Linda Strite Murnane

January 20, 2013; January 25, 2013; February 17, 2013;
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ABA Senior Lawyers Division

Women Trailblazers in the Law

ORAL HISTORY

of

COLONEL LINDA STRITE MURNANE

Interviewer: Elizabeth Turchi

Dates of Interviews:

January 20, 2013
January 25, 2013
February 17, 2013
March 3, 2013
March 17, 2013
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Ms. Turchi: This is the first interview of oral history of Col. Linda Murnane, which is being taken on behalf of The Women Trailblazers In The Law Project, which is a project of the American Bar Association, Senior Lawyer Division. It is being conducted by Elizabeth Turchi. Today is January 20, 2013. Linda and I are recording this interview via the internet, the internet call-in program named Skype. And Linda is at her home in Xenia, Ohio, in the United States, while I am at my apartment in the Netherlands. So Linda, why don't you get started discussing a bit about your family and your family background. Can you tell us about your family?

Col. Murnane: Thank you very much, Liz. Well, I am one of four children. We were all born of the same parents. My father, Norman Strite, was originally from Dayton, Kentucky. My mother, Anna Mae Holscher, later Strite, was from Cincinnati, Ohio. My mother's family was first-generation American. Her parents were both from Germany and immigrated here at the end of World War II. My father was also first-generation American. But interestingly, I never knew my father's father, my grandfather on my father's side. We had actually been told from the time we were infants that he had died. After I had become a lawyer, some 26 years later, I found out that he had been living; that my grandfather on my father's side actually had not died and had been living not more than 50 miles from my home all of our lives. But there was a bit of a family history that kept us from wanting to be around him, so I never knew him and don't know anything about his history, his family or anything about him.
My mom and dad married when my mother was very young. She was 19 and my dad was on active duty with the U.S. Air Force at the time. He and my mother had their first child very shortly, 10 months after they were married, and that's my older brother, Jerry. I was actually born at a period of time when my dad had been recalled to the military. So I was born in East Orange, New Jersey, because my father was at that time serving with the U.S. Air Force in New York City, NY. He was the assigned liaison with the steel industry. My dad originally, when he joined the Army/Air Force, was a pilot, but at the end of WWII and before Korea, he went back to school and got his degree in accounting. So, when he was recalled during the Korean conflict he was serving as an accountant. He had a nerve condition that had gotten bad enough that he could no longer fly planes. I mention that as kind of a little bit of detail, because I am a retired Air Force Col. and I can tell you that I and all of my brothers and sisters would remember very clearly my father lamenting for all of our childhoods that at the end of 13 years in the Force, he got out and didn't stay in. He didn't stay to retirement, and I think that may have had some impact on the fact that three of the four children that my parents eventually had all had some connection with the U.S. Air Force. I think it probably was a big influence on our lives. I also have a younger sister, Bonnie Strite Alexander and a younger brother, Ken Strite. So there were four of us altogether. All the kids were born in Ohio.

Ms. Turchi: Linda, what year were you born?
Col. Murnane: I was born in 1952. I have no recollection of ever living in East Orange, NJ, which is what my birth certificate says and baptismal certificate says, but the stories that my mom and dad told when I was growing up; and were confirmed my mother's siblings, was that my family was quite poor when I was born. My parents had my older brother and me at that time in 1952. I was told that they couldn't afford a crib and I was brought home from the hospital and put in an orange crate, which was my crib. That was kind of the theme through a big part of our lives. There were four kids and not enough money to cover everything that a family of six probably needed. But my parents were creative people who found ways to make sure that we had the things that were most important. After my dad
got out of the Air Force, not long after I was born, his story throughout my lifetime was that he had wanted to stay on active duty but my mother wanted him to come home to Ohio and had told my dad it was fine if he wanted to have an Air Force career, but that she was moving home and my dad came with her. Later I found out that that may have been tied to the fact that one of the actual reasons why I never knew about his father is that my father’s mother and father had been divorced when he was 12 and, of course at that day and time and age, it was quite a disgrace to come from a family where the parents had divorced. It was very tough for my dad. He told stories, at the age of 12 to 13, of having to take a job as a bicycle courier for Western Union to try to help his mother make ends meet. She was a Licensed Practical Nurse who did private duty nursing, but there weren’t a lot of resources available to him or to his mother.

During my early childhood we moved to a small, very modest neighborhood, a place called Dillonvale, Ohio, which is just outside of Cincinnati, one of the suburbs of Cincinnati. I know my parents were quite proud that they had been able to purchase a home there. My understanding is that they bought their house for $19,000, if you can believe that. Different day and different time, I think. It was a small, very modest, two bedroom, one bath house, made out of brick and eventually became home for four of us. They eventually finished off the attic and put a two-bedroom addition on the second floor, so that we had a very small four bedroom, one and one half bath house for the six of us growing up.

My parents were committed to insuring that their children were educated in Catholic schools. We didn’t have money for other things. But I’m extremely grateful today for the fact that my parents placed our education as their highest priority, because I really think that the foundations I got in my elementary and high school years were essential to the success that I have enjoyed, at least so far.

I knew we were poor because of a couple of things that happened. On one occasion, I was probably seven or eight years old, and my father gave me an envelope that he had put a quarter (25 cents) in and he put it in an envelope along with a note and he told me I needed to take it up to the bank. The bank was about
a mile from the house. I was under the age of ten, though I’m not sure exactly how
old I was at the time exactly. I walked to the bank. I did quite a lot of walking as
a kid and walked to school much of my elementary school years. I gave the
envelope to the teller. It turned out it was twenty-five cents that my dad needed to
deposit into his checking account so that it wouldn’t be overdrawn. I know that in
this day and age of internet banking that’s kind of bizarre and crazy. There wasn’t
the electronic transfer and as near as I could determine there wasn’t any place to
electronically transfer money from or move money from, so he had dug up a
quarter somewhere and had me walk it to the bank so he didn’t overdraw his
account. I think I understood from very early on that we didn’t have a lot of spare
cash, and you didn’t ask for a lot because of that. When I was about nine or ten, I
think, I started doing the weekly grocery shopping for the family; so every
Saturday morning, or every other Saturday morning or whatever the pay period
was I don’t really remember when the pay period was, I would take my little red
wagon and I would walk a mile to the grocery store in the Dillonvale shopping
center and I would have a list of what my mother wanted me to buy and I would
have a piece of paper. I didn’t have a hand-held calculator because we didn’t have
the hand-held calculators back then. I would have a piece of paper and list of what
she wanted, and as I picked something off the shelf I would write down how much
it was and I would have to add it up to make sure I didn’t go over $50 dollars that
she put in an envelope for me to do the shopping for six people. Then I would
walk home with all my groceries carefully stacked in my little red wagon and
bring them home.
I kind of had a sense we weren’t terribly well off, and I was doing the little bit of
things I could do to help. But my parents still made it a point to make sure that we
had had Catholic educations, and I got an extraordinary foundation going to St.
Saviour Elementary School in Rossmoyne, Ohio, which is again another small
subdivision near where my family lived about a mile or a little over a mile from
where our house was.
I don’t recall my parents ever being active in politics. In fact I remember the only
discussions I remember as a child about politics was that my mother and father
apparently voted opposite sides of the aisle because they would discuss it on
election day -- the fact that they had made sure that they canceled one another's
vote out again that year. Apparently to be honest with you, I suspect my father
was probably the one who leaned Republican. He was an accountant, after all. I
suspect my mother was probably more committed to social justice issues and
things of that nature. As a result I think she probably was a Democrat, but I really
don't know. I have no idea what political party my parents may have registered
under, even to this day. My parents are now both deceased. My mother died quite
young at the age of 59, and my dad died in 1997.
It was a bit of a challenging time growing up. For the first eight years of my life,
or so, my mom did not work full-time outside the home. She did work in the
home. She did a variety of things including telephone survey work which was a
very common thing at the time for women who were trying to supplement their
husbands' incomes. I remember in particular one survey that she did where she
was calling a list of individuals; she would get a section of phone numbers that she
would be responsible for calling; she had to fill out the paperwork, and the subject
was: What toilet paper tissue did those people use? And I remember Charmin and
I remember, I don't know, White Cloud and a couple different other brands,
because she would make the same call with the same script over and over and over
again and you would hear her in the background: "Can you tell me if you've heard
any of these types of products and if you've ever used them: White Cloud,
Charmin, da, da, da, da." After you've heard that over and over and over again it
was something that stuck in my head and still does to this day. So she did that.
And she also sold Avon products, took in other people's ironing, and she did a lot
of different kinds of home-based sort of efforts to supplement the family income.
My dad was a cost accountant for the Hilton Davis Chemical Company which was
a division of Sterling Drug which was the company that was responsible for
manufacturing Bayer Aspirin. He worked in a building in Golf Manor, Ohio, that
was covered in ivy. That's what I really remember most about it.
But when my mom was, when I was about maybe 11, I think driven by financial
concerns and issues, my mom actually got a job working as a waitress. She would
work nights and my dad would work days. That was a really ugly time in our lives because my parents didn't see a lot of each other, and my dad was a very different person when my mom was out of the house and when he was responsible for trying to take care of keeping four kids on schedule. He wasn't terribly gifted at doing that. My dad was an only child; my mom was one of four. So that didn't last very long before my mom got linked up with a placement agency that eventually placed her to work in a clerical job with Gibson Greeting Cards, which was just up the road from where my dad worked. That became sort of the story of our lives for the rest of the time that I was at home, the next 5½ years or so. My mom would be working at Gibson Greeting Cards in the Quality Control Department and my dad worked at Hilton Davis Chemical Company. As a cost accountant, my dad was very involved in a lot of different activities that tied to his work. He was involved as the treasurer, later the president of the Hilton Davis Federal Credit Union. He was on the bowling league. He was involved on the golf team. He was involved in the booster club. That kept him out of the house most nights during the week. It was pretty rare that I saw him, especially from the time I was 10 or 11 years old onward. He was just never home. My mom, when she went to work full time, found it a particularly difficult and challenging environment, particularly with four children. She didn't cope well with that. She developed a very serious drinking problem.

Ms. Turchi: I just wanted to ask, around what age were you when you realized your mom was developing a drinking problem.

Col. Murnane: I became consciously aware of it when I was 12. What had happened is when my mom went to work full time at Gibson Greeting Cards, my dad and mom had originally brought someone in who was supposed to stay with the kids from 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when we would get home, until 6 p.m. And that lasted, as near as I can remember, less than 6 months. Then when I was 12, my dad came to me and said “We don't want to pay this lady anymore.” My older brother was then 15, but they didn't want to charge him with care of my younger siblings who were then 9 and 8. He wasn't a terribly a responsible older brother. So I was 12 years old and my dad said “We don't want to bring this lady to take
care of you anymore, and so what we'd like to do is make you responsible for taking care of [my younger sister and younger brother] Bonnie and Ken. One day if you do a good job looking out for your 9 year old sister and your 8 year old brother maybe we'll buy you a new dress or something.” So from the time I was 12 I became the caregiver for me younger sister and younger brother. I had responsibility for the laundry, for the cooking and had already been doing the shopping, as I shared with you. I began to observe some things, and that's when I realized that my mom was drunk all the time. At the age of 12 I told my dad and said “mom's an alcoholic and you to really need to do something about that.” This came as quite a shock to my dad. When my mother died he told that story to people who came to the funeral because my mother's death was from medical complications related to her alcoholism. It was kind of an interesting detail that at her funeral he was willing to acknowledge that at the age of 12 I had told him that my mother was an alcoholic, which he refused to believe, and actually became quite angry over the fact that I had confronted him with my mom's drinking. This was a very tough time for all of us.

One of the things that I think really saved me from what could have been a disastrous plight in that situation was that when I was very little, when I was maybe in kindergarten or first grade, my mom had this vision of turning me into a dancer. If you could see me you would understand why that's funny. It is really funny, because I don't have a dancer's build or body. My sister Bonnie does, but I don't. I'm big boned and kind of clumsy, but my mother had it in her head that I was going to be a dancer. So she found this program that -- for 25 cents a week -- I could take ballet and tap lessons in an after-school environment not too far from where I went to school during the day. When I was in grade school, I could walk to the school where the dance classes were held, and in high school I would take a bus from my school to the dance classes. I can't remember if it was a quarter each or 50 cents for the dance classes, but they were group classes. I really became involved in that dance program and that became really important. My younger brother and sister were also in the dance class, much to my younger brother's dismay. He doesn't want anybody to know that he took dance. He took tap, he
didn't take ballet, but he took tap dancing lessons to get a sense of rhythm. Eventually, not in my first several years, but by the time I was maybe in the 5th or 6th grade, I was in dance classes Monday through Thursday evenings and all day on Saturday.

To pay for the extra dance lessons I worked an arrangement with the dance teacher, who was a bit older and not quite as spry on her feet as she once was, and I would be an assistant to her in exchange for which she would give me free dance lessons several days a week. So I was studying dance four days a week, Monday through Thursday evenings after school plus Saturdays. And my sister was there as well, and then part of the time my brother would be there as well. And I think that really made a difference; my involvement in some kind of an organized, discipline situation. Because of that I had to organize my time very efficiently and effectively from a really early age, which I think is a skill which probably helped me a great deal later on in life.

Ms. Turchi: I just want to make sure I heard correctly. When you began dancing, at what age group did you begin with your siblings?

Col. Murnane: I think I began when I was in the first grade actually. But it was a 30-minute class that you would learn the little recital-type numbers; you would study all year these little routines and at the end of the year there would be a dance recital. In fact, Kevin and I, my husband Kevin and I are unpacking our house here in Xenia, which has lots and lots of boxes from our many moves. We're finally getting to the point we can unpack and put this stuff away. Just yesterday I went through a box that actually had some of the photos from some of those early dance recitals that we had long time ago, a very long time ago now. My sister Bonnie actually was the much better dancer between us and she actually studied dance well after she graduated from high school and after she had gotten married. Bonnie was actually a much dancer than I was. Much more gifted. I belonged when I was a kid, when I was little, maybe for two years, I don't think probably much more than that, I belonged to the Bluebirds which was a girl scouting organization. It wasn't part of the Girls Scouts. It was part of the Camp Fire Girls and it was affiliated with the Catholic Parish that I was in. I don't think I was in Bluebirds more than
about 2 years, because it required a commitment to bring a treat, and bringing a
treat was a problem. It required dues, and dues were a problem. It required
uniforms and uniforms were a problem. So I suspect it probably ended about the
time my younger sister or brother were born or maybe about the time they started
school, because money just kept getting tighter and tighter, and so it was
really a very difficult and very meager basic subsistence in any event.
My first political involvement, unlike my parents, was when I was still in
elementary school. It turned out that John Gilligan who owned the Gilligan
Funeral Home chain in Cincinnati, and who is a former Governor of the State of
Ohio, was affiliated somehow with the Catholic Parish we attended. I don't if he
was a member of the Parish. I don't know whether he had family members in the
parish, whatever, but they had a recruitment effort to have kids work on the
Gilligan campaign. I frankly don't remember which Gilligan campaign. I think it
may have been a congressional campaign. I actually got involved in kids for
Gilligan or youth for Gilligan. I think he was a Democrat; I really don't
remember. But I got involved in working at the State Fair and working at the
County Fairs and putting bumper stickers on people's cars and whatever. But, I
think my parents' lack of interest in, lack of political connection, probably rubbed
off on me more than anything else, because I didn't actually work on a lot of
campaigns after that. That is somewhat curious given I grew up in an era when
the Vietnam war was going on when I was in high school and many of the young
men who I knew and dated when I was in high school either got drafted right out
of high school or enlisted right out of high school and some of them were killed
Vietnam. If I was ever going to get the political bug on my own it would have
probably been at that point in my life. But that really wasn't a central feature in
our home life.
I went to 8 years of Catholic grade school at St. Saviour and graduated there. I
was a very good student. Many times top of my class. I won the school spelling
bee for the school and went to the regional final Scripps Howard School spelling
bee several years for a row but never won. But when I was getting ready to leave
for high school, of course I'd realized a few years earlier that mom was a serious
alcoholic. And I had an aunt, my mother's youngest sister, who had gone to the Ursuline Brown County Academy in Brown County, Ohio, which was a boarding school, and I thought that was the coolest thing ever. That you could like not live at home and go to a boarding school. I remember going to Ursuline Academy in Brown County to visit my aunt several times when I was a kid, and thinking, “Wow! This is where I want to go to school when I go to high school.” So, I knew by the two years I'd been taking care of my younger sister and younger brother, which was not without its own unique challenges, that I didn't want to spend another 4 years doing that, and that I was kind of locked into a situation that if I didn't go away to high school that I was probably going to be responsible for those kids for the next 4 years as well. So I found out about a number of different options that I had to go somewhere other than the parochial high school that was affiliated with St. Saviour Elementary School. I decided I would compete for as many as scholarships to go somewhere else as I could find out about, so I did that and I competed for the Ursuline Brown County Academy scholarship and didn't win that. I competed for the Sacred Heart Academy Boarding School scholarship and I didn't win that, and several other schools that would have taken me out of the house, because by 14 I knew I didn’t want to live there anymore. I knew I didn't want to continue to have to raise two children, given that I'd had two years of experience and didn't think that I was probably very good at that. And that was regularly reinforced to me, by the way, that I wasn't very good at that. Although my sister would tell you that I did a really good job. I didn't hear that from my adult role models and that was probably what mattered most and probably was important in other decisions that I made later in my life. I think if I had had a little more positive reinforcement that at 12 I did the best one could be expected in raising a 9 and 8 year old, I might have made some different choices later in my life. But I think every experience helps to make you stronger and makes you better at what you do and what you decide is most important in your life. I don't regret that that's all happened. It's just that I think that I've put in place now and I think it makes more sense now than it did at the time.

So I didn't win a scholarship to go away to high school, and wound up going to
Mt. Notre Dame High School in Reading, Ohio, again, a suburb of Cincinnati, not too far from where my parents' home was in the Deer Park/Dillonvale area. I started there as a freshman and finished all my requirements for graduation in three years. I was very active in student government when I was in high school. The first year I was the treasurer, second year I was the secretary, third year I was the vice president and my senior I was president of the Student Council. I was very active in every organization I could get involved in. I think probably following my dad's lead, I knew that this was a great way not to have to come home. So I would have to stay after school night after night. Plus I was dancing 4 days a week plus the weekend; studying dance, including participating in dance caravan and a number of high-level professional associations, some study courses for the Cincinnati Civic Ballet under the direction of Balanchine, who was the director of the ballet company programs designed for youth. I did everything I could to not be at home. I rode the bus to school my freshman year. My sophomore year I got involved in a carpool because I was then 16, I was able to actually drive one day a week, and four other friends drove the other days. But many nights I didn't come home and plus I started working after school. My first job was at the age of 13. I did telephone soliciting. That was my first paid job at the age of 13. I did telephone soliciting work. I guess maybe that was back before you needed work permits so you were allowed to work. I don't know but I had a paid job as a telephone solicitor selling coupon books. My dad or mom would get home from work, they would take over the responsibilities for my younger sister and younger brother and then they would take me to my job at night which started at 7 and lasted until 10. I started that very young; still was dancing. I had a lot of different things going on. Chaos is a common theme though in an alcoholic home; so if this sounds kind of chaotic and how did you do it all, it is because chaos is a common theme in an alcoholic home. Among the different school organizations I got involved with at Mt. Notre Dame: I joined the Cincinnati Classics Club because I was studying Latin. I studied 4 years of Latin while at Mt. Notre Dame. I got involved in the Spanish Club. I studied three years of Spanish while I was at Mt. Notre Dame. I got involved in the school chorus and the Acapella choir. So I
was very active in all of those activities. My school transcript when I look at it now just kind of makes me laugh because they list all your different clubs up to a point and they just put an entry at the end, “generally very active in everything” is what it says on my school transcripts from high school. But I nonetheless continued to get really good grades, many times straight As and Bs so I was very fortunate that I had a solid foundation from my elementary school, and I think my high school years built from that and I was able to do quite well as a result. In my 8th Grade year, just before I went to Mt. Notre Dame, I got involved with a project in the inner-city in Cincinnati, OH. On Saturday mornings I would go down, I think it was St. Vincent de Paul Parish, and I would help with basic literacy skills with kids in the inner-city schools. This was a time when Cincinnati was not yet through its urban renewal. So there were some really, really poor -- I mean some extremely poor families there, extremely poor by U.S. standards, I should say. We would take down clothes and food and we would help the kids work on developing their reading skills. I think this was the result of my mom's influence again. She was probably the social justice end of our family and the one who had a commitment to try to make things better for other people. I had a reminder about that same time, of the fact that there wasn't a lot of extra money in our household. There was one year that I realized my mother had made every gift that was under the Christmas tree for us that year, because apparently there hadn't been enough money for Christmas that year. I didn't realize it until may a year or two later but my mother had sewn clothes for all of us, made sock puppets, made a beanbag game, that she had sewn everything herself. And that was our Christmas that year. We always had a Christmas, but I think I remember with great warmth the fact that in order for my mom to make sure that would happen, even though she was an alcoholic and even though she was very often not able to do things that other moms did, the things that mattered most she made sure they happened. I think that was probably something that was really important to me and I remember it.

Ms. Turchi: Linda, were your parents generally encouraging or not encouraging for you to be as active as you were in the various activities?

Col. Murnane: I think the best characterization of my relationship with my dad is that we had
what I call an “oh-yeah” relationship. I would come home and I would say, “Dad, I'm going to run for student council treasurer,” and he'd say, “You can't be the student council treasurer”. And I would say “Oh-yeah?” I don't know if my dad knew that continually telling me that I couldn't do things that that would bring out the rebel in me to the degree that I would spend every ounce of energy I had proving him wrong. I don't know if he knew that, but that's how it worked. And that is a constant theme throughout my life, including through law school and through the Air Force and all the things that I did my dad was constantly reinforcing the statement “You can't -- you can't, you cannot do that.” I think that probably impacted me in a way much more deeply than anything else, because I would not allow my daughters, when I was a mom later, to use the word “I can't” in my home. We didn't say “you can't” in my home. It made me furious when my dad would tell me all the things I couldn't do and all the things I was incapable of doing. It made me furious. My mom, because she was an alcoholic, I don't think we had a meaningful relationship after the point when I was 12. I think of her as loving, creative and unable to do much. Largely because she was generally passed out nights. It's a painful memory for me but I remember having to pick her up off the kitchen floor, passed out drunk, on more than one occasion. That's the kind of relationship I had with my mom. It led later to a lot of conflict. When I was 16 I finally got fed up and said I had had it. It's a painful memory for me but I remember having to pick her up off the kitchen floor, passed out drunk, on more than one occasion. That's the kind of relationship I had with my mom. It led later to a lot of conflict. When I was 16 I finally got fed up and said I had had it. I can't remember exactly the circumstances that led to it happening, but my parents packed up all my things and put them on the porch and told me to get out. At the time my older brother, again that great role model, was dating a girl that was 14; my brother was 19 and he was dating a girl who was 14 and she lived down the street on the corner. She had what was considered one of those cool moms who let the kids hang out at her house. We didn't do illegal stuff; we didn't do drugs or booze or whatever, but all the kids could hang out down there. Jeanie's mom, my brother's girlfriend's name was Jeanie, and Jeanie's mom offered to take me in and we actually went down and had a discussion with my parents about filing papers to arrange for guardianship since I was only 16; and that was when my parents demanded that I come home, I think probably driven mostly by the fact that I had a 13-year old
sister and a 12-year old brother at that point and they didn't know how they were going to care for them if I didn't come back home. So, it didn't last, which was perhaps a fortuitous event, but I was out of the house for a while when that happened, and I think that best characterizes the nature of my relationship with my mom. I don't think she was encouraging or discouraging, because I just don't think she had a presence in my life other than as someone for whom I was expected to cover-up and cleanup and basically serve as an adjunct of my father's enabling. Sad as that is.

Ms. Turchi: And how did all of that impact your ability to interact with others? Were you active with friends? Did they share a lot of those activities that you did at school? What were your memories of your friends during this time period of your life?

Col. Murnane: I had a lot of friends but they were never allowed at my home, not ever. We didn't have birthday parties at home, other than with my brothers and sisters or my aunts and uncles and their children. I can't remember my aunts and uncles and their children being there after my mom started drinking, ever. I wasn't allowed to have any of my friends in the house while my parents weren't home and I was not allowed to have any of my friends in the house when my parents were home. And I didn't really want to have any of friends in the house whether or not my parents were home. For many years we had hardwood floors and one year, I don't exactly how it happened, we managed to get carpeting, but the carpet became threadbare. So we had threadbare carpeting in the house. The house was generally pretty dirty because I wasn't a very good housekeeper and my mother did no housework. In fact, part of the time when she was working in the home to try to supplement my dad's income, one of the things she did was ironing for other people. But from the time when I was twelve, I did all of my own laundry and ironing. From the time I was sixteen, I was responsible for all of my own debts. I had to pay for clothes, lunches and whatever else. So, whatever little job I had was consumed paying for whatever my personal expenses were including my dance classes, my gas -- if I had a car, and my insurance -- if I had insurance ... all of those things. So my friends were never in my home. I remember going to parties at other girls' houses from my high school days, but I never had a party in my home until my senior
year. I decided that I was going to have a party at our house my senior year and my parents told me no but I went ahead and planned the party anyway. And nobody came. Which I didn't find particularly surprising, frankly. The friends I had were connected principally to the successes I had through efforts that I think were on my own, in some of the organizations I belonged to, whether it was the Classics League, the Spanish Club or the Choir or whatever other organization I was involved in. I'm still friends with a number of the folks that I was friends with as a child. In fact just this Christmas, a woman who grew up across the street from us, diagonally across the street from us, was in our home for Christmas. Some of those are friends that I've kept for life. And now, of course, we've talked about my mom's alcoholism and the situation in our home and how difficult it was. I think I was basically pretty socially unacceptable in high school. I think my clothes were probably not always clean and I think that was probably not something that was lost on some of the kids that I went to school with. In looking back at it I guess I'm lucky that I came out of it relatively unscathed. I know in 8th grade I had tried out for the cheerleading squad for my grade school football team and I didn't make the cheerleading squad, but I was an alternate. The number one athlete of our school was a guy named Vic Koegel. Vic went on to play high school football at Moeller High School. He was quite the star, number one ranked athlete in the City of Cincinnati. Then he went on to play at Ohio State University and eventually went on to play, I don't know, a year or two with the Cincinnati Bengals. But in the 8th grade there was a dance and Vic Koegel invited me to that dance. And that was such a big deal because I was the socially unacceptable girl from the wrong side of the tracks, you know? I'd come from the poor family, nobody was ever able to come to my house. I worked at thirteen years old and I was working. I mean it's just kind of, I knew I was different from other kids and not in a good way. It was like such a big deal to me that Vic Koegel invited me to this dance. I found out later when he didn't show up to pick me up that it was all part of a hoax, you know, kind of a, I guess they'd call it bullying now. I didn't think of it as bullying then. It was just a joke. Wasn't that funny, that I would really think that he would even ask me out. It wasn't
really a very pleasant situation in grade school but I'm really fortunate, because it didn't bother me, I didn't let any of that stuff shape my life. I mean I was going to be a success and it didn't really matter to me that nobody else believed that. I didn't have somebody in elementary school or through the 8th grade certainly, from whom I got the positive reinforcement that made me believe that it was me. I didn't get it at home, I didn't get it from my parents and I certainly didn't get it from the teachers at the school. But I believe in a Higher Power and for whatever reason I had that innate belief that I was going to succeed and I did. So, that's how I think it turned out.

Ms. Turchi: Remarkable.

Col. Murnane: It's weird because I look back at it. People have asked me many times over who was your role model, who was your mentor. I didn't have one. I'm sorry, I didn't have one. I will say that I was very fortunate when I went to Mt. Notre Dame High School, which I didn't want to go to, you may recall. My freshman year in high school my homeroom teacher was a woman named Mary Mehmert and she taught world cultures and social studies. She was my advisor for student council and it turned out my senior year that Mary Mehmert was also my senior homeroom teacher the year that I was the president of the student council. Mary Mehmert and I are still in touch to this day [Note, Ms. Mehmert died in 2014 while working on this oral history.]. I wouldn't say she was a role model and I wouldn't say she was a mentor and she was certainly not someone I ever went to and said you know what, I'm in an alcoholic home. I probably would have been taken out of my home if I had told anybody at the school what was going on in our house when I was in high school. I probably would have been removed by social workers and raised in foster care. But I never told anyone other than a few of my very close friends. I never told a teacher; I never told a principal; I never told anyone of the dysfunction, why my clothes were not as clean as the other kids -- although I was asked on a couple occasions. But there wasn't any outside intervention to save us from our situation. But Mary Mehmert is a constant in my life and I don't know why, because it wasn't somebody I wanted to grow up to be like. I didn't want to be a history teacher. I didn't want to be a teacher at all. But
Ms. Turchi: She was someone that gave constancy to my life, if that makes sense. She was reliable, and reliability was in short order as I was growing up. I couldn't count on adults. They wouldn't be there. That was the one constant message and theme for me was that I had to rely on myself because no one else would be there to get me out of anything. Whether that was getting home from school, which was one mile when I was in grade school and probably 5 miles from school to my home in high school, maybe more, I don't know. I remember walking home from high school and I remember walking to work because somebody didn't show up, my mom didn't show up, whatever. I remember walking long distances to get to work. Long distances to get home or whatever it was that I had to do. But I think that taught me to be self-reliant and not to count on other people to get you through and to make sure that whatever you did you didn't get yourself in so much of a jam that you couldn't problem solve your way out of it on your own and that's basically what I did.

Was there perhaps not a woman or an individual that wasn't mentoring you in your life but was there a figure or maybe a famous person on TV, a character in a book, any external individual that may have influenced you and given you or served as a source of strength?

Col. Murnane: I wish I could tell you somebody, Liz; I really do. I mean you have to think about that time and that age. This was 1952 to 1970 when I graduated from high school. There weren't even many women broadcasters, if you get what I'm saying. There were no women on television. I mean maybe there were weather girls or something, I don't know. But, women weren't in broadcasting, women weren't in Congress, women certainly weren't running for president. Women were mothers and homemakers and the unsuccessful women were the ones who had to work outside their homes because they didn't marry well. That was the message at that time and that age. And the only women who worked outside the home were the women who didn't marry well enough and their husbands didn't make enough money. There wasn't really a female role model, I can tell you that. I really wish there was. I can't tell you how much I wish there was. Because I know that doesn't sound right, but there really wasn't and I didn't really have a male role
model either, to be honest with you. My older brother was a mess from a very early age.

What I do know is this. My older brother shaped my life, in many, many ways. Principally I thought my parents were cruel to him and I think my parents to this day were cruel to him. I later learned from my mother's sister and my mother's brother that my dad apparently used to beat my older brother when he was a baby. I don't think he knew that and I certainly didn't know that. And again it's only by report from my mother's two living siblings and I can say that, because my older brother really had a bad situation, a really bad situation. I had been told that he had polio when he was born. I know he walked with a pronounced limp and still does. He was in physical therapy. I remember he used to have to stand in the kitchen and lift a big rusty metal bucket that had chains in it to try to strengthen his leg and he used to cry and cry and cry. I became his champion because I thought that my parents were cruel to him. I used to fight with my parents; above everything else I used to fight with my parents about the way they treated my older brother. My older brother had his own way of dealing with that, which is that he was the rebel. He disgraced them at every possible turn. He ran away at 16 and joined the Hurricane Hell Drivers, which was a carnival road show. He got into trouble with the law very young. Stole my parents' car at one point. So my brother responded to the way he was treated in the home in a really different manner than I did. I wanted them to stop treating him badly. It was the subject of, I can't even remember how many really ugly, ugly, loud fights and it may have been the thing that wound up getting me thrown out of the house when I was 16. At some point my parents actually made him move to the basement of our home, which was unfinished, it was a cold, damp, dark with a concrete floor and concrete cinderblock wall facility. You know? He wasn't allowed to live on the main floor with the rest of us. He had to live in the basement. So they treated him like he was vermin. And he lives now like he is vermin. I mean they reinforced that fairly significantly in his life. It's really quite sad, yep. It's not a pretty story, is it Liz?

Ms. Turchi: It's quite remarkable, Linda. All of it.

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Ms. Turchi: It's remarkable that you're sharing this.

Col. Murnane: You know, the reason for sharing this though, is that I've done a lot with my life and if I can come out of that cellar and get there on my own which is what I did. I got there on my own. I think other people who may not see a light for themselves can get there, too. That's the reason to share it. So.... Any way..... Are we at about an hour?

Ms. Turchi: Yeah, we're at about an hour in. We could stop here if you'd like.

Col. Murnane: I think I would like to stop because I need a bit of time to recover now.

-------------------End of First Interview-----------------------
Ms. Turchi: Colonel Murnane is located right now in Xenia, Ohio and I am currently located in The Hague, Netherlands. We are using internet online software to facilitate this interview. Linda, when we last spoke on session 1, we spoke about your early childhood years and we touched upon high school a bit but I think we should start this session with a return to the high school years. Starting with just letting us know the years you were in high school.

Col. Murnane: Thanks Liz. I was in high school between 1966 and 1970 which was quite a turbulent time within the United States because of the wide range of social issues including the war protest years, the U.S. was involved in the Vietnam war at the time. The draft was still going on and so many of the young men who went to the high school across town were primarily worried about what their draft number was going to be and the US implemented a lottery in 1968 I think it was and certainly it was in effect in 1969 where your birthday would determine at what point you would get drafted into the armed forces if you were a male. My high school was an all-female high school. I went to Mount Notre Dame High School in Reading, I mentioned that in the last session and our affiliated all boys high school across town was Cincinnati Moeller which is where most of the guys that I dated as I was in high school attended school, although occasionally I would branch out and try somebody from another school and go on a date with one of them, but my social interactions such as they were, were primarily with the guys from Moeller high school. So it was kind of an interesting time in that the guys were all really worried about getting drafted from their eighteenth birthday onward. Many of the guys who were going to college were going to college to avoid the draft because they might get an exemption while they were in college and so that was kind of the focus of their mind set. Of course, women were not subject to the draft and there weren’t many women in the armed forces at that time. And that’s kind of an important overlay for things that happen later in my life including my decision to join the armed forces. So to kind of have a flavor of what the times were like was kind of important. It was interesting, because in high school I learned how to play the guitar and I had long blonde hair and I looked like one of the hippie children, the peaceniks used to sing all the folk songs, “If I had a hammer”, “Blowing in the wind”. I knew how to play them, sang them at school assembly, actually played on stage, played the guitar on stage and
sang peace songs. Again, really kind of interesting, particularly for my high school class mates who remembered me as the girl with the long blonde hair who used to sing the peace songs and then I wind up enlisting in the Air Force in 1974, so kind of again a very interesting overlay. I was very active as I shared in the last session in a number of clubs and organizations when I was in high school. Most importantly was probably the student council positions that I held because I got involved in student council my freshman year and advanced to each of the leadership, highest leadership positions in the student council structure starting as treasurer, then secretary, then vice president and president of the student council, but I was also very active in the Spanish club and I was also the president of the citywide, City of Cincinnati classics League because I also studied Latin. And it was pretty unusual at that time in high school education for someone to study more than one language so the fact that I was studying Latin, Spanish and French in addition to a full time course load English, science, math, and I didn’t have any study halls which is how I took an extra couple of languages is that I opted out of all the study halls, so as the result of that I had more credits than I needed to graduate by the end of my junior year in high school and they had discussed with me the possibility of graduating early which was very tempting because of what going on in my home. But my senior year in high school would have been my younger sister’s freshman year also in high school and because my younger sister had largely been raised by me from the time that I was twelve and she was nine, she didn’t have all the social skills that one might expect. So it was a bit difficult for her to transition from elementary school to high school and I made a decision not to graduate a year early and to stay to help her with that transition at the Mount Notre Dame high school as a freshman which she will tell you made a big difference in her life. So, anyway as much as I wanted to get out of the house and stay out of the house I didn’t think it was the right thing to do for my sister Bonnie for whom I had been the surrogate mother for a quite a few years at that point, five or six years. There was a time between my during my summer vacation between my sophomore year and my junior year I had been at school and because I had taken two years of Spanish and two years of Latin at that point I really wanted to, I brought home this flyer from school, it said study abroad, go to Spain for the summer and I really wanted to go to Spain and study abroad that summer. And that was such an hysterically funny thing now that I look back at it because as I shared with you earlier our family was not well off by any stretch of the imagination. My parents
idea of summer semester abroad would have been being able to scrape up enough
money to go from the Hague to Paris or something on train or to go from Cincinnati
to Cleveland which was about an eight hour drive because we just didn't have that
kind of spare money lying around so I am sure my parents were amazed that I even
came home and asked if I might be able to go to summer semester aboard in Spain.
But my mom, being a resourceful person, found out about a program which would
allow me to go to Mexico to work as a part of a VISTA extension program, if they
could come up with round trip air fare to Phoenix, Arizona, which was around $200
then I think or something like that.

