

Interview with Professor Robert Gordon, son of Margaret S. Gordon, for Economics 150W project
Conducted Thursday April 16, 2020
Transcript of Zoom recording prepared by Carol Lee

Martha Olney (MO): We're going to record the meeting so that we don't have to take massive notes while we're talking and then we can transcribe it later and then we'll send you a copy of the transcript to correct and edit and so on.

Robert Gordon (RG): Why don't you tell me a bit about the nature of your project and why you're interested in my mother?

MO: We will, we will absolutely do that. I want to thank you—I'm going to let—Carol, you're going to do some of that, or did you want me to...

RG: Either, anybody.

MO: Well, no, I'm looking at Carol, but I think she just froze. There she is.

Carol Lee (CL): Yeah my internet connection can be a little spotty, but yeah, either, or.

MO: Ok, thank you very much Bob for taking the time to do this. We really appreciate it. The university this year is celebrating 150 years of women on campus and as part of Econ's 150W project we're looking at the post-world war II period and the role of women in the department. Your mom was here but was not allowed to be a regular faculty member because of the nepotism rules and so we feel like that's an important piece of the history of women in that post world war II period. You know before the war, there were, there were several women in the department and then we went to this post war period. So I want to introduce you to the RAs and then Carol is going to do the interview. Caitlin is a senior at Berkeley and is graduating this semester although we don't have graduation—because of the virus and is still here in Berkeley and Carol is a senior and she's going to be doing the interview and she'll be graduating in January, right? Did I get it right this time? I think?

CL: (giggle) Yes.

MO: She is doing a semester in Washington DC in the fall. Renee is a junior and if we are all back, we'll be back in the fall. I hope that we're back in person. We don't know yet what's happening for the fall. And is joining us today from Houston where she is home because we've all scattered to the Four Winds to carry out the semester. So Carol, I'm going to turn it over to you and if—does it help your internet connection for Renee and Caitlin and I to drop off the video or does that not matter?

RG: Doesn't matter, doesn't matter to me.

MO: Doesn't matter to Bob and Carol does it help yours?

CL: I don't think it matters to me, either.

Caitlin Hartley (CH): Wait a while and see.

MO: Okay, alright Carol, you're up.

CL: (bad connection) Okay, well thank you Professor Gordon, like Professor Olney had said, for joining us today. We want to get a little bit of background from before the WWII period. I'm really curious about your mother's formative years as a student. What kind of...

MO: Carol, you're cutting in and out in terms of

CL: (bad connection) As a student...as a... is my connection not...okay, so maybe if you do turn your cameras off, maybe, I don't know if that will help much.

MO: Okay, Caitlin and Renee and I will turn off our video to see if that helps. Alright give that a shot and see how that goes?

CL: Okay. Can you hear me Professor Gordon?

RG: I can hear you.

CL: Okay, so I'll, I'll start over just in case you missed everything that I had said. Like Professor Olney said, we are curious about events after WWII, but I am also curious about your mother's formative years during the Great Depression, during her college years, during the period before she had come to Berkeley. Of course, also the time while she was at Berkeley. I am curious about her time as a student at Bryn Mawr College during the Great Depression. Who were her academic and personal role models growing up? What steered her towards economics?

RG: I can't really tell you much of anything about her time at Bryn Mawr except I— I believe that her long professional engagement with Clark Kerr may have a connection with the fact that Clark Kerr went to Swarthmore and I'm not sure whether they might have met as students. I can't remember exactly what age Clark Kerr was in relation to my mother's age, they were certainly somewhat similar so that's one— one possible connection. The only thing I remember her talking about at Bryn Mawr was being very actively involved in a production of *The Mikado*. She was not, I don't think, a musical star of it, but she might have been the director, or something and she was always very fond of Gilbert and Sullivan, possibly as an outgrowth of that. I don't know anything about why she got interested in economics but for anyone going to college between 1928 and 1931 with the world collapsing around you, I would think it's a very natural thing that almost anybody would be interested in economics. After all, she was—she turned eighteen in September 1928 at the peak of the stock market boom and would have been declaring her major just as the economy was collapsing in the fall of 1929 and the spring of 1930. And so what was going on outside in the real world was undoubtedly a major factor behind her choice of economics.

