

Eileen McHenry

(President, St. Margaret's Guild, St. Alban's)

An Oral History

Today is Thursday the 19th of September 2002 and we are here at St. Alban's just after the St. Margaret's Guild meeting. Today was our regular meeting and we always start with Communion with Fr. Norm [...] and then he speaks to us about the "State of the Parish," but today it was about the "State of Father Norm!" He spoke to us a little bit about his retirement and then we invited him and Velda to have lunch with us. [...] Ordinarily, we brown bag it for ourselves.

Introduction. [Eileen McHenry—is that your full name?] I have just two names: Eileen McHenry. [...] It's just like the Fort in Baltimore, you know what I mean when I say that? [Well, no] Oh where is your history lesson? [Well, I'm Canadian. Sorry, I don't know some of this.] Fort McHenry [is] where the "Star Spangled Banner" flew and Francis Scott Key wrote his famous "Star Spangled Banner." Used to be I could say that my name was just like the fort in Baltimore and everyone would know. Young people today! Don't they teach you history? [I was learning *Canadian* history, I'm sorry [...]] Now tell me something about where you are from.]

Born and schooled in West Virginia. I was born in West Virginia in Parkersburg, right on the Ohio River, down the river from Wheeling. I grew up there. I went one year to Marietta (Ohio) College, which I disliked very much because I had to live at home. It was like glorified High School. I transferred to West Virginia University. I received my B.A. and then my law degree from that school. I've been a very loyal Mountaineer all my life. I loved my friends and I joined a sorority there [...] and enjoyed college life. Then, when I got my law degree I thought, "Well, now what do I do exactly?" [...] As you know, I came out at the time when women [...] "didn't have any brains," you know! [...] Everybody would say to me, in my hometown: "Eileen, you get your first case or your first will [...] and then we'll come see you." Finally, one day I got tired of that—it was an attorney—too, and I said: "I want to ask you a question. How am I ever going to get my first case, will you tell me, when y'all are talking like this?"

I have to leave Parkersburg! So, I said [to myself]: “I have to leave Parkersburg.” So, the two summers I was in law school I had worked in New York City for Judge Anna M. Ross, a petite Russian Jewess, an emigrant. She had helped found a wayward minors court [...] for teens who were still fighting this battle between 15 and 18. What do you do with boys of those ages? This was all we had. And so it was a great experience for me. I don’t know whether you know about New York—I didn’t know about the system. It’s the Magistrate’s Court and you sit in a different court every week, or every two weeks, so I was all over the place—from the Bowery, up to the Bronx. I thought, “Isn’t this wonderful!” It’s what I wanted to do, really—juvenile work. That’s why I studied law.

“We couldn’t hire a woman.” They decided in West Virginia (of all places) that they were going to try to start some kind of a court like that. Just up my alley! So I made an appointment, but I had to be careful because I happen to be a Republican and my family had always been Republican, and this was a Democrat administration. But daddy being in business there had some good friends—a couple of judges—and they wrote me lovely letters. I went down to Charleston, the state capitol, and had a real good interview and they liked my background and asked questions. “Oh this is just wonderful because this is what we want to do.” We talked a lot and I was feeling better inside. [...] I thought: “This is wonderful; this is the state Capitol!” And then he finished by saying: “But I’m awfully sorry, Miss McHenry, we couldn’t hire a woman.” Talk about a pin stuck in a balloon!

Choosing a Republican state: California. [Then why did they interview you?] Well, they were picking my brain, I guess. I don’t know. They thought [perhaps] out of courtesy [that because] I was a recent graduate, they had to do it. I said: “Thank you very much” and I went home and I thought about it: I’m not going to get any place in my home state, not right now. Ten years later it would have been better, but not then. So I decided I was going to move. I hate winter. I’ve hated it ever since I was a little kid. I never went sleigh riding. I hate it! I couldn’t have lived in Canada! And I thought there were two states in the country at that time that were Republican. One was Minnesota, so I wasn’t going there. The other was California. And they also had a court out here that they had started—a youth court. I decided I could work there. So I just came. I didn’t know anybody out here. I knew one girl that I had met the first summer I

worked in New York City and she was the only contact I had at all. And I just got on the train and came out. [What year was that?] It was when Pearl Harbor happened—so it had to be 1941. And I often kid Jean about that. She got married two weeks after I arrived, so she was no good to me at all for the first few months. Anyway, I worked here. I found work with attorneys [...] I tried to learn, and I did have several appointments with a judge [...] in [her] court having to do with children. [...] I was amazed to find out that that, too, is political. I thought: they're kids and they're making it political? Of course, I couldn't get to first base there.

