anyway, when I wrote and said Joe was going in for himself, he was very excited. My older brother sent me a check for five thousand dollars. I have never forgotten [inaudible]. "Why?" That's the way he talked. I said, "Because [inaudible]." Swear to God [inaudible], but that's what I mean about [inaudible], and it was rough, but Joe was so [inaudible] to New Hampshire, where he had worked with a lot of people [inaudible].

SG: How old were the kids at that time?

SC: Laura was four, and Linda was almost six, five and a half. They were fifteen months apart. I used to do a lot of [inaudible] at home [inaudible].

SG: Were you in West Roxbury at that point?

SC: No, we lived in Brookline. Oh, well, Joe came here. We found the apartment in Brookline, near Coolidge Corner, third floor, one bedroom – big bedroom big [inaudible]. Both girls [inaudible], but we did a smart thing. We took the beds out of the bedroom. I don't know what we did, and we got two – they looked like twin beds, not quite. Made them crisscross. We gave the girls that room. It was the only way to do it. We were there until we built this house in 1952 [inaudible].

SG: When you went back to work for [inaudible], was that when you joined on with Joe?

SC: No, I was doing [inaudible] work. Then, I got involved with – I was – and Joe, too, but mostly [inaudible] I became a member of the Americans for Democratic Action [inaudible]. It was a liberal democratic group. I worked on the [inaudible] committee, worked with local candidates [inaudible]. Then, there was a campaign for District Attorney, and Joe and I [inaudible] local high school [inaudible]. I went to work with him on [inaudible]. He became elected. I wasn't looking for any job, believe me. One day, he called Joe and said, "Joe, I want to ask Sally [inaudible], but I know she helps you at your office. [inaudible]." Anyway, I went to work.

SG: What was his name?

SC: James L. O'Dea, Jr., was district attorney of Middlesex County for two years. He would have been governor, except he had a wife, Carol. I felt she was very [inaudible]. I don't know who it was [inaudible] found – everybody knew about it but me – found out that he had a "girlfriend," but I mean a girlfriend. It was a real thing. [inaudible] and it was awful. One day I came home from work – and I would leave around three-ish because I liked to get home [inaudible]. There's a porch outside [inaudible]. I'd go up through the back, and there is a reporter [inaudible]. I knew the [inaudible]. I said, "What in the hell?" "Oh, Sally, we want to talk to you." I said, "Boys, see that door? [inaudible]." I said, "This has got to stop." [inaudible] But I said that [inaudible] not right away because I didn't want to be associated with [inaudible]. It was a very exciting time. I'd never been exposed to [inaudible]. I want to tell you, if you ever have time, and you want to learn what the courts really are, go to [inaudible]. It's [inaudible]. I didn't [inaudible] any cases [inaudible]. But I knew when I got out I would [inaudible] it's money, but this is [inaudible]. But it was a very exciting [inaudible]. He ultimately [inaudible].

SG: So, at that point, I would assume most of your daughters' friends' mothers were home after school, milk and cookies.

SC: I think so. The best story from that time is that I think it was a Saturday. Joe was home. Laura, the little one, was home with a friend of hers. Joe heard her say, "She doesn't work? Well, what does she do?" Some would work. Most were not [inaudible]. I sensed some unspoken criticism. When the girls got to be, I think, twelve, thirteen, we were so lucky. We got a woman. Her name was [inaudible]. And her husband was an electrician. She came in the afternoon for three or four hours. The girls adored her. We went there every Christmas. We had them here every Thanksgiving until they went off to college. We were very close with them, and I knew the girls were in good hands, too. [inaudible] We were very lucky. I remember the time that Joe and I went to the Kennedy Convention, 1960. Were you born then?

SG: Oh, yes, I was.

SC: You were? It was such an exciting time. I was not a delegate, but we had worked with him, and we got seats on the convention floor.

SG: Where was that?

SC: Out in California, Los Angeles. He delivered his address [inaudible]. No, that wasn't at Convention Hall. He delivered something at a big football stadium. I don't know. It was an exciting time. I remember one guy we bumped into. He's gone [inaudible] Joe [inaudible], and he was a delegate. I said, "How's he doing?" He said, "Sally, Joe, come on." He takes us into his room in the hotel. They have an organization [inaudible]. If your husband were a delegate, they would know his mother, his father, his likes, his dislikes, what you like, how many kids you have – everything was totally [inaudible] so that when he could meet somebody, he'd say, "Hi, how's [inaudible] doing?" Really. It was an exciting time. No question. Anyway, here I am.