Ms. Turchi: Linda, what sparked your interest in travelling abroad?

Col. Murnane: Well there were a couple of things. The first and most important thing was that I
really thought I wanted to be a linguist. In 1966 when I was just coming out of the
eighth grade, my parents had purchased a 12 foot travel trailer and they hooked it up
on the back of our station wagon, put the four kids in the station wagon and the two
parents and took this 12 foot travel trailer and we went to New York to the New
York's world fair and my parents had taken us on a side trip to the United Nations
building and I was just fascinated by putting on the headphones and hearing people
who could talk simultaneously in a different language while someone else was
speaking in English. And I really thought I wanted to be a linguist. And so I wanted
to go to Spain because I thought that it would make me more fluent in Spanish. I
didn't understand at that point and time that there were native Spanish speakers who
would be able to make the transition and that it was improbable that I would ever be
a Spanish interpreter. But I was good in Spanish, I was good in Latin and I was good
in English and I did very well in languages and I thought that that would really help
enhance my abilities. The other thing that really drew my attention to it though is
that I would be out of the house because this was the semester that I asked my
parents, or the summer semester that I had asked my parents to send me abroad was
at the end of the experience I had where they had thrown me out of the house and I
had found somewhere else to live, and so I was looking for ways to be away from
that environment as much as I could. So my mom being a particularly resourceful
person couldn't afford to send me to summer semester in Spain but she found an
organization called Project Team and it was a group that was affiliated with a
particular church group and with VISTA and if my mother could scrape up a
hundred or two hundred dollars which was the cost of a round trip ticket at the time
to Phoenix, Arizona then strangers would pick her sixteen year daughter up in Phoenix and take her to Mexico for the summer which sounded like a pretty good idea to my mom and didn't sound like a half bad idea to me at the time. So between us, between my job that I was working, my mom put aside a little bit of money from her job, couple of other ways, birthday money, and whatever that I had gotten from other relatives we managed to scrape up the cost of the ticket and off I went the summer between my sophomore and junior year to Phoenix, Arizona where I got picked up by a member of Project Team and I went Sonora Mexico. And when I got there I met up with some other high school students who also were going to Mexico. Most of them were individuals who were going to be going into the medical profession or the nursing field and they were from Chicago Illinois. And all of them were going to work in a free clinic that was set up in Sonora for flu shots and basic medical needs that were provided for by this particular church affiliated group that had organized the project team experience. Because I didn't have that kind of a science or nursing background I was given the opportunity to go and teach in the barrios and the ejidos which were in the inner city and in the poor farm communities and what we would go in and do is teach basic literacy skills to the children who were being used primarily as child slave labor on these farms. And I came to know quite a lot about migrant farming and about how migrant farming worked and about the situation of Mexican children as a result of working in the farm. And the way our day would work we stayed with a host family affiliated with the same church group as our group was involved with so we would come across the border or Sunday night or Monday morning, we would get picked up by our host family and then every morning we would get picked up by the Project Team station wagon that would come by our host family pick us up and take us to a farm community. And the farm was primarily, it was a large land mass that grew crops primarily. It usually had a couple of livestock locations throughout the farm. But the children who were working on these farms had a quota every morning that they received and they had to achieve that quota before they could go to school or do anything else and the quota was pretty intense. And so I came to find out that these farms were actually owned by landowners who were from the U.S. and they basically were using these children as slaves and they were keeping them uneducated because at around fifteen or sixteen years old when the children had gotten bigger and the house that was provided by the landowner had got smaller or was too small for the
number of the children that they had the parents could tell them I am sorry you have
to leave. And the farm owner who was from the U.S. and probably owned additional
farm land in the U.S. would tell them that’s fine I would take care of you. I have
taken care of you all of your life and then would smuggle them in to the U.S. to work
for them at below minimum wage at their farms in the U.S., undocumented, as
workers so that they really had no voice. And because they had been prevented from
learning how to read or write during much of their life on the farm that they lived in
they would come to the U.S. completely dependent on that U.S. land owner who had
owned the land they had worked on in Mexico as well, which is something I certainly
was oblivious to until I went down there and worked.
So the way that our system worked, we would get up every morning and we would
go out with the children who had a daily picking requirement and we would help
them achieve that picking requirement and once they met their quota then they could
come to our little school that we operated where they would learn how to read and
write and do some basic literacy work with them. So it was really quite a moving
experience for me to be involved in Project Team.
So I did that for all of that summer, I remember so distinctly thinking how rewarding
that was and how much it had meant to me. I saw real poverty, poverty beyond what
I certainly had ever been exposed to and I always thought that we were poor but
people lived in in adobe clay huts on the property and while I was there on the fourth
of July there was a big storm and most of the buildings were damaged on the farm
that we were working on, I believe we were on Esperanza at the time and so we spent
a couple of days helping to repair some of the clay houses. Most of them did not
have any indoor plumbing. They had one central water system in the farms that was
basically a copper pipe and the water was I thought very dirty, but they would wash
in it and they would swim in it and bathe in it and wash their clothes, then they
would put it in buckets and carry it home and cook with it at night in their houses.
So it was really quite eye opening. The Americans who were there as part of Project
Team didn’t drink any of the water of course because Americans tend to be aware I
think for the most part about the value of clean water and so we had bottled water
that the kids who actually lived and worked on the farm would drink from this
reddish colored water that they had just finished bathing in or swimming in or doing
their clothes in and then they would bring it home and that is what they would use to
cook. It was quite eye opening for me.
I desperately wanted to go back to Mexico for my next summer. My Spanish skills became very good that summer. The children that I worked with since they were not literate in their own language obviously couldn’t communicate with me in English so I was forced to use my Spanish so I became a very strong Spanish skilled person in terms of my verbal skills and when I returned to school that next fall I won first place in a city wide language contest in Spanish and that was also the year that I started my studies in French. But I wanted to go back. I desperately, desperately wanted to go back the next summer but there wasn’t enough money for me to do that and my mom actually took ads out in the paper saying that her daughter wanted to go back to Mexico and she couldn’t afford it, and would people send money so that her daughter could go back to Mexico and I remember how embarrassed I was when that letter to the editor appeared in the paper with my name and my mother’s name in it and people sending one dollar bills to my mother saying “Let her take care of the people here. I am not going to spend another penny, here is a dollar.” If they had send a hundred of them then I would have gone back but they didn’t send a hundred dollars so I didn’t get back to Mexico, ever, ever, well I should say until I was an adult. But I will say that the next summer give me another real interesting experience because I went to work at Gibson Greeting Card in the factory that summer earning enough money to pay for my high school graduation, to pay for my ring, my class ring, to pay for my senior high school portraits, to pay my medical bills for my senior year because by then I was told that I was responsible for my own medical bills although my dad he had insurance through his company but I had to pay for the excess and so I paid my own medical bills, I had my own phone at that point and I paid my own phone bill. I had a car at that point that my then boyfriend had given me when he enlisted in the Air Force so I had my own car and I had to pay my own insurance and my own gas, and upkeep for the car so it was a good thing that I guess that next summer I wound up working in the factory at Gibson Greeting Card, counting greeting cards and putting them in stacks of twelve, and packaging them in a plastic sealing system. But it changed my life.

Ms. Turchi: At that point was your mother was still working there as well.

Col. Murnane: Yes, yes. One of my lifelong friends, the woman who I mentioned who recently came to visit me here at the house over Christmas, her name is Rosanne. Rosanne went to work at Gibson that summer as well because at that time it was very common for some of the factories to try to hire the kids of their blue collar workers during the
summer to try and help them out a little bit, help the families out a little bit, help them save for college or whatever it was that they needed to do. So Rosanne and I both worked at in the Gibson Greeting Card factory that summer between our junior and senior year.

Ms. Turchi: I didn't mean to cut you off. You were about to say it had changed your life, were you referring to your experience in Mexico.

Col. Murnane: Yes. The Mexico experience really became kind of an awakening, kind of a passion for the underprivileged, the individuals who were being deprived of the opportunity for a basic education, individuals who were living in a kind of poverty, I just frankly had never been exposed to in my whole life. So, I mean I had worked in the inner city, and we were certainly not well off but we had flush toilets where I lived and we had clean running water and while we didn’t have a lot of anything we had enough of something you know to be able to make ends meet. So to see what I saw in Mexico really was an awakening for me and even more strongly convinced me that I wanted to work for equality and for justice which was a central feature of a lot of what I did the rest of my life.

Ms. Turchi: You’d mention in the last session that your mom had justice tendencies as well, can you elaborate on that?
Col. Murnane: Yeah. Even though we weren't very well off, my mom always made sure that if there was a can goods drive for the food bank or if there was some kind of project that would help individuals who were poorer than we were, that we'd find a way to help contribute to that. Usually, it was with bringing a can of green beans or a can of baked beans or something to a central collection site, something of that nature. It was never that we had a lot of money but we might be able to spare a can of green beans and so a can of green beans would go into a basket for another family somewhere -- something like that. And my mom was really behind my involvement with the tutoring program that I was involved with in the 8th grade where I went downtown to the inner-city in Cincinnati and did tutoring for kids in the inner city in Cincinnati as well so my mom was always the more socially aware person -- notwithstanding that we didn't have a lot of money and notwithstanding that she was drunk most of the time -- as between she and my dad, she was certainly the one that was more attuned to social justice issues.

Which is why I mentioned the last time my parents always -- whenever they talked about politics -- the only thing I ever heard was that they cancelled one another votes out so I always kind of thought my mom was a democrat and my dad a republican but I don't know to be honest with you because politics wasn't a part of our home life.

So that summer that I worked at the Gibson Greeting Card Factory, I mentioned that I had a car at that point and that's because I had started dating a guy who went to Moeller High School.

I wasn't allowed to "date" until I was 16, but I used to go to football games and you'd meet people at the football games and I did that before I was 16 with my parents knowledge and permission. But when I was 16 I started dating a guy, a couple different guys but one guy in particular. This became a rather complicated and difficult situation.

He was also from a family home that had addiction at its core. His mother was a drug addict. His mother was a nurse and she stole prescription medication from the drug cart from the hospital that she worked at and was drug addicted. He was a year ahead of me in school so I dated him -- through the end of his junior and senior years in high school but I was seeing other people. It was kind of a standard -- we are going steady but we are not going steady. We'd break up and make up and all of
those sort of things. It was a different day and year from the way teenagers date
today but in any event, we were seriously connected to one another in large measure
because his mother was an addict and my mother was an alcohol addict. And we
were, I think, each desperately looking for some connection with normalcy in our
lives.

He was absolutely the wrong guy for me but I couldn't see that at the time. I
mentioned earlier that all of the guys that at point in time were worried about what
their draft number was going to be because of the lottery system. I remember still his
senior year in high school, the guy I was dating got his draft, his lottery number and
he was 364 out of 365 numbers in terms of the draft and so the chances were very,
very, very slim that he was going to get drafted. But he wasn't a particularly good
student and he really didn't have a plan for his life and his family situation, much
like mine, was quite chaotic and intense and he wanted to get out of the house in the
worst way. And so he enlisted in the Air Force while he was still a senior in high
school. And then upon graduation left for basic training and by then by we were
convinced we were in love with one another and on top of that I wanted desperately
to get out of my house. So he left and when to Texas for basic training and then he
went to Sheppard Air Force Base, also in Texas for technical training school to
become a load master on a C-130 aircraft or a load master on an air craft. You find
out what airframe you are going to operate later but you went to school to become a
load master. And that was so ironic because of all the things that he was bad at, that
was the thing he was worst at. And being a load master requires a lot of weights and
balances, physics and all those sort of things and how he ever wound up being a load
master, I don't think he would know and I certainly wouldn't know. And I actually
thought when he left to go to the Air Force that that would give us some space and
time that our relationship would cool off and we would not see one another anymore.

He had been involved in underage drinking from the time he was 16 and I knew that
although I didn't drink. I was the good girl. I didn't have anything to drink and
never did have anything to drink but when I was under age which is kind of amazing
but true. I think I was always trying to kind of keep him out of trouble and trying to -
kind of like my older brother, trying to steer him in another direction. I don't know
why I thought that made a perfect match but it seemed at the time to be the right
thing. And so when he left to go to basic training, he owned a car and he left the car
with me because he knew that there were times that I had to get out of the house and
get out of the house quickly because of the nature of what was going in my own home. And so he left his car with me at which point I became responsible for the gas and maintenance and upkeep of that car and that's how I wound up having a car. It wasn't really my car; it was his car that he let me keep while he was gone to basic training and tech school because he was not allowed to have his car at basic training and tech school.

And so I really thought that given some distance and time that the relationship would probably end but that changed my senior year in high school because his mom who, as I shared with you, was a drug addicted person had invited me to come over to her house on my 18th birthday knowing that my parents did not always remember my birthday. And so knowing that there might not be any sort of a birthday celebration on my 18th birthday, my boyfriend’s mother invited me to come. Now, he was gone, my boyfriend was gone. He was in Texas and his father, my boyfriend’s father was in Florida at the time because he had some land in Florida that he worked on every year during the winter he would do building and whatever because his dad was in construction. And both of my boyfriend’s sisters were away so I was supposed to go to dinner there that night but she called -- his mother called me earlier in the day and she obviously was impaired then she said are you coming tonight and I said yeah, I'd be there 7 o'clock or whatever time I told her and then the school principal called me down later in the day and said that his mother had called again at the school and that it didn’t sound like she was okay and maybe I should give her a call. And I didn’t give her a call; I decided that she was probably impaired and that I wasn’t going to go but I didn’t call either. Till late that night on my birthday, I received a call from my boyfriend saying he was coming home that night and I was shocked by that. I said, “Did you wash out of school or had something happened”, and he said, “No, my mother killed herself this afternoon”.

So he arrived the next morning the day after my birthday, my 18th birthday and three days later he asked me to marry him and gave me his mother’s engagement ring. And I probably didn’t have the internal control or the insight to say “Maybe this is the best time to ask me and why don’t you hold that and come back to me in six months to see where you are at”. I felt guilty and I felt responsible for her death because I didn’t go to dinner that night and so we became engaged that week. And I was a senior in high school; I had plans to go to college but I also wasn’t going to go to college unless it involved being somewhere other than being in my home.
Because our situation in my home had gotten worse and worse and I wasn’t going to stay living in that house under any circumstance. So, we hadn’t set a date and we weren’t sure quite when we were going to get married but here we were, we were engaged the year I turned 18.

Ms. Turchi: Had you talked about going to college?

Col. Murnane: Had I talked about going to college?

Ms. Turchi: You hadn’t talked about going to college with your fiancé prior to his proposal?

Col. Murnane: He knew that I’d planned to go to college; he knew that I wanted to be a lawyer but we didn’t have that kind of vision like how we were going to make all of this work. We really focused on the chaos in our lives and I think both of us were looking at marrying one another to escape all of that. So meanwhile I continued to do very well in school. If I didn’t have straight As, it was almost straight As. And so when I graduated from high school in May of 1970, I had three full scholarship offers to go to college. I had an offer to go to Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio which I had done campus visit for and which had an extraordinary language program including an immersion house where you would live with kids that only spoke foreign languages. And that was where I really wanted to go. I had a scholarship offer from Trinity College in Washington, DC. Again, it was a fully tuition room and board and books scholarship at both locations. And I also had an offer from what was then called Edgecliff College which was had previously been Our Lady of Cincinnati College. It later got bought out by Xavier University in Cincinnati. The campus itself, the Edgecliff College campus itself doesn’t exist as a college campus for higher education any longer although I under some other school activities on the site but not Xavier University activities any longer. So I had three full scholarships offers when I graduated from high school.

Col. Murnane: And then it just kind of gets crazy from there because I sat down with my dad and I had a discussion about college and my older brother who I had talked about the last time, Jerry, my dad had paid for my brother Jerry to go to a semester of college and my brother Jerry dealt with my mom’s alcoholism and the chaos in the family in a way very different than I did. My brother Jerry got involved in trouble with the law; stole the family car; and other involvements with the law. I mean just all sort of things that he did that were outrageous and so my dad told me that all he was prepared to do for me was to send me to the University of Cincinnati where I would have to stay at home and raise the kids and he would only paid for one semester.
And I told him that that wasn’t what I had in mind and that I really needed him to help me. I had these three full scholarship offers which I showed him. And I just needed him to pay for my bus fare to get me to Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio which I think would have been around $100 with my clothes and whatever but that I wouldn’t ask him for anything else -- that just needed him to pay for my bus fare that I wasn’t going to live at home and I wasn’t going to raise his children any longer for him. And it was an intense and difficult discussion and my dad told me then that he had only put aside enough money to send my brothers to college and that it really not his problem that I would get a college education. And while I would have probably had enough money to pay my own bus fare to Western College for Women had I not been paying all my own expenses like my insurance and my car and my medical bills and school tuition and all the other things that I paid for myself, my senior year, I didn’t have that extra $100 to get myself to Western College for Women. And so at the end of my senior year in high school, I set a date and married the guy that had asked me to marry him in February. And he had gotten stationed at a military installation that was only 100 miles from our home so the last several months before I graduated we were actually -- I was actually commuting at night to take him back to work because he would hitchhike home after work every day to Cincinnati to see me and I’d drive him back to Columbus where he was stationed and then turn around and drive home and then go to work and then go to school. But anything that kept me out of the house was good with me and good with him and my sister by that time was 15 so she could take care of herself and my younger brother was 14 and he really didn’t want my help any more so my daily routine from the time that my boyfriend got stationed at Lockbourne Rickenbacker Air Force Base in Columbus, Ohio was to drive back and forth every night to Columbus, go to school and work until I graduated from high school. So as soon as I graduated from high school, right away, immediately, after I graduated from high school, I packed everything I had and I moved to Columbus and got a job working in retail sales. And stayed there until we got married in August of 1970 -- three months after I graduated from high school. And I didn’t go to college that semester or that year because there just wasn’t enough money given what he made and what I made working in retail sales but I never gave up my hope that I was going to go to college. It was always a plan that I would go back but I just couldn’t afford it that year because we just didn’t have enough money. In fact, we lived in a
place that, I now know because I know a little bit more about Columbus, Ohio, was probably one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city. My current husband’s family -- my husband to whom I have now been married for 25 years - his family is from the Columbus area and they refer to the place where I first lived when I moved to Columbus as the bottom of “The Bottoms” which is an area reference in Columbus, because it was such a poor neighborhood. But all that mattered to me is that I wasn't living at home. That I didn’t have my mother to have to pick up off the floor drunk every night and I was no longer in that environment, which was good for me. But it didn’t take very long before our marriage made in heaven turned out not to be all it was cracked up to be.

Although, I had probably had some indications before I got married that my new husband was a violent person, I didn’t appreciate fully that he would be violent with me. And so it wasn’t very long into the marriage that he started beating me. And beating me regularly and intensely and in a way that could have resulted in my being permanently injured -- seriously injured. And so, about eight months into the marriage, he got orders to move to Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. And I told him that I wanted to go back to college and that it might be good if we had a bit of time apart because whatever it was that was going on between us -- it wasn’t healthy for him or healthy for me. And he was only too happy to have a bit of time apart. And I didn’t know at the time that everything that would go on a trip and he would fly -- he was an air crew member so he would fly all the time and he would be out of the country long periods of time. He would go to Thailand. He would go to Vietnam. He would go to the Philippines and all sort of other places and I had no idea that he was . . . His idea of being faithfully and being married was not the same as my idea of being faithful and married. Let’s just leave it at that. And I found that out later in some very significant and real ways in my life. And I think he was never monogamous, ever. And I guess that it was a good thing that at the end of that nine month period that he went on to Langley and I in turn went back to the different colleges that had offered me a scholarship the year before and said, “Well, I wasn’t smart enough to take you up on your offer last year but would you consider offering me a scholarship again this year. I am a year smarter and I’m still the same student who got those good grades that you offered scholarship to last year.” And the only school that said yeah, we’d be happy to do that was Edgecliff College in Cincinnati, Ohio and they renewed the offer that they gave me the previous year of full tuition,
room and board and books. And so in August of 1971, I began my undergraduate studies at Edgecliff College.

Edgecliff was in Cincinnati so my family was from Cincinnati.

In our first session, Liz you’d asked me about ... to describe how my family may have encouraged me or provided some inspiration or support. And to give you an idea of how little support or inspiration came from my family, at Christmas time that year, I didn’t want to go to Virginia because I was afraid I might get seriously injured or killed if I went back to my husband so I asked my parents if I might come home over the Christmas holidays and stay with them because I was then living in the college dorm. There was an extra charge for you to stay in the dorm over the Christmas holidays. They closed the dorms during the Christmas holidays and if you were going to stay, there was an extra charge to stay there and it wasn’t part of my financial aid package -- my tuition, scholarship, student loan package. I didn’t have a student loan; it was work study package so I asked my parents if I might come home for the Christmas recess and stay with them and my parents told me no, that I wasn’t welcome. And so in order to cover my room and board during the Christmas holidays, I took a job as a cook in the Edgecliff College dining hall because the school was Catholic affiliated and there were nuns who actually lived on the campus during the holidays, so I was a cook for the nuns for the Christmas holidays so that I could stay in the dorm over the Christmas holidays.

Ms. Turchi: And Linda, just to clarify, that conversation that you’d with your father a year earlier. Was he not willing to pay for tuition because of your gender? He had paid for your brother but their view towards you was different?

Col. Murnane: But you know in trying to make sense of all that and in what happened afterwards with my sister and my younger brother, I am convinced that my parents weren’t trying to be mean-spirited about it but they just didn’t have enough money to send all four kids to college. And I think that they made the decision that my sister and I would have to fend for ourselves but the boys really needed a college education. Because they also offered to help my younger brother go to college and did help him to go to college for a bit. But my sister and I were basically left on our own -- and we had to find our own way to get there.

And so, my dad and I never had a discussion that you know -- I’m not sending my daughters. He just didn’t send his daughters, if that makes sense. And it was really up to his daughters how they were going to make their own way in the world but for
his sons he was in a position to be able to help them until they quit. Each of them chose not to continue their college education. And he didn’t then come to either my sister or I and say you know what now that Jerry and Ken aren’t going to college here’s a few thousand dollars so you can go to school. He never did that. In fact, many years later, after my mom had died, my mom died at the age of 59 so she was quite young when I was in my early 30’s, I had occasion to go with my dad and several of his buddies that he played golf with every day at that point and one of the things that my dad was proudest of and he told them with great pride in his voice was that he hadn’t paid a dime for my education so I don’t know that it was ever explicitly stated that it was because I was a woman and he wasn’t going to pay for his daughters to go to college but I will tell you that both my sister and I put ourselves through school.

My sister, Bonnie, had a much tougher time than I did. She actually went on welfare. She was a single parent trying to get a degree and she actually went on welfare to be able to finish her college education, took out student loans. I found a way to do all of my college education with only one student loan and that student loan was actually forgiven when I enlisted in the Air Force under the Student Loan Forgiveness Program that existed at the time and so I wound up after undergraduate school not owing any money on student loan. But my sister had a much tougher time and had to take student loans and had to go on welfare for a period of time but both my sister and I toughed it out and found a way to get our degrees and both of my brothers who had a least a part of their education supported by my parents both left school and went on to do other things. So I think that’s the best way to describe it as fairly as I can. Plenty of that I can tell you that because of the chaos that was going on in my own life at that time, I didn’t frankly know if my classmates were going to college. That wasn’t something that we talked about on a regular basis. We talked about my upcoming wedding because I was getting married three months after graduating from high school with lots of bridesmaids and craziness. I think I knew that some of my friends were going to college but I didn’t know how they were doing it. I didn’t have a best friend who I wanted to go to college with. I did stay in touch by writing to my friends but they had gone sort of their way and I had gone sort of my way. At the end of my freshman year at Edgecliff College which happened to be affiliated with the Catholic Church, I felt like I had to try to make my marriage to my husband work. We had not gotten divorced. We had been apart for a year and so I thought
maybe the fact that we had now been married two years and maybe we were a little older and little more mature meant that we could work things out and so I left Edgecliff that year and I went to Virginia to join him to try to make the marriage work. I got a job again working in retail. I applied to a community college that was in Virginia and got a financial aid package from them as well and I worked full time and went to school full time at Thomas Nelson Community College. Working in retail my sophomore year, graduating with an associate in arts degree not that year but the following year with a very high -- I was on the Dean’s list every semester, very good grades. And then I applied to attend the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia which had an extraordinary language program. It was a school known to funnel kids into the State Department. At that time it was on the fringe of being an Ivy League school and I was accepted there and got a scholarship package there and I was going to go to the College of William and Mary and did go to the College of William and Mary for a semester before transferring to the branch campus of the College of William and Mary then known as Christopher Newport College of the College of William and Mary. Christopher Newport is now a separate institution but at the time that I went to the branch campus it was part of the William and Mary College system.

In the meantime, the reconciliation effort with my husband did not go well. At some point, I walked in on him with another woman in our home -- happened to be the wife of his best friend and I decided that I couldn’t live there anymore and so I separated from him.

In the meantime, I had worked my way into a position as the Secretary to the Dean of Veterans’ Benefits at Thomas Nelson Community College. A guy named Bob Little, Robert Little was the Dean of Veterans’ Benefits because there were so many guys from the Vietnam era who were drawing vocational rehabilitation who were drug addicted, who were ill one way or another and they basically put a VA education benefit office right on the campus to be able to help these vets deals with the issues and challenges with the Veterans’ Administration and I had gotten a job as a secretary there and it was really funny because the position that they advertised for said must take a 100 words per minute shorthand, must type 60 words per minute. I didn’t take any shorthand and I don’t know how many words per minutes I typed but the only typing course I’d ever taken in my whole life was a night program I had taken when I was 10 years old at the public library so I was pretty sure I didn’t do 60
words a minute. But I really wanted this job and so they said okay well now we’re going to give you dictation test. And I was really good at memorizing things really fast. And so I scribbled some stuff on a paper and when they said okay read that back to me I had memorized what he had said and I recited it back to him but I didn’t take a single word of shorthand. And if they had had a shorthand person take a look at what I had written on that paper they would have said “right”. But I got the job and it worked out very well for me. And in fact at some point towards the end of my time before I enlisted in the Air Force, Robert Little who was a major in the army reserve, had been recalled by the Reserves to go the Army Command and Staff College and rather than hire a replacement for him, they decided that they would appoint me as the acting Dean of Veterans’ Benefits because I knew so much about how to process and who to contact and how the VA system worked. And it was while I was in that job going to school full time at night and working full time in the day or working full time at night and going to school full-time in the day I decided you know what I need to get out of the marriage. I need to get back into college full-time and I need to get me some of this GI bill stuff. I had also looked into the fact that the Air Force had a program called the Funded Legal Education Program and I knew that if I enlisted in the Air Force that they would assist me with tuition through something called the Bootstrap Education Program and that eventually I could get them to not only paid for the rest of my undergraduate degree for but also my law school.

On top of that I had this idea that if I enlisted in the Air Force and if they stationed me far, far away from where my then husband was stationed that I might live long enough to actually graduate and so I enlisted in the United States Air Force before completing my bachelor degree in September of 1974 as part of kind of an escape strategy.

I’m going to put it on pause, okay, Liz.

-------------------End of Second Interview-----------------------

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Ms. Turchi: During this interview Col. Murnane is at her home in Xenia, Ohio and I am in The Hague in The Netherlands, and this interview is being recorded with the use of an internet calling program. So Linda at the end of our last interview, you were telling me about your early to mid-college years, and you were explaining that you were living on campus in a dorm away from your husband. You were taking on the role of acting Dean of Veteran’s Affairs Office at the University and you left off by telling us that you were influenced by your work in this office to enlist in the Air Force. I thought we could begin the call today discussing your experience at the office and how you came to the decision to enlist in the Air Force.

Col. Murnane: Okay. Well, a couple different things that happened. Let me backup for a second if I could. So my freshman year in college when I was at Our Lady of Cincinnati which later, when I was there it was called Edgecliff and later became part of Xavier University and now it doesn’t exist anymore. That’s when I was living in the dorm and away from home and on my own. But at the end of my freshman year, I decided that I had to try to make my marriage work being that I was Catholic so I moved to Virginia which is where my husband was and so when I was working as a secretary to the Dean of Veteran’s Affairs and later as the acting Dean, I was actually physically in Newport News, Virginia. I was living in Hampton, Virginia and going to school at Thomas Nelson Community College, but my husband was away a lot because he was a load master in the Air Force and he flew for a living, that’s what he did, so he was away a lot, but when he was home it was a terribly difficult and violent place to be. He went home for the baptism of his sister’s child and while he was home for the baptism, I moved out, but by then I had already enlisted in the Air Force, but I’ll come back to that in a little bit. So when I went, when I was going to
Thomas Nelson Community College at first I was working full time during the day as the secretary to the Dean, going to school full time as well at Thomas Nelson Community College which was a two-year degree program and I could afford the classes without getting into debt. That was important to me not to incur a lot of student loan debt because I wasn’t quite sure where I was going to wind up so, then when the Dean of Veteran’s Affairs left, his name was Major Little, Robert Little, he went, he was a reservist, an Army reservist and he was selected to attend the Army Command and Staff College, it was not a year, it was a nine-month assignment, and that’s why they decided not to hire new Dean of Veteran’s Affairs and so they just asked me to fill in as the Dean of Veteran’s Affairs in his absence is what I did when I was going to school full time finishing up my associate in arts degree, in liberal arts. But I learned a lot about how much money one could receive to be attending school full time as either a veteran or disabled vet. I learned how the process worked, I learned how they paid for school, and they paid a living allowance every month and since I was working full time and going to school full time that sounded like a pretty good deal to me. During that window, I also, after I finished my associate in arts degree in 1974 which was the two-year degree program, I then got selected, successfully applied and was accepted to the College of William and Mary which was 26 miles from where I lived in Hampton-Newport News area, and, William and Mary had a very good reputation as a language school, as a State Department school. Because of my experience which I talked about during the last interview I really thought that was the direction I really wanted to head, so I was thrilled when I got selected to the College of William and Mary and it didn’t concern me at all that I would have a little bit of a commute to go to school every day and I continued to work full time at night. I had to quit my job working at Thomas Nelson Community College and I had to take a job working nights. So I was able to work part-time with Thomas Nelson Community College at night doing veteran’s benefits processing. Mr.
Little had come back by then, Major Little, and so he was there during the
day and I would catch up the paperwork at night. So I had to quit my full-
time day job but go to work just at night. Then eventually that wasn’t
working out, I worked in retail working at a variety of places so I could
continue to pay the tuition bill, because again I wanted to get out with a
minimum of college debt. So I only went to the main campus at William
and Mary in Williamsburg for one semester. I made some fundamental
mistakes including scheduling myself for an 8 a.m. class with a 26-mile
commute. That was a bad plan on my part. So the William and Mary
experience lasted a semester. Then I came back to Hampton-Newport
News then one more semester at Thomas Nelson where I finished up some
science courses I had to finish and then applied and was selected to the
branch campus of William and Mary which was much closer to my home
and didn’t involve the commute and it was then known as the Christopher
Newport College of the College of William and Mary. It’s now its own
independent university. It’s called Christopher Newport University now.
But when I graduated it was the branch campus of the College of William
and Mary so my degree says College of William and Mary, my four-year
degree does. And I spent one more year at Christopher Newport and
graduated from Christopher Newport. But it was in that window between
the time that I left the William and Mary main campus and the time that I
went to Christopher Newport I decided that I had to join the Air Force. I
had run out of money. I had an untenable situation at my home and I had
to get out. I wasn’t … given my what I’ve already told you about my
family, I couldn’t ask my family for help. That wasn’t really an option.
Liz, did I lose you?

Ms. Turchi:  Yes, I’m back on the line. You were departing to enlist because you were
facing a very untenable situation at home and then the connection cut off.

Col. Murnane:  Okay. So I decided I had to enlist in the Air Force, because I didn’t have
the money, I didn’t want to quit school, I couldn’t live where I was anymore. I knew I couldn’t live there anymore when I came home and found my husband in bed with another woman in our home. I didn’t think that was going to work out very well for me. And especially when I was already in an abusive relationship I don’t know why I would have put up with that. So I made a decision I had to get out. So I enlisted in the Air Force. When I enlisted in the Air Force, this was 1974 there was a program called the Delayed Enlistment Program and what you did you signed up, you got credit while you waiting to get your actual basic training date and I knew that I wanted to get my degree, I wanted to go to law school, I saw this as a way to pay for my law school. I saw it as a way to get out and stay out of the house to separate from my husband, to be independent, and to be able to do this on all my own because it just wasn’t possible for me to ask my family for help and so I enlisted in the Delayed Enlistment Program in September of 1974 and that was an interesting time because when I went to the recruiter women were required to take a front view and a profile view photo to submit with their application. Men weren’t required to do that. I never did quite figure out what that was all about. Additionally women in 1974 had to sign a statement and I had to sign a statement that I had no children and I understood that if I got pregnant I would discharged and that if I had children that I had to give them up for adoption before I could come on active duty that it wasn’t possible for a woman to be on active duty and have children. Of course, I had no children at the time and I was joining the Air Force to get away from a bad marriage so that wasn’t part of the thought process of why I decided to enlist. It was 1974 and it was end the Vietnam War.

Ms. Turchi: Did you know of any other women that were enlisting,

Col. Murnane: No I didn’t. I didn’t know any women in the military. When I told my dad, I called my dad to tell him I was going to enlist in the Air Force and
my dad had this vision of women in the Armed Forces that related to Hot Lips Houlihan on M*A*S*H. All women were only in to link up with a good man and whatever and I don’t know. Although my dad was an Air Force vet, Army-Air Corps and Air Force veteran, he’d gotten out when I was 18 months old. He didn’t want his daughter in the Air Force. He was not amused when I enlisted. But in any event I entered the Delayed Enlistment Program in September 1974 which meant I had to take a semester out of school but I had to get away from the situation where I was at with my marriage and I was out of money and couldn’t continue to go to school and work full time and make the tuition payment and do all the things I needed to do so I enlisted. I was supposed to have a spring basic training date. You go away for basic training for six weeks and then you go to a tech school, a technical training school because enlisted forces for the most part, they are not required to have a degree but they’re sent to a technical field and learn how to do something. Because I wanted to go to law school and I needed to get my undergraduate degree and I needed to do a lot of things within six years, I had specifically asked my recruiter to help me select a field that would not require me to go to technical school because I didn’t have time for that in the agenda I had set for myself as part of the Air Force path. I didn’t intend when I enlisted to stay for a long career and that changes along the way for a different reasons and I’ll talk about those. But so when I enlisted I had what I had what’s known as a guaranteed job and my guaranteed job was to work in public affairs, which is basically journalism, community relations outreach type work. I had studied journalism when I was in college so and I was fairly good in languages and good in grammar and in structure and all of those things. So I thought this was a place I could go without too much technical training and still be successful and it sounded very interesting. I was supposed to go to basic training in the spring but I got a phone call from my recruiter saying we have an opening, someone’s cancelled, would you be available to go to basic training in November and that was kind of quick but I needed
to get out of the house, so I said of course. So I went to basic training over Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years of 1974-1975. That's a tough time to be in basic training because in part basic training is a very unusual environment. I was in a squadron with two flights of about 13 women each. I didn't know any of the women in the flights when I got there. I became close friends with several of the women. Basic training is a very regimented, very disciplined, well-constructed method of teaching you what you need to know to be a member of the Armed Forces, teaching you teamwork, teaching you discipline, teaching how to work as a group. They start by breaking you down. You're completely alone. You don't have any contact with your family, friends or others when you first arrive. I don't know how they do it now because everybody has a cell phone, but back when I went in in 74 there were payphone banks that you had to use and you only got to use those if you earned privileges. So there was no such thing as just calling home and getting over a bit of homesickness or whatever. In fact from the moment you got off the bus, when your bus arrived, I don't know if anyone else's bus arrived during the day, but my bus arrived late at night. So you were completely disoriented, you didn't know where you were, it was dark and the first thing that happened was you came off the bus. You flew into San Antonio, and you got on a bus and they took you out where the basic training was located at Lackland Air Force Base and the military training instructor started barking things at you, and yelling at you, but being yelled at was something I was accustomed to so I felt I had been well prepared for basic training through all the other things I had done in my life so being yelled at was no problem for me and I knew how to react to that. You were told to read your social security number off your social security card but if you just memorized it and didn't read it, then you got yelled at and embarrassed and screamed at. I expect they've probably revised their technique because I suspect that some of the techniques that they used in 1974 don't over quite so well with our better informed and better educated high school graduates of today but
it worked pretty well for us. To give you an idea how regimented basic
training is you had to fold your clothes in a certain way, you had to line
them up in your drawer a certain direction, you had to space your hangers
apart a certain spacing. The only clothes you were allowed to have in your
locker at the end of your bunk bed were military uniforms. They had to be
on hangers, facing a certain direction, spaced apart so many inches apart.
You had to shine your shoes and you had to shine your shoes at least once
a day and you had to do it not just with shoe polish and a brush. You had
to do it with cotton balls. That’s all you were allowed to have was just
cotton balls, water, and your shoe polish. Your shoes had to be in a line,
in a certain way under your cot, under your bunk that you had. Your bunk
had to be made with hospital corners. You had to climb up under the bed
and you had to pull the sheets tight so that a quarter would bounce off the
blanket and all that. People have heard that that’s true and that’s true or at
least that was true when I was there. You’d get up every morning very
early. I think wake-up time was either 5:30 or 6:00. You would have
basically two minutes to shower, get dressed and fall out for breakfast, then
you had physical training, then you had classes, some kind of cleaning
detail. [The phone disconnected again]. Hey Liz it’s just not our day for
the system.