CL: That might still be true. I'm not 100 percent sure but I think the enrollment in economics was greater after the Great Recession as well, so that makes a huge amount of sense.

RG: We will certainly have another surge in economic enrollments as the current recession evolves and we hit records in post-war annals in many types of economic statistics.

CL: Do you know much about her time studying economics when she was earning her PhD at Harvard? Do you know if there were many other women studying economics?

RG: I very much doubt it. I don't think she mentioned more than perhaps one and I forget the name. I think it's important—I re-read the interview, just now, and I think it's very important that she mentions this group of students and young instructors that she was part of, so she was not excluded. She was very much a part of the life of the male graduate students and the male young instructors, one of whom was Ken Galbraith, and as you know she spent the academic year 1933-34 at the very bottom of the Great Depression in London working on her PhD dissertation at the London School of Economics. I have, I think, seen pictures of her standing on the entrance to the ship, standing next to her father, about to go off to England and she must have been extremely unusual. She had funding for some kind of fellowship that took her over there but very few people were able to afford to take trips to Europe in those days, so she was very lucky and very privileged. As you noticed from the interview, she sort of very modestly alludes to the fact that she had the highest grade average at Bryn Mawr in her class and that's why she won this fellowship. And it may have been the money from that fellowship that allowed her to go to Europe when she did.

CL: (bad connection) Mhm. Your mum actually came across as very modest during the entire course of the oral history.

RG: Isn't it amazing the range of people that she mentions in the course of that interview?

CL: Hugely.

RG: All the different activities she was involved in and she remembered who was president of the League of Women Voters in 1946 and who was in 1947 and I don't know if she had done homework before the interview or whether they went back and I believe it's mentioned at the end that she was given the chance to edit it so she may have doctored it a little bit after the fact.

CL: She definitely met a huge breadth of people. Yeah, definitely. I think she spoke more about how others influenced her and she never mentioned who she might have influenced. I do hear some stories on this end now as we go through the interviews. It's pretty marvelous. Do you know if her parents were very supportive of her going to college? Obviously, they let her go to London.

RG: She always referred to her father as the major or most distinguished surgeon in Framingham, Massachusetts. And when I was eight years old my parents took me out of elementary school, and we spent two or two and a half months living with her parents in Framingham. They had a big Victorian

house right in the middle of town virtually at the major crossing point of the routes that go through Framingham. And the ground floor was his office where he saw his patients and then they lived on the two floors above that. So her father was clearly very central in the life of Framingham, Massachusetts during the time that she was—during the time after they came back from Minnesota. I've never been clear why he went to Minnesota when he did because, as you know, that's where she was born. But she was very clear that he, being a leading doctor, was quite prosperous by the standards of the time and clearly could afford to send her to Bryn Mawr and was undoubtedly very proud of her and would have been very supportive of anything she wanted to do. Her mother was very non-professional. I had a chance to observe her mother during a time when her mother came to stay with us when we were already in the Creston Road house. This would have been some time around 1956 or '57 when her mother would have been in her seventies and she was a somewhat uptight lady not particularly interested in the outside world. Couldn't have been more different than my mother and her main accomplishment was that she had brought up her three daughters and her one son. She was a housewife, very simple. I never heard of any activities that her mother was involved in, for instance.

CL: Yes, very, very different from your mother.

RG: (bad connection) All of this—my mother had an instinct... it seems like there was hardly an organization she heard about that she didn't want to join...

CL: (giggles) Very true.

RG: ...or direct and would end up running it because she was so good at that but she certainly didn't get it from her mother and as you just heard, her father was in a very different line of business.

CL: She mentioned she had a concern for minorities which helped bring her and your father together while they were studying at Harvard or rather when he had his PhD and she was still working on hers. Her later work on employment, education, and social welfare policies reflected that concern. Do you know what initially sparked her concern for minorities?