SG: Why were you there if you weren't a delegate?

SC: Well, because we were interested in [inaudible]. It was the first time we thought we would see a Massachusetts guy named to be the president. We worked with all these people. We decided we were entitled to vacation. As a matter of fact, on the way over, we stopped at Yellowstone.

SG: Were the kids with you?

SC: No, they were not. Alice and Eddie stayed here with those two girls. And I remember when we came home, quite by accident, we got onto this plane that the Kennedys had hired. Half of it they sold out to a plane that couldn't go. We were on it quite by accident. Didn't know it. I remember – what the hell was Robert Kennedy – Ethel walked up the aisle. “I'm so-and-so.” Very nice. I said, “Say, I have a favor to ask you.” They had little menus for us all. I said, “Do you think you could get Mr. Kennedy to write this to my girls?” Took out a notebook. “What's their names?” I still have it in a book. It was a lovely, lovely time [inaudible]. And I don't know what it would have been in the long run, but I always felt he just died too [inaudible]. Anyway, too quickly to really know what he was going to be able to do. He inspired Johnson; there's no question.

SG: When did you start litigation?

SC: Well, after I left O'Dea, I went in the office, and Joe said, “Sally, you are wasting your time as administrator.” I said, “I don't want to [inaudible]. Let me pick up a case.” He picked out a case [inaudible] never forget that. [inaudible] He must have worked with me a month on that case, and then I tried before what's called a master. Sometimes the judges can refer the matter to a master. Two-week trial.

SG: Wow.

SC: The lawyer was a former landlord of ours. It doesn't matter. In any event, [inaudible], and then Joe kept [inaudible]. I was nervous. I was very nervous for a very long time.

SG: How did you deal with that and being a mom?

SC: Well, by the time I really got into this, the girls were in high school. I had someone here at that point twice a week, so that I wouldn't have to do anything at home but shop. There was one rule at the office [inaudible]. I wonder what [inaudible] no matter what I am doing [inaudible], and I did once or twice. They knew they could get me at the office. They were relatively healthy. They were busy. They went to things. Kept them busy [inaudible]. We really had relatively –

SG: Were they in the Newton schools?

SC: I beg your pardon.

SG: They were in the Newton Schools.

SC: Newton South. We had really relatively few problems. Look, they were teenagers. They bickered a great deal, believe me. They began to date and found that a little trying. They began to meet Negro boys and girls, which was [inaudible]. When one of them got interested in dating a Negro boy, it bothered me. He invited her to [inaudible] or something. I discouraged it. I look back at it now [inaudible]. I'm not sure. It doesn't matter. In any event, they both went off to college and graduate schools. I need not tell you after that. You ain't got [inaudible].

SG: They're gone. One went into law and one –?

SC: Well, Laura didn't go into law willingly. Laura went to Brown, got her doctorate in English at the University of Pennsylvania, got an appointment in Montreal – I think it was University of Montreal – to teach English, and loved it. The guy she was then dating lived in New York, so they were doing this every weekend. After a couple of years, she called her father and said, "Dad, how do you think you could handle sending me to law school?" He tried to contain himself. We were very good. We never pressured them to go

[inaudible], and he said, "I can manage it, but I have one rule. You must apply to Harvard." She said, "I'll apply. Absolutely." Then months later, she called and said, "Well, Dad, I'm going to Yale Law School." He said, "What? You promised me Harvard." She said, "No, I didn't. You just told me to apply, and I did. But I want to go to Yale." [laughter] That's how she went. She worked in a law firm in New York. Hard, long hours. Became interested in [inaudible] there, and they decided that was not a good idea. She went to another firm [inaudible]. They worked sixteen-hour days [inaudible]. Finally, she went, I think, to a [inaudible], and it turned out that the New York Times was looking for a lawyer to work on the legal staff. I think that's [inaudible]. Anyway, she went to work there. Later, she became a [inaudible]. Later, she became a corporate counselor. Later, she became vice president and worked there for twenty-two years. They have a wonderful plan where you work so many years, and you can retire. She worked very hard [inaudible]. Though she had not admitted it really to me, I think she's enjoyed it very much. [inaudible]

[Recording paused.]

SG: All right. You were saying [inaudible].

SC: There's a book called The Trust. It's about the New York Times family.

SG: Oh, yes.

SC: Have you read it?

SG: I've read excerpts. I guess it was in the New Yorker.