War years: Casablanca, Dakar, Egypt, Kauai. So I tried everything, and along came Pearl Harbor and I thought: I'm not going to sit here. There must be something I can do, I'm young, and that's when [I applied for] the Red Cross overseas [...] and they accepted me. [...] I [was there] until almost the end of the war. [Where did you go?] Our ship went first to Casablanca. We were supposed to land in Italy, but we crossed at the height of the submarine warfare and due to the invasion of southern Italy, we docked in Casablanca. (We were a single ship, the old Matson Line. [...] I started my time there in a very fine way. I got sick the next morning. You know what happened? When we arrived, they took us out in the desert to a camp (there were 125 Red Cross women). I didn't know "for nothing" about deserts. I didn't know that you should have all the warmth *underneath* you. I kept piling things *on top* and I almost had pneumonia, because you know how cold the desert gets at night. This was in early spring, so it was really very cold. [...] They took me into [...] an old maternity hospital that the army had taken over and my room was a bed inside two hung sheets in the hall. Anyhow, once they got you in there they wouldn't let you out [but] I finally got out of there several weeks later.

By that time there were 125 women who had come over and everyone had been assigned. They didn't know what to do with me. So they assigned me to a camp in Casablanca. I worked there and then went to Port Lyautey, in northern Africa, for the Navy base and tank battalion. Then I was transferred down to Dakar—which is now Senegal. [...] I think I was there 6, 8, 9 months (I sort of forget). They finally realized that really, American women shouldn't be kept down there—diseases of all descriptions were rampant—and [so] they transferred me up to Egypt. And I didn't like that. There really wasn't anything much to do there. The club was in town—mostly transient service men. [...] I finally asked if I could be transferred up to the Continent, but instead

they sent me all the way out to the Pacific. [...] I fell apart out there because my thyroid went out of control. [Where were you?] I didn't get too far. I only got as far as Kauai. I was supposed to go on to Guam, I guess it was, but I didn't make it. [...] I had lost quite a bit of weight.

Florida: oh the bugs! I decided to come back to California. [And you've been here ever since?] Yes...with one interval. I thought: "I think I'll go East again." Why I went to Florida, I'll never know. I'm sorry: they can have Florida. [...] I had a very good friend that I had gone all the way through grade school and high school with. Mary and her husband were there. I had a feeling that if I stepped off the sidewalk there I would step into the swamp...and oh the bugs! There were so many bugs and insects. I thought: "This is silly. I don't like this. I'm going back to California." I left in 1947 and came back in 1949 and I haven't been away since, except for vacations.

A change of career. [How did your career go? Did you still practice law?] No. Once again, by that time they still weren't accepting women much. It wasn't until the 50's and the early 60's. [...] Also, you had a lot of veterans coming home—already lawyers—and of course, they were given back their jobs. [...] We were not considered veterans, no matter where we had been or what we had experienced. [...] I worked with attorneys, but I didn't want to be a courtroom attorney anyhow, even though I liked to talk, I didn't want to do that. I found one firm I liked and was the office attorney—only problem was: they specialized in personal injury and after a while, I couldn't stand that any more.

Agnes Ledley. My friend Agnes Ledley had been in accounting and bookkeeping. I met her in the Red Cross... [And you've been housemates ever since?] Yes, after I came back she wrote and said: "Eileen, I don't want to go back to what I was doing. Would you care if I came to California?" Why should I care if you come out? Go ahead! So she came out, and of course, it was very difficult to find housing at that time. We had a couple of friends who helped us. One such friend was Alyne Henry at St. Alban's. And that's how we finally bought a house together. The aunt who had raised me was a retired schoolteacher and I wanted her to be able to come out every winter and visit. And Agnes wanted her parents to be able to visit. So, we said: why don't

we buy a house together? [We'll] be joint tenants and no one has to worry about anything. [...]
And so that's how that happened.