Ms. Turchi:     Hey, no I wonder if the video is slowing our connection.

Col. Murnane:   I’m going to turn the video off. See if that works.

Ms. Turchi:     I know leading up to the call dropping I was definitely hearing you on a
                long delay.

Col. Murnane:   Okay but I’ve got it on the recorder.

Ms. Turchi:     I was going to ask you. I was curious how you felt a few days into your
basic training, did you feel like you made a mistake or did you feel like this is where you wanted to be?

Col. Murnane: It was really difficult, it was a difficult situation. I was pretty unhappy at basic training with all that screaming and carrying on, but I came from a culture that if you make your own bed, then you have to lie in it. My parents were not going to bail me out. They told me not to get married the first time. They told me not to join the Air Force so I think, I don’t know if I mentioned to you in an earlier interview, the nature of the relationship with my dad was what I call an “oh yeah” relationship. He would tell me I can’t do something and I would say, “oh yeah”. And so and I really had no relationship with my mom because she was an alcoholic. Although I loved her very much and I think in her own way she loved us. She just wasn’t home if you get what I mean. You’d have a conversation with her and she just wasn’t home. It was what it was. So since my dad would have said I told you so if I had called and said I can’t make it, I was not going to fail. There you have it. I was just not going to fail. And I don’t think my dad was clever enough to have made that part of the motivation for the way he interacted with me. I don’t think that was why we had that kind of relationship. I think he just wasn’t capable of caring more deeply than he did for all of us. That’s my personal view. But it worked for me. And it’s kind of a theme that I adopted throughout my adult life which is taking a negative and turning it into a positive. If somebody doesn’t like you that’s fine, turn it into a positive. Find a way to make that work for you as a motivator. Be better than they could possibly imagine that you could be because that will establish that their opinion is less valid than your opinion. And I understand that’s kind of some upside down thinking but it worked for me. And I think it works for people who don’t have somebody to say you’re doing a great job even if you are doing a great job.

So after you get up in the morning, you have maybe 5 minutes to shower and getting panty hose on after a 5 minute shower was really tough because
the basic training uniform for most of the days was a wrap-around blue skirt with panty hose, low flat shoes, black shoes, blouse with a Peter Pan collar which I thought was kind of funny because we’d be out there sweeping the drill pad, doing whatever we had to do, marching in a wrap-around skirt. I thought this is a kind of combat outfit, a good strong wind here and your skirt flies up, but it was the basic training uniform at the time, and it was the fatigue uniform for women. You had a blue pant uniform that you could wear if you had to scrub floors, you had to wear it with your Peter Pan blouse with the rollup sleeve. At the time I enlisted the Air Force didn’t have a pantsuit for women. You had to wear a skirt when you were in service dress uniform. Later they came out with a polyester pantsuit with a blazer and shirt with the Peter Pan collar. As the nation socialized to women in the workplace, so did the Air Force and so did the uniforms and they changed over time.

I made very good friends in basic training and I figured out very early on that what I wanted to be while I was in basic training because you had these jobs that you did as part of these flight duties. I wanted to be the chapel guide because the chapel guide got to go to two meetings a week plus church services on Sunday and during those meetings that you went to at the chapel nobody yelled at you and being somewhere where no-one yelled at you was a very valuable commodity. In fact it was probably the most nurturing and positive reinforcing place that I found while I was at basic training. So I wasn’t the, I don’t remember what they called it, commander of the flight, the flight commander, my friend Jessie May was and I wasn’t like, I didn’t have a tremendously important flight position but I found a safe haven which I guess had become sort of a pattern for me is that I always found a safe haven to avoid things that were harmful to me. I was a chapel guide and I got to go a couple of times a week to the chapel where we could laugh and be like real people and not scream at one another and that was a positive thing for me. I got, after I had, you get all your shots while you’re at basic training so I got all kinds of shots. And
among the shots I got was the flu shot and I don’t, I can’t take the flu shot, I have a medical reaction to the flu shot so I eventually developed pneumonia while I was in basic training. I was very sick for several weeks but again because it was over Christmas, Thanksgiving, and New Year’s I wasn’t going to give my father the satisfaction that I somehow failed or had not succeeded in basic training. I marched and ran and did all the things you had to do with pneumonia until the morning of the last day. The graduation day, they came and took me by ambulance to the hospital because I was really, really sick. And I wound up not able to attend the basic training graduation because I was in the hospital at Lackland. It took a few extra days for me to be reassigned. One of the big and exciting days while you’re in basic training is you find out where you’re going to be assigned and I found out because I had put on my enlistment paperwork I was married and my husband was stationed at the Air Force base in Virginia they worked it out that I was going back to Langley Air Force base in Virginia and that was. I did go back. I’m sorry go ahead.

Ms. Turchi: No go ahead.

Col. Murnane: And that was probably okay overall because it enabled me to go back to Christopher Newport College to finish my degree. And if I had gone somewhere else, maybe some of those credits might not have transferred. But I knew from the moment I found out I was going back to Langley and I was going to be back where he was, I was going to have to find a way to get out and eventually I did. So when I came back from basic training in January of 1975, one of the early things I did was my best friend from basic training, Jessie May, her friend Imogene Ching, she was also a good friend of mine, we called her Jingles Ching and I made a decision that we were going to go on a trip to Hawaii because Jingles’ family lived in Hawaii and because we were now eligible to take military flights, we thought we could all afford to get to Hawaii. We spent a good time away
and when I got back to Virginia, my husband was still flying and he would be away, I would be away, whatever. And so now I was in the Air Force, I was learning a new job. From January of 75 until April of 75, I can't remember, it may have been sometime in that window that I went to Hawaii with Jingles and with Jessie. And then in April of 75, I volunteered to deploy to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. It was the end of the Vietnam War and the US was evacuating those people from Vietnam who had aided the US. They were relocating to one of several different camps that they had set up and they had finding sponsor families to help move the families into the US because it was the belief that if these families stayed in Vietnam, they would be killed because they had helped the United States. So I volunteered to go and live in the camp. Anything to be away from home, and I was supposed to actually go for a week, but I wound up staying much longer than that and I was doing basically journalism work from the camp. The commander of what was then the Tactical Air Command had been upset that all of the journalists that they had at Eglin Air Force Base were working on stories about Vietnamese couples and families that were finding each other in the various camps and were reuniting, getting married, and some of the human interest stories. The commander of the Tactical Air Command, which is the command I was assigned to at Langley, really wanted stories about his front line airmen who were making safe the camp environment because we, no kidding, lived in a tent and ate in a dining hall that was out in a field and we showered in a makeshift shower stall and it was really primitive camping conditions. It wasn’t like the Girl Scouts I can tell you that. But it was Florida and it was nice and sunny all the time but there were bugs and snakes and things. That was kind of different. [The phone disconnected again] It's just one of those days.

Ms. Turchi: Sorry about that.
Col. Murnane: We didn't have an internet back then though. When I was deployed, in fact we didn't have an electric typewriter. You were typing on one of those old fashioned typewriters. You didn't have an electric typewriter, I was really like a field journalist. It was really fun. It was really interesting. And what I would do I would write the stories.

Ms. Turchi: I was going to say we have a bit of delay on our connection but do you still have some of your articles.

Col. Murnane: I do. There are in some of these boxes that are surrounding me. We've been trying to get out of boxes. Yeah I have the articles and I have the photos that I took. It was so funny because I didn't go to technical training. I didn't know how to work a 35 millimeter camera. They had given me a 35 millimeter camera to take to the field with me. I mean I had only been in the Air Force other than basic training three months. So I was still really, really new. But I ran into a guy, a master sergeant. He was a great guy, a good friend for a lot of years. And he showed me how to work the F stops and how to make the camera work and whatever. A couple of my stories got picked up on the national wire services, UPI and AP, and a couple of my photos got picked up. So there I was I had been in the Air Force from November until May whatever, and came back and had been there a couple of months down in the field. And had done what the General had wanted and nobody else had been able to get it done. Since we didn't have fax and we didn't have internet, what I would do I would write the story and I would send the roll of film back on a plane that flew back and forth between Langley and Eglin every day or every other day and my stories would then get processed out and published out of the Langley office and they would develop the film back at the main base and a couple of my pictures were quite dramatic and quite good considering I didn't know what I was doing. So when I came back from Eglin, I knew this was the time to ask. I went in to my boss who was then a Colonel, E.K. Loving, we
called him the loving colonel. I told him “I have kind of a plan here and my plan involves having to get my undergraduate degree finished up and then I want to apply to go to law school and I want to be a JAG”, and I said, “So, I really need you to approve my request to go on this program called bootstrap which allows me to go back to school full-time for nine months.” Well the challenge for a supervisor in the Air Force to let someone go bootstrap is that you don’t get a replacement for the person you let go to college for nine months but notwithstanding that, E.K. Loving saw something in me that he said, I’m going to do this, and he approved my bootstrap application. So by August of 1975 I was back in school fulltime at the Christopher Newport campus of the College of William and Mary. And by the way, I’m still in touch with E.K. Loving today. We have stayed in touch all these many years and I have told him that on those days sometimes when it seemed dark and not possible, that I didn’t want to let him down and I wanted to pay him back for his investment in me. And he agrees that I’ve done that. So he lives in Washington state and when I happened to be up in Seattle for a meeting of the National Association of Women Judges a couple of years ago, he actually drove an hour from where he lived in Washington state to come meet me and we had dinner together which was the first time I had seen him in since 1975 when he left. E.K. Loving was an interesting guy because he had been what they called a forward air controller which means that he was on the ground calling in air support for combat operations in Vietnam and when he came back, he went into the public affairs field and he was one of the funniest people I knew. He had a great sense of humor. He made it a great it a great place to work. He cared about the people who worked for him. And you know obviously still does. Somebody else, I’m still in touch with from those very early days is a woman whose name, who was my military training instructor, her name is Mary Jane Ellis, and she’s now a retired chief master sergeant and I think I was her first flight as a military training instructor. And Mary Jane and I stayed in touch all of the years. And when I later got my
commission in 76, she came over and attended my graduation ceremony and pinned on one of my lieutenant bars and gave me my first salute and there’s a tradition in the military that you give a silver dollar to the first person who salutes you in your new Second Lieutenant grade so she got my silver dollar. But she and I still exchange holiday greetings and periodically are in touch with one another. She is the person who sponsored me in the Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) Memorial. She was the one who registered me in WIMSA at Arlington National Cemetery. It’s the women’s memorial.

So in any event. I went back to school in August or September full time. I had organized my plan on how I was going to get away from my husband. As I started to talk about earlier, my then husband went off to go to his sister’s baby’s baptism in Ohio and while he was away, I moved out of the house to the airmen dormitory at Langley Air Force Base and because I had to pick him up at the airport because I had dropped him off, I picked him up, I drove him up to the front door or our house, and when he got out of the car, I said, “I don’t live here anymore”, and I drove off. That was the last time I was in the house. We didn’t get divorced right away, and in fact I stayed in school and graduated. Eventually he filed for divorce while I was in Officer Training School in 1976 so it wasn’t very long after I came back from Eglin, I was out of the house, back in school and was charting a new course so, that’s not really why I wound up staying in the Air Force. That will come a bit later when I get to law school.

Ms. Turchi: You were saying before.

Col. Murnane: Go ahead Liz.

Ms. Turchi: So Linda you were saying before our internet connection was lost, you had taken a trip to Hawaii and I just didn’t hear about that trip. Was it of any significance or should we move.
Col. Murnane: No, it was just that it was, it was really just doing something for myself the first time. I went from a difficult family situation to a difficult marriage and this was like an escape, a wonderful escape with two female friends that I was very close with. We shared a common bond having been through six weeks of basic training which some refer to as hell. But it’s really not. It’s six tough weeks but it reshapes your way of thinking and your way of operating. So we shared a common bond. Jessie May was a linguist, a Russian linguist and she was in technical training at Monterey in California which is one of the nicest facilities the Air Force has or had. But it was a very stressful environment and basically she was working to perfect her Russian language skills so she could be basically an intercept operator and Jingles was one of the very first women who they decided had to be an aircraft mechanic. I think that when they opened up, the all-volunteer force really changed the way the military did business. And I really believe, and you’re never going to convince me that it’s other than the truth, that, as with any other program that the military is forced to undertake, they try to find ways to be able to say we told you it wouldn’t work, see it failed. And one of the things they did and they had to increase their female quotas is they decided they were going to make a lot of women aircraft mechanics because quite frankly, not a lot of women had studied anything related to mechanics at that time. And you had to be able to carry a 50 pound tool box and not a lot of women at that time before Title IX and given the way women were treated in high school and early college years, not a lot of women were prepared to carry around a 50 pound tool box. And if you could see Imogene Ching, Jingles Ching, she was maybe 5’2”, 5’3” and if she was soaking wet, she was 120 pounds. But she was an aircraft mechanic. And of the three of us, I was the largest of the three, and there was no way I could carry a 50 pound tool box and Lord knows, you wouldn’t want to fly on anything I had fixed because I was not mechanically inclined. So it was kind of funny, you know, Imogene was
the smallest of the three of us, she was the aircraft mechanic, Jessie was the Russian linguist, and I was the public affairs specialist. That was really funny. But we bonded, we stayed with Jingles’ family on the island of Oahu, they live in Waipahu, met her family, had a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful week there, enjoyed myself tremendously and I think it gave me the courage to take the next step to say, “You know I don’t need this kind of companionship in my life to be complete in terms of my marriage because there are other avenues. There’s a fulfillment in life that I can have that doesn’t involve having to be someone’s wife.” And that was kind of a difficult for me to adopt, primarily because I was Catholic, had been raised Catholic, and leaving what I knew for something else, was really going to be difficult, especially

Col. Murnane: This is going like a multi-chapter segment.

Ms. Turchi: We’re not having much luck with our connection.

Col. Murnane: No we aren’t. In any event, I was leaving all the traditional values. I was leaving, if you can, it’s hard for women today, young women today to understand that the way you were brought up was that you were supposed to go to high school, find a husband, get married, be part of your church, family, cook, clean house, kind of like the Donna Reed, Father Knows Best kind of environment. So I was leaving all of that. I was doing something incredibly rogue, including being separated from my husband. I knew that I wasn’t going back again because I wasn’t going to put myself in that environment again and there were other reasons as well, I just wasn’t going back there and so it was liberating and it gave me the courage to move forward just to have these female friends that I had been through a lot with. So I went on to finish my degree. I graduated in May from the Christopher Newport College of the College of William and Mary. While I was at in that program, I applied for Officer Training School and that was when I
found out that the Air Force wasn’t actually accepting soft core degree programs for commissioning at the time because since it was the end of the Vietnam War and they were in a draw down, they had a number of officers that they had to reassign to non-combat related fields and because of that, they were only accepting people in technical fields like computers and engineering and things of that nature. But luck being as important many times as being smart, the Air Force had just instituted a 12 percent quota for women in the officer ranks and so although my degree was a soft core degree and I had gotten a degree in political science from the College of William and Mary, Christopher Newport branch campus, they didn’t have a lot of women applying who had math, science and tech degrees because well, there frankly weren’t a lot of women in math, science and tech degree programs at that time because they hadn’t been set up to pursue that particular field of work and so as a result, I got in on the 12 percent quota. There were 100 men and 12 women in my Officer Training School class representing exactly 12 percent. And I had very good grades and had two years of really creditable military service but that wouldn’t have been enough because I didn’t have a hard core degree.

Ms. Turchi: Linda, could I ask what the difference, you’re saying hard core and soft core degree. I’m not sure what that means.

Col. Murnane: Soft core degrees are things like majors in business, business administration, political science, English, education and what the Air Force called hard core degrees were things like math, science, engineering, and at the time, they were only taking hard core degree graduates.

Ms. Turchi: Okay.

Col. Murnane: And pre-law would have been a soft core degree, but I didn’t have a pre-law degree, I had a political science degree. So the question then, I got
selected then to go to officer training school, and then the question then became what was I going to do for the Air Force with my soft core degree because, the way the recruitment works in the Air Force you have to have a degree in a field that they need you to work in and they didn’t need any political scientists, they didn’t need any urban planners, or people who were going to do the kind of thing that I had been trained to do in my undergraduate degree, so they informed me that I was going to become a supply officer. And I didn’t have any particularly strong supply skills but if that was the way I was going to get a commission, that’s the way I was going to get a commission. Because I had worked for the VA and because I had two years on active duty and knew a little bit about how the Air Force works by now, I found out they had a program called the Extension Course Institute or ECI. And through the Extension Course Institute, you could study by correspondence to expand your skills within the Air Force you could be both a supply officer for example and maybe a police officer, not a pilot probably, but probably a maintenance officer but you could do a lot of work through the Extension Course Institute and I found out they had a program for public affairs which I really liked. I really felt I was good at public affairs, journalism, community relations, outreach. I was very positive about the Air Force and felt I could communicate well about the importance of the Air Force and its role and mission. So when I left for office training school in June of 1976, I enrolled in the ECI course for public affairs. When you go to officer training school, it’s a lot like basic training. Again you are in a very regimented environment, you have to fold your clothes a certain way, you have to space your hangers a certain distance, very disciplined, very regimented. I was the only woman in my flight, or I don’t remember, maybe 12 or 14 guys in my flight. I wasn’t very good at polishing shoes, so I made a deal with some of the guys that I would iron their shirts if they would polish my shoes. That’s what teamwork’s all about. You there, Liz?
Ms. Turchi:  Yes, I'm here.

Col. Murnane:  So that's what teamwork is all about is you do what you're good at and they do what they're good at. So I exchanged polishing my shoes for ironing their shirts and I was in the gold squadron. Everybody had a color. I was in the super-jock squadron which was really unfortunate for me because I was not a super-jock. I had not been in track. I went to an all-girls high school. We did not have track. I had not been in inter-mural sports if we had inter-mural sports, I don't remember that. I was president of my student council so you would think I would know that we had inter-mural sports other than maybe volleyball and basketball. We certainly didn't have track. So kind of the attitude that the guys on my flight had were that I would always participate in the least minimal possible way so I wouldn't hold them back. There was a big premium on being the super-jock flight and being first in running, and first in flickerball, and being first in softball, or run pitch or whatever they used to call it. And I wasn't good at any of them. But they found ways to put me in the lineup because they had to. On the other hand, I was very good academically at officer training school so I brought their grades up. So I learned quite a lot about teamwork and where everybody fits in life and how one does well. Also while I was in officer training school I met the man that I later married who is the father of my children, Ray Vayon. I first remember meeting Ray when I was sweeping the drill pad because they had told us that in officer training school because they were going to treat us like ladies and gentlemen, they were going to treat us like professionals because all of us had degrees and I remember saying to this person that I later married that I didn't consider sweeping rocks off the drill pad being treated like a lady. I think that's the first thing I said to him. I wasn't amused by this. Sweeping rocks off a black top drill pad wasn't the reason I had worked so hard to get my degree but if it was what it took to get me to law school, then I was okay with that I guess. It was while I was at officer training
school that my divorce was final and I became single again so I was free to
date and make whatever other mistakes I needed to make in my life. And I
was bound and determined to do that. I will say that when I graduated
from officer training school my mom and dad came down to Texas and my
dad I think was legitimately proud that his daughter had become a second
lieutenant and he actually brought down one of his gold bars from when he
was a second lieutenant and he actually pinned that on my uniform when I
got commissioned. So that was a special moment. And of course, Chief
Master Sergeant Ellis came and she pinned on a bar. She wasn’t a Chief
then, she was a Master Sergeant, but she eventually rose to the highest
enlisted grade, Chief, and she pinned on the other bar. So graduation from
officer training school was a special moment. When you’re in officer
training school, they have a lights out time and I mentioned that I had
enrolled in an ECI course because I didn’t think I was well-suited to be a
supply officer and so. Are you still there Liz? And so I, after lights out
with a flashlight, I did the extension courses program for public affairs
officer. And I was able to complete the public affairs course before I
graduated from officer training school.

Ms. Turchi: Linda.

Col. Murnane: It’s chapter 5 right.

Ms. Turchi: Sorry about this.

Col. Murnane: It’s not your fault. It’s probably the miserable weather here. So I was
finishing up the idea or the ECI course that I took because they had a lights
out period when that you had to have your lights off at a certain time. And
what I would do because your days are so full at officer training school,
there just was no time to study or do other things. So at night, by flashlight
under my pillow, I was doing this ECI course and I finished it in the nine
weeks you’re in officer training school and I was able to get a second Air
Force specialty code as a public affairs officer so when I got my
commission I was qualified as both a public affairs officer and a supply
officer.
So I left officer training school and I flew up to, they sent me to Colorado
where they had their Supply Officer School and they had instituted self-
paced learning as a supply officer so I finished the course. Self-paced
learning was really a good learning tool for me because I figured out pretty
quickly the success tools for self-paced learning so I finished the course in
minimal time as an honor graduate although, as I said when I got to my
first assignment out of technical school, I probably couldn’t tell you
anything about how to issue a pencil let alone a jacket or an inventory or
whatever, because you needed the practical skill. You needed to know
how to do it. And that’s what you do next. You go to a base and you learn
how to do it. But I was honor graduate out of supply officer school, I had
an entry level special code in public affairs so I left Colorado after 3 1/2, 4
weeks and went to my first duty station which was Nellis Air Force Base in
Las Vegas, Nevada. And when I got there, like the least senior person in
supply had like 20 years of experience. He had been a prior enlisted supply
NCO who had gotten a civil service job. It was really a crazy environment
to be in that I was now the Second Lieutenant and supposedly in charge of
something. It made it very clear what a male-dominated profession I was
in and it was tough. It was a very tough environment for me. I had
decided to marry Mr. Veillon who I had met when I was in officer training
school and because the Air Force had a program in place that you could
apply to join your husband at his assignment location or your wife at her
assignment location, I was only at Nellis two or three months before I was
reassigned to Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi because that’s
where Mr. Veillon was stationed. He was a computer programming
instructor at Keesler Tech Training Center. And when I got to Keesler,
they had an excess in supply officers and they were critically short in
public affairs officers so I went over and I talked to the public affairs officer, Major Dick Hoover and he and my boss in supply, Colonel Bob Gibson said that it would work out well for each of them if I went back to public affairs. So that began a really fabulous experience where I worked in public affairs although my specialty code was still supply, I was back in the Air Force field that I knew. I was doing community relations, I was planning huge events like air shows and the “Strolling Strings” concerts, Air Force Band visits, educator tours for high school and college educators. And I went back to school to work on my masters degree while I waited for an opportunity to apply for the funded legal education program because that’s where I wanted to go. I wanted to be a lawyer and I just was trying to put in enough time to apply for the funded legal education program. So I went for a semester at the University of Southern Mississippi branch campus and studied in the masters in public administration program. I did only one semester there because I had applied the very first time I was eligible the Air Force’s funded legal education program which was a program where they would send you back to law school full time for up to three years and you would be guaranteed to be brought into the JAG Corps upon successful completion and you went to a law school that you could get accepted to, wherever you could get accepted to and it had to be ABA accredited. And I applied the first time while I was working in public affairs and I was not selected but I was going to the University of Southern Mississippi masters program at night. And it was about that time that Major General John S. Pustay became the center commander at Keesler Technical Training Center and John Pustay was a remarkable man. He was a PhD, former intelligence officer. He was a Naval Academy officer who had cross-trained, or had cross-serviced from the Navy to the Air Force to my great benefit. He wanted a protocol officer on his staff. I applied as did other individuals and I was selected to become his protocol officer. Because I had not been selected to the funded legal education program the first time I applied, I explored the possibility of moving out of the masters
program and going to night law school and I found out that Loyola University in New Orleans which was 99 miles from the Keesler Base gate up Highway 10, Interstate 10 had a night law program. It was required that you had to go to school 4 nights a week. You had to take the mandatory curriculum. You didn’t have any choices. There was a very strict regimented program. But if I could work all days as a public affairs officer, drive 100 miles to law school, and do it four nights a week, I could get a year of law school out of the way and be on my way toward my goal as being a lawyer. So while I was still in public affairs and before I got selected to the protocol job, that’s what I did. Since I didn’t get selected for the funded legal education program, I applied and was selected to Loyola New Orleans and I commuted to night law 200 miles a day because you had to get there and get back and I got my first law school classes that way. So

Ms. Turchi: What year was that?

Col. Murnane: I got commissioned in 76, I went to USM in I guess the spring semester so it would have been the fall of 77. So when I got selected as the center protocol officer. As a protocol officer you had a lot of evening functions. You’d have to organize dinners and banquets and receptions and political events, by political events, I don’t mean truly political events but if there was a senator or congressman coming to the base and you had to be available for those events if you were the protocol officer and so after a semester of community 200 miles a day, 4 nights a week, I had to take a leave of absence because I had gotten this protocol job and I had put all my eggs in one basket. If I did a really, really good job working on this two-star general’s staff that he would give it his full endorsement to get me into the funded legal education program. So I took a leave of absence from Loyola after a semester and went to work as the center protocol officer and applied again for the funded legal education and before I did that, it happened that General Pustay said “There is a general officer who is
coming to see me who was on your first funded legal education board, 
would you like to talk to him to see what it was about your package that led 
to you not being selected.” And I said, “Yes, I’d really appreciate that.”
And the gentlemen, the general who was on I refer to as my non-selection 
board, was a guy named General Zanewski who had been the Strategic Air 
Command Judge Advocate. General Pustay arranged for me to speak with 
him. And I said to him “What is it that was missing from my application?
I had really great grades, I had a solid LSAT score. I had two years of 
military service as an enlisted member, got my commission, I had 
deployed. Tell me General, what am I missing.”. I had overcome so 
many obstacles. Why wasn’t I selected to the funded legal program, what 
was missing” and he said, “Well what we were looking for was 
commitment”, And I said, “What more commitment do you need”. And 
he told me, “Well if you had gone to the Air Force Academy we would 
know you were committed”. And I said, “Well General, women weren’t 
eligible to go to the Air Force Academy”, and he said, “Well there is that.”
So it became very obvious to me that this was a program that was intended 
for Air Force Academy graduates and that it was a means to keep women 
from getting this unique opportunity. I think if I had known then what I 
know now, which is there were only seven slots that were competitively 
made available for the funded legal education program, I might have made 
some different choices but it’s part of why the reason I tell people now, 
apply and make them tell you no because you never know what will 
happen. Of course by the time I applied for the funded legal education 
program the second time I had that semester of law school 200 miles a day, 
4 nights a week. I had a semester successfully completed and I think that 
probably made me look more competitive. Interesting what happened next 
though. As you will recall from my earlier narrative about 1974 and having 
had to sign a statement that I had no children and that if I got pregnant, 
they would kick me out. In 1976 as the result of the efforts of Ruth Bader 
Ginsberg and a small handful of individuals at the American Civil Liberties
Union who had taken up the cause of women in the military. Women were now eligible to keep their children and they were no longer kicked out. You had to show that you had a child care plan that would enable you to be both a mother and a career professional for the armed forces but you could at least apply to keep your children if you wanted to do that and you didn’t get fired immediately, although the preference was still for a parenthood discharge for any woman who got pregnant. So the day I found out I had gotten one of these coveted seven slots to the funded legal education program, I also found out that I was pregnant with my first child. And so consistent with the way the Department of Defense, I think, and you will never convince otherwise, intended to do things, although I had now been competitively selected to one of the seven legal education slots the Air Force had available, I had to pass a physical because you had to be career reserve status or a regular officer to be able to go to the funded legal education program. Well the only people who got regular commissions at the time were Air Force Academy graduates, meaning men. ack to “girls need not apply”, because you weren’t eligible to go to the academy but you could get a regular commission or career reserve status if you could pass a physical. So the first time I took the physical, I failed the physical because I had what the doctor described in my physical paperwork as an “enlarged uterus” because I was pregnant.

Ms. Turchi: Oh wow.

Col. Murnane: And he’s right, I did have an enlarged uterus.

Ms. Turchi: You weren’t able to pass the physical.

Col. Murnane: Yeah I wasn’t able to pass the physical and I still have the letter in my files that I received from the JAG Department, the Judge Advocate General Department when I said, well what do I do now, and the answer was “If the
Air Force wants to send pregnant women when they have equally qualified men who don’t suffer from that disability, we’re not lifting a finger to help”, or words to that effect.

**Ms. Turchi:** So I understand, up until this point, you had to pay for Loyola that semester by yourself.

**Col. Murnane:** Actually, because I was eligible for the GI bill going back to my veteran’s benefits, my semester that I had completed at Loyola. What the VA did for service members then, they would pay the cost of tuition and books but no monthly stipend. So the tuition cost and books were covered by the VA for my night classes, my four night classes, but I got no stipend. But I was pretty sure I wasn’t going to be able to do night classes, be pregnant and also work full time. And again to my very great benefit, General John Pustay was a very enlightened man, just as E.K. Loving had been who allowed me to go to the bootstrap program. And General Pustay took my cause and made it his own. And there wasn’t really a reason for him to take my cause as his own. It’s not like I had some kind of long-term professional relationship with him. I certainly had no personal relationship with him. I think he just thought it was good for the Air Force and he went to bat for me when no one else would. And he made the statement, which he later related to me, that while he was in discussions with them about my situation, he told them that they, he knew that they had never sent a pregnant woman to law school on a funded education program up to this time because of course they discharged them all. But that they did not know this woman. And that he would be willing to “bust his sword over this” and what that means is when service academy graduates completed their military degree program, they received a sword and it was one of their special treasures and there were very few things in life that you would bust your sword over but he was willing to do that because he believed in me. And there really wasn’t a reason for it. Except that I worked very hard for
him and I was very dedicated to the Air Force and to the mission that I had working for him. And as a result of his intervention, they found a work-around which they had never done before because again they had kicked all the pregnant women out, they had not done this before. And they allowed me to go on a specified-period of time contract, and within 90 days of delivering my child I had to then pass the physical or I would be eliminated from the program. So in August 1978, I started school full time. At that, the time I found out I had been selected to the funded program in February so I was basically six or seven months pregnant, so I was seven months pregnant. I was still going to Loyola of New Orleans because my husband was still stationed at Keesler but we had bought a house that was midway between New Orleans and the base so I was only driving 50 miles in the morning and 50 miles back in the evening and I was going to school fulltime. And that lasted for two days.

And on the second day that I was at Loyola full time, and you know seven months pregnant, I came home from work and my husband was lying in the middle of the living room floor on his back. He couldn’t move because he had suffered a spinal compression of the 5th lumbar disc, an L-5, S-1 spinal compression and he was paralyzed. And so I got him to the hospital at Keesler Air Force Base and he was admitted there, and he stayed there until after the delivery of our daughter in October. And because he was at the hospital at Keesler, I took a room at the lodging facility next to Keesler so I could be with him in the evenings after school. So now I was commuting every morning from Keesler 100 miles to class and 00 miles back at night, 5 days a week so I could be with him until the day I delivered our daughter. I think Liz it makes sense that at this would be a good point to stop because it gets kind of crazy after this.

Ms. Turchi: Okay, I do have a few questions for clarification we can start with the next session.
Okay, we can ask the clarification questions now if you like and start with and then what.

I'm not sure if you want to touch on how he was rendered paralyzed or if it was temporary or permanent; and also I just didn't hear, what year you had married your second husband.

We got married in 1976 around November. Because the way it works in the Air Force, you have to be married for the assignment application process to go forward and I think if I remember right, it was November or December I had come to visit him at Keesler and we got married in the fire station because that's where the justice of the peace was so I think it was December of 76. His paralysis, it's a complicated question. Are you there Liz?

Linda.

Oh you're there. The question whether his paralysis was permanent or temporary is kind of complicated. Over the next 18 months, over the next two years he had six spinal cord surgeries and there were periods of time when he was mobile and there were periods of time when he was not. He had a whole range of issues and complications. He developed a lot of medical problems from there on and he actually died in November of last year at the age of 65. He had, he wound up having two bypass surgeries, he really had a lot of medical complications from the point at which he suffered the spinal compression onward. That had to do with the fact that he had always been very physically active, he had always been active in sports and when that stopped, he put on a lot of weight and he had all the problems that attend to being overweight. I can tell you from the point at which he was hospitalized to the point when we wind up separating; he was unable to work in a meaningful occupation. He had periods where he was
physically ambulatory and periods where he was not. So it just varied. But it was a very difficult situation for him. Are you there Liz?

Ms. Turchi: Yeah. Okay.

Col. Murnane: I can tell you. The reason that I would like to stop here. After my daughter is born and after, there’s an event that occurs, and I transfer to the University of Cincinnati, it gets kind of crazier, if that’s not crazy enough, it gets crazier.

Ms. Turchi: I think this is a good breaking point.

Col. Murnane: We’re going to pray for a better connection. Okay.

---------END OF THIRD INTERVIEW------
FOURTH INTERVIEW; MARCH 3, 2013

Ms. Turchi: So what was the year of your first year of law school? I'll kind of start us off that way revisiting that time period.

Col. Murnane: My first semester where was I was commuting to night law before I got selected for the funded legal program was August 77 to Dec 77. And then I took a semester break and started again in August 78 when I got picked up on the funded legal education program. And, so my first year of law school if you start with just the semester that I did at night where I was commuting 200 miles a night, four nights a week, that was 77. But then the year that my husband was paralyzed that was August of 78.

Ms. Turchi: Okay, so it was your first year of law school but second semester.....

Col. Murnane: Yes.

Ms. Turchi: ......when you were pregnant with your first child?

Col. Murnane: Yes.

Ms. Turchi: ... I note from last time. When you had come home and found your husband paralyzed, this was the same time starting out law school while you were pregnant, right?

Col. Murnane: Yes.

Ms. Turchi: All happening at the same time?

Col. Murnane: Yes.

Ms. Turchi: And then 1977?

Col. Murnane: The year that he was paralyzed was August 1978.

Ms. Turchi: Okay, I'm getting my notes saying everything was the same year. The first year of law school and you were pregnant starting law school and your husband was paralyzed all at the same time.