SC: Yeah, yeah. It's a very interesting family, very productive. They've had their personal problems like we all do. They have all risen to the occasion of trying to maintain the integrity of that paper, which I think they have done. I'm not exactly happy at the way they're expressing themselves lately [inaudible] Israel. But maybe I'm overly sensitive. I don't know.

SG: Yeah, and your other daughter?

SC: Linda is a social worker, and she runs a school in Cambridge called Castle School. Linda was out in Michigan and stayed on there for a while, doing the job, and met this young man who is now her husband. They decided they wanted to come East. So, Ed came first. As a matter of fact, he lived here because he had to take the bar exam here, as I recall. Linda did some interview and got in with this comparatively new school. This school deals – or did deal – in children who could not live at home, not drug addicts or that kind of thing. Not that that has not turned up a little bit. It housed originally either twelve or fourteen kids. It had social workers almost twenty-four hours a day. It's now enlarged. Not the physical place is larger. They've just changed it. They now have day students. They do very well. They've had some really good success. It's a tough field to be in, and you don't measure, "Gee, I had twenty-three students. Did twenty-two do this?" If half a dozen really succeed, they're happy. She loves what she's doing.

SG: That's fabulous.

SC: Absolutely loves it. And Laura has not always, but time to time, says she's really doing meaningful work. Well, when somebody says that, they'll find their way, and they know their own work is meaningful, too. She's very happy. She has a lot of aggravations, naturally, with that kind of work. Look, you have aggravations with all kinds of work, too, not just the work you're doing, [but the] staff you're working with.

SG: Absolutely.

SC: Keep everybody happy, and prosperity has its problems with keeping people, but you learn to deal with all this. You have to do it.

SG: Completely shifting gears, did you start –? Did you join Temple Shalom when it began? Are you one of the founders?

SC: No, when we moved here – yes, when it began. We moved here. In Brookline, we didn't bother. We knew we wanted to belong to a temple because we wanted the girls to be exposed and to go to Sunday school, and that kind of thing. We joined the temple. We met in a house then, a lovely, lovely old house, and Rabbi Rothman, he's such a nice – he was such a nice person. I think she's still alive.

SG: Yeah, I think so.

SC: She did an awful lot. She is the one with the Sisterhood that did the –

SG: The art cover?

SC: Yeah.

SG: Gorgeous.

SC: Just beautiful.

SG: We sent the girls to Sunday school. [inaudible] Anyway, they went and within, I don't know how long it was, I think it was a few months, not even, a year, they were both complaining. They found it dull and boring. Joe [inaudible] called the school committee, called the school first, and found out about the school committee, and went up two or three times. He may have been too demanding. I don't know. But in any event, he felt he got nowhere, and they were beginning to raise hell. They were not kids who were not made to do things. Finally, we said, "Okay, quit, but we're going to get some structure [inaudible]." And they did. They became much more knowledgeable, although both admitted that [inaudible] when in college, in their Bible studies, [inaudible] as a result of which, they were not [inaudible]. But they operate on what I regard as the Jewish tradition. We all have different feelings about this. Joe and I both had zilch, nothing. We worked very hard, but we were lucky because we were working at something we really, truly loved. Not to say it doesn't have regular aggravations, but we made it. We

assembled a staff. Most of them are still there from the very beginning, and we feel that we were lucky enough to have more than enough, and we like to do what we can to help those. And we do that through [inaudible]. They say most things don't rub off [inaudible] both girls, two nights ago [inaudible] they both sit down [inaudible] charity list.

SG: That's great.

SC: Which is great. They have no political interests. They're Democrats, and they give money for certain offices. But none of that really rubbed off. They're their own people, and it's the way it should be.

SG: They certainly picked up the tzedakah attitude.

SC: Yeah. Well, I think it's so important. I mean, what can you do? People like Joe and I – I don't do volunteer work at this age. But giving money to Jewish organizations is important. I mean, I think [inaudible]. They have a big attendance now, big membership at Shalom.

SG: [inaudible] huge.

SC: We went there [inaudible]. In the beginning, we were happy if it was filled up in the front.

SG: It's funny. We took the kids to Puerto Rico this February. The owner of the little hotel we were staying at was Jewish. I had a really interesting talk with him. And he said, "Oh, yes, there are four hundred Jewish families on the island." I said, "There are thirteen hundred in my temple."

SC: Alone. Is that what it is?

SG: Oh, I don't know. It's something.

SC: Unbelievable.

SG: Something large like that. It's pretty wild.