RG: I think it was part of the—I think it was a combination of the Great Depression and the New Deal with a new political environment where one could tackle problems that were long entrenched. Of course in the 1930s we still had Jim Crow in the South; we had the remnants of sharecropping. We had by the 1930s—we'd had the first wave of black immigration from the south due to the prosperity during World War I and during the 1920s and so the problems of black minorities in Northern cities had already become visible and evident. So I don't think it's unusual that as part of developing a liberal philosophy in the wake of the Great Depression and the enormous number of social problems that it unveiled, that both she and my father would be extremely interested in problems of minorities—both the black unemployment problem in Berkeley that she was concerned about on the city council and the problem of racial injustice in general. One of your questions involves her interest in gender equality as well as racial equality. I remember her and my father as much more involved in racial aspects of injustice than in gender equality. I hardly ever heard her express strong feelings about gender issues in the way that I did about racial issues.

CL: So you think maybe she didn't—how do I say this—she didn't believe that women's issues were also minority issues?

RG: Well this gets involved with several of your later questions. I think—she, as a mother with children who managed to do so many things on her own, I would speculate that she had the viewpoint that if women wanted to do things, they should get out and do them and she used herself as an example. And you'll notice that she was—the comment that she made, which I had never heard before, when my father got the offer to go to Berkeley in 1938, she said, “Oh I never would have dreamed of making my own employment a condition of him taking that job. It was such a prize for him to get that job,” and she took the anti-nepotism fate that had cast her into this supporting role as a *fait accompli*. And she never complained about it and very rarely speculated—I cannot remember if I ever heard her say—oh if only I had been able to join Aaron on the faculty of the Economics Department here's how my life would have been different. In a way, it would have been less interesting because she would have had much less time to do all the activities she did and she would have met many fewer people if she had spent all that time with the faculty where she would have been heavily involved in teaching undergraduates.

CL: I might actually jump a little bit forward to the anti-nepotism rule because I'm quite curious about it. I understand what you're saying but did anybody confront her with the anti-nepotism rule? She must have tried to get a position at the school for them to present this rule to her.

RG: It may have been made evident to my father when he got the first offer that we can't even consider giving your wife an offer. At no time that I remember did she ever try to get a faculty position at nearby Mills College which would have been an option for a faculty wife back in that day because it was so close and so nearby, or SF State or one of the other universities that are in reasonable proximity to Berkeley. So clearly her attitude about being a mother with my brother born in 1944 and with him less than six all the way until 1950, you would, you would sympathize with her interest in part time political organizations like the League of Women Voters and then her activities in Democratic Party politics in the 1948 and 1950 elections.

CL: If you don't mind talking a little bit about family life and bring us to the period after World War II. Your mother decided not to hold a regular job while you and your brother were young. She had explicitly said she wasn't interested in hiring, um, child care, basically. She was already very accomplished; she had already completed her first book on international trade. Do you know how much of this decision was motivated by the conditions of the time? Maybe there were fewer good employment roles for women? I believe all academic jobs were very rare at that time. And could it have been due to the expectation of mothers to stay home?

RG: I think—there is a remark about her decision to leave the Office of Price Administration in Washington when she became pregnant with my brother and if you'll recall that line she said, “I didn't want to become dependent on a maid.” That was her phrase for child care help and she managed the mother aspect of bringing us up pretty much by herself. I do not remember that we had a cleaning woman during the time when I was a child. In that interview, there is constant reference to Creston Road, the house which they completed in 1956. Before I forget, I do have to give you a couple of anecdotes about

that house. My mother was solely responsible for the desire to move to a more modern house. The house that we were in from 1945 to 1956 was a house built in the 1920s. It was located at 45 San Mateo Road which is a cul-de-sac that runs off from Indian Rock Park. My recollection of that house is that there was nothing wrong with it. It had a view of the bay. It was on the lower side of the street that was heavily inclined in those areas so that we could see over the top of the houses in between us and the bay. There was, it seemed to me, plenty of room for us to grow up. And in fact, a reason I bring this up is because there was a bedroom on the first floor that they rented out to a college student and I think they rented it out in partial trade for babysitting services. And it is possible that the student tenant of that room may have helped out with some household duties, I'm not exactly sure. But I have vivid memories of my mother with the old-fashioned wringer washing machine in the basement of that house, of her hanging clothes out on clothes pins on an outdoor line in the era before clothes dryers, so she was very much a housewife. She cooked every meal, every dinner, although my parents seemed to be going out to meetings all the time. You can understand now with her involvement that she was constantly going out to all of these meetings of her various organizations. And so to the extent that they were going out for dinner and leaving the children alone, we were brought up on Swanson chicken pot pies and Hormel chili and other delicious processed foods in the era.