Aunt Lou. [You said that you were raised by an aunt?] My mother died when I had just turned 4 and my aunt Lou was actually my daddy's sister, but when mother and daddy married (my mother was younger by ten years than my daddy), she and aunt Lou became like sisters. She knew she was dying. She had cancer. And she asked aunt Lou if she would raise me. I had an aunt who was my mother's sister, but my mother wanted aunt Lou and so, when mother died, my daddy moved aunt Lou (she had never married) and my grandmother and grandfather to his house. I used to kid her that her genes had rubbed off too well on me: "you soured me on men!" [...] She was just like a mother and she was so good to me. She was a schoolteacher 45 years. I knew how to read and do all sorts of things before I went to school. [...] Anybody who says a child of 4 years doesn't realize that their mother has died [...] doesn't know what they're talking about [...] Not true at all. Aunt Lou, thank heavens, knew that.

Religious background. [Did she make a strong woman out of you and encourage you to become....] Yes, I think she probably did, without [...] lecturing. [...] I went to school with her too. She taught grade school and then she retired [after] 40-46 years. And she taught me arithmetic and spelling. That's who gave me my religious background too. My mother had been Episcopalian. I was baptized in her Church, but aunt Lou was United Brethren (which is now the Methodist Church) and it was more convenient for her to take me to her Church. So I grew up through high school in her Church. It wasn't until I went to university—there was no UB Church there—and I was looking around [that] I found this little Episcopal Church, the sweetest little Church. It was frame; oh it was so pretty. I thought: I'm going to try it here. I liked it and so I was confirmed. I've been an Episcopalian ever since. Aunt Lou was the kind [of woman who] when I used to say "thank you," she would say: "No Eileen, I thank you. I look at some of my friends in teaching and they are not with it—I forget the word she used—You have kept me from being an old maid Scrooge." [...] She let me have parties all the time! She grew and learned from me, and I learned from her. She taught me the Bible. The different Scriptures that I remember are the ones she taught me. I didn't realize it. They just come naturally to me.

[Were you always very involved with the Church?] Oh yes, growing up in the UB Church we had youth groups and I taught Sunday school. I didn't do as much when I was at University because I didn't have the connection. I went to Church somewhere every Sunday, but that was it. I always laugh: when I went to Dakar, where I was stationed, the army Chaplain was a Roman Catholic. He was a nice man. When he passed me on the base he would say: "Oh sure, Eileen, the Catholics lost a good one when they lost you." He said [that] with my name I should be a Roman Catholic. I had no business being anything else! [...] He went to all the trouble of going into the city (our base was out of town) and getting an Episcopal—no an Anglican—priest, a French man who would come out on Sunday. That man would come out every Sunday and there were only two of us who went, a soldier friend and me. We were the only two. We tried to get other people, but to no avail.

Women without men. [So you, like your aunt, never married.] That's right, I never married. I always said I picked the wrong people. But I also was taught to use the intelligence I was born with and to think things through. And when I saw what happened afterwards to that particular person, I thought: "Thank you, Lord, for having your angel wings under me," because that person became an alcoholic. And I know enough to know that unless they want to, there's nothing you can do, and I wouldn't wish that on anybody. I loved to dance at parties [...]. I know my daddy used to say to his friends when I was overseas that "my daughter is giving her feet for her country." If I had a dollar for every dance I had to dance I could have retired even earlier than I did! [You went to a lot of dances, a lot of parties?] We put them on. That's one of the duties of the Red Cross. We were recreation. We had the sad jobs too. Whenever any sad news came from the States, we had to break the news, write the letters, and all that. And anything that came under counseling, we did too.

Ethnicity. [What is your ethnic background?] Irish. You might know! My mother was Irish, too. Her maiden name was McAtee. I don't know from where. When I got to go to Ireland some years ago, I looked all over, but they must spell it differently because it's McAfee. That's what must have happened...but I did find my grandmother's name, Ogle. That's a very Irish name and I did find that in the phone books over there. And of course, the McHenrys were Irish. I'm pretty well Irish—a little Scottish thrown in, way back there, but mostly that. [Do you feel strongly

about your Irish background?] Oh yes, I love the Irish. I can see in myself [what] I didn't recognize before I had been there. I spent a whole year with Ireland as my home base and I traveled out [from there].