Col. Murnane: Yes. I started law school in the night law program after work and I was not pregnant at that time in August 1977. And that's when I would work all day and then I would get out of work at 4:30, I would drive 100 miles to the law school and then I would come home 50 miles to where I lived in Diamondhead Mississippi which was halfway between the law school and the
base. Then I would get up in the morning and drive 50 miles into work and then 100 miles during the day to get to the law school and 50 miles at night. So it was 200 miles a day, four nights a week. In December 1977, shortly before December 1977 I got the job as the center protocol officer and so I couldn't be sure that I would be able to get to class every night so I took a leave of absence from December 1977 until August 1978 and it was in that window around February 1978 that I got notified that I'd gotten one of the seven funded legal education program slots and I found out that I was pregnant with Christina my oldest daughter. I started law school I think it was August 28, 1978 which would have been the last week of August of that year and at that time my due date with my daughter was October 1st, so I was basically 7 months pregnant, when I started back to school with one semester completed and I was starting full time now so I was commuting from our home in Diamondhead and I would drive 50 miles to school and 50 miles home so just a 100 miles a day, 5 days a week to go to school because I didn't have to go to the base any more until around August 30, which would have been two or three days into my law school which is when I came home and he was paralyzed, lying on the floor from the spinal compression. And so he was then admitted to Keesler Medical Center at the base and I took a room at a building ... I think I was in the Tyer House. There were two lodging facilities; one was the Tyer House and the other was the Shaw House and I took a room in the Shaw House or the Tyer House whichever one was right next to the hospital, instead of staying at home, I would drive back at night to the hospital so that I could be with him, get the updates on what was going on, see him in the morning before I left. And so I was now around the 30th of August until September 30th, I commuted basically a 1,000 miles a week because I was in class 5 days a week. So now I was doing 200 miles a day 5 days a week. And I was 9 months pregnant. So that I could be with my husband who was in the hospital paralyzed and still go to school. So around September 28 or 29, I think it was, he had the first spinal cord surgery. He eventually ended up having a total of six of spinal cord procedures that were
intended to correct the compression that he suffered but the first one was I think around the 28 or 29 of September which was a day or two before I went into labor with our daughter. And the 30th of September was a Saturday and I went into spontaneous labor on the 1st of October which was a Sunday. So it happened that I was just staying in the Tyer House and just walking across the parking lot. With all that driving my dad was really concerned that I was going to go into labor on the highway and horrible things were going to happen. And that’s why it was just so ironic that I went into labor while I was in the Tyer House just across the parking lot from across the hospital and just walked over to the emergency room and admitted myself. Because my husband had just had spinal surgery he was obviously on heavy duty pain drugs and didn’t even recognize me at first when I came in to tell him I was in labor.

It was kind of funny my sister had flown in the night before, she had come in the night of the September 30th from Germany. My sister was stationed in Germany at the time with her husband. She wasn't on active duty but her husband was. So she had flown in the night before to be with me since my husband wasn't going to be able to be present or help because he was recovering from spinal cord surgery. We had asked the American Red Cross to bring her in and they said “no”, they couldn't do that. So my sister paid for her own way to come and stay with me. And I went into labor .... my labor started by my water breaking which is not what you wanted to have happen. So they had to start me on a pitocin drip and not a lot was going on. My sister took a picture of me in the labor room. Exams were going to be in November. Final exams for my second semester of law school, my first full time semester under the Funded Legal Education program (FLEP), so I took my constitutional law book with me into the labor room and was studying constitutional law on the labor table because I didn't have a lot of spare time on my hands, you know. My sister has a picture of that.

Ms. Turchi: [Laughter] I would think you could have had a magazine, but…
Col. Murnane: Yeah, I know, but I was there studying my constitutional law book. I tell people all the time I think that's the best proof I have that there's a correlation between pain and memory because it turned out at the end of day that when it was all said and done and the exams were over, I won the American Jurisprudence Award for Academic Excellence in constitutional law that semester getting the top grade of all students at Loyola University in constitutional law in the exam. Which was really funny, I thought. But any way, so I wound up having to have a cesarean delivery with my daughter after laboring basically around 20 hours they came in and said they'd have to take the baby by section and by then I was, having been on a pitocin drip for a long time and that meant that there were contractions about every 90 seconds and it was really nasty. So they took the baby by section. I was in the hospital for 5 days because that was the protocol at the time. My husband was in the hospital the same length of time and so after 5 days in the hospital, they sent me home, they sent my daughter home and they sent my husband home even though he still had a drain pump in his back draining from the incision site .... all of us home after about 5 days.

We lived out in Diamondhead, you know, principally because it was closer to the school, 50 miles from where he worked, 50 miles from where I was going to school. We had bought a house there, but it was way out in the country so it was really difficult to get someone to come and stay or get day care or whatever and at that point in time as it probably is now you couldn't drop your five day old child off at a daycare facility. So, and my sister stayed for a week and then she had to go back to, I think it was a week, and she had to go back to Germany, so I hired someone who came in to take care of my husband and my baby, because I went back to school ten days after I had the baby, five days in the hospital and five days at home and then I went back to class. So, because I was not inherently brilliant like a lot of other students that I went to school with who could just not come and show up to take the exam, I needed to have the interaction in the classroom and you know the structure of discussions and information sharing and whatever to really comprehend and understand the class work that I was trying to do. So, in any event, ten days later I went back to class and I had somebody stay for a little while and that just didn’t work out. So once my husband was able to be mobile enough that
he could get to and from the bathroom basically and I could leave him with a tray set up with his snacks and things during the day, I had to find other arrangements for my daughter, and so what do you do if your daughter is a month old. I wanted somebody that I knew I could trust with a child that small and there was a really good friend that we had, her name was Sheryl Rimple, and she lived in Biloxi. But it was important to me to have the right child care for my infant so, now I would get up in the morning, I would get my husband’s tray ready and make sure that he had everything he needed because he was going to be at home on his own and he wasn’t terribly mobile still, but you know get him a chair, his wheelchair, whatever it was that he needed to be able to get to and from the bathroom and have a tray with his food and whatever it was that he needed and then I would drive fifty miles Biloxi to drop my daughter off, a hundred miles to the law school, a hundred miles to pick my daughter up and fifty miles back to the home, five days a week, and go to school. So basically I was doing about three hundred miles a day in addition to going to school full time, so about fifteen hundred miles a week to finish that semester, and, well actually to finish that school year.

And so around March of 1979, the Air Force decided they were going to discharge my husband and they were not going to retire him and they were not going to keep him on active duty. And so when that happened I saw a window of opportunity to stop this crazy commute and maybe move up to Ohio where I had family and I thought, maybe foolishly so, but thought at least you know maybe my parents might be able to help a bit with my daughter and maybe even with my husband. But if nothing else if I got up to Cincinnati I knew that the hospitals were right near the law school because the University of Cincinnati law school where I was going to try to transfer to is right in the center of the hospital district in Ohio, in Cincinnati Ohio. So if nothing else, the hospitals would be nearby. And that was somewhat important because my daughter who was born in October of ’78 got sick in December of ’78 while we were in Louisiana visiting my husband’s family for the Christmas holidays. She came down with the flu and she had to be
hospitalized at a hospital in Louisiana in Eunice, Louisiana, and she was so sick when the holiday visit ended that the doctor said “Well, you know we really can’t release her.” But my husband had to be back at the hospital in Biloxi, Mississippi because of a medical requirement for the military. So we wound up, my husband’s family had connections with an oil company where their dad worked and they flew my daughter by private plane, company plane, from the hospital in Louisiana to the hospital in Biloxi where she was hospitalized first with the flu, he was then hospitalized with, you know the things that he had to take care of for his back and his spinal cord. And she got out and about ten days she came down with pneumonia so she was back in the hospital in Biloxi. So it was really a difficult semester, but when final grades came out I had passed everything and I had won the American Jurisprudence award for academic excellence in constitutional laws, the top student.

I then asked the Air Force to approve my transfer to the University of Cincinnati, which they did, and I was accepted at the University of Cincinnati. And so we made arrangements between March when my husband discharged and May to close up the house in Mississippi and put it on the market and to move to Cincinnati, Ohio. The military takes care of bringing a moving van so we didn’t have to do like a do it yourself move. They came in and boxed everything up and moved us to Cincinnati Ohio and so in June of that year I started summer school classes with the University of Cincinnati, at the law school and so that cut down that horrendous daily commute to try to have my daughter cared for and my husband looked after and whatever else I needed to do. And so I started at the University of Cincinnati in June of 1979 in the summer school program and my husband was then being seen by civilian doctors not military doctors. My daughter was being seen by civilian pediatricians not military pediatricians because we were more than fifty miles from any major medical facility that the military had. And this becomes important because of what happens next.

So I am going to school and I find out that the civilian healthcare program
that military dependents fell under was called Champus and Champus paid eighty percent of allowable charges for inpatient and outpatient hospitalizations and for medical appointments and doctor care and whatever. As a first lieutenant, I was at that time a first lieutenant in the Air Force and I was making about 19,000 dollars a year because that’s what the pay rates were at the time and my husband wasn’t working and had been discharged from the Air Force and unable to work and he hadn’t been disabled a full year so he wasn’t eligible for social security disability. The reason that the Air Force had discharged him without retirement is that they insisted that it would be a temporary condition and that he would get better and social security on the strength of that report also wouldn’t pay until he was disabled for a year. So I was the sole source of income for my family and fortunately my grandmother had not been able to stay at her home at that time so I was able to rent my grandmother’s home at a very reasonable rate, I got a good break on that. My mom told me that she wasn’t a babysitting grandmother and that she didn’t know why I had come home, so she continued to work outside the home, my dad worked. So anyway I wound up getting a really good day care provider in Cincinnati. I told”Look, I have to know that you will take this child whether she is well or ill, there really can’t be any other kids in your home if she is ill,” and this lady agreed to do that. Her name was Linda Henderson. I said “I will pay you whether she comes or doesn’t come, but I have to have somebody that I can be sure she can stay with everyday so that I can get to class”. And so, these are people without whose help, and they were angels on my path, truly, Sheryl Rumple and Linda Henderson who really were essential in my ability to complete school based on all the other things that were going on. Because my husband still wasn’t able to lift the baby and he couldn’t take care of her. He was a bit more mobile, he wasn’t completely paralyzed but he wasn’t well enough to work. And then I started getting the doctor bills because again he was being seen by civilians and the 80 percent wasn’t really a true 80 percent and the doctor bills were really mounting up and so I realized that I was going to have to get some kind of supplemental
income. So I asked the Air Force to let me take a clerk or a part-time job working as a law clerk, and they said no, that I wasn’t allowed to do that, and so I had to do something that maybe was under the radar for the Air Force and they wouldn’t know or care, or whatever.

So fortunately there was a woman named Candy Grenham who I went to law school with. She was a businesswoman and a co-owner of a cleaning company and she and her partner agreed to hire me to scrub floors and toilet at five banks after school at night. I was the cleaning crew for five banks, five Providence banks that were located, Providence the name of the bank company that were located throughout the city of Cincinnati and so in order to be able to cover the medical costs after I would get out of school I had keys to five different banks in the city where I would scrub floors, clean toilets, empty trash, do the dusting, whatever it was that I had to do. There was a check list of stuff that you had to clean every day. So in any event I was now working part-time and going to school full time and taking care of my sick husband and my sick daughter and then I wound up getting pregnant again which was like the world’s worst nightmare. I do remember being so despondent when I found out I was pregnant, that I had actually contemplated jumping off the bridge in Ohio. There is a bridge that goes between Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky and I actually visualized stopping the car and jumping off the bridge, because it was just more that I could comprehend that I was in this situation. Still in law school, working at night, sick husband, sick kid and now I am pregnant again which, you know, I kicked myself over and over, except for the fact that I am so thrilled with my daughter Rachel who is a great blessing to me as is my daughter Christina, but at the time I was just desperate. It was just such a difficult situation. And because I am Catholic, and was raised Catholic, and continue to practice as a Catholic, there weren’t other options that there might have been for some women who didn’t have that religious background. So I wound up, because my obstetrician, and I was being seen by a civilian obstetrician, my obstetrician advised it because it was so close in time to the delivery of my first child that I needed to schedule a
delivery date so that I could avoid going into labor because there were risks of complications relating to possible rupture of the prior surgical scar and whatever because Tina had just been born in October '78, Rachel was due in March of '80. And so we scheduled a caesarian delivery for Rachel on February 29, 1980, actually. She would have been a leap day baby. So I continued to work at night, go to school full time during the day and take care of the matters at home. My husband still was unwell and so they had scheduled him to be put in a body cast on the fourth of March to try to stabilize his disk problems. They thought maybe putting him in a what they called a body cast would allow the prior several -- he had had like three spinal surgeries, they thought that might be a tool that they could use to stabilize his condition a bit and so the idea was that I would have the baby on the 29th by caesarian section and be able to take him to the hospital on the fourth of March and get his body cast put on, but at least he would be able to be there for the delivery of the baby and all that.

Meanwhile we also had moved out of my grandmother’s house and we had bought a small house closer to where my parents lived in Cincinnati. At some point prior to Rachel’s arrival because my grandmother’s house was just too small to be able to have the two children and my husband there, so we had moved into the new house, but almost immediately after we bought it we had to put it on the market to try to sell it because I was going to finish law school in December and we were going to be moving again wherever it was the Air Force was going to send me. So, the week, I think it was the week of or the week before Rachel was to be delivered on the 29th the doctor did some tests. He said, “I think we may have miscalculated your due date. The baby is really small. I don’t think we should take it on the scheduled date. I think we need to postpone. I think we may be off by as much as a month and so I want to schedule it for a late March delivery.” And I told him, I said “Doctor, know exactly the moment I got pregnant”, because my husband was ill and this wasn’t like a guessing game. And so he said, "But I am telling you the baby is really small and you don’t want to do anything that’s going to
jeopardize her health, whatever” Sp of course, I said, “Well okay, you are right. I don’t want to do anything that’s going to jeopardize her health,” because by that point the only thing that I thought was going to keep me sane was that I was going to be blessed with a happy, health, one happy healthy co­person in my family. I just kept thinking this must be what this about is, because my husband was sick, and my daughter was sick, my older daughter had a really bad problem with an eye disorder, she had to have eye surgery, it was scheduled for Easter break over that school semester. I just knew that this was going to be a happy, healthy baby and that was going to be like the thing that brought it all home, you know. And so I said okay, fine, schedule whenever you think the right date is, and he did that. Her original due date had been March the fifth. My husband had to go into his body cast on March the fourth, so I took him in on March the fourth, he went into a body cast on the night of the fourth of March. And so early morning of March the fifth, I went into spontaneous labor. So he was unable to dress himself because he was now in a body cast. So when I went into spontaneous labor on the morning of the fifth of March, I got up, got him dressed, got my daughter dressed, got me dressed, got him loaded into a handicap van, handicap equipped van that we had, got my daughter in the van, drove to the daycare person’s house and dropped my daughter off because that’s the arrangement we had made is that she would keep my daughter for five days while I was in the hospital, and then drove myself and my husband to Bethesda hospital and checked myself in to have my baby delivered. Meanwhile, we had gotten an offer on the house and because of the way the real estate market was at the time we had decided we needed to take it. So they scheduled the closing also for the fifth of March. So I went in to the hospital. It took the doctor I thought forever to get in and I labored for a couple hours and then they took the baby by section. My husband was able to be present for this child’s birth, but in a wheelchair. Later that afternoon I closed on the Williams Avenue, house, 4223 Williams Avenue, and I was in the hospital for five days. Because my parents were in town they were able to pick my husband up and
take him back to the house. Again I was in the hospital for five days and then it was spring break that school year when my older daughter had to go and have her eye surgery, so she was in Jewish hospital and my new infant daughter was at home and so I was running back and forth from Jewish hospital and back to the house with the new baby for the five class days of spring break and then the following week I went back to class. But unfortunately at the seven day mark my younger daughter Rachel was baptized, and the day that she was baptized she developed something called pyloric spasms which included all sorts of really nasty things including projectile vomiting and she wasn’t able to keep food down and so she was admitted to Children’s hospital and then my husband had to be admitted to Deaconess hospital and so my new routine became, when I went back to class ten days after my second caesarian delivery my new routine became, get up, go to school, go to Deaconess hospital to visit my husband, go to Children’s Hospital to visit Rachel. If Christina was in the hospital, go to Jewish hospital to visit Christina, then go clean the five banks, then go home and study.

I went to summer school again that semester, that next summer semester, and I also applied for and was selected that semester on the strength of academics and other criteria to be one of the first six international human rights fellows at the University of Cincinnati’s new international human rights program which was called the Urban Morgan Institute for International Human Rights. It was funded by William Butler who has been a great donor to the University of Cincinnati and a great contributor to international human rights work. So I was an international human rights fellow that semester. I had taken international law that semester and had gotten a good grade, and now I was just a semester away from completing law school. So, this all kind of started to take its toll on me and Rachel was in and out of the hospital, kind of constantly. We had to move because we had sold the house so we moved to a condominium complex or a townhouse complex. It was on a different side of town. And just because things were so difficult and I was trying desperately to finish up my law degree and on time, not asking for an extension, andnot
failing any classes, my husband's sister said she would come up and help for a couple days or a week or so. And that I guess just because of where I was in my life and circumstances that turned out to be like the worst of all things because she came up and made some accusations that were very difficult. I don't really want to get into the details of them but the short version is that she suggested that I was demanding too much support from my husband and of course my view is and will always be that I was doing everything and that's just you know how things fall apart in relationships. And so I got really angry one day and kind of had a melt down and suggested that if she thought she could do a better job that she should take my husband and my two kids and go somewhere else. So I came home from school one day and she had done just that. She'd packed up my kids and she had packed up my husband and she had taken them to Louisiana. It wasn't entirely an unwelcome change to be honest with you at that point because it had been just so crazy. It would have been around August just before summer school ended. And so the kids and Ray went down to Louisiana and they stayed there until we moved to California and he joined me in California when I got out of law school and when I went to my first duty assignment. So I had basically one semester where I didn't have the kids every day and I didn't have him every day. I was still working full-time at night and just going to school during the day. But it really became kind of a chance to catch my breath and stay fueled and energized. Rachel continued to be very sick but she was now hospitalized down in Louisiana instead of in Ohio. But I think I just did reach the sort of my rope because I'd been burning the candle at both, at more than two ends long enough. With that change in environment I finished on time, completed my law school in December 1980. Under the University of Cincinnati guidelines I wasn't eligible to graduate with honors because I'd been a transfer student and I didn't have enough hours to qualify under their honors program but under the Air Force Institute of Technology if you had a grade point average that was above 3.5 overall then you were eligible for what they called Air Force Institute of Technology Honors so I graduated with Air Force
Institute of Technology Honors completing the Funded Legal Education Program in two and a half years and on time without any delays even with the transfer mid-term and having had two babies. I guess I showed them that a woman who was pregnant could go to law school, having not only one pregnancy but two and could do it all, so there you have it.

Although I completed my degree requirements in December, the University of Cincinnati did not have a commencement exercise for law until March. Because I was on active duty and because as soon as my law classes were over, I had to report to a duty station, I was given orders to actually go to Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, TX. When I got my assignment to Abilene, I went down to Dyess and found out that the base had no gastroenterology clinic, which is what my daughter Rachel was being seen for. They had a small eye clinic; both my daughters had eye disorders. When Rachel went into the hospital at 7 days we found out that Rachel had a hearing deficiency and we found out that she also was legally blind because the nurses noticed that she wasn't following light or sound. I needed all sorts of specialties including orthopedic specialty and neurology specialty. And they just didn't have that at Dyess because they only had a clinic, they didn't have a hospital at that installation. So that semester my Urban Morgan fellowship included a brief trip to Washington, D.C., and one of the things they had on the agenda with the Urban Morgan fellows was a visit to Amnesty International. Because I had a longstanding contract with the Air Force and wasn't likely to be working for Amnesty International any time in the near future, I asked if I could take that block of time that they would be going to Amnesty and go over instead and meet with the folks at the Pentagon who were responsible for my assignments and the University of Cincinnati team agreed to let me do that. And I took with me to my meeting in the Pentagon with the career management people for the Air Force all of my unpaid medical bills. There were $23,000 in unpaid medical bills from the hospitalizations that Rachel, Christina, and Ray had had. And $23,000 was $4,000 more than I got paid that year. And I told them I said, "Look, this is $23,000 in unpaid medical
because Champus refused to pay the nursing bills.” Most of that overrun cut came from Champus refusing to pay the nursing bills that were submitted by Children's Hospital from when Rachel was there because Children's has one nurse for every two babies and they call that private duty nursing care and they wouldn't pay for it. It wasn't like I had an option but they weren't going to pay for it. So I told the people at the career management, I said “Look you're going to send me to Dyess,” and I said “They don't have these specialties that my family needs. I've got a sick husband and two sick children.”, I said “I really need to be at a major medical facility.” And there were five major medical facilities that the Air Force had throughout the United States. And they said “Okay, well we would take a look at that“ After my visit to Washington, D.C., I got notice that my first duty station out of law school was instead going to be Travis Air Force Base, California, which was in fact a major medical facility and I was very pleased about that. But that probably turned out to be one of the worst things that I could have done in retrospect because it happens that a gentleman that I later came to know as Jeff Mangin was the staff advocate I would have worked for at Dyess and Jeff Mangin is a really compassionate, very skilled attorney and somebody who in later discussions with him he just couldn't believe what I went through when I got to Travis. He has said several times during my later career what a bad decision I had made, but of course I didn't know that because I didn't know who these guys were, these different staff advocates and I had no idea what staff advocate you worked for would determine mainly how you got treated. But I went to Travis and reported out there in January and when I got there I went to work for the worst boss I've ever had in my whole entire life. He's deceased now. When I went into his office in January and said I'm Linda Veillon and I'm here to report for duty he said “I don't know who you knew that you got this assignment changed. And I don't know what I am supposed to do with you, you haven't even passed the bar yet.” And I said “Well, I thought maybe they allowed me to report early because I have a sick family and they were hoping to try to help me out that I could get
them into medical care here”. And I said “I was thinking maybe that you would want to let me like study for the bar examine over the next eight weeks”, since I had to take the bar exam in about eight weeks. And he said “Well that's not what we pay you to do”. And he said, “Well what is it you're interested in.” And I said I really loved international law and I did really well in it. I had actually been approached by the University of Virginia for a possible masters program follow on LL.M. in international law but the Air Force said no they wanted me to come to work. He said kind of sarcastically and like I was some kind of idiot “We don't do a lot of international law in this office so what else are you good at. “ And I said “I can do anything you can assign me to do Col. Brothers” his last name was Brothers, “but I would really appreciate it if I didn't have to do medical malpractice work because I have a husband and two sick kids and their life line is to the hospital and I’d really rather not spend my days all day finding out what doctors are being investigated for malpractice.” And he said “Well okay let me think about that.” He came back a little bit later and said “I've decided I'm going to make you my assistant claimsofficer dealing with malpractice; it'll help you build character.”

Ms. Turchi:  
Oh.. (Chuckel)

Ms. Murnane:  
Which you know became kind of a guideline for all the stuff that happened after that. This was the worst assignment I have ever had anywhere ever in my whole Air Force career. I did go back to take the bar in February. I graduated and got my degree in March. I went back to Ohio in March and participated in graduation ceremonies. And then in April my daughter Rachel was in the hospital at Travis Air Force Base. She had been diagnosed with a variety of different things but the most serious one was septisemia which was basically a total body infection. My husband was in the hospital at Travis in the orthopedic ward continuing to suffer from a variety of situations regarding his back and I had my other daughter Christina at home with me but I was able to work every day and I had a good childcare arrangement there. I had good friends at the church that we belonged to. And my boss called me in,
Charlie Brothers called me in and said you have to go to Montgomery, Alabama for a six week training course called the Judge Advocate Staff Officers Course. And I said “Col. Brothers this is a uniquely not good time for me to be taking off to go to the Judge Advocate Staff Officers Course for training because my daughter Rachel is in pediatric intensive care and my husband is in the orthopedic ward”. And Charlie Brothers said to me, “Captain you can be a mother or a lawyer, pick one, I need your answer by 4:30 today. “

Ms. Turchi: My goodness.

Col. Murnane: So, I fretted all day about that but given that my family was completely dependent on me for all their income and completely dependent on me for all their healthcare I really thought that I didn't have a choice and so I told him by 4:30 that day that I was a lawyer first and that I would go to the training course. So in April I left and went to Montgomery Alabama with my daughter still ill and my husband still in the hospital, I left my daughter Christina with some friends from the church who agreed to take care of her until Ray could get out of the hospital and while I was away they had operated on Rachel because her hearing could be repaired. There was something they could do to repair her hearing and so they operated on her and I found out later that one of the doctors, the anesthesiologist who was involved in her procedure was one of the doctors that I had investigated for malpractice who he had been found to have been negligent and had been the anesthesiologist on a case that involved a woman who had elective jaw surgery and she had died. That was an extremely stressful situation. At that time the Air Force didn't let you leave a training course without failing you from the course so I was unable to come home when Rachel had her surgery. I knew who the anesthesiologist was and I still was unable to be there at all. I came home at the end of the training course and I went into my boss' office and said "Look I have played your stupid game" … I didn't use stupid, but I used a military word …..

You know what military words are right. Not nice words, not nice words. I
Ms. Turchi: Good for you.

Col. Murnane: Anyway, I said “Now, they have moved my daughter Rachel from the Travis medical center to the Presbyterian Hospital of the Pacific in San Francisco” because there was a specialty service that she needed that they couldn’t provide at Travis. And I said “I need leave on the 29th and 30th of June and the 1st and 2nd of July so that I can be with Rachel for the surgery that they were going to perform” and this surgery was on her eyes to try to see if they could help with her vision deficit. And he told me he would get back to me. And so the week before Rachel’s surgery he called me in his office and he said “Captain Veillon, I have given Captain Al Brayton and Captain Larry Kelly” who were two of my -- two jags, two other attorneys in the office, they were my equals, they had been attorneys longer than I had but they were my equals. “I have given Captain Brayton and Captain Kelly the days that you have asked for leave. I have given them those days as days off because they have arranged for sod to be delivered to their houses that day and so I can’t grant your leave request and you will have to try this fully litigated court-martial during that time. “ And so because that was the edict what I did was I stayed at the Presbyterian Hospital of the Pacific with Rachel in the night and I would shower and change and get dressed and come from San Francisco to the base which was about an hour drive, just because of traffic, and try a case all day. It was a five day trial, and then go back and sit with Rachel all night in the hospital until she was released. At the end of that trial, it was a fully litigated special court-martial involving drunk driving and eluding police and damage to government property. We got a conviction on all counts and a maximum sentence. There was an exhibit that was admitted in that trial, the smashed up Volkswagen. And I tried the case with a lead counsel whose name was Bernie Chachula because I had not had a lot of trial experience in the Air Force and I wasn’t allowed to come and try a case by myself so Bernie Chachula was my lead, but I was the litigator on the team. And Bernie Chachula inscribed that picture, it says “Linda congratulations on a “smashing success” in your first fully litigated court-martial as a U.S. Air Force Jag, Bernie Chachula” and the dates are listed on it and the exhibit labels are on it. And I had that framed and I put that on my wall. It was on my at the Tribunal, I don’t know if you ever noticed it Liz, but, and it was there as a reminder of how I was treated and how I felt, because I kept that as a constant remember. Every person you worked for in your life is a good example of something and
Charlie Brothers was an example of how not to treat people. And I am convinced to this day that Charlie did not believe that women belonged in the Air Force and that he was doing everything in his power to make me leave.

After the surgery and the trial and all the other things, I had spiraled into a really deep depression, which I don’t think anybody would find surprising given everything that I had taken on and how overloaded I was. And I had a very good friend in the legal office, her name was Gail Heriot, her name is now Gail Silverman, but at the time it was Gail Heriot. And Gail happened to have been in a long term relationship with the head of the hospital psychology unit, the mental health unit at the hospital and I was actually seeing someone in the mental health unit to try to help work through some of the depression that I was in. And at some point during that all happening I actually was so deeply depressed that I was actively involved in planning my own suicide. I just didn’t think that I could take it anymore. And I had shared that with one other person and with Gail and Gail was away at the time, but she fortunately got hold of my therapist who she knew and told them you know, “Linda is in very very deep trouble and you need to call her and get her in the office.” And I didn’t know that Gail had done that. I just got a phone call from my therapist saying, “Our appointment is scheduled for Friday, I need you come in today, I am not going to be available on Friday, can you come in.” But that was Gail’s intervention, and that was why I got called in that day. And I was so completely disabled by my depression at that point that I couldn’t speak. The doctor would ask me “How are you feeling”, and I couldn’t talk. I couldn’t even get a word out. I mean I don’t know how to describe it, but it was profound. And he decided that I needed to be admitted to the hospital, which probably saved my life.

When I got the Margaret Brent award I had commented on this just briefly in my remarks by saying that I was receiving this award because in part of Gail Silverman whose efforts at the darkest time in my life was responsible for everything that happened after that year onward. And I talked about the fact in my Brent speech that everything that had happened since that day was a dividend on her friendship because I was truly in active suicidal ideation and I probably would have killed myself if it hadn’t been for her intervention.

So I wound up staying in the hospital for about three weeks or four weeks until I was out of the deep dark hole I was in. But while I was in the hospital my husband packed up both the kids and he left. And that was the last time that we lived together.
as a family. And while we didn’t get divorced right away, we were divorced a couple years later. The kids were in Louisiana. He was staying with a sister who had been a primary caretaker for his family and was the primary caretaker for my kids. And I just didn’t have the emotional strength quite frankly at the moment to fight for the custody of my kids or to fight for anything. I was devastated. I was all in.

It was a really good thing though that came about as the result of that is that it turned out, and I didn’t know this at the time that Gail Silverman, another woman in our office who was an attorney, whose first name was Ann, I won’t give you her last name, to protect her privacy, but Gail, Ann and I, all three women attorneys, all three active duty women attorneys were actually seeing the same psychologist for the same work related stress, trauma, etc. and to his credit the psychologist informed his boss that all three of us were reporting what he thought was very troubling behavior by a superior and although it took a while they eventually fired Charlie Brothers. And when I left the hospital the base commander, John O’Neill was his name came to see me, and he said tell me what happened and I said “I am afraid to tell you what happened because I am afraid that I would get court-martialed for statements that I might make about this guy”. And he said “Well what do you want Linda.” And I said I did not want not to have to work for him ever again. And so there entered yet another one of those really incredible men who had vision and who helped me in my career and I have mentioned already John Pastay E.K. Loving. But the third on that path was a guy named Mike McShane. And at that point in time, Mike McShane was a lieutenant colonel and the Chief of Defense services at Travis Air Force base for the Western Circuit. And Mike McShane asked me if I would be interested in coming to work for him as the area defense counsel which took me out of Charlie Brothers’ chain of command and put me in defense services. I later came to work for Mike McShane and it has been just one of the great professional privileges of my career to have worked for Mike McShane in three different capacities during my Air Force career. You know some of my living history makes it sound like the Air Force was just full of bad men, but that’s not true. They had really great men and a few bad apples and Charlie Brothers was certainly the most rotten of those apples. But Mike McShane was really one of the super stars as was John Pastay and EK Loving. So when I came back out of the hospital I had, a short period of time I worked for both Charlie Brothers and then Phil Johnson after Charlie Brothers got fired. And then I
went to work for Mike McShane as the area defense counsel which became a really great gift in my life, a truly great gift in my life.

----END OF FOURTH INTERVIEW---
Ms. Turchi: This is the oral history of Col. Linda Murnane. It is being taken on behalf of Women Trailblazers in the Law, a project of the American Bar Association Senior Lawyers Division; it is being conducted by Elizabeth Turchi on this day, the 17th day of March 2013. Linda is at her home in Xenia, Ohio, and I am in The Hague, Netherlands and so we are using internet calling program to facilitate this interview. So, Linda I’ll turn it over to you. Our last conversation we were discussing how you were about to begin working for Mike McShane at Travis Air Force. So why don’t we pick up with that.

Col. Murnane: Okay, thanks Liz. So when I came out of the hospital which I talked about the last time that we spoke, I didn’t have to work very much longer for Colonel Charlie Brothers. Among other things, he left and was replaced by – the main thing with Colonel Brothers was that he thought he was headed to higher places in the department and that was de-railed when he was disclosed as, the sexist that he was in the process that I described. Lieutenant Colonel Phil Johnson came in as the staff advocate. I didn’t work long for Colonel Johnson before I was able to move to the Area Defense Counsel and worked for Mike McShane and also the Deputy Chief Defense Counsel for the Circuit was a gentleman named Jim Cohen. And they both have become very dear friends of mine. People that I stay in touch with, and Mike in particular, was truly a great guy to work for. He was a good mentor. He helped to train you, teach you what you needed to know; he guided you in the direction that you needed to head so that you could professionally develop. He and his wife Sigrid, my husband Kevin, and I are very good friends; and just a year and a half ago we flew back for his daughter’s wedding in Austin, Texas at Christmas time because we really have become lifelong friends. I worked for Mike on a number of different occasions after this as well, and it was always a privilege to work with him. He was a man of great integrity. He is currently serving as a Social Security Administrative Law Judge in Texas, or it may be a Texas Labor Department Judge, I’m not sure which, but he continues to serve as a judge in another capacity now that’s he’s retired from the Air Force. One of the questions that you suggested for discussion, Liz, was
why was Mike McShane so influential in my career and I can tell you that I was not at all prepared for the kind of attitude that Charlie Brothers had toward women in the service, because I had been blessed with people like E.K. Loving, who I talked about, who went out of his way to reward initiative and he was able to spot individuals who had potential and to help them chart a career path within the Air Force that would be both good for the individual and good for the Department of the Air Force. I had never encountered anyone quite like Charlie Brothers in my life. Mike McShane was another person like E.K. Loving and like John Pastay who, if you worked hard for them, they didn’t have any expectation other than high-quality performance and they respected professional accomplishment. Mike continued to do that in every job that I worked in from the time that I first went to work for him as defense counsel and then twice later worked later for him as a judge. I was really not quite sure where to put the Charlie Brothers experience in my life and for at least a good long while even after I got out of the hospital because I tend to be a person who internalizes every mistake that I make and I’m hypercritical of my own shortcomings, probably from my home upbringing. I internalized the Charlie Brothers experience as some failing on my part for a good long while. But I have come to understand over the years that it wasn’t my failing, but his, and later I had the opportunity to see Charlie Brothers once again after he had retired and I was still on active duty and had a line number to Colonel and I had quite a special moment when I was able to confront him and say “Today, Colonel Brothers, the United States Air Force has decided that you and I are equals” because Charlie was a colonel and now I was going to be a colonel too, which I think about did him in, but I really can’t help that. That would be his problem and not mine. And I was able to finally put that all in kind of a neat little box.