CL: Yes, I grew up on quite a few TV dinners— I think Hungry—Hungry-Man, or something. I had the same.

RG: She did a lot of home cooking, too. And as a matter of fact, her most special wedding present to us when we were married in 1963 was a hand typed ring binder of recipes, of recipes she knew I had liked growing up that she was going to endow my wife in hope that my wife would cook some of her recipes for me. And I can—you can just imagine if you read that interview the incredible energy that she had—and I can just see her typing away at night on those recipes in preparation for the wedding and giving us that wedding present on little four by six cards stuck in her typewriter. And she was an excellent typist, totally unlike my father who wrote everything in long hand, she was an excellent typist from the very beginning. She'd probably taken it in junior high school, and she could type like a whirlwind.

CL: Yes, that's amazing. How did the support from your family change as she took on more and more roles? I know she was very active with the Women's League. She was a member of the board there when you were quite small, and she was also conducting research for the Institute part time at home. How did things change as she started to take on more research roles and more positions? She already did a lot but how had the support system at home changed over time?

RG: I think the. I'm pausing because I don't remember any noticeable conflict between her role as a mother and our growing up in that era. It was the period 1950 to 1954 when she was doing research at the Institute before she was appointed Associate Director and she was mainly working at home so that would not have involved many meetings. As you know, she dropped out of Democratic Party politics after she started working for the Institute because of this belief of Clark Kerr that the Institute was supposed to remain non-partisan. So she was doing plenty of her work at home and so she was available for cooking dinner and indeed I think it would be my father that had more meetings that would take him away. I remember my father, unlike some professors, did most of his work.

RG: During that Institute period when she didn't have any administrative responsibilities, she could be home most of the time and by then I was in 5th and 6th grade and then in junior high school with— I guess getting home in the middle of the afternoon and then going out and playing with kids on the street afterwards so I wasn't really paying much attention to what she was doing during the day.

CL: That's fair. And how did your family react when she started to take on more political roles when she was a member of the city council?

RG: Well, that was much later. Remember that I went off to college in 1958 and was home only for the summer. I was home for the summers of '58, '59, '61 and '62 so I did have quite a bit of contact with her. That was when she was still in her dual role at the Institute and essentially doing part-time administration and working at home the rest of the time and my brother was finishing up high school. He went to Harvard in 1961 so from 1961 on, they were pretty much empty nesters. And that incident that is reported in the interview about my father being asked to be on the Council of Economic Advisers in the first Kennedy Administration would have been when I was already off at Harvard so it would not have made much difference to me what my father was doing and my brother was a senior. One anecdote that would perhaps tell you something about their quality as parents is that my father had a chance to go on leave—I believe in Cambridge, England—in the academic year 1957 to '58 and that's when I was a high school senior and my brother was an equivalent three year behind in the last year of junior high school and both of us were heavily involved in activities. And I had my whole political career planned out including becoming editor of the high school newspaper at Berkeley High School and it would have completely torn those plans into shreds if my parents had gone to Cambridge, England during that year. So my brother and I joined together and simply vetoed their plan and they were good enough parents to see how important this was to us and at least as important as being away was to them. And having spent a little time in Cambridge and a lot of time in Oxford England, I think they were very smart to stay in Berkeley.

CL: You mentioned that Clark Kerr had asked your mum to resign from the Democratic State Central Committee and like you had said, the Institute was very non-partisan at that time. Did she discuss the political and cultural changes that occurred during the twenty years she was at the Institute that allowed her to be a member of the Berkeley City Council while holding the position of Associate Director? The politics issue seemed to just completely fall out of the picture.

RG: I'll have to punt on that one. The Institute was a great mystery to me. I was aware that she wrote that book on employment that I think came out in 1953 [*Employment Expansion and Population Growth, the California Experience: 1900-1950*, published 1954]. I'm not even clear what she wrote in between then and the very prolific period she had on the Carnegie Commission starting in 1969 so I would imagine she was probably quite heavily involved in administration at the Institute but I never had a real clear idea what the Institute did—whether they had their own working paper series, whether they paid for people to do part-time work there, or whether the labor economists who were partly affiliated with the Institute did so for collegiality rather than money. I never talked to her about that. It wouldn't have been anything I would have been very interested in at that age.