Stubborn and emotional. The Irish are very loving people and very welcoming. They are very stubborn and I thought: "Uh uh, I got that one all right." [...] And also I found out something about myself that I think is strictly Irish: you're either up or you're down; there's not much in between. I've been that way most of my life. Fortunately, that has been "up" for me. [...] The Irish are very emotional, there's no doubt about that. And heaven knows I'm that! I've been very proud of my Irish blood. I really am...but talk about being a loyal American! I was raised that way, too. I can remember from the time I was little, what they would do on the 4th of July. We had parades [...], you flew the flag [...], and I've always been very patriotic. I love my country. [...] I was in Ireland on St. Patrick's Day. A young girl (who was actually from Thailand) stayed at the same place I did. We went to the parade. We were watching them all coming and suddenly I heard something, and I thought: "That's not Irish. There's something strange going on here." All of a sudden it dawned on me: it was the "Star Spangled Banner" being played by a bugle corps from Boston. Well, when I heard that...the tears. I thought: "You love it here, Eileen, but you couldn't stay here the rest of your life."

Politics. [You said you were a Republican. Were you active in politics?] Oh yes. [...] To begin with, used to be, a long time ago, [that] you couldn't vote absentee. I first had the right to vote when I was in university. We drove all the way from Morgantown into my hometown so we could vote. We didn't have many things on campus like they do now, but whatever I could do [I did]. [...] When I got out, I worked in canvassing and at headquarters [etc.]. I don't do too much of it anymore, but I belonged to the Republican Association of Women. I was their president until it disbanded, and when George Murphy ran for Senator, I was very active. We would do mail [...] anything we could do. And [...] I worked in precincts until a few years ago.

Feminist? I've never liked that word. [You described how difficult it was as a woman to make your way. Were you involved in any women's issues? Would you consider yourself a feminist?] I've never liked that word [but] I've always been [one]. I never joined the women's [movement]

because I did not believe in some of the things they were doing. I still don't. Because I believe that we need to be recognized and have just as many rights, and the whole ball of wax, but I don't think I deserve any more because I'm a woman. And when they got to the point where they were issuing the bra-burning thing... I think that's silly. [...] [Have you worked for any women's issues?] Yes, that's what we did in the Republican Association of Women. I was president of that for several years. And of course, we were getting more [appointments] for different people, and fortunately that's been happening more now. They are appointing women to some of the highest jobs. Sometimes it stands you in good stead and sometimes it doesn't. You can be too vocal sometimes. I try not to force my point of view on everybody, to the extent that I make myself obnoxious. [...] I think you've lost before you've won, and you never will gain it back. Oh, but I'm very outspoken. I had the reputation in high school—my friends said all the time: “give Eileen a soapbox and she'll make a speech.” That's the best thing I had and I won awards for it—debates and all those oratorical contests—oh yes, I'm quite a talker, Luisa!

Children's issues and the law. [What drew you to the law and made you interested in children's issues?] First, the law: my aunt tells me that one summer when I was about 10, I was playing with the girl next door and I came running into the house and said: “aunt Lou, I've decided what I'm going to be when I grow up. I'm going to be a lawyer.” She said “Oh, all right, that's fine.” With that, I turned around and walked out. Now what prompted me, I can't tell you. I don't know to this day. [...] There had never been lawyers in my family. Well, maybe way back, there were lawyers, but not recently.

Work ethic. My Father was an electrical engineer. He had his own business. I learned the work ethic. I remember that when I got my law degree he came to graduation. He said: “daughter (he never called me Eileen, always “daughter” or “babe”), I just want to give you one word. (I knew he didn't like lawyers.) You do what you have to do, what you want to do. (He didn't trust a lot of them. And I knew a lot of them and I didn't blame him. [...]) He said: “when you start working, no matter where you are, or what you're doing, for every dollar that somebody pays you, you give them a dollar's worth of work.” He had a very good work ethic, my daddy did, and he was so well liked by the union. I don't know if you know anything about the Electrician's Union, but it's a strong one and they're always right, you know. Daddy had many a word with

them, but every one of them respected him. When he died, they had a special meeting and passed a special resolution that they sent to the family, honoring him. I get that kind of ethic from my daddy and aunt Lou. Of course, I was with my aunt more, and when I was 13, my daddy finally remarried and he wasn't living in my home (as I called it) any more. So aunt Lou was my hero. She had a lot of hardships, you know. You could be a teacher, but aunt Lou always wanted to travel. [...] Aunt Lou always told a story. She had a younger brother, too, and his friends would come around all the time and they would ask her to go out. He said: Lou, there's just one thing, you're just too damned particular!" I've never forgotten that. And she said, "I guess I was." She said: you know, I had all the blessings of marriage without having to be bothered with a husband...meaning, she had me and a home [...].