So, I went to work as an Area Defense Counsel for the Air Force, which meant that I was defending cases up and down the West Coast of the United States. I had some very interesting and very challenging and very difficult cases. I had one case of a U.S. Air Force Captain who had quite a bit of financial resources because his parents had died young and he had a quite large trust fund. He was
charged with attempted murder, larceny of a great deal of property -- there was so much property he was charged with stealing that the evidence was actually contained in a warehouse at a base that I had to travel to defend him. He was charged with stealing a backhoe and an F4 ejection seat, which is a piece of an aircraft. I mean he was charged with stealing his Commander’s shot records, dog tags, and passport and burning them up in the fireplace; destroying them because he got hooked up with a guy named Jack Poster, who was arrested by the Las Vegas Police Department for insurance fraud. When he got caught, Mr. Poster said “You think that I’m a bad dude? I’ve got a really bad dude that I’m hooked up with and he’s an Air Force officer.” So the Las Vegas police did an undercover video of my client planning a diamond heist where they were going to lure some guy from Amsterdam over with diamonds in exchange for two paintings my client had stolen from the Air Force art collection and then they were going to kill him, and my client was on the video tape saying “and then we'll kill him and throw him in Lake Meade because, you know, they can't dredge Lake Meade for a body” because it’s a man-made lake. I got some very good results as a defense counsel. I had one very high-profile case that was featured on 60 MINUTES, the case of Captain Eugene Horvath. Capt. Eugene Horvath was alleged to be the biggest videotape pirate on the west coast, and Hollywood got involved in his arrest. He came home from leave with his family and they had a big show with cameras and whatever arresting him. He was actually charged with copyright violations in the civilian courts and to get himself out of the box he was in in civilian courts, he pled guilty to one count in the federal courts in California. But the Air Forcereplied on that case up to try to discharge Capt. Horvath. I represented Capt. Horvath along with a civilian attorney at the discharge board. I actually have artist sketches of us in the courtroom. We were able to get a jury of senior Air Force officers, colonels, all colonels, to conclude that not only did Eugene Horvath not engage in copyright infringement which requires a component of doing things for profit, but additionally, Eugene Horvath didn't do the thing he pled guilty to downtown and so they opted to retain him. I got a couple of other really high-profile cases
where there were outright acquittals; or the person was retained or whatever. So my time in defense services wasn't particularly long before I got a new job. I was offered the position of Chief of Criminal Law (Chief, Military Justice they call it) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base -- but not before I made maybe another really big mistake in my life. The father of my children, who I talked about, packed up and left while I was in the hospital and we were divorced in 1982, so it was a bit of time before we got divorced. But I turned around and married a physician assistant I met while I was stationed at Travis Air Force Base in California. I don't know what possessed me to do that. He was a violent person and I had already been through that once in my life and should have seen it coming. I knew that was the situation before I married him. Part of what I went through was when my ex-husband, Ray, left, he took all the furniture and all the appliances. So I was actually, for a period of time, sleeping on the floor of this house I was tied to a lease on and couldn't get out of. I think part of what possessed me to do what I did in getting married was that I was just still not quite all together from that experience. In any event, I married David. He was really good looking and he knew how to have a good time, but it became kind of a nightmare, and pretty quickly, and eventually an assignment and a half, I wind up divorcing David after he had broken my right shoulder. In an assault. But he told me if I ever reported him or put his retirement in jeopardy, he would kill me. I believed he would and could kill me. So it was maybe not the best decision in my life. Interestingly, while I was married to David we got stationed at Wright-Patterson which was near my parents' home, I began to do some volunteer work - pro bono work -- with the Greene County Domestic Violence Project here in Ohio, while I myself was being victimized as a battered spouse. Nobody at the Greene County Domestic Violence Project ever asked about the bruises or whatever was going on, and I wasn't volunteering any of that, because if any of it got back to the Air Force I was pretty sure David would carry through with his threat. Anyway, another bad choice on my part that I had to sort through. I like to think that for the most part what I suffered from was that I had a really hard-broke picker-outer because I couldn't seem to pick out good guys from bad guys.
I mean there were probably 100,000 clues, all of which I chose to overlook, not the first of which was that I was the fifth (5th) Mrs. Woodard. So, that should tell you something, and I should have been smarter than I was. I was still young and foolish and a bit hard-headed. In any event, I left Travis after a very successful assignment as defense counsel. I was very pleased to have... One of the things that you suggested that I talk about, Liz, was if I had any internal struggle, resentment, anger or hatred towards Col. Brothers, Col. Johnson, Larry Kelly, Al Briayton who were the two guys who got the time off. I didn't really have any anger, hatred or resentment against them. I just thought the best way to get even was to beat their tails off in the courtroom, and I did that. I did it by working harder, smarter, longer, being more prepared. I got a number of cases thrown out on technical evidence challenges. I tried a case called United States v. Matusick and I did another one called United States v. Maltby, in which I was able to get the Air Force urinalysis program that had been implemented thrown out as unreliable, because I was able to discover that the evidence tags that were accompanying urine samples that were going to the Brooks Laboratory Testing Facility were being removed from their actual sample bottle and tossed in a corner, where an Air National Guard or Air Reserve technician had been assigned to do nothing but stamp tags, and then somebody at the other end stamped them and married them up with the evidence at the other end of the test process, which is not how the chain of custody of evidence was required to be tracked. So I was able to get both the Maltby and Matusick cases thrown out; those were very senior noncommissioned officers who were facing discharge for wrongful use for marijuana on the strength of a positive urinalysis only. I had the high-profile case of Eugene Horvath, and the case that really drove them crazy was the case of the senior noncommissioned officer who had been court-martialed twice and had two Article 15 actions which is non-judicial punishment and two actions vacating suspended non-judicial punishment, so they had basically six misconduct actions within a year. I was able to get a board of officers to retain him on active duty, which just sent the base legal office people through the roof. And it wasn't long after that happened that I was advised that I
Ms. Turchi: Wow!

Col. Murnane: I'm not bitter about it. I just think they are pathetic, if that makes sense. And I don't know any other way to . . . they are uninformed, lack vision, pathetic and they were not able to see what we were able to see as women in the service in
terms of trying to build an infrastructure that would support the number of women they were bringing on active duty, because I think it was their belief that they would be successful in driving us out. And I believe that. Today, of course, now there are Congressional hearings about what we're going to do about this crisis in sexual assault in the Armed Forces and maybe a dramatic change to the Uniform Code of Military Justice as a result of it. Charlie Brothers died in July 2008, I believe it was, so I can't call him up and have a chat with him about where we find ourselves today. And it's not that I was tracking what Charlie Brothers' situation was. The Air Force has a really good way of keeping you informed about colleagues who have died or killed in action, and so we get regular updates on significant figures in the department who have died and that's how I came to know that Charlie had passed away. So I left Travis and went to Wright-Patterson, where I went to work for who I thought was a really great guy. I won't say his name because I don't want to talk about something that happened but I don't want to harm his reputation because I think it was an aberration what happened at the end of our tour, but he was a really great guy. He looked out for me. I wouldn't want to work for him again because of what happened at the end. His number two was really an evil person much like Charlie Brothers. Didn't like me, didn't like anything I did, didn't like the people who worked for me. He was my first reporting officer, the guy that I was directly reporting to, and I would have to basically work through him to the boss to be able to get things moved forward. I had a very successful career at Wright-Patterson, although my home life was really a mess. I had a very successful career. I was there two years. I became very dear friends with the Vice Wing Commander, who is still a friend today and who actually has looked out for my house. He stayed here in Xenia when he retired from the Air Force. Is a very dear friend and relies still on my legal judgment, having come to understand how much he could trust that I would do good work for him. One case that was very significant when I was at Wright-Patterson was the case of Lt. Col. Shober. This is the case that I talk about in my Law Review Article that's published in the Duke Law Journal of Gender Law and Policy, May 2007. One of the cases that we prosecuted which I was responsible
for organizing was the *Shober* case. Lt. Col. Shober was what was then called the Club Officer. He was responsible for operating the Officers’ Open Mess. They don't have officers who do that anymore -- it is all civilianized now. From 1984 to 1986 when I was at Wright-Patterson, it was still a military position. So Lt. Col. Shober was married, and the military still has a criminal statute for adultery for its officers and enlisted personnel, if there's proof that that adultery impacts good discipline and morale. Col. Shober was working his way through the wait staff, basically obtaining sexual favors, taking nude photographs of the different cocktail waitresses and he actually had a slide lock put on the inside of his office so that no one could come in while he was using his office for whatever sexual tryst he was involved in. He had taken some nude photographs of a woman who I'll just identify her by her initials, again, not wanting to cause her any embarrassment, although the case is public. But her initials are C.S. He had taken some nude photos and he had engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior with a number of the wait staff and got caught. So we court-martialed him; a jury of senior officers -- because Col. Shober was a Lt. Colonel. all the officers on the panel had to be Lt. Colonels or Colonels or a General, but we didn't have any Generals on the panel so they were all Lt. Colonels or Colonels -- convicted him of Conduct Unbecoming an Officer on a range of different criminal offenses and sentenced him to be dismissed from the Air Force. He had about 18 years in the service, and you were eligible to retire after 20 years of service. So this was a very big deal. And it sent out shockwaves across the Air Force that you couldn't take nude photographs of your female employees; you could not have sex with them and get away with it, because you would be prosecuted. But, the Air Force Court of Military Review is what it was called at the time, it is now known as the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals reviews all cases in which there is a dismissal, bad conduct or dishonorable discharge as a matter of right, so it's an automatic appeal. When the Air Force Court of Military Review reviewed the *Shober* case, they *reversed* the Decision and said that the taking of nude photographs, especially of your subordinate employees, was *not* a criminal offense -- particularly when Ms. C.S. asked for the pictures back when the affair
ended, he gave them back to her and they used some language in their Decision that was just outrageous, in my view, where they said “after all, a man who had a camera would be relegated to still life if he wasn't able to take these nude photographs of his subordinate employees.” This was in the 1983/1984 timeframe. I was just dumbfounded. Absolutely dumbfounded at the lack of understanding the Air Force demonstrated in that Decision and the Air Force court demonstrated in that Decision, about what professionalism in the workplace ought to be about. I was just dumbfounded. So that was like a really big case that was decided when I was at Wright-Patterson. There were a number of again high-profile cases I was responsible for trying. We did a number of urinalysis sweeps of college students who were attending school under the Air Force Institute of Technologies Program. They had been on college campuses across the United States, civilian campuses, but had never been subject to urinalysis testing like other military personnel were, until we found a way to do that. We had a lot of folks who were out there enjoying the benefits of college campus life in the early 80s for those who know the early 80s you'll understand why that was significant, who were identified as using illegal drugs while they were on full-paid scholarships from the Department of Defense, and they were eliminated from their program. So lots of different cases. Toward the end of that assignment, the Colonel that I worked for, who had battled for me and in my favor, was reassigned shortly before I got reassigned, and he came in my office when it was his last day. I was very upset that he was leaving, because now I was going to have to work for his Deputy who was very difficult to work for and not somebody that I could see eye-to-eye with, and who really hated me. And I told him, I told my boss when he came in my office, he dropped the blinds because I was teary eyed when he came in. I said I was really going to miss you and I really appreciate everything you've done and I'm very grateful to you for all your support. And I gave him a hug, and he started kissing my neck.

Ms. Turchi: Oh, my goodness.

Col. Murnane: And I pushed him back and I said “What was that?” And he said “I better stop before I can't stop myself.” I cannot tell you what that did to me. It was one of
the -- I mean, I've had a lot of difficult moments in the Air Force -- but this was one of the most difficult. Because, for the year-and-a-half that I had worked for this guy, I thought that he respected my professionalism; that he thought I was a good officer; that he had sided with me because he thought that my legal judgment was sound. He had never made any overture toward me which I thought was inappropriate or unprofessional. He had battled my battles against the Deputy. He had made sure that I had the ability to move forward. And this one act destroyed all of that, because it made me question whether this was all about his thinking that maybe down the road there could be something else, because it is just not the way you say good bye. If you understand what I'm saying. It was just shocking.

Ms. Turchi: Absolutely.

Col. Murnane: it was shocking and startling and it was just he and I. I never reported it until many years later I reported it to this Vice Wing Commander who was no longer on active duty and I told him that it was just him and just me in that room and nobody would have believed it. Nobody would have believed it. Because this guy was a good guy from every perspective. Everyone including me felt he was a good guy. I don't know, something had gone upside down in his life or . . . but it took me a long time to recover from that, especially because I felt I couldn't say anything to anyone and didn't say anything to anyone until well after I had retired from active duty. He was succeeded as the Staff Judge Advocate by a guy who was known as a womanizer and skirt chaser. The guy who followed this gentleman whose name I have not disclosed, actually was married to someone else and the woman was down taking care of this new Staff Judge Advocate's father who was ill. The Staff Judge Advocate coming in had just gotten picked up for drunk driving on the base which is, you just don't drink and drive on a military base, but he had gotten picked up for drunk driving, so there was some question some whether he would actually get the job after all because he had been lined up to come take the job when he got his drunk driving charge. But it turned out the new Wing Commander, a guy named Charlie Fox, said yeah, he would take him on. Charlie Fox was a very right-wing, strong Christian Baptist;
a very religious guy. He would take this new Staff Judge Advocate on board and he would get him straightened out. So I went to the promotion ceremony for the new Staff Judge Advocate when he pinned on his new rank to Colonel, and interestingly the new Staff Judge Advocate had his promotion party at his girlfriend's house while his wife was down taking care of his sick father.

Ms. Turchi: Oh my goodness.
Col. Murnane: Which I thought was the ultimate chutzpah.
Ms. Turchi: How about the criminal statute?
Col. Murnane: Yeah, how about the criminal statute?
Ms. Turchi: Or adultery, my goodness.

Col. Murnane: Yeah, and this was going to be my new boss. So, of course, my head was completely spun around as to what the Uniform Code of Military Justice said and what these senior male officers were doing as to what I could expect in my future in the Air Force. Right after this new Staff Judge Advocate came on board he called me in and he said that on the recommendation of the Deputy who, of course, was my nemesis, he was going to move me from my position as the Chief of Military Justice to the position of the Chief of Civil Law. Well, this was a big deal to me because the Chief of Criminal Law or the Chief of Military Justice as that position is known, was a billet or a position that was assigned for a field-grade officer Major, and I had been doing the work in that job for 18 months as a captain, so the probability that I would get promoted on my upcoming board to Major was probably pretty good because I had been doing a higher ranking job than I was required to do for a year and a half and had done it successfully. But now they were going to move me back to a position which although I understand the reasons for it -- they said it was for career broadening and I accepted that because I hadn't done very much in the civil law arena. But it was against an 03 or a captain's billet. So I contacted Career Management and I said “look I've got to get out of here. This is what this new Staff Judge Advocate is trying to do to me and I need to go.” And they said “you really can't move, you really can't move” -- until all of a sudden like a week later -- they called and said they were going to move me to be a Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, which again was a field
grade Major’s billet in San Antonio, Texas on a very short-notice assignment. Well, that became important because usually those short-notice assignments mean that you're going somewhere because they've fired somebody else and they needed somebody urgently to backfill. I tell the story sometimes, I don't give the specifics, but I tell the story sometimes, I say “well what I tried to do in my career was to find places where people had gotten fired and I'd go in and replace them, because then it made me look really good when I came in and was halfway competent.” But the flip side of that was that it was usually quite a mess when someone had gotten fired, no kidding, fired from that job, and you had to go in and really kind of dig things out from out of a mess and that was surely true of Wright-Patterson, which was the assignment that I got short notice to go there. The Wright-Patterson assignment, my boss who's name I did not disclose, called me in one day right after I first got there and he said “I don't usually talk about a senior officer” because the person I was replacing had been a Major and I was a Captain. He said “I don't usually talk about a senior officer to a junior officer in this way but I'm just going to tell you, you have little shoes to fill.” He explained to me that the person I was replacing was the daughter of a general officer who was also assigned at that same installation, and that she had been a professional and personal embarrassment to him; that she would take her needlepoint to important meetings like StandUp, which is an important meeting with all the senior officers, or to Commander’s Call, and would sit in the front row and needlepoint while the Commanders were talking, and he just found that objectionable and just outrageous and she made bad, poor judgments and decisions. So I called that my success formula in the Air Force -- I think it came from the little-shoe syndrome -- where I tried to go places where people had little shoes that I could step into with my big size 9 feet I could fill very easily.

Ms. Turchi: I think you're not giving yourself enough credit.

Col. Murnane: I want to make sure it's clear while it is true that I replaced a lot of people who had gotten fired step, by step, by step, it really left a mess that I had to dig out and make things better, which really helped me develop some key skills that I used throughout my career. I really became kind of an expert in dysfunctional
workplace management, and how to get that sorted out in the end -- even through my assignment at the Tribunal. That was something that I really developed skill and strength in doing as the result of that process of being assigned one after the other to places that were dysfunctional. While I was at Wright-Patterson, before I left there, that's when my husband assaulted me, broke my right shoulder. We didn't separate until I got to Texas, which was my next assignment -- at Randolph Air Force Base. He was a physician assistant and was able to get my shoulder treated using friends of his that didn't involve my having to report what actually happened to my shoulder. As I said, he assured me that if I ever told anyone something bad would happen. So I left Wright-Patterson in 1986 and moved to San Antonio, Texas to Randolph Air Force Base, and I became the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate at Randolph Air Force Base, which is the number two legal officer for an entire Wing. I worked for a Lt. Col. And, while I was at Randolph, I was selected, first-round, for promotion to the grade of Major, which is the first field grade in the Air Force ranks. I had a portfolio at Randolph that included all the Criminal Justice programs, the Claims function, the Civil Law function and the Legal Assistance function. I had a very successful two-year tour at Randolph, divorced my abusing husband, and met and married the right guy, finally, Kevin Murnane and we've been married 26 years now, this year. I was just going through some boxes of stuff last night from when I first met Kevin and we began our relationship which really brought back some very special and fond memories. He is my best friend even to this day. Eventually my picker-outer got fixed and I got the right guy who has been really a terrific partner as in all the endeavors I have undertaken. There is hope out there for all of us. If I can finally get there anybody can get there. In any event, I went from Randolph to Japan, where I became the Chief of Military Justice for a Numbered Air Force, which is an entire region of bases, so more than one base and so I was the 5th Air Force - U.S. Forces Japan Chief of Military Justice which is the criminal law program and our jurisdiction included all of Japan and we had 3 bases: Misawa, Yokota and Kadena on Okinawa. So I would travel a bit to the different bases to do staff assistance to assist in the prosecution of cases. I did two years in that
role working for a great guy, Col. Bill Elliott. I had worked peripherally with
Col. Elliott when I was at Randolph when I was the Deputy Staff Judge
Advocate, he was at Randolph Air Force Base. He was the Deputy Staff Judge
Advocate at Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, which was our
higher headquarters on that installation. So, he knew of my work and knew a bit
about it. I was reassigned to work directly for him on his staff at 5th Air Force-
U.S. Forces Japan. I spent two years in Military Justice and then Col. Elliott left
and I worked for Col. Bob Cerha. Col. Cerha did me a great service that I really
was reluctant to undertake, but I did it. He made me the Chief of
Civil, International and Operational Law for my last year that I was in Japan. So I
was involved in negotiations with the Japanese self-defense forces; I did some
work with the U.S. Embassy staff; I was appointed as an official U.S. Trial
Observer in Japan for military personnel who were being tried in the Japanese
courts, and really got me back into that international law arena that I had kind of
fallen out of, because of the work that I was doing in the military justice arena
stateside. The assignment to Japan was really a culture shock for me because it
was a huge difference in my previous life experience, including, you know, my
limited international travel to Mexico. It was the first time in my life that I was
transferred to someplace where I became a functional illiterate the minute I hit
the ground. Because the Japanese use three-character languages: Katakana,
Hiragana and Kanji. I could not read a single word of Hiragana, Katakana or
Kanji, which are the three languages, and I also didn’t speak any Japanese. I had
studied seven years of Spanish and two years of French and four years of Latin,
but not a single day of Japanese. So I couldn’t read, write or speak the language,
but now I was going to live in the Japanese community, drive on their roads, not
be able to read the road signs; it really opened my eyes to the situation of being a
minority first of all, because I was a blonde-haired, blue-eyed woman in Japan,
which there aren’t a lot of blonde-haired, blue-eyed women in Japan. I was in a
very responsible position, particularly that third year when I was in the
International Law position. I actually was invited to review the Japanese Fleet on
a particular holiday, and I also deployed in support of the first Gulf War and in
some joint and bilateral exercises that were on-going in Japan. I didn’t actually deploy to Kuwait or to the Gulf, but it was during that time that we held Operation Keen Edge, which was a joint bilateral Japanese self-defense force exercise that was done with U.S. forces and Japanese forces, side-by-side. I sat in the targeting cell in the Combined Air Operations Center, working under General Johnson, who was the 5th Air Force Vice Commander, and learned a lot about Geneva Conventions from a very practical and pragmatic perspective, and I have been involved in that work ever since. I teach it. I learned it. And I did quite a bit of work in it. So I had a really great three years in Japan for the most part. There were some challenges. The first year was difficult because my Mom passed away and I wasn’t able to get home in time to see her before she died. She died while I was in St. Louis, transferring planes. So I didn’t get a chance to say goodbye, which left a lot of unfinished business between us. It took me a long time to get through that. But overall I think it was, professionally, a really rewarding experience. It then turned out that at the end of my three-year tour, one thousand ninety-five days in Japan -- that should tell you something about the fact that I can tell you the exact number of days that I served -- I was advised that I would be reassigned again to work for Col. Bill Elliott, but this time he was the Headquarters U.S. Air Forces Europe Staff Judge Advocate, and I would go to work for Col. John Martinez, who was the Staff Judge Advocate at Ramstein Air Base and I would be the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate under Col. Martinez. And again this was the situation where the Staff Judge Advocate had been fired and the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate had been fired at Ramstein, so I was going in to clean up yet another mess at Ramstein Air Base when I arrived to be John Martinez’ Deputy. John Martinez’ wife, Ronnie, and Kevin and I became very close friends over the course of my two-year assignment working for Col. Martinez. He was a fascinating guy to work with. Very good sense of humor; and he was really probably the very first JAG officer I had met who wanted to spend the time to understand what women’s issues were in the Air Force. I can’t tell you how many hours I spent with Col. Martinez talking about domestic violence, sexual assault and other issues and how they impacted on women in the
military. Explaining to him why it is that women didn’t report, explaining why it was that women who reported recanted. But he cared enough to try to understand it. And he became truly an advocate for women everywhere through our professional affiliation. I really admire Col. Martinez. He is still alive and he is still working for the Department of Defense, although he is retired from active duty. I enjoyed the time working for him and working in that office. It was an assignment period full of challenge and a particularly interesting period of time. I loved living in Germany. Compared to Japan, the air was crisp and clear and there wasn’t all the smog that you had from being assigned at a place that was just outside of Tokyo. There was a lot more space around you. I worked for John Martinez for only two years, because while I was there I was fortunate enough to be selected to be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and I was fortunate enough to be selected to become the Staff Judge Advocate, or the Senior Legal Officer to be assigned at Bitburg Air Base in Trier, Germany, and I went there in 1993 and served for 14 months as the Staff Judge Advocate of Bitburg. Bitburg was, I refer to that as my Camelot assignment. It was really phenomenal to work at Bitburg. It was one of the times when I didn’t come in and replace somebody who had been fired. Infact the gentleman that I replaced was actually one of the most highly regarded Lt. Colonels in the entire Air Force. He was extremely well organized. Everything he had was labeled, indexed, cross-colored, cross-coded, color-coded -- this guy was really remarkable in terms of his ability to organize and maintain information in an orderly fashion. I had a Deputy, his name is Brett Coakley. Brett deployed to Bosnia. Shortly after Brett arrived, and he became the forward deployed Staff Judge Advocate in Bosnia during the Balkans crisis, and Brett was actually in the Sarajevo marketplace the day of the missile attack on the Sarajevo marketplace. And that . . .

Ms. Turchi: The Markale Shelling?

Col. Murnane: Yeah. The Markale Shelling. And that becomes significant because of the work I wound up doing later at the International Criminal Tribunal. I had a fabulous staff, every one of whom I am still in touch with in some way or another. Terrific people. When I retired from the Air Force in 2004, nearly all of my
Bitburg staff flew in to Washington from wherever they were so that they could be there. We called it “Camelot” because it was really a phenomenally good experience, I think for all of us. And it wasn’t because everybody was a great officer or everybody was without any problems, but it was because we worked effectively as a team. We did not have a dysfunctional office environment. That really made it pleasant, even if we had to work long hours. That assignment would ordinarily have been at least a two-year assignment, but because of the Base Realignment And Closure, or BRAC, process, they had decided to close Bitburg and so I had the responsibility for all of the legal issues dealing with closing down a long-time military installation on foreign soil, including things like “What do you do with the PCBs that were being used on the military installations that could not be shipped back to the United States and could not be left on German soil?” So some very interesting environmental law problems, very interesting labor law problems; I was responsible for all the claims in Northern Germany and in Luxembourg; I had all the Criminal Justice responsibility at Bitburg; it was really quite a fascinating 14 months. At the end of that 14-month period I was asked by then-Major General Nolan Sklute, who was the Judge Advocate General of the United States Air Force, what I wanted to do. And I said to General Sklute: “You know, General, people who I respect like Col. Elliott, Col. Martinez and others tell me that in order for me to move forward and possibly make Colonel, I need to go to Washington, D.C., and take a staff job, but what if the most important thing in my life, General, wasn’t being a Colonel? What if I just really wanted to be a Military Judge?” And being a Military Judge had been, since I had started working in the criminal justice field had been something that I really became interested in doing. I thought I would be good at it; it was in an area that I did tons and tons of work, and I thought that it was really my strength. And General Sklute said: “You know, Linda, I agree with Col. Elliott, and I agree with Col. Martinez that in order for you to get your best shot at making Colonel, you need to come to Washington in a staff position.” I said: “Yeah, but that’s not really where I feel called to do.” And I said: “I really, really, really just want to be a judge.” And so he said “Okay.
That's what's going to happen.” So when my assignment ended at Bitburg, I ended for all intents and purposes the JAG component and went to the Bench in 1994. And I think that is probably a good stop-place, Liz, if that is okay with you?

Ms. Turchi: Okay. Yes, absolutely.

Col. Murnane: And I can kind of . . . I told you it would get faster and it really will, because my ten years as a judge are fabulous, so, anyway . . . okay?

Ms. Turchi: Okay, that is great.

------END OF FIFTH INTERVIEW------
SIXTH INTERVIEW; APRIL 7, 2013

Ms. Turchi: This is April 7, 2013. This is the interview of Colonel Linda Murnane. The interview is being conducted by me, Elizabeth Turchi, in connection with The Women Trailblazers in the Law project. So Linda the last time we spoke you were telling us about your decisions to pursue a pathway toward becoming a judge. So perhaps you can start by explaining what sparked your interest in taking that path.

Col. Murnane: You know as I was thinking about that as a start point for our conversation today, it brought me back to my law school days and as part of my law school curriculum at the University of Cincinnati. For the little bit of time that I was there, I had the option to go to a criminal law clinic where I would have done criminal defense work or to a civil litigation clinic. Not every student had to take a clinical prospective but I wasn’t a business lawyer and knew I didn’t want to be a business lawyer so I wasn’t going to be in mergers and acquisitions or intellectual property or maybe any of the other higher paying, you know, corporate counsel type approaches or tax lawyer; whatever -- those weren’t the things that I thought I would be particularly good at. But I remember very distinctly making the decision when I was in law school that I needed to get into the civil law clinic program because I was quite frankly afraid of the criminal law clinic. And I don’t know why I was so afraid of it. except that perhaps it was in part trial work and I didn’t know that I’d be any good at trial work. But when I joined the Air Force and began my actual litigation career. I loved the courtroom. There wasn’t any place in the building that I would have rather been than in the courtroom. And it’s so funny because it was the place that I was so afraid of when I was in law school. But I loved it. I really, really loved it. And interestingly, I was not great at moot court. I mean, I did well enough to pass the moot class but I wasn’t on the moot court team. I wasn’t, you know, some great oralist or brief writer on the appeals level but when I got in the courtroom as a captain on active duty and was trying my first criminal cases, I just absolutely loved it. And so the Air Force in terms of how one kind of guided their path you can be basically a generalist who learns a bit about and maybe specializes in contracts or specializes in environmental or any of the other many areas where the Department of Defense really needs lawyers or
you can take basically the criminal litigation path which is what I just fell in love with and wanted to do. I mean it was the thing that I wanted to do more than anything else.

It’s very difficult to stay in the criminal litigation field in the armed forces because usually that means that you can be a circuit counsel. You can be a circuit prosecutor, a circuit defense counsel. You can be a military judge. In order to stay in long enough to make it a career at some point you have to be a deputy staff advocate but for you to actually stay in litigation and be in the courtroom every day, you have to look at getting what was then 22 military judge slots in order to be able to stay in the courtroom. And that’s what I wanted to do and I knew that. By the time I got out of Bitburg, I had been a deputy staff advocate twice and a staff advocate once and I knew where I really wanted to be was in the courtroom because that’s where I thought I was called to be and I loved it. I really truly loved it. And that’s the primary reason why when the Judge Advocate General and others came to Bitburg and said do you know what you want to do; I think you should go to Washington, D.C.basically to become a specialist ,and whatever it is that they decided that they wanted to do, there was Personnel litigation or contracts, or something else. But what I really wanted was to be in the courtroom and I told the Judge Advocate General that. The reason that that was important was the way you become a military judge in the US Air Force and the Department of Defense is that you are appointed by the Judge Advocate General in the United States Air Force. He is the senior legal officer for all of the military branch like the Judge Advocate General of the United States is the senior legal officer for the Air Force. The Judge Advocate General of the Army is the senior legal officer for the Army and they are the ones who appoint all of the military judges. There had been very few women judges in the Air Force when I came to the bench and when I was appointed to the bench I was only one of two women serving on the trial bench. One of the reasons so few women were on the bench, it starts with the fact that, as I shared at the start of my Air Force discussion, women had to give up their kids to come on active duty in ’74. Just not that many folks. Not that many women were foolish enough to stay. That’s how I say it because it was really a
difficult work environment and most women just didn’t feel like they needed it to do that to find fulfillment in their practice of law. And so most women didn’t stay. All military judges were majors or above at that point in time although there had been people who had been military judges as a captain, but at the point at which I was eligible they moved pretty much to majors and above. And so there just weren’t that many women who had stayed in and gotten promoted and who wanted for any reason to make their career in the armed forces which was not surprising. Which was not surprising. Additionally, another key reason that so few women were on the bench is that the way the Air Force court system worked at least at that time is that the judge traveled to the location where the accused was located and the witnesses were located. The Air Force had a circuit system in place where a judge might be stationed at one of five locations. So you would be stationed at Ramstein Air Base in Germany if you were in the European Circuit and then you would travel anywhere that the European circuit covered including Turkey, Italy, Iceland, the Azores and then later, when I was the chief circuit judge for Europe we had the Middle East. If one were a judge in the Central Circuit, you would be stationed in San Antonio, Texas and you would be required to travel to a base anywhere from the state of Ohio to the state of New Mexico in terms of east and west boundaries and north and south you would go as far north as Canada and as far south as Mexican border. The Eastern Circuit was Maine to Miami, west to St. Louis and south to Biloxi, Mississippi and the eastern circuit you would be stationed at Washington, D.C. and then the Western Circuit was out of Travis Air Force Base, California and you would travel anywhere from California east to New Mexico, north to Canada and south to the Mexican border. And then the Pacific Circuit was in Japan and you would cover all of the Pacific including Korea, the Koreas and Japan, Alaska, for part of the time. So it required that you be on the road a lot. In fact, I was on the road as a judge about 200 days a year. And when you consider that I would routinely be home for the weekends and weekends represent 110 days of the year, if you figure I was on the road another 200 days a year, that’s 310 days a year which means there were 55 days that I was home other than the weekend. And so for women who had made the
choice that I did to have a family and be on active duty and be a judge, it was a very challenging role. One of the women that was on the bench, my colleague had no kids, Mary Boone, she was single, never married, well that’s not true, Mary had married. But I think it was like for 30 days and then it was over. So you know it was very hard to have both a home life and a family life and be a judge. But at that point my kids were older. I didn’t have to be there all the time. Nor did they want me to be there all the time. So, and of course they were also with their dad most of the time during the school year and so it all worked out, I think in a pretty significant way for me to be able to follow the thing that I think I was most passionately driven to try to do. I really enjoyed being a judge and my first job as a judge I went to the Central Circuit and I worked one of the gruffest but kindest people I think the Air Force may ever have known ... a guy name Don Weir ... and he was just ... he was absolutely politically incorrect, he said all the wrong things ... especially with respect to women in the service. He had a pet name for every judge on the circuit – men and women – and I mean, he was just completely politically incorrect, but he was a great judge in terms of knowing the law and being in a position to teach you how to be a good judge. I owe him a great deal. He died shortly after he retired, which is not uncommon in the Air Force because people are ... some people are so completely tied to their Air Force lives that they don’t have any outside interests or activities and so when their Air Force life ends, the rest of their life ends as well. But he was a very, very good judge and he was someone that I owe a great deal to in terms of helping me to be successful. It was an experience being a judge to get up every Monday morning and fly to where the accused was. To do my best to see every individual before me as a person who was entitled to be treated as innocent until proven guilty and even if proven guilty, to be treated with compassion and respect. And I really thrived on the bench. There was a reason I was drawn to the courtroom and it was where I was intended to be. So, I wound up after my first assignment on the bench ... I wanted to stay on the bench so I went from the Eastern Circuit to the Central Circuit – which is not an easy thing to do – so I ... I’m sorry, I went from the Central Circuit to the Eastern Circuit ... it’s not an easy thing to do because they
have this theory in the Air Force that they should rotate you on and off the bench and you should go do, I don’t know, some claims or something else for a period of time and not stay on the bench consecutively and so the fact that I was able to get four consecutive assignments on the bench and get promoted to colonel on the bench, which was a very unusual thing to have happen, was really remarkable.

The process for becoming a judge is that you inform the career management unit of the Air Force that you’re interested in being a judge. The Judge Advocate General, in an apparently fairly arbitrary kind of way, reviews your record, gets some recommendations, asks others – your peers . . . prosecution and defense and otherwise – whether they think you’d be a good judge, takes a look at what the Air Force requirements are for people with your specific skill-set, looks at the vacancy rate in the judiciary and makes a decision of whether he’s going to appoint a judge or not. I wish I could say that at the time that I came to the bench they also looked at the possibility of ensuring that there was a balance of men and women, but they didn’t because it really wasn’t on their radar to be concerned about gender balance, gender equity. That’s just not something the Air Force, in my view, spent a lot of time working hard to promote. The other thing is that it’s very rare . . .

Ms. Turchi: Did you . . .
Ms. Turchi: ....did you find that your male colleagues on the bench treated you with a sense of equality?
Col. Murnane: Umm . . . because I demanded it, that’s what I think. I had been around the Air Force by that time long enough that I understood how to manage that population fairly well and I can tell you a story in my second assignment on the bench that demonstrates what I mean. My first assignment on the bench, like I said, I had the opportunity to work with Don Weir. Great guy. Politically incorrect. Having said that, I always knew where I stood with Don Weir and I knew who he was and I knew he was old school and knew he was going to say things that would make most women just cringe to think that you had to make it think that you had to work there. But he didn’t mean anything by it. I don’t know if that makes sense, but he would say outrageous stuff that was wholly inappropriate, but he didn’t mean that
in the way that it came out, you know. And so you just kind of, if you knew him, you understood him and you knew how to manage that and deal with it. I liked him very much. It was when I was working for Don Weir that I had the occasion to come back in touch with the guy who I had mentioned in an earlier session was the guy that told me I could be a mother or a lawyer and I had to let him know by the end of the day which it was going to be. My worst boss ever in the Air Force was Charlie Brothers because when Don Weir retired, he came to me and he said, “Hey Linda, you’re organizing my retirement dinner” because I was because, well, that was a woman thing. And so of course I would organize the retirement dinner, but I had also been a protocol officer, so I knew how to do it and I didn’t mind doing it and I would do it well and I knew that I would. And he said “I’d like to invite Charlie Brothers to my retirement ceremony, and I know you and he have a bit of a history”, and I said “I’d be delighted to have Charlie Brothers come to your retirement ceremony, but you might have to call the emergency squad for Charlie cause he’s just going to absolutely faint dead away when he finds out that I’m not only still in the Air Force, but that I’m a colonel select, taking the check from him for your retirement dinner.” So I mean, you know, life has a way of working out in strange ways, but after I left the Central Circuit, I went to the Eastern Circuit and while I was at the Eastern Circuit, I worked for a good guy. I think he was a good guy. His name was Bruce Brown. He was an African American and if there was any minority that was more significantly a minority than women on the bench, it was African Americans on the bench. There just weren’t African American judges in the Air Force. So, Bruce Brown was a unique individual with great skills. He was politically well connected in the Air Force and otherwise. He still lives in the DC area and is still politically connected. And I thought Bruce would really understand some of the issues and concerns that I had being a woman judge on the bench. I was the only woman judge in the Circuit. And also on that Circuit was a gentleman who I won’t mention his name, but he’s still on active duty and in a very high position today in the Air Force and two other male judges. The gentleman who is now in a very high position in the Air Force was only going to be on the bench about nine (9) months because they
were just going to put him there until he could get a little bit of a view of what being a military judge was about because they had bigger and better things in mind for him. And he has gone on to bigger and better things. Well, the example that I was going to share with you, Liz, is, I came in the office one day and the four men who were judges were in the other room just kind of laughing and yukking it up and I was the only woman in the Circuit who was a judge and so I went to the door and my male colleagues, my male counterparts, my equals ... said, “well, we were just talking about the fact that the most recent advance sheets of the Military Justice Reporter have a decision that have ... decisions in it that includes every female judge that’s currently on the bench.” And there were so few of us – that was kind of a remarkable thing that, you know, they would have an advance sheet that had a case for every woman who was currently on the bench in this advance sheet and I said, “Well, I don’t know what was so funny, but I would suggest to you that whatever it was that you were laughing about, it might not upset me, but Mary Boone,” my colleague, my other female colleague who was on the bench who was 6’1” and could you know, she was quite uniquely talented. She could fix the plumbing in her house and she could run electrical wires and she could put a wall up and . . . I mean, she was a very unique person. And I said, “but Mary Boone might sit on you if she heard you talking the way I heard you talking.” And I thought that might be enough to give them the hint that the way they were acting was maybe inappropriate. But one of the other men, who was a judge on the bench, turned the advance sheet sideways and said, “Yeah, I’ve had a look at the centerfold and it’s not very attractive anyway.”