SC: Well, the present rabbi, I like his writings. I didn't really use to read that stuff very much, but I do now. I like his writing.

SG: Have you gotten to know him at all?

SC: No.

SG: It's hard with all the changes to stay on top of who's there.

SC: Yeah, it is.

SG: We got to a bit because my son's bar mitzvah was last year. Rabbi [Eric] Gurvis was just lovely.

SC: Was he?

SG: Lovely. But each year, we're less involved, I guess. I don't know. Hard to stay connected. All right, let me just look at my little sheet here and see if there's – we covered a lot.

SC: I think we've covered it mostly.

SG: What do you feel we didn't cover?

SC: I don't know. I was just looking at a resume [inaudible] years ago for something. Oh, I want to tell you. I don't mean this to sound bragging. I just thought you would like to know one of the high points of my life. My husband is my highest point. I don't mean to sound [inaudible] married fifty-nine years. Joe has been a [inaudible] doesn't mean we never argue. I'm not saying [inaudible]. By and large, we're great support for each other. Many

years ago, the Women's Bar Association, which was relatively new, decided to give an award to six women, and these were the ones they regarded as trailblazers, so if you were old like me, [inaudible]. Our firm, of course, [inaudible]. I said to Joe, "Now, don't bother Laura. This is a bunch of you-know-what, talks, and all that. She's too busy." Late in the afternoon, I'm at the office because we're going, and I see Laura. I said, "What are you doing here?" She said, "Dad said you were being honored in something tonight." I said, "[inaudible] not to bother. You know it will just be [inaudible]." Oh, well. In any event, there are six people, and some person – a lawyer – gets up and talks about the person who's going to be honored, and then that person talks [inaudible]. They call Sally Corwin now, and up stands Laura Corwin. She goes to the podium [inaudible] that when she was in Israel – she had gone to Israel – she got a call from this gal, Jane Sender, who was then with the Women's Bar, saying, "I'm sorry to track you down, but your office said I could reach you there." She said, "We're honoring your mother and five others." And since you're a lawyer, we thought it would be fun if you would say a few words. So, she did. Anyway, she got up. She had [inaudible]. She was great. That was really a great point in our lives.

SG: Oh, that's really nice.

SC: It was so exciting. It really was.

SG: That's really lovely. An article [inaudible].

SC: No, no. I was trying to get the date. I took this out, only if I had – that was a picture they took.

SG: Of the women?

SC: Yeah.

SG: Wow.

SC: Now, if you leave, my husband will say – when you leave, my husband will say, “Did you tell her about your offers?”

SG: Yeah, you've got to –

SC: And I would say –

SG: You've got to brag a little bit.

SC: But I haven't done that. At the end of Michael Dukakis's first term, I'm at the office and the phone rings. I've known him since he was nineteen. He says, “Sally, want a superior court job? It's yours. Just take it.” Well, I had filled out an application a couple of years before somebody asked me to. I forgot about it. To make a long story short, I said, “Mike, I'm very excited, but I don't think I can.” Joe had not been well, and he had had some [inaudible] abdominal [inaudible]. I think I used that excuse. I really didn't want [inaudible]. Many years later, we were in our present [inaudible]. I can't remember his name. I think it was [inaudible]. He called, he said, “Sally, I have something to offer you.” I said, “What are you talking about?” He said, “How would you like to be [inaudible]?” I said, “I'm already [inaudible].” He said, “If you'll come, I think it can be arranged.” I said, “Joe and I are leaving [inaudible] for the Caribbean tomorrow morning for two weeks.” I remember saying this. “I shall [inaudible] on the beach and just be so happy, but I do not think [inaudible].” He said, “Why?” I said, “Listen.” I think this is what I said. “I'm going to be sixty-two. All I know is construction [inaudible], and I know if I want to [inaudible], and I don't think so. But I'll tell you what, hold it, because I'll talk to my husband. I talked to Joe. “You got to take it. You got to take it.” I talked to the girls [inaudible]. Independently, they said, “Mommy [inaudible]. I know you. You only know construction. You'll stay up every night reading until you're green in the face. You'll be worn out. Don't do it. They gave me the excuse [inaudible]. I loved what I was doing. I used that.

SG: That's great.

SC: But those were the [inaudible].

SG: And you don't have regrets about it?

SC: No, no. [inaudible]

SG: The firm that Joe started [inaudible].

SC: Corwin and Corwin. Still the name.

SG: It started as a twosome. Where is it today? How many –?