St. Alban's, St. Paul's Cathedral. [Eileen, did you come immediately to St. Alban's when you came to Los Angeles?] No, I didn't because the funny thing is, the first weekend here, I stayed with the friend I knew from New York. They lived in Westwood and she told me where St. Alban's was. I thought: OK, I think I'll go there on Sunday. Very odd [because] it happened to be the Sunday that this Church was dedicated. [...] When I finally found work, I moved closer into town. And so I went to the Cathedral. That's why I've always been very sad that when they built the new one, they built it where they did. I think they lost a lot of people. I went to St. Paul's Cathedral. And then after the war I had met Alyne Henry. It was so funny that day when I said "I'm Eileen McHenry" and she said, "Well, I'm Alyne Henry." She was much older than I and she took me under her wing. It was she who introduced me to St. Margaret's. I was the youngest member of the group. It met at night then and Al took me. I was a baby compared to them. [...] Al would be over 100 now and she's the one who got me interested. I've never quit going to St. Margaret's since.

Mission versus a Church. [I wonder how many people in the parish know that this used to be a mission?] Did you know it? You don't start right off being a Church or a chapel. You start out as a mission and the Diocese supports you. [...] The Episcopalians wanted a Church in this area [because] there was nothing around here. UCLA was just starting; [it was] not the monster it is today. It was [first] a mission, [and] then they got enough people to build it slowly. They started in the early 30's. It got well enough along [so] it could be named a chapel and then a Church.

That shows you how fast they went—from that time to the dedication of this big new lovely Church at the end of the 40's. [...] There were a lot of people. The Dodds for instance, you'll see a window in there dedicated to him. He was the treasurer of the Church. She was Al's friend. She took pity on me because of the housing shortage when I came back. I lived in the servant's quarters of her house in Beverly Hills because she didn't have any servants at that time. People like that, who had money and were interested in the Church, helped build it. [...] When Parker Jones was Rector, they had a capital drive fund. We were running out of room and we wanted to increase the Church School. That's why they built the 2nd floor. [Later], attendance started to drop off. What are you going to do? People felt sort of helpless. [If] people don't want to go to Church—it's like anything else: if you don't have that little desire in you, you're not going to do anything about it. I feel like I've been born here. I missed all my youthful years in the Episcopal Church...not that I didn't have a wonderful time in the UB Church. [...]

Women's guilds at St. Alban's: St. Margaret's. [What was St. Alban's like then? How has it changed?] Oh so much—[it had] a bigger congregation, of course. And we had more guilds then. We had a women's group, Episcopal Women, and this was one reason why St. Margaret's met at night. Betsy Cahall and I were laughing today...the younger women wanted it at night because even if they didn't work, the father could take care of the children while they went out for the evening. So there was a regular women's group that met during the daytime. They used to put on things like fashion shows and wonderful big luncheons and I remember taking the day off from work lots of times to come. And I remember St. Margaret's used to put on dances and sell tickets. That's how we made money. We'd have the dances at the Bay Club in Malibu. It was a wonderful place to have dances. We did lots of things. For instance, we were always interested in children. Just like we are now. A youth group used to have their club down in Santa Monica. We decided we were going to spruce it up. We painted the whole thing inside and spruced it up. As far as I can remember, St. Margaret's has always been interested in children. I always have been too. I suppose one reason [was] aunt Lou, again! I don't mean to be always talking about her, but she did give me an awful lot of advice, and my path, as it were. Children don't have to be beaten or be poor to have problems. [...] I think that I've never gotten over some of the things that happened during my mother's illness. [...] Children always have problems of some kind, and I think it helps when someone besides their parents try to do things [for them]. And of course, the

ones from broken homes, need it even more. That's why we got so interested in Hillside and started doing the scholarship there. We've been doing that for a long time. [...]