CL: Sure, and do you know if she had much interaction with other faculty outside of the Institute? I know she wasn't teaching at that time. Did she know perhaps Emily Huntington or other women faculty?

RG: You mentioned Emily Huntington in your questions and I must say as I re-read the interview, virtually every name in that interview, and there were a vast number of names, was familiar. I had heard that mentioned in their conversation and at one point I think you were going to ask what our dinner table conversations were like. They were of course about what was going on in the world but also about the mother and father reporting to each other about what was going on in their life. And it is through those dinner table conversations that I think I had soaked up this familiarity with all of those names—Roger Traynor who was the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court and I think they mentioned the New Year's Eve parties that the Heynemans would give and then later years, Bernice May gave a New Year's Eve party that we would observe my parents going out to when we were staying with them over Christmas break. And they would have a party to go to and we wouldn't, so we were very conscious of their very active social life in Berkeley. One thing she mentions in passing but she doesn't really explain very much is their dinner group. They had a dinner group, a dinner club, consisting of I would guess eight to ten couples who alternated hosting for dinner and that would then be followed by a talk given by usually one of the husbands about their work or their travels, or a couple would talk about their recent travels. It was very different than a similar dinner group that my wife and I had because ours was mainly involved in cooking and each couple in the group doing a different dish. That was different than my parents' group but that included as I remember, the Heymans—he was Chancellor of the University about the time that that interview was taking place in the late 70s and early 80s. Clark Kerr and his wife may have been in that group. It was a group of very distinguished Berkeley academic and non-academic couples and she referred to it as "the group" and she continued with this long after my father had died. I distinctly remember being home one night when she was hosting "the group." I don't know where I went or whether I helped her out in the kitchen but she made this absolutely enormous bowl full of shrimp curry and I had never seen such a large bowl being made of any home cooking dish but she had to because there were so many people in this group. There were too many to sit at the dining room table, so I remember card tables being set up around the living room which was not that big.

CL: Do you remember the name Lloyd Ulman?

RG: Of course. Lloyd Ulman was a very close personal friend of my father, particularly in the latter years when my father was having periodic heart attacks and was relatively weak. Lloyd Ulman as I remember lived further north on Creston Road and my father would walk down to his house and spend time down there or vice versa. I think one of your questions asks about the relationship between Lloyd Ulman and my mother, but I mainly remember the connection between Lloyd Ulman and my father.

CL: Mhm. I felt like Lloyd Ulman was a connection between some of the women when we first started to research for this project. He seemed like—within labor economics and within the economics department as a whole—I felt like he really was the one that championed for women to be part of the faculty. He definitely made more than one reference to the work that your mom had done at the Institute.

RG: I remember—of course I looked on the Berkeley faculty from a distance after I became my own—I was in my own career as an assistant professor. As I remember, the Berkeley faculty opened up to women and quite a few radical economists in the late 1960s and the early 1970s and the character became much more progressive politically and I'm sure the anti-nepotism rule was dropped at some point in the 1960s as part of affirmative action.

CL: I know you were very young at the time, but it was one thing that she mentioned in her oral history, or in her interview, that really sparked my curiosity—did your parents talk a lot about the Loyalty Oath?

RG: Oh, it was topic number one in 1950 when that controversy was taking place. Somebody wrote a book on the Loyalty Oath and gave it to me and I may have it somewhere around here on one of the shelves but it was very all-consuming for my father. He was so involved in fighting the Loyalty Oath that he came close to risking his job because as you know, they fired people who wouldn't sign the Loyalty Oath. Then after the Korean War started, when we were in a wartime situation, he changed his mind and decided it would be considered disloyal to refuse to sign an oath that you were against communism given that we were in war with the Communists of North Korea. The topic died out after that. I somehow remember the spring and summer of 1950 would have been the time when he was most involved in that. I also remember, just because of the Korean War, I can remember that the day after the Korean war broke out in June 1950, he arrived home driving a new 1950 Plymouth that he had driven all the way from Detroit because you could get a new car cheaper in those days if you picked it up at the factory and so they were enough of penny pinchers in those day that he actually went to all of that inconvenience to pick up the 1950 Plymouth at the factory rather than having it delivered at extra cost out to Berkeley. And it may be that it was particularly expensive delivery charges because Berkeley was so far from Detroit where all these cars were made.