SC: I think there are thirteen lawyers.

SG: Fabulous.

SC: The ones who started, the main partners originally, are still there, and they're wonderful. They really are.

SG: Any women?

SC: We have a woman partner now. Just made her partner. I like her very much.

SG: Where's that?

SC: We're at One Washington [inaudible].

SG: Wow.

SC: [inaudible] part of the fourth and the fifth floor. It's very nice. They're very good, excellent. They're also very devoted to Joe. I will tell you, as the guy gets older – Joe's going to be ninety-two. He doesn't come to the office frequently, but when he does, let me tell you, they are so loving and so respectful. It means so much.

SG: Excellent.

SC: It really does.

SG: And do you still go? [inaudible]?

SC: Well, I'm working on a case that is going over the Supreme Court, our Supreme Court, and it's going to make new law if I win. So, I have all the papers at home, and I have a computer, and I can get anything I want via the internet. So, I'm working on that. I don't go in hardly at all. We do have new staff, however, and they've asked me to come in once every two weeks or so. What I've been doing, I've been operating [inaudible] send stuff by [inaudible], but I like doing that. Joe has not been really well. His balance is [inaudible]. But he does do some work and enjoys it, but he's quite limited in the amount that he can handle. We do what we want to when we want to. [inaudible]

SG: All right. Two last questions. How would life –? Now, these aren't my questions, but I like these. How would life have been different if you were born male?

SC: What an interesting question. My answer has got to be since I have told you about my background, I don't think it would have been. I really don't.

SG: That's pretty interesting. I would imagine that doesn't come up. That response is not stated often.

SC: No, absolutely.

SG: I'm going to add a third question. What impact has the fact that you've been a working mom all these years had on your daughters, do you think?

SC: That's a very interesting question. I think I told you about Laura saying in front of Joe, "What does your mother do?" I don't know. I literally do not know. I don't think it has made much difference with either of them. I think it may have made a little difference with

Laura when she went into the law. I think you must feel some kind of [inaudible]. On the other hand, I remember the first time she had gone to a courtroom. She called us. "I want to talk to mother. What do you do?" I said, "Go in the day before [inaudible] if you're the plaintiff, where the plaintiff sits," and that kind of thing. I gave her some very basic things. I felt very good that she called. On the other hand, when Laura came up for a couple of arguments [inaudible] a rather important case. I don't think it's made any difference in their growing-up process. There were times I felt they were very proud. There were times I felt they were not annoyed [inaudible], and we did try to keep it to a minimum discussion at home, but I'm sure we didn't [inaudible]. I guess I'm saying I'm not sure because I'm not, but I guess underneath, I think, gee, there were some things that didn't [inaudible]. The best story about Linda [inaudible], she was eighteen, home for Thanksgiving. I took her to Taunton, where I was trying a case.

SG: To Taunton?

SC: Taunton. That's where it was. I told her all about the case. I said, "Now, you just sit and listen." I present my case, and the other guy puts his witness on. I go up to cross-examine. A good cross-examiner never has to [inaudible] unless he knows – assumes the other guy [inaudible] and has a written paper to [inaudible]. I went up to him. I asked him something, and he answered. My daughter Linda screams, "He's lying."

SG: Oh, geez.

SC: The bailiff comes over. I said, "I'm sorry, it's my daughter." The judge looked down like this. [laughter] Anyway, I'd never forgotten that. She got so interested. I don't think it affected her. I think it somewhat affected Laura. I don't think it's easy when you have two parents [inaudible] to not get annoyed. We never discussed, very rarely discussed her job, not that I didn't want to, but it was apparent she didn't feel comfortable discussing it, and that's okay, too. Believe me. I don't know how else to answer that.

SG: And your advice for a future generation?

SC: Of women?

SG: Yeah.

SC: The first thing is: marry the right guy. I'm not kidding. I grew up at a time when many men thought it was terrible, in a way, to have the woman achieving that kind of success [inaudible]. Joe never. He took such pride, which helped me a great deal. Make no mistake, it did. Marry the right guy and be organized. I am very highly organized. My nephew is a patent lawyer and was here the other day because I'm redoing my kitchen; he opened the cabinets for something. He said, "Sally, I have never seen cabinets like that." And I said, "Don't you know I did that?" He said, "No." I said, "Because I worked all my life. In order to have everything at home go quickly and devote myself to the children, I have to be organized." I think organization helps. I really do.

SG: All right. I think that's it.

SC: Well, thank you very much. I feel I handled –