Ms. Turchi: Ugh, how lovely. (sarcasm)

Col. Murnane: And he threw the book on the table. And that just infuriated me. And so I went from that encounter to the Chief Judge of the United States Air Force’s office. He was a colleague. A person I had worked with before. A person whose name I’ve mentioned in this session before . . . Mike McShane was then the Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force. And I went to his office and I said, “I don’t know exactly what to do about this,” but I said, “I’m going to tell you. I’m not tolerating this. I’m just not going to tolerate it.” And I said, “I don’t want to take out the entire
Circuit, but all four of the men judges who were in my Circuit were in there.” And I said, “regardless of whether they were just being knuckleheads or what, these are judges and there were other attorneys in our hallway who heard them yukking it up and being stupid.” And he said, “Well, do you want to file a complaint?” and I said, “No, let me think about it a while.” But I just needed a place to sound out what I wanted to do and what my thoughts were about it. So the Chief Trial Judge’s office was away, away from where my office was and I drove back to my office in the Eastern Circuit and I walked in the door and the Chief Circuit Judge, Bruce Brown confronted me when I came in because I had left him a note saying I was going to see the Chief Trial Judge and that I had some things that I was concerned about and he said, “Linda, I don’t know what you want me to do about that experience that we just had in the office.” And I said, “Well, I want you to knock it off and I want you to make all of them knock it off.” And I said, “You guys are judges and that’s just inappropriate.” And he said, “Well, who else did you tell?” And I said, “It’s none of your damn business who else I told.” And I said, “But the mere fact that you’re concerned about who else I told ought to tell you something about what you need to do to get it fixed.”

So a little bit later that day, they started coming in one by one. First the guy who is now in a much senior position in the Air Force came in to apologize for being such a knucklehead and being so stupid-acting and that he was inappropriate. I mean one by one they came in and they started apologizing to me. So you asked did I receive respect from my peers ... yes, because I demanded it. But not because it was innately the situation that because they were judges and I was a judge that they were somehow going to consider me an equal. It was because I demanded that they treat me as an equal. And I would not tolerate anything less. Interestingly, the guy who is now a senior official in the Department of Defense in the Air Force, has become the most sensitive, gender-advocate in the Air Force JAG Corps today. And he is known as such. And I don’t think that my ... I would call it a lecture because I gave him a lecture when he came to apologize to me. I said, “I’m going to accept your apology, but I’m going to tell you something. The Air Force has great things in mind for you. And they deserve
better than what I saw in that room that day and you need to make sure that it never happens again.” And I’m sure he calls it “the lecture” or whatever. I’m sure he doesn’t ever tell anybody about it, but he knows and I know what happened that day. So, I don’t think that it was suddenly some kind of safe haven where I had... I was sure that I would get the respect that I deserved for the work I had put in to get where I was. That wasn’t the case. But I demanded the respect that I deserved and I got it as the result of that demand. I will tell you.

One of the things that you had, Liz, on your questions is: did I have a role model judge as I came in to be a judge since there were only two women on the bench when I came in. I did not have a female role model, just as I didn’t have a role model for any other path in my life for the most part. The one woman that I had met who had been a military judge was a woman by the name of Millie Raichle... R-a-i-c-h-l-e. And I had met her very early on when I was a JAG and it was unfortunately the case that Millie Raichle was a confirmed alcoholic and when I met her she was drunk at an official gathering and it was well known that Millie was a person who was substance abuse impaired. And she eventually wound up being removed from the bench for her substance abuse and she was the only woman that was out there as a possible role model for us and I had already seen what that life was about because of my Mom’s situation. So Millie Raichle was not my role model and I had some good judges who I admired that I had practiced in front of. And I had some bad judges that I had practiced in front of. But I really kind of... it was just kind of charting my own course and being a good litigator – because I really loved litigation – I was a good litigator. And then knowing what I would have liked to have seen in a judge, being able to know the rules, apply the rules of evidence and procedure in the courtroom, treating everyone fairly, making sure that all the jurors paid attention, making sure that none of the jurors would fall asleep, making sure that the record was complete. I became very good at it and I did it for 10 years and I was good at it all 10 years as was demonstrated in the continuing evaluations I got from the Air Force saying that... several times, they said I was the best trial judge in the Air Force. So, it was a right calling for me and a right path for me to take.
Ms. Turchi: What would you say were some of the highlighted cases that you recall most or had touched you most or affected you even to today?

Col. Murnane: Well, it was interesting because since there were so few women who were on the bench and because, as I shared with you, Don Weir was just a guy that was politically incorrect and that was just the way he was. It started out that the Air Force doesn’t have a juvenile court bench. Juvenile court benches are very frequently the way that women would get to the bench in earliest days and still today in many cases. But we had something that was perhaps the military equivalent which is child sex abuse and domestic violence cases. And so I was, for whatever reason, when I was working under Don Weir, for about the 18 months that I worked under his supervision, it seemed that I would get all the child abuse and domestic violence cases because I guess I could understand that better than they could. I don’t know. I didn’t understand that. That was a bit confusing. I used to say, “Well, I know that I’m the junior judge in the Circuit, Judge Weir.” As the senior judge in the Circuit or the Chief Judge of the Circuit, he would assign the cases. And I’d say, “I know I’m the junior judge in the circuit.” And he’d say, “Yeah, and you know what that means.” And I said, “Yeah, it means I’m going to go to Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota in the winter and I’m going to go to Del Rio, south of San Antonio in Texas in the summer,” because the weather would be bad. And he said, “No. Del Rio is too good for you any time of the year. So you know, you’re going to get all the cases that are northern . . . freezing cold.” And whatever. But not because I was a woman. It was because I was the junior judge. And I understood that. That was not an issue for me. I had so many fascinating cases when I was a judge and as a Circuit . . . Chief Circuit Judge, when I was supervising other judges and I was the chief judge of the circuit. I mean they were all fascinating cases, but I did an identity theft case in my first assignment on the bench, the first three years I was on the bench, where the defendant was simultaneously a deserter from the Army and the Air Force. While he was in a deserter status from the Army, having stolen an identity of someone else to enlist in the Army, he re-enlisted in the Air Force while a deserter from the Army having stolen another person’s identity. He impregnated, fell in
love with and married in some order, a female airman while he was in technical training and they had a baby by the time that he got captured and was court-martialed in front of me and I presided at his trial for desertion from the Air Force, desertion from the Army, for fraudulent enlistment in the Air Force and fraudulent enlistment in the Army because had stolen other people’s identity, for theft because he stole from his roommate and because he stole from a company that he was working for when he got caught — a civilian company when he got caught — and he had stolen from ... using a government travel card, a couple of thousand dollars, and a number of other false official statements and whatever other series of crimes that are related to frauds and thefts. And I remember so distinctively when he pled guilty in my courtroom to his criminal offenses. First of all, the last person whose identity this airman stole was a person who had died as an infant at 5 months in an auto accident killing both the mother and this baby. And they had found the father of this person whose identity this airman had stolen and he was in his early 70’s and this poor man came in to testify about what it meant to him to learn that his infant son had had his identity stolen by this guy who had used it in such a dishonorable way. The defendant’s name was Michael Vincent Cantrell. That’s the name of the case: United States v. Cantrell. And when he pled guilty in front of me it was funny because in the military, when they plead guilty there’s no option to do an Alford plea. You have to admit to each and every element of each offense. And you do that in the military ordinarily by setting out a stipulation of fact that’s signed by the prosecution and the defense and by the accused. And so I used to read those stipulations out loud so that all the people in the gallery and the press and anybody else who wanted to attend would know what the facts were on which the accused was being sentenced, because otherwise it would just be a piece of paper in front of me, if they were judge alone and ... or in front of the jurors, if it was a jury, and nobody understood what it was that the guy was alleged to have actually done. So I would read it out and I would stop at the end of each paragraph and I would say,

“Do you have any questions about anything that’s in the first paragraph?”

— “No, Your Honor.”
"And is everything in that paragraph true?"

— "Yes, Your Honor."

So in this particular case I said, "Now, at the top of this document it says that this is the case of the United States v. Airman Michael Vincent Cantrell and then there’s a social security account number. And let me ask you, Airman Cantrell, is that your name, your grade and your social security account number?" And there was like this shifting around at the defense table and then the defense counsel who is now Colonel Barbara Shestko, but she was captain then, gets up and says, "Your Honor, can we come back to that?" And I thought, well now there’s an indication of where we’re headed with this case because we can’t get through "is that your name, your grade and your social security account number." So, the other thing that was interesting about that case is that this person’s wife . . . this guy has stolen four other identities. He was on probation in nine different states under various aliases for various credit card and check fraud offenses when he managed to steal a new identity and enlist in the Air Force. It was his fourth enlistment in the armed forces. In the first one, he got a bad conduct discharge under his adopted father’s name. The second one he stole his best friend’s name and he got an honorable discharge and a 30% disability for an ankle injury. And the third and fourth enlistments were the two that he was in front of me on – being a deserter from each. So, this guy was really quite a piece of work. And this woman who had met him and she was a military woman and she had met him while they were at technical training and again, you know, got pregnant and they got married. I don’t know whether, whatever that’s all about. And she came in my courtroom and she said, "Your Honor, please be lenient with my husband because regardless of whatever else he may have done, we have a 6 month old son and I need his help to raise my child." And I thought to myself, "You’ve got to be kidding me. I want to expose your child to this kind of decision-making as a part of their upbringing? Are you serious girl?" I was like, "You can do better without him. Trust me." So, I mean, that was a fascinating case. I had a lot of really fascinating cases. One of the most difficult cases I did was a case called United States v. Dodge. It was one of my last cases on the bench when I was the chief judge of the
Eastern Circuit out of Boiling Air Force Base in Washington, DC. Captain Dodge was a U.S. Air Force Academy graduate, which means that the United States taxpayer paid for Captain Dodge to go to undergraduate school at no expense to him and paid him a monthly stipend to be a cadet at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Captain Dodge did what a lot of . . . it’s terribly unfortunate, but we see a lot of individuals who have preyed on our youth as volunteers, not just in the military, I mean in a more general sense. Captain Dodge had preyed on our youth by becoming a youth volunteer soccer coach and Captain Dodge was in front of me for a little bit of everything. He had written some bad checks. He had failed to report to work without proper leave on a couple of occasions, but most significantly, he was illegally using drugs and he was exposing the youth from the soccer team to that illegal use of drugs and allowing them to illegally use drugs and he actually videotaped himself with a couple of these kids in his military uniform at his apartment passing a marijuana pipe around with the kids and is joking on the tape saying, “Oh yes, Your Honor, I’m a great role model for these children.”, obviously not thinking that it would be shown at his trial, but it was. And unfortunately the worst of his offenses included that he was making child pornography with a hidden camera in his vent in his bathroom because he had earned the trust of some of the parents. Largely, single-parent female parents who thought he was a great role model for their kids and so he had some of these kids over at his place overnight and he would videotape them in the bathroom secretly and sexually molested some of the boys. So, it was really quite a tragic case.
And both the Cantrell case and the Dodge case are reported cases, so you can Google on them and see the results and see the appellate decisions . . . each of those cases have been upheld on appeal. So you know, some really awful stuff. I mean we had your run of the mill minor marijuana possessions and cocaine use and marijuana use and shoplifting and theft and failure to repay and people not showing up. We had a “Just Say No to DNA” collection case involving an airman who wasn’t convinced that the Department of Defense had a legitimate need to have a copy of his DNA in their history files and he refused to donate his DNA and I presided at that trial. So I mean, we did a lot of really interesting and
of Panama which was really quite an exciting trip on a lot of different levels. I got
to take a ... go on a passage on the Panama Canal. All opportunities that I
probably would never had had but for the fact that I was a military judge. And
then I went to be the Chief Judge of the European Circuit in 2000 which was . . .
there just isn't any better job in the whole world than being the Chief Circuit
military judge in Europe. You're stationed in . . . at Ramstein Air Base Germany
as the Chief Circuit Judge and you have the awful responsibility of having to get
up every day and go to England, go to Italy, go to the Azores to hear criminal
cases, but I mean you're really, you know, getting the opportunity to go all over
Europe which was a fabulous experience. And then because I was there from
September 2000 to August of 2003, when the planes hit the Trade Towers on
September 11th, I became responsible for all of the U.S. Air Force installations
that were supporting Operation Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. And as a result of
that, I had the opportunity to try cases in Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The first
trials of each of the Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom in the combat zone
where I presided over a number of trials. I think that might be a good place for us
to start the next session, Liz. Is to talk about the experience of trying cases in
Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, if that would be alright.

Ms. Turchi: Sure. That sounds fascinating.
Col. Murnane: Yeah. Just because of the unique situation that you found yourself in being a
woman and a country with a Muslim tradition or state religion, whichever the case
may be. And especially the Saudi Arabia experience where the issue about driving
- I have some interesting stories about that. And so, in any event, if that would be
ok.

Ms. Turchi: Yeah. That sounds good. Are we offline now or is the recorder on?
Col. Murnane: I'll stop the recorder now.

----END OF SIXTH INTERVIEW----
Today is the 19th of May, 2013. This is the continued interview of Colonel Linda Murnane and I am Elizabeth Turchi. We last left off Linda at discussing some memorable cases that you presided over, U.S. v. Cantrell, U.S. v. Dodge case and then we continued on to the start of you explaining your experiences as Chief Circuit Military Judge for Europe. We mentioned that you would begin today with a bit of visiting that time of your life and moving to your AirForce . . . You indicated that in support of Iraqi Freedom which brought you to various locations in the Middle East.

Thanks Liz, it’s good to be back in touch.

It sure is.

After a few weeks of a break. Thanks for accommodating my personal schedule. You know one of the things that . . . I think both women and men, but maybe more women than men face is making sure that you have that balance between your family and your career and as you know my grandson made his first communion. My daughter graduated with her masters in social work. So I needed to take a couple weeks off the project that we’re in the mist of so that I could make sure that I met my family obligations which it wasn’t a situation where I could do both at the moment. It was . . . I just needed some time. So thank you so much for giving me a couple of weeks break and we’re back. So I will tell you Liz that in getting ready for our discussion today I . . . . It brings a lot of smiles because truly the best job anywhere in the whole entire universe is to be the Chief Circuit Military Judge for the United States Air Force in Europe. I say that to everyone who will listen and to some who would prefer not to listen because it really was just such an incredible experience and an incredible opportunity both to be of service to my country but also to see more of the world and to do things that some people will just never have the opportunity to do. I feel very, very fortunate to have been given
the opportunities to serve as Chief Circuit Military Judge for Europe. Of course at the time that I got the assignment as the CCMJ the United States has not yet . . . . They had been involved in the first Gulf War which dealt with Kuwait. And activities involving Iraq that the United States engaged in to liberate the ports in Kuwait. But we had not suffered the experience of September 11, 2011, because I went to Europe as the CCMJ in 2000, September of 2000. Of course, I had had an experience already being the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate at Ramstein and being the Staff Judge Advocate at Bitburg Air Base. So I had three years of living in Europe, specifically three years being stationed in Germany so I was going back to Ramstein Air Base where I would be physically located, but my job entailed being responsible for assigning judges and also presiding at trials myself as the Chief Judge for cases that were anywhere in the European Theater and that Theater included all of Europe, Northern Africa and Southwest Asia. So anything that wasn’t covered by the Pacific Circuit which covered the Far East, Japan, Hawaii, Korea anything that wasn’t covered by that would be covered by the European Circuit. There were only two of us in that Circuit, two Judges in the office. Initially my deputy chief judge, the second judge in my European office was a Lieutenant Colonel Roger Drew who was coming to that assignment after being the Deputy Chief Trial Judge in the United States Air Force, so he worked directly in the Chief Trial Judge Office and he came and served with me for 18 months and then the last 18 months of my assignment in Europe my Deputy was a gentleman who became important, very important in my next adventures. That gentleman is now at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. My Deputy Chief Judge for the last 18 months of my assignment there was Lieutenant Thomas W. Pittman, Wayde Pittman, who I had seen many times before me as a litigator. As a prosecutor or defense attorney because he was just an outstanding and exceptional litigator both prosecution and defense and eventually he came to be my Deputy Chief Trial Judge when I was the
Col. Murnane: Chief Trial Judge in Europe.

So between the two of us we had to cover all of the U.S. military installations that were anywhere in Europe, Southwest Asia and Northern Africa. And so on September 11, 2001, roughly a year into my assignment, when the aircraft hit the Trade Towers, we became responsible for assigning judges and presiding at trials for U.S. service members who were assigned or attached to military installations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom and that included responsibility for U.S. Air Force installations in Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Afghanistan and Iraq. The one thing about being in the Air Force, though, as opposed to being in say the Army, the Navy or the Marine Corp is that Class A resources like aircraft which are considered a highly expensive resource, aren’t generally physically located in the direct combat zone. So while we had U.S. airmen who were working in Iraq, and U.S. airmen who were working in Afghanistan, the majority of the forces for whom I was responsible for presiding at trials were in surrounding locations and so I wound up doing the first trials of both Operation Iraqi and Operation Enduring Freedom presiding at trials in Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. That was such a unique experience and something I wouldn’t trade for anything in the world. I did five separate deployments to conduct trials. There was a bit of controversy as to whether the trial should actually be done in the combat zone because technically Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia were considered a part of the combat zone even though they were not places that the U.S. was targeting or bombing and these were places where we had forces on the ground. We actually had some incidents including a fragging incident where a U.S. service member killed a number of people at one of those installations. We also had a number of incidents where missile attacks some of them believed to be gas related.

Ms. Turchi: Sorry.

Col. Murnane: Now that was pretty good there. First disconnect over an hour so.
Anyway, so some of the missile attacks that occurred at some of the U.S. facilities or coalition facilities were believed to be gas attacks and so there were regular gas drills and whenever you would deploy with your gas mask, your chemical gear you had to be upgraded and trained. I had to be qualified on a personal weapon although I didn’t carry a personal weapon while I was there because I’m not big into guns and I’m not terribly good at that. So in any event so when I landed the first time in the Middle East to try a case, it was fascinating because I was the senior officer onboard the flight and as I flew in on a military charter aircraft and so it turns out that the senior officer onboard the flight gets to pick the movies you watch because they’re just movies -- dvds they plug into a dvd player. There’s hot meals but there not like – there like microwave oven meals. It’s not like, you know, you’re flying first class. And I was seated next to the reserve auxiliary pilot because they fly in with 3 and out with 3 or something, and so because I had like the best seat on the plane because I was the senior officer onboard they had the backup pilot seating next to me. And he said to me as we were getting close to the end of our very long flight, and he said, “You know we’re going to turn the lights out here in just a minute and if you need to use the restroom or anything you may want to do it now.” And I said, “I’ve gone to the restroom in the dark before on a plane,” and he said, “No, not like this He said “We’re going to turn off all the lights.” And I said, “What do you mean by all the lights?” I said, You mean those little blinky lights at the end that tells other planes in the area that there’s a plane?” And he said, “Yeah we’re going to turn out all the lights. “And I said “Why are you going to turn out all the lights? Sounds kind of dangerous to me.” And he said “We come in and we land this aircraft what we call ‘cold and dead’ because, do you know where we are?” And I said “No, I have no idea where we are. You know, someplace on the way to whatever my location was that I was going.” And he said “We’re on the Iraq border” And he said, “We’ve had a couple of occasions where they’ve lit up our plane with radar and so this is the safest
way for us to come in so we don’t get shot out of the sky.” And that was the very first moment that I came to appreciate that I knew that I was going to get paid an extra – I was going to be tax free that month. I didn’t have to pay income tax for that month that I was going to be deployed and I now understood why. I was not going to have to pay income tax because unlike my fellow citizens in the United States, I was flying on an aircraft that was going to land cold and dead because I was flying in on the Iraq border and this was obviously not a routine matter. And so when we landed, which we did, and of course I’m very grateful that we safely landed, a gentleman came on board the plane and said “Welcome to such and such air base which we call the Sandbox. Please leave anything that might be offensive to our host nation aboard the plane and that includes any pornographic pictures, religious materials, and things of that nature.”

Now I had been briefed on this before I left because before U.S. military members deploy, there’s a very thorough process of preparing folks to go to the Middle East to make sure that our service members are aware of cultural sensitivities first of all and secondly that the number of incidents in which service members engage in conduct that might be offensive to the host country are minimized. And so I was aware of what was prohibited. I was aware of what they call General Order Number 1, which included that you couldn’t drink any alcoholic beverages while you were there, or that women could not appear on the beaches at some of these areas in areas where there were men in bathing suits or other attire. But what I didn’t appreciate was because I traveled a couple hundred days a year about 220-230 days a year, I used to travel with a lot of pictures of my kids and my grandkids in my wallet and a couple of those pictures included my daughters in their prom dresses, when they went to their prom. Something that I think a lot of moms and dads would commonly carry in their wallet. I mean pictures of their kids prom, pictures of their kids graduation where they wear the drape, girls that wear the drape and so I wasn’t prepared when I landed to be informed that those photos of my daughters in their off
the shoulder prom gowns which were not by U.S. standards at all risqué. My daughters were fairly conservative dressers but they wore off the shoulder gowns and those were considered pornographic in the countries to which I was traveling and I couldn’t safely bring my daughters’ photos in with me which I thought was fascinating. When I landed in Saudi Arabia, which weren’t the first cases that I did but it was some of the cases that I did were in Saudi Arabia, because I was a senior officer -- I was a full colonel--the gentleman that was assigned to assist with my arrival said, You know colonel because you’re a senior officer I have to offer you the keys to a car but just so you know women aren’t allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia and so if you drive you’ll be like the only blonde haired, blue eyed woman driving in Saudi Arabia. Or you’re very likely to be the only blonde haired blue eyed woman driving in Saudi Arabia which will increase the risk that you will be seen as a target because there must be some reason why a blonde haired blue eyed woman would be driving in Saudi Arabia. It means you must be a diplomat or something which would increase your value to someone who might want to kidnap you or take you hostage or you know otherwise do harm to you. And he said”And by the way, we cannot require that you wear this but here’s an abaya. We strongly recommend that you wear the abaya even though it’s a religious garment,”Some women in the military found that offensive. ,Specifically Sally McSally has made quite a celebrity of herself over that. Can you hear me?

Ms. Turchi: Sorry about that.
Col. Murnane: No problem.
Ms. Turchi: I can hear you.
Col. Murnane: Okay. So Sally McSally had made quite a celebrity of herself over refusing to wear the abaya. And she recently ran for Congress. She’s very well known for taking that stand. While I understand her position, it was my position when I started traveling to some of these places during the period of time that Operation Iraqi and Enduring Freedom were going on,
my kids, my daughters were pretty freaked out about it. They were very concerned that their mom was going to get killed. And what I had told my daughters was “Look – I’ve been in a lot of difficult situations in the service and the one thing that you can be sure of is that I’m going to get in alive and I’m going to get out alive because I make smart decisions when I’m faced with these kind of unique environments that I wound up going into.” And so I weighed all of that and I decided that -- well the other thing I did was when they said “Well Colonel you know we have to give you the keys to a car but you know if you drive you’re going to be the only blonde haired blue eyed woman driving in Saudi Arabia which will make you a higher profile target.” I said to him “Well what are my alternatives?” And they said “Well we’ll give you a driver person.” And I said “Well okay, tell me about the driver person. And they said “Well he’ll be a host country national somebody who is familiar with the region. Somebody who speaks the local language and he’ll take you wherever you go so kind of like a chauffeur.” And I said “Well before I make a decision”, because I also wasn’t a shy wallflower – never have been never will be. And I said “Let me look at the map”. And so because I had driven in Japan where I couldn’t read a word of Japanese, I knew that the way that you probably got around in Saudi Arabia where I also wouldn’t be able to read any of the street signs was by picture maps primarily. And so I said I better you know – cause I’m not very good at directions you know. I get lost easily even when I have street signs so that I can read and so I look – go ahead.

No no go ahead.

And so I looked at this map book that they had which it would have like a picture of an intersection. There would be like a donkey cart and maybe a concrete building in the back and a palm tree. They’d say – the instructions would say to get from this place to that place if you’re at this intersection where this picture looks like you turn left and if you’re under attack this is where the nearest safe house is and then it would show you
like where the safe house is. And I was like “Oh, no. I can’t do that. I just can’t navigate in that kind of environment, you know. I need the driver person. Give me one of those driver people.” So it turns out that it was a really good thing that I took the driver person because after my first trial in Saudi Arabia was over, I went to Riyadh and Riyadh had been hit by a missile attack during the conflict shortly before I was there. And so we went to Riyadh to go to shopping and among other things I saw how the Sharia police chose to enforce things like the inappropriate wear of the abaya although I wasn’t personally dragged out of my vehicle which had different plates on it. I did see the local religious police beating a woman, and when I asked my driver, who was from the region, what that was about, he said that it was the Sharia and obviously this woman had committed some infraction and they were beating her out at a square that had been built for playing soccer that they were beating her. But when we were there shopping I also – it was also good that I had the driver there because not being from that culture I was not sensitive to the fact that I couldn’t just go in and shop but because I was a woman. The shop owner couldn’t speak to me and so basically the way I shopped was that I would go to the shop and I would find something that I wanted to barter for a price for or that I thought that I would like to have and then I would go to my driver and I would say this is what I would like to have, this is what I’m willing to spend on it and oh by the way I’ll be over in that next shop picking something else out that you can assist me with when you get done over there. Now this is a part of the culture that I probably could have gotten used to in the United States where you know you basically pick things out and then you send a gentleman in to you know do your bartering for you. It was a very different cultural experience. But when the shopping trip was over, I went out to the car and I went to reach for the car door and my driver – again someone familiar with the local area, shouted at me and said “Don’t touch the car!” And he said it in a very urgent and a very loud voice. Enough that I jumped back from the car. And he pulled
out his pocket mirror and he walked around the bottom of the car checking for a bomb. And I thought to myself, you know, really good thing that I didn’t play stubborn and decide to drive myself because I’m not very good mechanically either. Not only am I directionally challenged but I’m not much of a mechanic and so I pictured myself standing there going “Muffler? Bomb? Muffler? Bomb? I just don’t know I can’t decide. Does Triple A like make house calls?” Cause I really didn’t have that kind of - I didn’t come to Saudi Arabia with that kind of expertise if you understand what I’m saying. So it was a very unique enriching experience in a lot of ways for me. And one that I will never ever forget.

Of course it was also while I was in Europe as the chief circuit trial judge in addition to Omar, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. I also had the opportunity to be on the first U.S. military assistance team that was invited to come to Rwanda following the genocide and that came about as a part of my status as an adjunct faculty member with the Defense Institute for International Legal Studies which is the U.S.-based Department of Defense lead agent for rule of law and human rights training globally in emerging democracies. And what I told by the folks organizing my travel from Ramstein Air Base in Germany to Rwanda was that at the end of the sanction period following the Rwanda genocide, the U.S. was anxious to provide whatever military assistance it could to the newly formed military government or government I'm sorry not military government but the government of Rwanda and that they offered them any defense institute national legal studies program that they would like to have and what they were interested in was a program on freedom of speech and freedom of the press. At the time I actually went into Rwanda on the day that Paul Kagami was inaugurated and it was still quite unstable in Rwanda and they were trying to minimize the number of people who would have to be brought in on a team. Among other things, they felt that it was sufficiently unstable that
we couldn’t stay in a hotel and so we were going to actually be housed in the air attache’s residence while we were there because it was a guarded compound. And because I had been a press officer for the Air Force before I became a judge, I could assist in multiple ways as part of the program team. So they did have a press officer who came with us. An excellent – a really fine Public Affairs gentleman who really knew his business and did a great job. But I was also able to provide perspective not only regarding freedom of speech but also my personal experience in having been a journalist for the Air Force. So I understood that’s how the decision was taken that led to my being selected as part of the team. So I got to go do that and as part of that, the weekend between our first week and our second week in Rwanda, I was given the opportunity to go on the gorilla trek in the Rhungheri National Forest which is where the gorillas that were the subject of the movie “Gorillas in the Mist” are living and are being studied. So I got to go gorilla trekking which is not something this little girl from Dillonvale, Ohio ever thought would happen in her lifetime. So that was really exciting and I have fabulous fabulous pictures of my gorilla trek which I will never forget. And I also visited three of the genocides sights while I was there and actually got to physically visit and observe some of the horrible visual and lasting memories of Rwanda. I have photos of bodies as far as you can or skulls as far as you can see where they were lined up on tables. Additionally, there was one church that I went to that was a genocide sight where there were still lots of bones and clothing and human remains lying all around so it was really quite awful. It was life changing on that trip. I came back from that trip -- by this time my husband had been reassigned to his dream job which was to be a commander. He was living in Italy and I was living in Germany and I phoned him when I came back from Rwanda and I was just sobbing
because I said you know I just felt called to be there. There’s so much work to be done and so much that could be done to help them in their transition to peace. And the poverty was so immense. I wish every American could go there one time because the level of poverty that I observed in my work in Africa whether it’s in Rwanda or Zambia, Liberia, Uganda, or Tanzania, the level of poverty is so remarkably greater than anything we know here in the United States. Really, really, really eye opening. And I was sobbing and crying and I kept saying I just felt called to go back Kevin I feel called to go back. And that’s when I began the process of applying to jobs with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda thinking that this maybe was the whisper that I listened for as to where I’m supposed to be and what I’m meant to do in this lifetime.

I applied many many times for positions at the ICTR and never once got even a phone call or a letter saying you know thank you for your interest, so I never even made the short list. My husband who has been a champion throughout all of this and willing to go with me to crazy places and do wild things, but he just said to me “You know, Linda, we can save the world here and they have flush toilets in the United States. So maybe could you save the world someplace where’s there is a flush toilet.” And that becomes important later on when I get the call to come to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia because I reminded him of that and I said “I’ve been called and invited to come to ICTY for ninety days to take over the complex litigation chamber and Kevin they have flush toilets.” So it was pretty fascinating in any event. Liz I’ve kept you on for 90 minutes so is it okay if we stop for today.

Ms. Turchi: Yeah I’m good to go as long as you want to continue. If you want to stop.

Col. Murnane: I think it’s a good stop point because I’ve talked about you know Oman,
Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. I haven’t talked about the nature of the cases but I’m not sure that that’s really something that I want to focus on. And I haven’t given too much information about where I was because some of those places I really can’t describe or talk about so I think maybe I’ll leave it at that. Okay?

Ms. Turchi: Sure, sure no problem.

---END OF SEVENTH INTERVIEW---
EIGHTH INTERVIEW; JULY 28, 2013

Ms. Turchi: Here we are. Today is the 28th of July. I’m Elizabeth Turchi and I’m here with Col. Linda Murnane. This is the ABA’s Women Trailblazers in the Law Oral History Project. And Linda, we last spoke about two months ago and we were discussing your time in Rwanda. So why don’t we pick up from there and you explain to us where things in your life were leading off with coming back from Rwanda.

Col. Murnane: Thanks Liz. And thanks for giving me a couple of weeks so that I could spend a bit of quality time with my kids and my grandkids. And I appreciate the opportunity to resume today. The trip to Rwanda as I shared with you earlier was part of the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, an entity that, the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies is the Department of Defense lead agent responsible for human rights and rule of law training in emerging democracies on behalf of the Department of Defense. And they organize small groups of experts who go out and train on various topics throughout different countries under agreements with the United States and the Department of State and the Department of Defense. And we train both military and non-military leaders, civic leaders, judges, lawyers and others. So it was really an honor to be part of that team that went to Rwanda. I had the opportunity as a part of the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies or DIILS, to travel a number of places I probably would never have been and to meet people who profoundly impacted my life. One of the first DIILS trip I was on was the trip to Latvia. And the reason that DIILS was going to Latvia is that this was shortly after the Soviet Union had broken up and Latvia was endeavoring to put itself in a position to become a full partner in NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. If you visit Latvia, one of the things that you can’t help but be impressed by is the number of times that Latvia has been occupied by a force that
was on its soil because it’s been occupied by virtually every major force that’s landed on its shores from the time of the Vikings onward. And they have a place in Riga, which is the capital city of Latvia, called the Occupation Museum that kind of details the history of occupations that that country has undergone. So when the Soviet Union fell apart and Latvia was restored to independence, they wanted to pursue full partnership with NATO in hopes of providing a more stable country for its citizens. And I was there to assist them in assessing their mobile military justice capability. They had signed on for a program the United States called the Partnership for Peace and they had actually deployed a number of Latvian conscript soldiers whose service was as the result of a mandatory service obligation. So these were younger individuals, 18 to 21. And they were signed on to assist with some NATO support missions. And it didn’t take very long for some of these guys to figure out if they went some place that wasn’t really attractive and if they really didn’t want to be there, if they tore up a bar or got themselves in some sort of trouble, that they would be sent back to Latvia because they did not have in existence a military justice system that enabled Latvia to discipline their conduct while they were deployed. The United States has a very advanced military justice code that applies without geographic restriction to all U.S. service members who are deployed worldwide and that justice system is applied wherever the soldier may be which is why I wound up traveling to places like Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, all over Europe and all over Asia, as well as across the United States to try U.S. service members under this military justice code. So our purpose in going to Latvia was to try to assist them in drafting their own military justice code. Interestingly, we found out that Latvia had maybe six or seven lawyers in their entire military force which meant that their code couldn’t look like our code where every major military installation has at least one and usually more than one lawyer on staff. So we were there, I went six times to the Riga, Leipaja, Aluksne and Cesis in Latvia to assess and then assist Team Latvia in drafting legislation that would enable them to have a mobile military justice code. Then I later went back to help train the judges who would be responsible for implementing that code and the various legal officials
that would be able to assist in implementing that code once it was enacted, which it later was with some amendments. Then I had the occasion to also be selected by the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies to go to Zambia. And in Zambia, I did two different programs. The primary program I was there for was addressing issues related to recent legislation in Zambia that called for a minimum of 30 percent of the state, leading state jobs to be reserved for women. And as it was explained to me, one of the things that they wanted us to look at were pitfalls and challenges that the women selected for those jobs might anticipate would be put in their way of success. Quota systems in the United States have been in existence -- I mentioned, I think, that when I went to the Officer Training School program there was a quota system in place that made the difference between my being selected and not being selected to the commissioning program because there was a 12 percent quota in place at the time that I was selected to go to Officer Training School in the US. But there were a lot of other things that they put in our way to try to ensure that we failed and I'm convinced of that to this day that they were unnecessary obstacles that were set up to enable folks who said that women shouldn't serve, couldn't serve to be able to say, "See, we told you so. We were right." And so in any event, I went to Zambia to do that and also to do a program on wills, estates and probate which was principally designed to help us address or help the Zambians address issues of land ownership and individuals who were inheriting land or taking land without inheritance rights because no organized way of transferring property existed under their system. I also had the opportunity to go to Papua New Guinea and Papua New Guinea was really fascinating. I'd never been to Papua New Guinea in my whole life and had to actually look up where it was on the map when they asked me if I'd go. It turned out to one of the most dangerous places I think I visited in all of my Air Force career and I wound up along with my colleagues being victimized in a robbery basically. My colleagues, Litsu Rijek, is how I think she spells her name. Litsu was from the American Embassy, US Embassy in Canberra, Australia and was there to help us set the program up. Litsu, Jim Gordon, US Marines, who was the country program
manager I was travelling with, and a contractor by the name of Jose Rodriquez who was there working on the language labs in Papua New Guinea. We were walking back from dinner. It wasn’t dark yet. There were four of us. It was only about two blocks. I had only been in the country a couple of hours. We had gone to a dinner at a small Japanese restaurant that wasn’t more than a couple of blocks from our gated guarded hotel. We stayed at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Port Moresby and four gentlemen drove up in a car, jumped out, forced Litsu and I to the ground with knives to our shoulders and Jim and Jose, the four guys had zip guns, handmade zip guns with rubber-band triggers they were using to keep them at bay, I guess. Stole our money, wallets, didn’t take my jewelry which really surprised me, kicked Litsu in the head, she suffered a closed-head injury. I’m convinced that that happened because they kept screaming at us to get on the ground, get on the ground. So I got on the ground but Jose wasn’t getting on the ground. He was a big guy, and he could have probably taken out the guy he was being held by I guess, but he wasn’t going to get on the ground and I think they got frustrated and kicked her in the head, kicked Litsu in the head. She suffered a closed head injury, a broken nose. So it was a bit of a dangerous trip. It was kind of interesting because it taught me a lot of things about survival skills. I learned early in my travels not to carry all my money in one place so I had a few dollars in my wallet, maybe $40 in my wallet. I had money in mostly other places, in my shoe, in the safe, my passport was in the safe, a copy of my passport was in my purse. But the passport was in the safe in my room, most of my money was in the safe in the room, I had some money in my front pockets of the pants which they didn’t get. When they started searching for it, my hips were against the pavement and they didn’t take my shoes off which I’m going to remember forever, keep your money in your shoe. It might be smelly but it still spends. And so it took the embassy a couple of days for DIILS to get some emergency cash to us because all of our credit cards had been stolen. Nobody ever tried to use my credit cards from Papua New Guinea. Of course I cancelled them all in the next 24 hours. But there we were in Papua New Guinea, no credit card, no cash so we lived on those little triangle sandwiches that they have at
happy hour. And the program we were putting on included breakfast and lunch so we’d have breakfast and lunch at the program and we’d go to happy hour at the bar. I told my husband when I came home, “You know, if I don’t ever eat another triangle sandwich in my whole life it will be too soon.” Anyway it was too funny. It taught me some things about survival. They had stolen my car keys so trying to figure out how I was going to drive my car home that was in the airport parking lot when I got home was a bit of question because I didn’t have a spare key because the spare key was with my husband in Italy because Kevin was in Italy at the time. So the spare key to the car wasn’t at home, it was in Italy and so it taught me some good problem-solving skills to be able to do that. So it was quite fascinating. All of the experiences with DIILS led me, and you’ll hear later on I actually wind up working for DIILS after I worked for the ICTY for a couple months. I worked later in my career path, I leave the Air Force, I go to work in Brown County as a rural prosecutor, I go to work for the State of Kentucky as their Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission. Then I got to the ICTY to work as the senior legal officer in chambers at the ICTY and then I go to work for DIILS for nine months and I’ll talk a little bit about what I do for DIILS when I’m there in chronology as I walk through the end of this process and then I go back to the tribunal and then I leave the tribunal in 2012.