CL: Your mother was a lecturer at the Department of Economics from I believe 1969 to 1978 and that coincided with her time as the Associate Director at the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. Out of curiosity, were some of the reports that she drafted for the Commission partly motivated by some of the things she'd seen on campus? Maybe her interactions with students at the time?

RG: No, I think they would have been much more from a general public policy interest. She was of course very involved in things like federal fellowships for low-income students but that would have been a very consistent part of her long-standing interest in helping minority groups and helping fight poverty going all the way back to the Great Depression. So I don't think it's speculation on my part, but I don't think her role as a lecturer was a particularly big part of her life during that period. She was, as her interview states, all consumed with writing all of these different reports. She was Clark Kerr's ghost writer and she uses the word draft a report as if it somehow doesn't—she was the author of the reports, that's what it should have said. Clark Kerr would get his name on the cover and then he would say in the acknowledgements I am grateful to Margaret Gordon for all her help—well Margaret Gordon had written the whole thing and as I remember they were so good that there was very little Clark Kerr did to change them!

RG: You all know how long it takes to write a book and indeed she worked several years revising her PhD thesis for that 1941 book and here at the Carnegie Commission she was virtually writing a book every year. And she again is very modest about what a strain that must have been on top of the fact that at least during most of that period my father was still alive and he was having health problems and were a continual source of worry to her.

CL: Yes, I believe she also said she didn't have a weekend off for ten years and she still did everything at home.

RG: And of course we were not around by then, so we heard about this only from a distance. One thing that occurs to me is that for people who are interested in reliving the past, my parents were very loyal letter writers when I was in college. There was a period between 1958 and 1970 when I have quite a few letters from my parents and that stopped. I remember exactly when it stopped. It stopped in 1971 when long-distance telephone calls became cheap enough so that the phone totally replaced the letters. But the phone calls were very different in character than the letters as you can imagine because on phone calls with your parents, usually it's the children reporting what they are doing to the parents without much detail coming in return. During those days, during those years of the early 70s when my father was president-elect and president of the American Economic Association, he was the center of attention and we didn't really hear much in detail about what her life was like except that she worked very hard for Clark Kerr.

CL: Given your mum's role in civic engagement and fighting for things she cared about, working very, very broadly and deeply on topics that she cared about, what advice do you think she would give female economics students now concerning activism for gender equality?

RG: I think she would have been quite concerned and probably surprised that there continues to be so much de facto discrimination against women in academics. She thought of herself, as you can tell, as fully equal to men in terms of her capabilities and achievements and she would have been surprised at the difficulty young women have in getting tenure and arriving on the tenure track and in many cases having lower salaries than men at equivalent positions. On the other hand, remember that she was someone that dropped out from professional life for ten years, well except for the time in her job in Washington. She was basically not trying to play the double role of mother of a young child with a tenure-track pressure of trying to get articles published the way young women have to combine life today. So I think she would have had a great deal of sympathy and support for the double role that young women have to play while fully recognizing that she did not go through the same thing herself as she opted to drop out for that period of time.

CL: Is there anything else you'd like to add that I haven't gone over?

RG: Just how supportive both of them were of my wife who had troubles with tenure and maintaining an academic job when she was young, and their consistent support of us as children in virtually anything we wanted to do. I think that anecdote that I told you about Cambridge, England in 1957-58 should really

sum it up that they were willing to make that sacrifice for their children's self-styled importance in junior high and high school.

CL: So you don't feel at all, not at all, that they tried to push economics on you and your brother?