Ms. Turchi: So Linda, when you were explaining your work for DIILS in Latvia assisting them in drafting their justice code, it seems like you had an opportunity to use some of your own experience with I guess challenges as a woman. Would you say that’s an accurate statement that you were able to bring some of your own past experiences to affecting policy elsewhere in the world.

Col. Murnane: I think that’s true, and it’s really funny how that turns out so I’m going to jump ahead a couple of years and I’m at the ICTY. And I in the hallway and Judge Uldis Kinis has just arrived at the ICTY and Judge Kinis is the new judge from Latvia. And I say to Judge Kinis, “It’s so good to meet you.” I said “I’ve spent quite a bit of time in Latvia. I’ve been there six times,” and he was surprised by that. And I said “I helped to draft the code, the mobile military justice code for Latvia and it was read in to the Saema, and that was very exciting for me to help
to draft legislation that I think has since been enacted in your country.” And he said, “You know, I attended a seminar, it was first seminar on military justice.” This is a judge now at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. He’s sitting on war crimes cases. And he said, “You know I attended a seminar when I was in Latvia. It was my first exposure to military justice and there was a woman there that I had a discussion with about women’s rights issues in the military.” He said, “Could that have been you?” And I said, “Yes, that was me”.

Ms. Turchi: One, it’s a very small world.

Col. Murnane: Can you believe that. Obviously he remembered that conversation and yes I think everywhere I went unfortunately or fortunately whichever the case may be you don’t leave your gender behind and you can’t if you’re passionate about these issues as I am passionate about these issues, you want to do what you can if there’s anything you can do to prevent other women from experiencing the same kinds of discrimination and the lack of equal opportunity. You want other women to fare better than you fared or at least that’s the way I feel. I know there are women who say “I got through it, they will too”. And I understand those who think that way. That’s just not the way I felt about the process. So in any event, when I had that conversation with Judge Kinis I was like “Wow”. I think it was maybe the first time I can put my finger on an example of how I may have impacted someone in some of the work that I did and I was really thrilled about that.

Ms. Turchi: It’s a very tangible example of that. I’m sure there are many but this is quite tangible, yes. Good for you.

Col. Murnane: So about that time that I was working with DIILS and, of course, I was still the Chief Military Judge in Europe, it came to be time -- the U.S. military reassigned you every two to three years and there are good reasons for that. The idea of fresh blood, new thought, not so much cronyism, not so much nepotism, moving fresh blood in, new thought process I think is a really valid consideration that the military has included among other reasons that they have reassigned people on a
recurring basis. So I had reached the point where I knew that my assignment in Europe was due shortly to come to an end. So that year I went to the U.S. Air Forces Europe Staff Judge Advocate Conference which is where you have all of the senior legal officials for the military services come together to discuss unique problems and issues within your theater of military operations and interestingly among the people who were in my US Air Forces Europe staff judge advocate class when I went to that meeting, among them were Brenda Hollis who is now the prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone and previously worked for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. She was responsible for the prosecution of the Furundžija case which was the first sexual assault case. Brenda and I were contemporaries in the military in both, she was the staff judge advocate at Rhein Main when I was the staff judge advocate at Bitburg Air Base. She wasn’t there when I was the Chief Judge in Europe so she wasn’t at this particular conference but Brenda and I had been at USAFE, U.S. Air Forces Europe judge advocate conferences together before now. So it was a really strong class of women in the military. Brenda is somebody that certainly has my utmost respect and admiration but I wouldn’t say she was a mentor. That wouldn’t be accurate. In any event, and I think she would agree with that. But I went to the U.S. Air Forces Europe Staff Judge Advocate Conference and when I was there part of what you do while you’re at this conference is you meet with your career advisor or the person we called JAX Career Management or Professional Development Officer, and they’re the ones that are supposed to kind of help guide you where your next assignment’s going to be. And I met with the career management guy for lawyers at the 06 colonel grade and he said, “Linda, you know we’re thinking about sending you to the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals because you’ve been a trial judge and a chief circuit judge now for nine years and we could really use your experience on the appeals bench.” And I told him you know, “Gary”, his name was Gary Halbert, and I said you know “Gary, I really appreciate that and it’s very flattering but I don’t see myself as an appellate judge, I see myself as more of an Air Force trial judge. Appellate judges in the U.S. military have kind of a different role. And I said I see myself as more make
a decision, move on, and let the appeals court figure out if I got it right or wrong and in 99.9 percent of the cases I got it right and I'd really like to stay on the trial bench.” I only had a maximum of three more years left in the military because there was a mandatory requirement that military officers retire at 30 years of active service if they retired at the grade of colonel or below, you couldn’t serve more than 30 and I could serve 32 total and I could serve 32 total only because I had two years of enlisted service, and your enlisted service didn’t count because the rule of 30 years of commissioned service and my 30 years of commissioned service was going to be up in two or three years. And I said what I’d really like to do is, because my husband was at that time stationed in Italy, I would really like to extend for one year as the Chief Trial Judge in Europe, not to mention that being the Chief Trial Judge in Europe is like the best job in the whole entire global universe and there isn’t any better job anywhere ever that anyone can ever get and that’s still the truth because it’s just like the most incredible experience to be the Chief Trial Judge in Europe and places you get to go and things you get to do and doing it all the while that you’re doing a job that you just love which I did. I said I would really like to extend for one year and then when Kevin comes out of Italy I’ll just retire. They said well, that’s not likely to happen because they had already promised my job to a guy named Mike Burd and so I was going to have to leave. Then Gary said to me, Gary Halbert said to me “What would you think about the Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force.” And I said, “You know Gary, I’ve thought about that because they had never had a female Chief Trial Judge of the United States Air Force.” In the entire history of the Air Force, there had never been a woman Chief Trial Judge. The Chief Trial Judge’s job is less about trying cases ordinarily although there had been some chief trial judges who, like Mike McShane, who incredibly tried the most cases and was the Chief Trial Judge but it’s more about administration, things like getting the budget organized, making sure all the circuits are functioning, keeping track statistically of all the different requirements and obligations, the report to Congress, providing information to the Judge Advocate General on an as-needed basis for different issues that come up. Dealing with any misconduct issues that arise
although there were few. Any time that a military judge was accused of doing something that was improper. It had a lot more administration with it and a lot less on-the-bench judging. And I told him “You know Gary, I could do that job. And I wouldn’t mind doing that job and I wouldn’t mind doing that job primarily because there’s never been a woman to do it. And it would be sort of the one last glass ceiling for me to break through before I retire, so yes, I would do that.” That’s what I told him. He said the idea would be, “You would come back and you would take the Eastern Circuit which is co-located with the Chief Trial Judge’s, it’s not in the same office but it’s in the same vicinity, it’s in Washington, DC and you would basically understudy your boss who would be John Powers and when he gets ready to retire, then you would take over,” and I said yeah. I talked to Kevin, my husband, and yeah, we would agree to do that. So that was the understanding is that I was going to come back to the Eastern Circuit and I was going to be the Chief Trial Judge for the Eastern Circuit just like I had been the Chief Circuit Judge or the Chief Trial Judge for Europe. I would come back to the circuit for Washington, DC which was the jurisdiction with all of the Eastern Seaboard states, it was Maine to Miami, west to St. Louis, south to Biloxi, all the Air Force installations that fell within that geographic area would be my responsibility and I would have four trial judges who worked for me and myself, so a total of five full-time judges and two reserve judges who would assist me in making sure we covered all the cases in all of those 24 military installations, I think it was 24 that were throughout that eastern third of the United States. And I would also manage the trial docket for the Chief Trial Judge and for his deputy. And so I said yeah, I would do that. So I talked to Kevin and that’s what we were going to do. He was going to be in Italy one more year, I would go to Washington, I would get a house, he would come meet me after a year because he would have to apply for an assignment at the Pentagon which wasn’t, Washington DC was not our favorite place to be. There are a lot of people who really love working there, but we weren’t two of them but we could make it work. And Kevin was willing to go back to Washington DC to work in the Pentagon with what he has to do in his line of work so I could break
that one final glass ceiling. In the meantime I continued to try cases in Europe including cases that involved my being transported through the Rhein Main Air Base, which was the major military hub there or the Frankfurt Airport, Frankfurt, Germany airport because my home station was in Germany. And that becomes important a little bit later because of what happens with the assignment. So it came to an end, my three fabulous years in Europe, really the best assignment I’ve had, the Chief Trial Judge in Europe. And I moved to Washington, DC and I went again to the General Court Martial Staff Judge Advocate’s Meeting for all the colonels in the Air Force along with the Judge Advocate General and at that time the Judge Advocate General of the Air Force was a person named Thomas Fiscus and he was a two-star general. And General Fiscus was not someone that I got on well with although all trial judges in the Air Force and all appellate judges in the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals are appointed by General Fiscus and so although he and I did not get on well and we weren’t friends, he had endorsed my officer effectiveness reports, my annual report with things like “She is the best trial judge in the Air Force. This officer needs to be challenged with increased responsibility so we can match her potential.” It said really great things about my performance as a judge although we didn’t like one another personally and I really didn’t like him a lot.

So I went to this General Court Martial Staff Judge Advocate Meeting in Omaha, Nebraska that year. And it was the year that I thought John Powers was likely to retire and I was going to take over my last couple of years as the Chief Trial Judge of the United States Air Force. I thought I was going to be the first woman to do that, and that would be my swan song and then I’d retire and go off into oblivion. So I was at the General Court Martial Staff Judge Advocate meeting and I was talking to my colleague, my peer, a guy named Dave Brash, a very nice man. He’s a very nice man. I liked Dave Brash very much. He’d been the Chief Circuit Military Judge for the Pacific where he had responsibility for Japan, Okinawa, Yokota, and Misawa, three bases in Japan, as well as Korea, and there were primarily two bases in Korea plus a couple other minor installations in Korea. So he had basically the smallest circuit and Dave was a good attorney
and somebody I had a lot of respect for -- but he hadn’t done the things I had done. He hadn’t done the extra things that I had done and he certainly wasn’t involved in the American Bar Association, he wasn’t involved in the National Association of Women Judges or any national associations that I knew of. He wasn’t out there representing the Department of Defense at a lot of these national and international entities. He hadn’t been on, I was on a project to redesign the reporting system, the computerized reporting system that we used. I’d done a lot of extra things that I had been recognized for in my performance assessments and Dave hadn’t done those things. So I asked Dave when I was there, “So you’re going to be coming out of Japan, do you know where you’re going next?” And he said “Well, they’ve talked to me about a couple of things but nothing’s for sure yet.” I asked him, “Did they tell you where to buy real estate yet?” He said “Well, I was told not to say anything”. I said, “Okay I don’t want to have you violate anything.”

Dave had told me he wanted to go to the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals. Since they had tried to get me to go to the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals, I had actually talked to some folks who I knew suggesting that he would be great on the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals and I thought, well maybe, he’s going to be on the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals. But then my boss, Colonel Powers came to me and he said to me “Linda, have you had a chance to talk to the career management folks,” and I said “No, should I?” I mean I thought everything was a go, I had already moved to Washington, I knew what their plan was. He said “I think they’re going to force me to retire.” I told him “Well they did talk to me about taking your position when you were ready to retire, but nobody said anything to me about forcing you to retire.” He said “Well, the word I have is that Dave Brash is going to replace me.” And I said “What!”. He said, “The word I have is that I’m to leave and that Dave Brash is going to replace me.” And I said “Well, that comes as news to me because I only came back to Washington for one reason, I don’t like Washington. I wouldn’t have come back here to be the Chief Circuit Judge for Washington DC because I’ve already been a Chief Circuit Judge. I didn’t need that credential again.”
And I said “So, this is really news to me”. So I called Kevin and I said “Look, I don’t know what’s happened but I think they’re going to give Dave Brash the Chief Trial Judge job and the day that happens Kevin, I want to quit because I’m not going to do this one more time. Not one more time, I’m not going to be told that I’m the best qualified person for something and then have a man take my job. I’m just not going to do it.” And I was furious about it. And I said, “Nobody has told me why that might bHey Linda, you made a bad decision in a case. Hey we don’t like the way you’re running the Circuit. Hey Linda, whatever.’ There was nothing. It was absolute silence. If they do this without telling me why I’m no longer going to the first woman to be the Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force, I just want to quit that day. And Kevin being the kind of man that he is. He’s been my greatest supporter ever. Even though he was now committed to coming to the Pentagon for a minimum of one year because he had agreed to an assignment so we could be together yet again. He said “If you feel like you need to retire, you do what you have to do.” And I said, I’ll get a job doing something else. But I said I just, I like Dave Brash, he’s a nice man, I just won’t do this not one more time, I just won’t do it. I won’t do it. So sure enough out came the announcement, the Judge Advocate General of the United States Air Force is pleased to announce that he has appointed Dave Brash as the next Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force. And I contacted the Judge Advocate General’s office that day. You ordinarily had to put in your papers and wait six months to retire. I wanted to retire. I had lined up a job working as a felony prosecutor in a small rural county in Ohio. I had never worked in this county but I knew somebody there who helped me get the job and I said I wanted to start the first of June and that was less than six months from the date that I was applying to retire and so they said, “Gee Linda, you’re supposed to give six months notice.” And I said “I don’t know why this happened, but I’m quite sure the Judge Advocate General is willing to waive the six-month requirement because I had been told I was coming back to be the Chief Trial Judge, I’m not going to be the Chief Trial Judge, I don’t know what his reasons are, but you tell him that I’m was pretty sure he wanted to waive my six-month waiting time.”
So sure enough I get the approval to retire soon, sooner than six months, I retired in like two months. I went on terminal leave about 30 days later and I went to work in Brown County as the felony prosecutor in Brown County, Ohio, Georgetown, Ohio.

Well, it wasn’t until a few months after I had been out of the Air Force, I’m sitting at my office in Brown County, Ohio, and I get a phone call from Nicole Gaudiano who is a reporter for the Air Force Times and she says “Col. Murnane, my name’s Nicole Gaudiano, I’m a reporter with the Air Force Times. I have two independent reports that you are responsible for reporting that General Fiscus, the Judge Advocate General of the United States Air Force, was engaged in sexually-inappropriate relationships with a number of female members of his staff and I wanted to know if you would like to comment.” And I said well, “Nicole”, I said, “wow that’s really amazing because I’ve been reading in the Air Force Times about the fact that the Judge Advocate General of the Air Force, the guy who should have been the person to nominate me to the Chief Trial Judge job, is under investigation. I understand from the press reports that I’ve read that the individual who reported the alleged misconduct of the Judge Advocate General did so by faxing an anonymous letter to General Jumper, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.” And I said, “Nicole, all I’m going to tell you is that I didn’t know that General Fiscus was engaged in misconduct with 22 or 23 women in the Department which is what it turns out the investigation shows.” And I said, “But I will tell you this. Anyone who knows me knows that I would never fax an anonymous letter to General Jumper if I had information like that. They would tell you that Linda Murnane would march into General Jumper’s office and demand that General Fiscus be relieved of duty, but I would never have faxed an anonymous letter to General Jumper to report what at least from my reading of the report seems to be serious misconduct by the Senior Legal Officer of the Department of the Air Force.” And I said, “I don’t know who your two sources and I suspect because I used to be a journalist that you probably can’t tell me or won’t tell me. But I will tell you this, some things add up
because you say this.” She said well the report I have is that your were in the Rhein Main Airport in Germany and you saw him with one of his paramours and that’s what you reported. And I told her, “You know what, Nicole, now it all make sense to me. Because I was brought back to Washington under the theory that I was going to be the Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force. General Fiscus makes that appointment. If he believed, I suspect he and his paramour, a woman who was the Staff Judge Advocate at RheinMain whose name I have but I’m not going to put in this report. But it’s in the Inspector General report. I suspect she was involved with General Fiscus. I suspect that the two of them saw me when I was in the Rhein Main Airport because I was in the RheinMain Airport all the time and they must have concluded that I turned them in.” “But I didn’t. And I’ve read the letter.” I had done a Freedom of Information Act request for a copy of the report that was done by the Inspector General and I said “While my copy of the report is redacted,” I said, “I understand now while General Fiscus didn’t want me as the Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force.”

Ms. Turchi: Wow, unbelievable.

Col. Murnane: Well, it turns out I had actually had a conversation with the woman who was the Staff Judge Advocate at RheinMain, who it turns out was one of his several paramours, and apparently one of the things the report talks about is them cooking naked in their aprons together. And I had actually had a conversation with her and her first name was Liz by the way. But I had had a conversation with Liz and she was an unmarried major at the time with really good credentials and I was always trying to recruit women who wanted to be judges in the Air Force. When I was appointed as a trial judge in the Air Force, I was one of only two women who were on the bench at the time. And I was always looking for women who were willing to do 200 days on the road and to do the important work of the U.S. Military as a trial judge and I thought Liz would be a really good candidate for that. And I had stopped and talked with Liz to ask her if she might not consider becoming a military trial judge and she had told me when we
had that conversation. This is before I left active duty, and I was at Rhein Main at the time, and she had told me at that time she really appreciated my interest in her but the Judge Advocate General had something better in mind for her in Washington, DC. And when she said that, it was like fingernails on a chalkboard to me because that’s not the way the assignment process works for majors in the Air Force. The Judge Advocate General doesn’t have something better in mind for you. Your career management person has something better in mind for you. And so I picked up on that at the time and I told her, I said, “Liz, I don’t know what the nature of your relationship is with the Judge Advocate General and I don’t want to know. If he’s your mentor, that’s fine, but I think you need to find a new mentor because he has never done anything to reflect that he has the best interest of women in the military at heart.” That’s what I told her. This is before any of the stuff breaks. I said, “He is not your friend and you need to get another mentor.” So I’m pretty sure the next time they were cooking naked in their aprons together, they probably had a good laugh over that.

Oh my goodness.

Because I had no idea that she had this inappropriate relationship with him, you know. And he was married by the way. Which, of course, in the military means something more than if you’re a Member of Congress, or if you’re running for the Mayor of New York. In the military, it’s a criminal offense.

Right.

So it turns out, after I left the military, you can Google on it, it’s all very highly publicized. All the stuff that happened. It winds up that General Fiscus does not get court-martialed but instead he’s reduced in rank. He gets what’s called non-judicial punishment for his inappropriate relationships with up to 23 different women who were either on active duty, reservists, or civilians who worked with him and he is eventually retired in the grade of colonel, same as my grade which means, he lost both of his stars and they retire you at a grade that you last honorably held. Which means the last time he honorably served was before he became a general officer.
Ms. Turchi: Disgraceful.

Col. Murnane: And that’s how I find out after I have left the Department of Defense— I find out what it is that probably led to my not being the first female Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force. Now there may have been other reasons, but nobody ever told me what they were. And so I’m left to my own summary of the facts and my own assessment of what I think happened. But I’m not sorry that it happened as it did because had I not left the Air Force when I did, the opportunities that next opened up to me would never have been there for me. So everything in life happens for a reason and while I was frustrated, disappointed, angry even, at the time, I understand that I was meant to be somewhere else. The whisper that I talked about earlier. The doors that opened up to me thereafter. And I think we’ve been talking now for a little, almost an hour now, Liz and unfortunately I guess we’ll have to schedule another time to talk about the things that open up next so that you can get on and I can get on with a couple of other things today. But I will tell you that when I retired, I held my retirement ceremony at the Women in Military Service Memorial for America which is at the foot of Arlington Cemetery. It is a memorial to women in the military. I had worked as a key worker at the very start of this project which was championed by General Wilma Vaught. And it’s designed to honor the role of women who have served in the Armed Forces and it’s a very, very impressive facility right outside the entry gate to Arlington Cemetery which is a place of great reverence for military personnel. It’s where we bury our war dead. And when I held my retirement ceremony the Judge Advocate General of the United States Air Force was still Major General Thomas Fiscus because he hadn’t been exposed yet for the individual that he turns out to be. And I didn’t invite him which was unusual for a Chief Circuit Judge not to invite the Judge Advocate General. So I asked instead my colleague, my supervisor, someone I had respect for, Colonel John Powers, the Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force. I asked John to preside at my retirement ceremony and I received a phone call from the Judge Advocate General’s office, his Exec, the Exec called and said "General Fiscus didn’t get an
Ms. Turchi: invitation to your retirement ceremony.” And he asked me to call to inquire about that. I said “Please tell the General I understand that he’s got way more important things to do with his time than to come to my retirement ceremony,” and hung up. 

Col. Murnane: Laughter.

Ms. Turchi: And I never called back with the details. Well and I told my sister who came for my retirement ceremony. She was living in Virginia at the time. I told her this is a picture of the Judge Advocate General of the Air Force and if he shows up, tell the guards because I don’t want him here. He’s not invited. And this is before I knew that he had engaged in this kind of conduct. And so I just knew he was a bad person, that’s all. I think sometimes as a trial judge because you’re involved in sentencing individuals and having to assess their rehabilitation potential, you develop a skill. And I knew he was a bad person. And I feel vindicated in that history now proves I was correct. He is a bad person and was a bad person.

Col. Murnane: Absolutely.

Ms. Turchi: And was a bad person. But when I retired I had a very, very large crowd at my retirement ceremony. I had probably a 100-150 people at my retirement ceremony and there were people who mattered. And it was a moment of great reflection for me and I was very honored by the people who came including the people who had worked for me at Bitburg Air Base when I was in Germany. They were all over the country and all over the world. And all but two or three of them came from all over the world to be at my retirement ceremony at their own expense. It meant a great deal to me. And it’s a memory that I will treasure forever having all of those folks there at my retirement ceremony. Then I got in my car, and I drove to Ohio. My retirement ceremony I think was on April 30 of 2004 and as I recall, that may have been a Thursday or Friday, I’m not sure. I got in my car and I drove to Ohio and I was going to say with my friends who lived in Brown County and I went to work the following Monday at my new job.

Ms. Turchi: My goodness, that sounds just like you.
Col. Murnane: So. Okay that gets me out of the Air Force, Liz and maybe the next call we can talk a little bit more about the things that you talked about. What were some of the difficulties in the transition out of the Air Force and why, my final exposure to gender discrimination in the Air Force. It was amazing, it was just amazing.

Ms. Turchi: Right up to the end.

Col. Murnane: Right up to the end. Absolutely amazing.

Ms. Turchi: A prevalent challenge that you continuously overcome with grace and dignity.

Col. Murnane: Well, I don’t know how graceful. Like I said, I’m not the person you want to write to if you want to know how not to hurt someone’s feelings because I don’t really care. In any event. Would that be all right if we go ahead and stop for the week there.

Ms. Turchi: Excellent, look forward to the next one.

Col. Murnane: Okay.

Ms. Turchi: This is a great stopping point.

Col. Murnane: Okay, I’m going to stop the recording then. Okay, Liz.

Ms. Turchi: Excellent.

Col. Murnane: All right.

----END OF EIGHTH INTERVIEW---
NINTH INTERVIEW; AUGUST 25, 2013

Ms. Turchi: Today is the 25th of August, 2013, and Linda we left off last call and you were explaining your retirement and the next step that followed from your retirement ceremony so perhaps we can pick up there.

Col. Murnane: Thanks very much Liz. I have to tell you when I retired from the Air Force having moved every two to two and half years or something like that, I actually thought that perhaps I was about to settle down, grow up, settle down and get a real job or find myself able to maybe get what might be considered a more normal lifestyle, rather than moving every couple of years, and changing jobs every couple of years and doing something different every couple of years. But that didn’t turn out to be the case. And so as I think I shared the last time, I was fortunate enough that as I retired from the Air Force a colleague of mine whose wife I had known on active duty, she was a doctor and had been the head of the OB-GYN and a commander of a US military facility out in Kansas before she retired and they had settled in Brown County, Ohio, and her husband who had gone to night law school at Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio, contacted me and said they were looking for a felony prosecutor in Brown County which was not too far from Cincinnati where I had gone to law school the last 18 months and was actually a reasonable commute from the home we owned in Xenia, Ohio, so I sent my resume to Mr. Tom Grennan who was the elected prosecutor for Brown County at the time. He happened to be a Viet Nam era veteran and had a great deal of respect for military, military attorneys and Brown County is one of those unique hometown places in the United States that you find where there were yellow ribbons on the tree still waiting for some folks that had been missing from the Iraq-Afghanistan conflicts to come home and in fact they had a specific vet that they were keeping close in thought that it turned out had been killed by the Taliban. So it was a really patriotic community and since Mr. Grennan was an elected prosecutor, having a veteran who had experience deploying in support of Iraqi and Enduring Freedom and the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan worked well for him. The fact that I happened to be a
weworked well for him from an election perspective as well. He hired me, I started to work. I think I took a weekend off, got in my car and drove, and went to work the next day in Brown County where I was prosecuting felonies for the prosecutor’s office which was very interesting. I had never been involved with the specific Ohio statutory requirements and I learned a lot. The Brown County job was interesting and I learned something which is what interests me about new jobs, learning something new, doing something different. Brown County was a very small, very rural-based economy and they didn’t have a lot of income, tax income, given the depression of the farming economy at the time. In fact, I spent a lot of my time prosecuting methamphetamine cases because a lot of the farmers had not been able to achieve success in farming so what they were basically doing were using their barns and whatever to cultivate methamphetamine. So we prosecuted a lot of methamphetamine cases. But it turns out that the county had, the county commissioners had approved the building of a new county garage that ate up a lot of the available taxable revenue that year so Mr. Grennan told me he probably was going to have to downsize part of his staff and he was going to let one of the junior attorneys who had recently graduated from law school go and I didn’t want to see that happen because for those folks who were brand-new graduates did not have a lot of options and I had a pretty substantial resume. Ten years as a judge, thirteen years as a prosecutor or defense lawyer, I had been a judge advocate, a deputy judge advocate. I had worked globally and I really didn’t think that Brown County was the only place I could work. So I started putting out some resumes and it turns out that the governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky who, at the time was Ernie Fletcher, and I didn’t know Governor Fletcher and had never lived in Kentucky but they were doing basically a universal search for a Director of the State Human Rights Commission. And I didn’t know at the time I applied that the reason they were doing a global search or a universal search for a Human Rights Director was that Governor Fletcher had just announced. . . . Governor Fletcher was a Republican, the first Republican governor in years and he was going to empanel a blue-ribbon commission to see whether the state of Kentucky, the Commonwealth of
Kentucky was getting their money's worth for what they were budgeting in the State Human Rights Commission and many of the folks who had been involved with the Commission took that to mean that Governor Fletcher was going to eliminate the Commission on Human Rights. So the existing director, Beverly Watts resigned after twelve or thirteen years as the Executive Director leaving them really up in the air. And so although I had not specifically worked in the human rights area, I certainly had a lot of experience in the human rights area, both from my work in the US military and from social actions and standing up victim witness programs, all the different things I had done, and I had the added credential of being an international human rights fellow. So they narrowed the field after the initial interview process down to two and I was one of the two and I got that job. So I resigned from the Brown County Prosecutor’s office eight months after going to work there. And in February of 2005 moved to Louisville, Kentucky. Now you have to remember my husband Kevin had followed me to the Pentagon but I left because of the Judge Advocate General when I retired and so he had to serve his year in the Pentagon before he could retire. Kevin retired and joined me in Louisville where we had never lived before. And we rented a house. We had a place there in Louisville, and set up house there and Kevin began the process of trying to transition to a new professional position for himself as well. The job at the Commission on Human Rights was fascinating and I had a fabulous staff, really great people. I found that my military background in preparing for Inspector General investigations really put me in great shape for preparing for the blue ribbon panel because I had an approach that my team and I decided we would take with respect to the Governor’s review of our work. And at the end of the day the blue ribbon commission not only decided not to terminate the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights but they actually proposed expanding our budget as the result of the approach that we took. And you know for those people who have had experience working with different political parties, we took the approach since we had a Republican governor and largely folks who supported that agenda who were on the blue ribbon panel, although not exclusively because he did put together a bi-partisan panel, we took
the approach that quite frankly is candidly, it's just absolutely correct today that inclusion and diversion are good for business and we explained to the blue ribbon panel, who in turn explained to the governor and his team of professionals that were working on this issue that places like Lexmark that was in Kentucky, had a large plant in Kentucky, companies like Toyota that was looking at a factory site in Kentucky wanted to know that their citizens, their employees, that individuals who were coming from abroad to support the fundamental activities were going to be welcomed into this community. And that's what the Commission on Human Rights did, was to ensure that the equal protection laws that were part of the Commonwealth of Kentucky’s fabric were given teeth and enforced and that discrimination of any kind would be eliminated. So it really was a wonderful job. I really enjoyed working there. I had responsibility for enforcing human and civil rights statutes in Kentucky in 118 of the 120 counties. Two of the counties had their own independent human rights commissions, so I did liaise with those counties, but I didn’t have primary responsibility for those. I did that with a staff of roughly 26 people statewide -- the workforce. They had a very high turnover rate. I made it a mission of mine while I was there to restore funding for the education program because the previous Executive Director had to identify some places to put cuts and she decided to cut the education benefits for her staff but I decided that was not the place I was going to cut and I restored education benefits and made it my mission to have more graduate degrees awarded during my time to staff members than any previous director and achieved that including one lawyer, a couple of masters’ degrees and a couple of bachelor’s degrees on my 26 member staff, folks that still write to me now talking about their success in reshaping the landscape of Kentucky. It was incredibly rewarding work in that individuals who had no voice or whose voice they felt was not being heard, we were able to be that voice for them. And one example I can give is an undocumented worker in Kentucky who had been working at a Mexican restaurant and she had not been getting paid and she felt that she couldn’t enforce her right to a fair and livable wage because the employer would have reported her as undocumented and she would have been
deported. And one of the most rewarding moments was on Christmas day, the week before Christmas, it wasn’t Christmas day, but the week before Christmas in 2004 I was able to present this woman with a check in settlement of her claim for a large amount of money and she turned to me and said “Please don’t take my picture because I’m afraid I’ll be deported,” but she said “You know what I’m doing with this money?” And I said, “What is that?” And she said, “I’m applying for my citizenship.” But it was really fascinating work and I really enjoyed it. But what changed the landscape was, just after my husband, Kevin, got a job working with Humana, I got a letter, I’m sorry, a phone call from a colleague, who was my deputy when I was in the Chief Judge position in Europe from Wayde Pittman, and Wayde called me and said “Hey, Linda, would you be interesting in coming to The Hague for 90 days to take over the Complex Litigation Chamber of the War Crimes Tribunal?”

That’s not a very usual request.

And so I have to tell you when that happened I was like, “Is this like candid camera, and is there like a camera somewhere that’s going to capture my reaction when somebody calls and asks me if I want to come and work in the Complex Litigation Chamber of the War Crimes Tribunal.” I was, what kind of phone call is that? You never get that kind of phone call, if you get what I mean. It was like, “Seriously?”

In some way you said that trip to Rwanda was a whisper but now this is more like a brick falling on your head.

Yeah it was like a loud knock at the door.

A loud knock, not a whisper.

It was like a knock knock at the door. So I said “Sure Wayde, I’d be thrilled. Let me call Kevin, my husband, and tell him about this opportunity so he can decide what he wants to do about the job at Humana and let me contact the governor and I’ll get right back to you.” And so I called Kevin up at Humana and I said, “You’re just not going to believe this but Wayde Pittman just called me and
asked me if I’d like to come to War Crimes Tribunal and take over the Complex Litigation Chamber.” And Kevin had told me earlier when I wanted to go to Rwanda I think I shared with you the vignette that he had said, “Linda, can’t we save the world somewhere there’s a flush toilet”, (laughter) and I said to him when I called him, “Wayde Pittman called and asked if I’d like to come to The Hague to take over the Complex Litigation Chamber of the War Crimes Tribunal for 90 days on a maternity replacement post”, and I said, “Kevin, they have flush toilets in The Hague”. And he said, “I’ll go with you Linda.” He said, “I’ll resign and I will go with you.” So I contacted the governor. At the time, I had enough compensatory time and leave time that I could take 90 days off without having to resign. So I contacted the governor’s office, I said, “I think this would be good for the Commonwealth of Kentucky for the Commission on Human Rights and certainly good for me and I’d like your permission to take a 90-day leave using my comp time and leave time to take over the Complex Litigation Chamber of the War Crimes Tribunal.” And the governor came back with, “Of course this is good for Kentucky, that you’ve been selected, and that you’re going to go do this, so yes, of course.” So the governor approved it, so off I went to the complex litigation chamber. So you notice nowhere in this did I discuss a salary because I didn’t ask if they would pay me, if I would have to buy my own ticket, if I would have any housing allowance. I just said yes, because it was such an incredible opportunity I thought that it just never occurred to me to haggle over the things people think matter like what will you pay me and who’s going to pay my travel expenses. But I just said, “Yeah, I’ll be there Wayde.” And he said, “Well there’s one thing Linda. You’re going to have to go through an interview with the President of the Chamber and that will be set up for a certain day”. I can’t remember the exact date, but I do know the interview took place when I was at the National Association of Women Judges meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, because the call was at 4:00 am Nevada time and I was sharing a room with another female judge at the time, and I had to go sit in the bathroom so as not to wake her up, so I could do the interview with then the President of Trial Chamber 3, Patrick Robinson of Jamaica. And that interview went I think fairly
well and shortly after that I got my offer letter to come to The Hague which told me not only would I get paid, but they would pay me the cost of my ticket going over and you know all the different benefits. So I thought that worked out pretty nicely because I didn’t try to negotiate a package. It was such an incredible opportunity and I wanted to go and so I left for The Hague in August of that year as I recall I think it was. And I took over two cases, it was the Milutinovic trial which was being conducted in English and the Prlic et al. trial which was being conducted in French. Wayde said when I got there, “Oh by the way, the one judge he’ll only speak to you in French but don’t let that worry you.” And I was like, “Oh my God, Wayde, my last French was in high school.” I studied Spanish for seven years, I knew a little Japanese. I had four years of Latin and a little bit of German but I hadn’t studied French since high school. But they, no kidding, did everything in French, including drafting in French, all the discussions were in French, so when I got there I had to hire a tutor. I told my husband I have to work in French so I’ve got to hire a tutor. So I hired a tutor at the Alliance Francaise so that I could get up to speed with my French plus took classes on the weekends on Saturdays for four hours, every Saturday in addition to working with my tutor so I could function in a French-only environment and so that I could draft. I had an exceptionally dedicated and skilled French team who helped walk me through what I needed to be able to essentially know so as to make sure as a team we were successful. So there I was at the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. In my Margaret Brent speech I said that perhaps the reason I got the award because I never learned to say, “Gosh I don’t think so, that sounds dangerous,” and perhaps when they told me I had to work in French, I should have said “I don’t think so, I can’t do that.” But the situation required I work in French and it was something I felt that I could contribute to in a meaningful way, so I had to work in French. So I had to work in French and I did. I’m sure that Judge Antonetti who was President of that particular Trial Chamber would scoff at any suggestion that I was able to speak in French because I really can’t, but I was able to review the drafts, decisions, orders, and judgments that were in French in writing and do that fairly effectively, I think,
and to lead the team which was the primary goal that I had to undertake. So I went to the Tribunal on a 90-day commitment. By the time we got into a place out, we were in a hotel for 3 weeks or something. So by the time we got into an apartment, a small apartment, a one-bedroom apartment, because we still had our house in Louisville, because I thought we were going back there, and we still had our house in Ohio, and we had a house in Virginia. So we had a very small apartment in The Hague and so by the time I had gotten into an apartment in The Hague on Laan van Meerdervoort I had to give notice that I was moving out because there was a 90-day moving notice requirement that the landlord had. So I almost immediately had to say, okay, am I going home in 90 days or not. Because when you came on a temporary contract, that was kind of the environment in which you found yourself working, do I have a job tomorrow. I was actually there because the woman who was the senior legal officer for the Trial Chamber 3 had been on maternity leave and remained on maternity leave for another two years so she stayed on quite extended maternity leave. So about six weeks into my stay at the Tribunal they said, no, we'd like to keep you for another three months so I contacted the governor because I was still the Executive Director of the state's Human Rights Commission and what I wound up doing for basically the six months that remained, the situation is I was running the Commission at night. Because there was a six-hour time difference between The Hague, they were six hours ahead of my Kentucky office. I would come home from my job at the ICTY, and then I would get on the phone, or on Skype, or the computer and I would work with my team back in Kentucky because we were shepherding a budget through with the increased funds for the next biennium budget year so I was working the budget from my office in The Hague back in Kentucky including actually watching the Kentucky State Legislature debating the budget on Kentucky educational television from my hotel room in The Hague. It was a bit of a wild time and they were Fed-exing packages for me to review and approval of the various settlements and things we were agreeing to on behalf of clients who had filed complaints. So I was working basically both jobs for about six months and I would fly back basically once a month for the
commission meetings so I could be back in Louisville for the commission meetings with the exception of one month when I couldn’t be away because of some commitments at the Tribunal. And I did that for six months doing basically both jobs and then

Ms. Turchi: Sounds exhausting.