RG: Oh no, oh no. They were very standoffish about that. They were completely relaxed about my initial decision to major in history. I'm not sure if she gives quite the right story about why I changed back to economics. I felt history was too subjective and the essays one would write in history courses were to be graded at the whim of the instructor who might agree or disagree with you but there were no definite answers. In economics courses, particularly as undergraduates, there were definite answers and you could learn the models and learn how to solve them and come up with a correct answer and so there was a reward in doing it rather than what I felt was the sort of—lacy vagueness of history as a discipline so even though I've written a little bit of economic history on my own, I still am very glad that I switched into economics. Probably there was a strong influence of the fact that I admired not just the lifestyle but also the professional milieu in which my father appeared to operate—lots of interesting people coming to the house, evidence of things that he'd written seemed to me that that was a pretty nice life to combine writing and teaching and so probably the idea of becoming an academic professor occurred to me before the decision to be an economist. When I was in junior high school, I wanted to become a TV director and I spent an awful lot of time watching television. Due to his connections with the Ford Foundation, my father arranged for an interview in New York when we were passing through there when I was 16 with Robert Saudek who was the producer of Omnibus which was a big magazine type CBS program at the time. Robert Saudek interviewed me for about 15 minutes and told me to my face— you have absolutely no business trying to become a tv director— and I dropped that ambition instantly at that moment and became interested in why some corporations succeeded and some failed so for a long time I wanted to be a management consultant. Initially in economics at Harvard, I was much more interested in industrial organization than I was in macro, so the macroeconomics all developed when I was in England on the Marshall Scholarship. I changed my interest entirely but that whole sequence from wanting to be a TV director to a management consultant to industrial organization had little to do with either of my parents. It was a natural outgrowth. They were very tolerant, and they were wise to let it evolve as it evolved.

CL: Wonderful. Well Professor Gordon, thank you very much. I had a great time.

RG: Well that was fun and I enjoyed doing it. I was so glad for the chance to revisit that interview which I'm not sure I'd ever read closely before and in the course of digging up that book, the interview book, I discovered—if you have just one second, I have something to show you. Just a minute.

MO: Sure.

RG: Okay, you ready for my souvenir?

MO: We are!

RG: Okay, this is the campaign brochure for my mother running for City Council in 1965.

MO: Very cool.

RG: And the back of it looks like this and it includes—I guess here we have all the names of famous Berkeley people endorsing her and then we have all of her accomplishments here on the back and this is what she looked like in 1965.

MO: That's awesome.

RG: One thing I noticed that gets far too little attention from the standpoint of all you Berkeley people—barely mentioned in the chapter on the City Council in the interview—the tremendous achievement of that Berkeley City Council from 1965 to '69 in achieving the undergrounding of BART. It confirmed the legacy to all Berkeley citizens for all time. There's a book. I don't know if you know about the book that contains her essay on her years in the City Council.

CL: I think it's mentioned in the oral history.

RG: It's a book that's published, it must be in the University of California library. I can email you the details and citation, if you want.

MO: That would be great.

RG: She wrote a chapter that's about 35 pages long about her City Council run by the liberal Democrats and the subsequent rise of the radicals in Berkeley. And she mentioned in the little section about BART that BART was undergrounded in Berkeley at the cost of a twenty million dollar bond issue, twenty million. And you think about that famous bullet train going from San Francisco to Los Angeles and how much that white elephant project cost. Okay, if you don't know about that book, it's definitely—you should look at it as part of your project and I will type in the details.

MO: That'd be great. Can you scan the brochure that you found? Do you have a way to scan that?

RG: My wife has just discovered an app where you can scan things and turn them into PDFs. Let me get that downloaded and do that and then I'll send it to one of you by email.

MO: Okay that sounds fabulous. Alright Bob, thank you so much for your time. We really appreciate it and that was lovely and I'm sorry that we were off video to save on the bandwidth because you couldn't see the smiles and the laughter and so on because that was really fabulous.

RG: Okay, good and Carol, you did a great job of preparing the questions and I benefited from seeing them in advance because I could refer back and forth to the questions out of the order than you intended them. So very well done and I wish good luck to your projects. Are you going to write something up about all of this? It's an oral history, or what?

MO: Yeah, we'll see. Certainly we're going to have a transcript of the conversations and I'm sure we'll have a summary article about the conversations. Everything got kind of thrown for a loop with the move to online instruction in early March so—we're getting there!

RG: Okay, well good luck with the whole project. I appreciate your interest in my mother.

MO: Absolutely. Thank you so much for your time.

RG: Bye-bye.

MO: Bye-bye.