Col. Murnane: Yeah it was exhausting. But then at the end of that process the ICTY tribunal indicated that they were going to extend me again and I knew that was the end of it, I could not ask the governor to continue to keep me on the payroll in Kentucky and they needed to move on to a new Executive Director so even though I didn’t have a permanent contract with the United Nations, even though I was on a month-to-month arrangement with the United Nations at the International Criminal Tribunal, the work I was doing there was just so rewarding at the time, and so meaningful, I made the decision to resign from the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights with great sorrow. It was two years that I worked there from 2005 to 2007 and I resigned in July of 2007 taking on just the position with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. When the incumbent returned to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, I asked what was going to happen and nobody seemed to know and they kept saying, we’re going to try to work something out, we’ll try to find a way to keep you, but in the meantime a position opened up at the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies that sounded it would be just a fabulous opportunity for me. And it was the senior international attorney for the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies. And you may recall earlier I talked about the fact that DIILS had been responsible for sending me to Rwanda, Papua New Guinea, Latvia, Argentina, the first couple of times I went into Zambia and I knew the work that they did and I had great admiration and respect for the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies so I applied and they came down to the top two. They sent a team to Germany to interview me in person. Kevin and I went and it was during Oktoberfest in Germany when we went to Munich and I had my second interview with the DIILS team and they hired me. And so because the
ICTY could not make a commitment to me equal to the commitment I had from DIILS, I resigned from the temporary post at the ICTY and we moved to Rhode Island. Kevin’s only comment was, “Here’s the deal, Linda. I’ll go with you wherever you want to go but I’m not moving the stuff anymore.”

I guess the word I’m looking for demands.

Ms. Turchi:

Col. Murnane: Demands. He said “We’re moving the stuff to the house in Ohio and it’s staying there. If you’re willing to sleep on a cot, or live in temporary lodging on a rented bed, then you can move wherever you want, but here’s the deal, I’m not moving the stuff. It’s going to Ohio and it’s staying there.” We packed up the house in Louisville, and we packed up the house in The Hague and off we went to Rhode Island on this great new adventure. Kevin got a position working with the Naval War College and I was the senior international attorney organizing teams of professional lawyers who were experts in human rights, military justice, criminal law and other specific topics and my responsibility was in curriculum design and development to ensure that the teams we sent out were experts to deal with the funding aspects, to deal with all the logistical arrangements, to get teams in and out of areas of the world that were not entirely safe all the time. In fact my immediate supervisor who was the deputy commandant of the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, Commander Elizabeth Jones was actually in Gabon with a team when the president died, and the border was closed and part of what I was involved with was trying to get she and her team to an airport and get them out of the country because it wasn’t clear what was going to happen in Gabon and whether the team would be safe. I actually went on a team trip to Liberia while I was there as a member of a DIILS team and was responsible really on a weekly basis for five, six, seven, eight teams somewhere in the world instructing on rule of law, human rights, and criminal justice issues. Maybe as many as six teams in a week at a location all over the globe which was really exciting and interesting. I was there for about six months when I got a call from someone at the Tribunal advising me that there was a new position that was opening up, that it would be a permanent post, that it would not be a temporary
contract or a medical replacement and that they thought I would be well suited for it and that I should apply. I talked it over with Kevin. We really missed the multi-culturalism that we found while working in The Hague and working for the United Nations which we found to be a real highlight of our stay there as well as our church community there. We were members of the Church of Our Savior in The Hague and it was a very diverse population with members of the church from all over the globe. We really felt we thrived in that environment and felt comfortable there and so Kevin said go ahead and apply and I was hired. And so off we went, back to The Hague, this time on a permanent contract so we knew we'd be there at least two years on my initial contract. We got a two bedroom place which was much larger and one that had a bathtub that was very important to me and I didn't have to do two-thirds of my work in French.

Now you could if you had to.

Ms. Turchi:

Col. Murnane: I could if I had to. And I became the Chief of Court Management and Support Services for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia for the next two years. I later was asked if I would like to apply for Acting Head of Chambers during a period of time when the Head of Chambers had been temporarily sent to serve as a judge on the Pre-Trial Chamber of the Extraordinary Chambers in Cambodia. And I competed and was selected to be the Acting Head of Chambers for three months and then I was asked to consider applying for a temporary vacancy for the Acting Deputy Registrar. I should note when I was Acting Head of Chambers I still remained the full time Chief of Court Management in addition to the full time Acting Head of Chambers. So again taking on double the responsibilities and I made the whopping additional sum of $500 a month extra for doing a second full-time job. And for anyone who observed me doing both those jobs, I know they appreciate that it was in fact two full time jobs, and not one full time job and I was working extremely long hours. In fact I remember one particular day I didn't come home until 3 in the morning and had to be back at the Tribunal around 8, 7:30 or 8. And that was during the budget preparation process. But then I was asked if I would apply to fill in as the
Acting Deputy Registrar and I did, and that, I guess, begins the process of my leaving the Tribunal because there were things I learned when I became the Acting Deputy Registrar that made it impossible for me to stay at the Tribunal and work there any longer. I began to see a pattern of conduct that convinced me, based upon my experiences and my background, that there was a systematic process in place by which individuals were asked to provide what I will call "special services" to senior officials at the Tribunal in exchange for which they would be guaranteed not to be demoted, not to lose their job, not to be downsized. And the "special services" had nothing to do with their legal talents. And when I came to observe that, consistent with everything in my past, I couldn't just turn my head the other way and ignore it. So initially I filed a complaint with the UN Dispute Tribunal on a narrow issue that didn't raise specifically the allegations of exchanging sexual favors for jobs and promotions but rather raised the issue of the hand selection of a permanent Deputy Registrar who would cover up for the senior official involved whereas I would not do that. I would not cover up for him. I filed a UN Dispute Tribunal action which did not get very far. And then I took leave and flew to New York with a 27-page complaint informing United Nations officials what I had observed and asking that they investigate. And when I got their response back indicating they declined to investigate, I told my husband I have to leave, I can't work here anymore because I won't be part of an administrative process that rewards individuals who are providing special services in exchange for jobs and opportunities. I thought of this as fundamentally wrong on a number of different levels, not the least of which was that many of people who were facing downsizing as the Tribunal completes its work, many of those individuals had been hired from the Balkans or from Rwanda and those individuals were quite desperate not to have to return to the Balkans. They were desperate not to have to return to Rwanda. And they were perhaps willing to perform services that were outside the scope of what their job description required in an effort to avoid being put in a position that they weren't going to be able to stay in The Netherlands a minimum of ten years to qualify for citizenship. And I saw that
quite frankly as a form of enslavement. And I just couldn’t and wouldn’t be part of it once I learned that the UN was not going to investigate. So I resigned and came back to Ohio. And I thought I was coming back to retire to do what I had always wanted to do when I grew up which was --nothing. But I was very, very fortunate that a judge at the Franklin County Municipal Court who had been on an interview panel that I had appeared before for a position as the Franklin County Court Administrator contacted me through the Human Resources Department and said I have a judicial bailiff position opening up. It involves some legal and a lot of administrative duties that support her and her duties as a judge in the Municipal Court and would you be interested in applying. I did apply and through a competitive process, I was one of five finalists for the position, came to Ohio, and interviewed directly with the judge for whom I’m now employed, or with whom I’m now employed. And was exceptionally fortunate that she selected me to come to work on her staff. So although I was going to no kidding retire, I resigned with effect of December 31, 2012 from the United Nations and I went to work on the 7th of January 2013 for Judge Anne Taylor in the Franklin County Municipal Court where I work now. And it’s just been absolutely fantastic working for a judge who, she’s been a judge for 22 years. She’s efficient, effective, fair. She treats every individual who comes in her courtroom with respect and dignity. It’s been very, very refreshing to go from the environment at the United Nations to the environment I’m in now where I have a judge who I think has incredible respect for the people she serves as a judicial official. I think she’s sort of the model of what I would have liked to have been if I had decided to run for election as a judge. I won’t ever do that, but I really admire working with her and the opportunity to work with her so we are finally now back in Ohio. I don’t think my career is at a complete end but I don’t think I’m picking up and moving anytime soon. And I know my stuff is not leaving the house in Ohio.

Ms. Turchi: And if it is Kevin is not moving it.

Col. Murnane: Kevin’s not moving it. And Kevin is now working at the Franklin County
Ms. Turchi: Municipal Court so he works in the probation department there. I think Liz, maybe we’ll stop here and will go to the reflective questions in the next session if that’s okay.

Col. Murnane: That’s great.

Col. Murnane: I’m going to go ahead and stop the recording okay.

---END OF NINTH INTERVIEW---
Ms. Turchi: Okay, we’re on! So here we are on Sunday December 8, 2013, with Colonel Linda Murnane and my name is Elizabeth Turchi and we are going to continue having a conversation about Linda’s career and since we have had discussions over several occasions tracing through Linda’s career and various experiences of great significance, we had thought that for one of the last few conversations we would have a question and answer session just reflecting on some of the experiences Linda has shared. So, here we go!

Okay, so Linda, my first question to you is a bit of a reflection on some of the experiences you’ve described having to do with the discrimination that you faced. So it seems to me that a repeated theme you’ve encountered throughout your career has been to encounter male superiors that not only discriminated against you because you are a woman, but who also conducted themselves in what many may see as a morally bankrupt and abusive way. And I think perhaps this is seen in your story and encounter of Charlie Brothers and the Judge Advocate General, you know, quite early on in your career and right up through your retirement. So it seems to me a bit of a repeated theme that you have encountered each time with grace but through each ordeal you have held firm in your moral integrity. And it seems in the end that the truth revealed itself; you emerged stronger; people like Charlie Brothers, etc., were fired; you went on to achieve a decorated and highly regarded career for example. The Judge Advocate General was demoted but in contrast you retired with, you know, triumphantly with the ceremony shared with loved ones and esteemed colleagues that came to honor and salute you. So with all of these experiences I would like to ask you, if you have a sense that there is a force of justice at play in your life and maybe in the world in general; a belief that good and honesty really shows itself in the end.

Col. Murnane: You know, it’s an interesting reflection, Liz., First of all, I hope I have made it clear in the conversations that we have had that while there were a few bad
men throughout the path of my career, there were also some really extraordinary good people, both men and women, who were there at the moment that I needed them most, like Colonel E.K. Loving, General John Pustay, Colonel Mike McShane, Colonel John Martinez, Colonel John Powers, folks who really made a huge difference and without whose intervention at key points in my career, my life path might have been very different. So for every Charlie Brothers fortunately there was an E.K. Loving or a John Pustay or even a Wayde Pitman or a Rodger Drew or, you know, a peer colleague who helped me see through the circumstances that surrounded me. A person like Gail Silverman my dear friend from when I was on active duty who helped me in the darkest moments of my life. So there was always something there. I think less than having a sense that there is a force of justice at play in my life, I think what I knew and still know is what I think we all know, which is, we are taught very early the difference between what is right and what is wrong. For most of us, we are taught very early that people should be treated equally, and for most of us we are taught very early in life that you do the right thing even when it is not the easy thing. You don’t compromise your values, what you know to be right, to get a quick buck or a promotion. You don’t stab other people in the back.

Now I know that there are people that I have encountered, that others have encountered, that you’ve encountered, who don’t follow that moral code. But we all know, I believe we all know, that that is the correct moral code. And because I believe in a Higher Power, which I have mentioned before, in the end I think there is justice, whether it is earthly justice or something else. The fact that Colonel Brothers and formerly General Fiscus at the end of their careers got what was coming to them had nothing to do with what happens in the real world. It had little to do with me and more to do with their having violated their own moral code. And I am sure they knew the difference between right and wrong. And they didn’t choose to follow the course of right. So, I mean, I don’t know that I have a belief that the good and the honest will win out in the end; I am not sure that that is accurate; I’ve seen plenty of
people who I would not put in the category of good or honest who continue to succeed; but that is not really my issue. I think that is the key for me; is that’s not really my issue. Their final accounting for their failure to ascribe to a moral compass that points true North is for them to resolve. But what is for me to do is never to remove myself from what I know to be right and wrong. And just to do what I know I have to do and that’s what I have done. And sometimes it has worked out nicely for me and other times it has worked out less nicely for me. But overall I can look myself in the mirror and know that everything I did — that’s not to say I didn’t make mistakes — but everything I did in the end was done for the right reasons I think. And I surely made mistakes along the way and things that I might have done differently and some choices I made that weren’t the best, but I always came back to true North and I was able to get back on track and do the things that I knew were right because I knew they were; because I knew they were the right things to do. And I would suggest that there are people who know the right thing to do and intentionally make a decision not to do that and that’s for them to account for with their Higher Power if they believe in one, or if they don’t with themselves.

Ms. Turchi: I was going to ask next what may have, you know, kept you positive throughout some of the more challenging times of your life. You may have just answered that in terms of saying your moral compass and code and belief in doing the right thing; but understandably some of your experiences could have left you quite bitter or angry and instead you’re energetic and you’re positive and throughout the experiences you have described you have maintained a dedication to still supporting and helping others, whether they are in the profession or not. What do you think has kept you positive?

Col. Murnane: Well I think it was a really important moment for me when I came to understand that when you allow other people; when you allow yourself I guess I should say, to become bitter and angry, then what you are doing is you are allowing other people to continue to control your life. When you hang on to bitterness and anger as the result of something that someone has done to you
that you know was wrong, you are blocking your own positive energy and you are letting them continue to control your life and so the best revenge, quite frankly, for someone who has done something wrong to you is success at every level. And rather than give them or continue to give those people who have tried to impact your life negatively power over your life by sinking into bitterness or anger, depression or any of those sorts of things, the best possible thing to do is just go on to be successful. Wildly, incredibly successful and not to let their negative impact on your life block your positive energy. So what keeps me positive is that “oh, yeah” that I talked about that I had with my Dad; the “oh, yeah” relationship I had with my Dad, you know, when he would consistently tell me that I couldn’t do something and I would say “oh yeah, watch me do it.” What keeps me positive is the “oh yeah” that is core to my being. I mean it is, you know, so you refuse to let me go to law school because I didn’t go to the Air Force Academy when women weren’t eligible to go to the Air Force Academy that’s an institutionally based discrimination that I conquered. The answer was “oh yeah watch me”. I would commute 200 miles a night four nights a week; I’ll graduate with honors; I’ll be a lawyer; I’ll be a judge; you know, it’s that “oh yeah” sort of philosophy that says “oh yeah, watch me”. So you make me choose between being a mother and being a lawyer; make me go away while my kid’s in the hospital; “oh yeah? “ I’ll go on to be a successful JAG and become a judge and I’ll actually be there at the retirement ceremony to frustrate your wildest dreams when you see that I am a Colonel-select and you and I are now equals, you know? So it’s not really that I am such a positive person; it’s that the best revenge is success at every level and that is what I keep at my core.

Ms. Turchi: Speaking of wildly successful as you are, of all the things you have achieved, career-wise and outside of your career, what are you most proud of? What is your most proud accomplishment? There are too many to count, but what would you say is your most proud accomplishment?

Col. Murnane: Well, having restored a relationship with my daughters is a really important accomplishment in my life. Having a relationship with them, which was
difficult, never easy. Being able to ask them to forgive the things that I did that may not have been the best choices for them early in their life and to have come full circle with them and have a relationship with them where I am in touch with them every day and that I am very proud of. I am extremely proud of my daughters and of what they have accomplished in their lives. I will tell you that one of the proudest moments in my life was when the ABA gave me the Margaret Brent Award; I mean that was just an amazing experience and standing in front of that many people in New York and informing most of them for the first time about what women in the military went through was really quite a wonderful opportunity to speak for women in the military. I am proud of having been a judge — a good judge — and Chief Circuit Judge for the United States Air Force; I am proud of my 30 years of — 29½ years of military service and proud to have served with extraordinary men and women in defense of our national objectives. I am not proud necessarily, but glad that I went to work for the United Nations and I am glad that I left when I did under the circumstances that I learned existed there; so I am proud of the fact that I wasn’t swayed by the lure of high money and prestigious titles to do something that I knew was fundamentally and morally wrong; I am honored to have been in a 26 year marriage with someone who has been an incredible supporter of mine. I think those are the things that matter the most to me.

Ms. Turchi: Now Linda, you’ve explained a series of events in your life that presented themselves as significant challenges: finances, discrimination, sets of circumstances that made each of your accomplishments quite harrowing at times. Specifically, what challenge did you overcome that you are most proud; or what challenge did you find in your life that has been one of the most difficult?

Col. Murnane: You know, it is hard for me to say, but I think that at least what comes to my mind immediately when you ask that question is I’m proudest that when the Air Force told me that they would not let me go to law school because I didn’t
go to the Air Force Academy that I found a work-around to make that happen. I think that 200 mile a night commute, four nights a week, and later 200 miles a day five days a week and later 300 miles a day five days a week and finishing law school on time with a very high grade point average, that was a huge challenge; scrubbing floors in the banks to cover the medical expenses while that was going on, all the stuff that was going on with my family; it would be hard for me to imagine anything that would be more difficult to overcome than that, because it was truly the most difficult hill. It was the highest mountain peak. Of all of them. And fundamental and core to everything else that I have accomplished, so whenever I would think I couldn’t do something I would go back to that as inspiration that I could, quite frankly. I can tell you that when I went overseas the first time when I was stationed in Japan, they told me that I had to qualify with the small arms weapon at a shooting range before I could go on this assignment. I did not come from a background or culture that included guns in any sense; my father wasn’t a hunter; my brother maybe had a BB-gun when he was a kid — I don’t know, but I never did target shoot or whatever; that was not part of my cultural background and the idea of going out to shoot a gun at a target was something I was quite sure I wouldn’t be able to do and I think you may have heard me say at some point during these interviews that my philosophy is that there is no such thing as “can’t”; there are such things as won’t, not willing to put the work in, don’t think I am going to modify my behavior to enable me to do that but I really thought this was something that was physically beyond my skill level and when I qualified on the range I actually took the target and put it on the back of my door in my office in Japan to remind myself that when I thought there was something I could not do, which was qualify on the range, I managed to do even that. So there are a lot of things that came my way that were difficult, very difficult, very challenging but I always knew that I could do them if I just was willing to sacrifice whatever it took to make it happen. And as long as it didn’t fall too far out the range of true North, I could make it happen. So I really think the commute to law school probably is the one thing I would point to and it was
really difficult; it was really, really difficult.

Ms. Turchi: I can imagine. Would you do it all again?

Col. Murnane: I might make some smarter choices along the way, but would I do the commute again if that is what it took? Yes. I would do that again. You know, my experience in Air Force JAG was an incredible adventure and I might have not tolerated some things that I tolerated quite so well knowing what I know now and I might not have fared quite as well in the far end because I think I have a little better understanding of how I might have redressed some of the things that happened but would I do the law school again? Absolutely. Would I have my kids again? Absolutely. Would I have made some bad marriage choices? Probably not; I might not have done that, you know. Might have changed that if I had the opportunity to go back and do a rewind, but I don’t spend a lot of time thinking about that.

Ms. Turchi: Are you fulfilled? Do you feel like you have more to do? And you have discussed throughout our conversations hearing a whisper and I absolutely love that phrase and what that means and what it signifies, but are you, do you feel you are hearing many more whispers?

Col. Murnane: I still have things to do; I am just not sure what they are and I am trying to find that new direction. I think that what I am doing now is really rewarding and I am enjoying it very much. I work for a fabulous boss; I enjoy working with her tremendously; she is a very good judge and I feel honored to work with her every day. I had the opportunity to assist her in drafting a decision this week that involved a complicated case of a self-representing defendant and so I am very pleased to be doing some — it’s an area of law that I hadn’t written on before so it was something I enjoyed doing and I am sure there is something else that I will be called to do; I just have to listen and be ready when the whisper comes and you know sometimes you just have to piece together all the parts of the whisper and understand that this is the direction you are intended to head next. You know, I have been asked a number of times to write a book. That takes a lot of energy. I haven’t put my mind to that quite yet. Maybe I
Ms. Turchi: One of the questions I had prepared for today was to ask you your views on mentoring. I certainly know them already, which is in my opinion one of great dedication to helping others as you have mentioned, but I would like to just ask the question for the benefit of others as what is your view on mentoring others in the profession and out. You mentioned earlier in life — earlier in the conversations that earlier in your life you did not have someone to do that for you and what strikes me as quite remarkable about you and your outlook on others and dedication to helping others is that you did not adopt that same mentality, well, I didn’t have it so I am not going to be a mentor to others. You have actually done the opposite and have taken great care of many people. How do you feel about mentoring? What does that mean to you?

Col. Murnane: You know, I told somebody recently in an interview that I was doing that one of the things about serving 29½ years in the United States Air Force and then coming back to the workforce outside of the Armed Forces is that you lose all the connections that you had that are ordinarily there to help you find a position. For example, from the time that I graduated from law school, and law school connections are sometimes an important component of folks
finding new jobs in their profession; I was not in touch with anyone from the University of Cincinnati or the Loyola University New Orleans law schools in the 20 plus years that I served as a lawyer, Judge Advocate, military judge on active duty because that just wasn’t the nature of my practice. I wasn’t physically stationed someplace close to either of the institutions that I had graduated from and because the military pay is not such that you can make sizeable donations to your alma mater; I wasn’t well connected with the alumni population, either. It became very clear to me how important those connections are as you try to get involved in the workforce as a Vet when you finally come home. And I mentioned that and talked about the fact that you know it’s a cold, harsh world when you try to reach out to find a job and people say “do you remember this person?” “No, I don’t.” Because it’s been 20 years or 30 years since you were in touch. And the work that I’ve done the network of people that you know or need to know is very different. It is not the people you knew in law school; it’s people that actually worked in those fields; people who were on active duty; people who served in the Guard or Reserve; people who worked for the United Nations; people who worked in the international or the state human rights environments that you need to know. And I knew those people. And while I understand that there are people who say ”I know those people and you don’t and I’m going to keep it that way”, I just think that’s kind of silliness, frankly. If you’ve got a top-quality individual who you know would be a dedicated part of a team and do a great job, why not help them move forward; why not reach back? I think you have an obligation to reach back; I mean, to stand on the hill and say I got to the top; see if you can do it on your own just isn’t in my DNA; that’s not part of who I am. So you know if I can make it easier for somebody else, then that is certainly what I want to do and if I can help them avoid some of the difficulty that I experienced then that’s a great thing. I didn’t have anyone who did that for me; I didn’t. With the exception of Wayde Pitman contacting me to come to work for the United Nations I may have that kind of situation now in my current boss, because she certainly has been exceptional in terms of trying to
create opportunities for me, although I keep telling her I am really good where I am and don’t really want to move. I think she would like to see me do something more but I am really good with where I am right now and so she’s tried to make some things happen, I think, for me and while I appreciate that, it’s — I’m not done yet, but I am also just really content with where I am right now, so I think it’s very tough for people to make it without someone to help them move up the ladder and I don’t think that is exclusive to women; I think it’s true for men as well. I think it is tougher for women largely because I have — it’s rarely the case that I have seen a man who is willing to say let me help you out here; I know few people willing to say “Let me make a call or two”. I just haven’t seen that happen a lot.

Ms. Turchi: You also have a reputation as a supervisor that takes care to develop the skills of your subordinates and what about maybe the experiences you described earlier while in the Air Force; whether or not with your bosses, whether or not in the context of the gender, you know, gender discrimination situation but what about those experiences do you think shaped the way you approached being a supervisor in the workplace? Or not?

Col. Murnane: Well, I think it had everything to do with who I was and am as a supervisor; I can tell you I had on my wall in my office; I have it on my wall now in my office and for all of my career had on my wall in my office a picture of a smashed-up VW Volkswagen bug car that was an exhibit in the first trial I did with Bernie Chachula as first chair and this was the trial that I was told I would have to do when my daughter Rachel was at the Presbyterian Hospital of the Pacific having eye surgery and Charlie Brothers refused my leave request to let me be with my daughter during that time. Instead of being on leave with her at the hospital, I commuted at night after being in trial all day to stay with my daughter while she was in the hospital after her first eye surgery. And this smashed-up Volkswagen was an exhibit in that case and Bernie had autographed it and said “Linda, Congratulations on a smashing success in your first trial as an Air Force JAG, Bernie Chachula.” And I put it on my wall not to remind me of my first trial or not to remind me of that exhibit or that case,
although I remember the details of it very clearly, but I put it on my wall to
remind me that when somebody came to my office in distress or somebody
came to my office needing help or somebody came to my office not believing
in themselves or somebody came to my office needing help, how I felt when
Charlie Brothers treated me that badly. And if ever I was having not my best
day, that picture was there to remind me that the person I needed to take that
out on was not the person that had come to me seeking my help but was rather
an internal matter that I needed to resolve and that I needed to treat people
better than I was treated every single day of my life and I did that. I will never
forget the sinking emotion I had when I was I thought that I had a boss who
respected my work and on the day he left had moved on to his next assignment
another senior officer put his arm around me and told me he needed to stop
before he couldn’t and he was kissing and slobbering on my neck and how that
destroyed my belief that the work I had done had been exceptionally good
work and put me in a situation of self-doubt for a good long while. And I
made sure that in all of my dealings with individuals that I supervised that I
helped to identify with them their strengths and weaknesses and to praise those
strengths and develop those weaknesses positively and that I didn’t treat my
subordinates, the people I was responsible for training and mentoring and
moving along in the profession as sexual objects ever; not ever; not one time.
And when I saw it happening to try to help those individuals who thought that
the only way they could succeed was by sleeping their way to the top or by
providing sexual favors, I felt compelled to tell people that’s not the way to get
where you’re going. And to believe in their skills and talents and not to resort
to that. So, I mean yeah, there’s no question that the experiences I had I often
am heard to say that I grew up in the sexual harassment leadership lab of the
United States Air Force. I believe that. It was a very difficult work
environment. I had good bosses and very bad bosses along the way but I had,
but it did help shape who I am and how I supervise people and hopefully those
who have had the opportunity to work for me and with my supervision feel the
better for it.
Ms. Turchi: That brings me to a comment question on workplace environment today. And maybe your take on what has changed; what still needs to change and what progress we’ve made as a people. It’s now 2013 and just recently there were articles in the New York newspapers about major lawsuits against huge financial outfits in Wall Street by three female employees alleging a Boys’ Club and that there is a discriminatory culture against women citing as an example they were given a book during training class discussing how to seduce their way to promotions. So just a bit of reflection and your opinion: Do you think the workplace environment for women in the legal profession is where it needs to be? There is marked improvement since your days with Charlie Brothers, but what gains do we still need to find and seek and realize . . .

Col. Murnane: Well, you know I have never worked at a big law firm in my whole career and there are a lot of people who will look at my career and say “Yeah, but she doesn’t have the million dollar house and she’s not a partner in a law firm” and all of that is true; I don’t have the million dollar house; I was never a partner in a law firm; I never looked at the profession of law as a place to become wealthy, frankly. When I look back at what my essay said when I applied to go to law school I said I wanted to make the world a better place and I’ve stayed true to that. I think that all of us who were lawyers would do well to look back at what we said when we applied to go to law school as to what our goal was. And if we were honest on our application, to remind ourselves of where it is we wanted to go with our career and whether or not we are doing that. And if we are not doing that maybe we need to look outside of our fancy cars and big houses and look at where we can make a difference in the lives of the people that, for the most part, we all said we wanted to help when we applied to go to law school. That may not be true for everybody and there may be someone who applied for law school and said,”I want to be rich and famous and that’s why I am coming to law school”, but I suspect most of those folks didn’t get in. So I can’t really speak with inside information as to the Merrill
Lynch lawsuit; I can tell you that I worked with women on active duty in the Air Force who wanted to become general officers. I was not one of them, by the way, but I worked with other women who wanted to become general officers and who had the credentials and who had the skills and I talked about at least one or more of them in my Margaret Brent acceptance speech. And the door just wasn’t open. I think there is still a challenge — recently the Air Force had the second woman ever on active duty nominated for a general officer position, Lisa Turner, somebody that I worked with when she was a young JAG; very talented; very capable; long overdue in my view that Lisa is going to have the opportunity to be heard before Congress and before the Senate to be confirmed as a general officer and she will be exceptional. As one colleague told me when the word came out that Lisa had been nominated, “she is fearless and will do a fabulous job.” I think that is the key — you still have to be fearless; you have to eat fear for breakfast, so to speak. You have to fight through a crazy series of experiences to get to the point where you are going to succeed, even today and I think that is more true for women than it is for their male counterparts. I think that the Department of Defense and the JAG Corps in particular has gotten rid of the idea of how to seduce your way to a promotion as being smart guidance to give to any woman who is trying to make it a career but it’s, I think, still the case that there is a Boys’ Club; that you are expected to somehow fit in with that Boys’ Club; that you are supposed to accept things that are really unacceptable and that the Boys’ Club knows to be unacceptable; I certainly know from my experiences with the United Nations that there is a Boys’ Club, and that only those who keep the silent rules of the Boys’ Club will get promoted or move forward, something I wasn’t willing to do and since the U.N. was unwilling to investigate it I felt I needed to leave. And that is terribly unfortunate because it means that individuals who are the best qualified are not always achieving their full potential and it means that those institutions are not always achieving their full potential because they haven’t hired the right people. So I think there is still a lot to be done. And while I do think it is better in some ways I think it is more
covert today than it was when I was working my way through that morass. And sometimes when things go undercover or when they become covert, they are more difficult to weed out. So in some ways I think it’s better and in some ways I think it’s worse. I don’t know if that makes sense but that’s how I think it — that’s what I really think.

Ms. Turchi: That makes absolute sense. I think that is an accurate assessment of where we are today in 2013. My next question is “What advice would you have for young lawyers — young female lawyers in particular — you may have already said that — your answer — in saying eat fear for breakfast, but just making a comment that throughout your career you’ve never seemed to have said “NO” to a challenging opportunity. You said it yourself you never once said “No, gee that sounds dangerous.” You repeatedly put yourself in new environments, literally all around the world, to which you had to adapt and push yourself and really face a challenge head-on so what would say, or how would you encourage young female professionals today? Would you tell them to move out of their comfort zones and eat fear for breakfast?

Col. Murnane: I have to attribute my eat fear for breakfast comment; I was at the University of Texas Austin Women’s Empowerment Seminar a couple of years ago as their keynote speaker. And on a panel at that conference there was a woman whose name just escapes me at the moment; I can probably look it up and get it for you, but she was a panelist on the program. She is the female CEO of LawDragon, which is a web blog. She said at that presentation, you know, you get up every morning and you eat fear for breakfast. And I have adopted that now as part of my philosophy: you eat fear for breakfast. You don’t, you can’t afford to be afraid as a lawyer. You can’t afford to be afraid as a lawyer. I mean that’s the bottom line. You can’t take on a profession that requires moral courage; that requires conviction; that requires a sense of purpose and be afraid. And so you have to eat fear for breakfast, which was her quote which I have adopted and put into my inventory and I wish I could remember her name at the moment but I can’t. But I don’t want it to go unattributed because it was her phrase and not mine. I do think that part of why a lot of women have not
been able to advance is because they were willing to accept that this is their place and this is their fate. And that isn’t, you know, not the case. Your place and your fate are in your own hands. I am not sure I would advise women to go out of their comfort zones; I would just advise women not to abandon their objectives. And if that includes — if achieving their objective includes moving out of their comfort zone then yeah, they have to do that but the bottom line is, what is it that made you decide upon the law as a profession? What is it that you were inspired by; what is it that made you do three years of, you know, fifty pages a night per class and whatever it is that you had to do to get through law school because while I have a story, every law student has a story. I mean, very few of us were born into a wealthy family that just, you know, it was clear what our path was going to be. So, what is it that inspired you to work that hard and have you given up on what inspired you to do that? And if you have, then you need to recapture that and go back to it. You know the difference between right and wrong. We all do. You know what true North is on your compass. And I think fundamentally what you have to do is stick to that. Understand who you are first and foremost; and don’t compromise. Don’t compromise. And if that means you have to step out of your comfort zone, then yeah, okay you do that. But I wouldn’t do that just for the sake of stepping out of my comfort zone. I would do it to achieve my objective. I just wouldn’t abandon my objective, whatever that was.

Ms. Turchi: What is your inspiration now? What is driving you now?

Col. Murnane: I am waiting for the whisper. I know it will come. I wonder some days if I am just not listening hard enough. And because I have had so many opportunities come my way, in ways that were totally unpredictable, what I am trying to do is stay open to the next possibility and the next thing that I am intended to do because it comes in just odd and unique ways and so I am trying not to be closed to it; not to overlook whatever that next call is that I have been asked to answer and I think that is what keeps me going now. It’s nice that I never took a job because I thought it would make me rich. That’s a really positive thing.
Since that was never my single inspiration being open to the possibility of, say, being called to a mission or being called to another humanitarian kind of assignment or to be even you know whatever it is, just to be open to whatever it is. I just don't think I commuted all those miles back in 1978 at night, which was sometimes almost dangerous because I was so tired, to stay home and watch television or play video games. I don't think that was what I was called to do. I don't know if that makes sense, so . . . .

Ms. Turchi: You certainly have been quite active in your retirement.


Ms. Turchi: Which was not really a retirement considering all you have done.


Ms. Turchi: Post-retirement, yes.


Ms. Turchi: Not really? Shall we go offline for a minute here?

Col. Murnane: Okay. I am going to stop the machine.

---END OF TENTH INTERVIEW---

Note: Since completing this Tenth interview, Colonel Murnane was selected to serve as the Chief, Court Management Services Section at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in Leidschendam, The Netherlands. She has been there since August 2014.

Colonel Murnane extends her appreciation to Elizabeth Turchi for serving as her oral historian, and for her hours of dedication to the process.