St. Hilda's. During Parker Jones' time here as Rector women didn't work as much then as they do now, and they were free in the daytime and wanted to have daytime meetings. That was fine, but those of us who worked had no more guild to go to. They started another one called Saint Hilda's. I went once or twice and I didn't care for it, because all they did was discuss things all the time. [...] I just remember that I wasn't comfortable there. [...] I don't particularly like that kind of organization. I want to be *doing* something. It wasn't until after I retired that I came back into St. Margaret's. [...]

Retreats in Santa Barbara. We did a lot of retreats then at the Sisters in Santa Barbara. I loved going on retreat there. [...] We decided that we would start a group and would meet for breakfast one Sunday out of the month. And we tried to do things for the Sisters and take up collections because they had the interesting theory that always seems to work: "God will provide." We decided that we should help God along. That was a lot of fun. There would always be at least 8 – 10 of us. That was an interesting group.

St. Anne. And then [as] I told you, they had the women's group then [and] they also had the wonderful sewing group. Connie Cook and those women started it and they kept it going until they were very, very advanced in age. They met every Wednesday and they cooked their lunch and sewed all sorts of items to sell. At that time we had marvelous bazaars. They would be two days [long] and they would put on dinners. That group was St. Anne. This group of women, I would say, was around your age [40's] and they made all these beautiful things, did a lot of work, and made money. It was a very active group.

[Well, you had lots of groups: St. Margaret's, St. Anne's, St. Hilda's, a Women's Group...] St. Hilda's sort of went down. [I also understand that there was a very exclusive club. What was that?] That was sort of St. Anne's. It wasn't what you would call exclusive, in a way. I wasn't comfortable there. [...] In St. Margaret's, it didn't make any difference what your financial

situation was, [in] St. Anne's it did make a little more difference. [...] They also met in the day and they were the ones who really did most of the work when it came to those bazaars.

Dinner and bazaar. And they did dinners. At that time, several years running, they would have the dinners over at the YWCA [...], you would buy your ticket. I think they had the dinners on Friday night and the bazaar all day Saturday. [...] And they were bringing in scads of money, you know. [...] St. Margaret's would have their booth with whatever they made. I was just so sad when all the bazaars quit because they really were wonderful. This was after I retired and had more time. Velda came when she could, Annette Bradley and Marcia Burkhardt, several others—they weren't working then. We started a group because we still had the bazaars, and we called ourselves the "Fancy Fingers." [...] We would meet every week. You know that this is an eating parish, don't you?! [...] St. Margaret's has always been about food. I dreamed up another one—it was under the guidance of St. Margaret's. But, only 2 or 3 of us worked there. It was called Treasure Trove. [Things] had to be new—some gift that you received that you knew you would never use and was still pristine, you brought. And we also made things. Something that I don't like might fit in your house just fine. And we served lunches at those bazaars. [...]

Change at St. Alban's. Of course, we had a larger congregation then. At one time during all this, we had four different masses on Sunday—at 8, 9, 10, 11:00, and we had three different priests. [Things have really changed!] Oh yes. And this way, you see, you didn't have the Eucharist every Sunday because you had Eucharist at one of these [masses]. One week I would go to 9, 10, or 11:00 because I always wanted to go to Eucharist. And that's what a lot of people did. We had loads of people.

[How has St. Alban's changed for the worst and for the better? What do you regret and what do you think has improved?] [...] First, we had to close the other services, until it was down to just two. And that was very sad for a lot of us to see. [...] We had people living here then whose husbands worked in positions that were subject to transfers all the time, and that's what happened to a lot of our parishioners. [...] I've always wondered why we went down. I don't really know. I taught in Sunday school here too. At that time, we didn't have the upstairs built. We had Sunday school in the Parish Hall. We would put dividers in between. I forget what grade I taught, I think

it was 6th grade. You would always have 10-12 children, and all different ages. [...] We went through that awful stage when there weren't as many young people coming to Church any more. [...] A lot of people moved away, and of course, as children grew up, they moved away. A lot of them married and lived in another part of the city. That was very discouraging, if you had been going here a long time. And we used to have those humongous rummage sales. Those would go on for 2 or 3 days. I didn't do those when I was working, naturally, but after I retired...

Business partners. [When did you retire?] 1969—long before I was supposed, too. Agnes had gotten a job as bookkeeper and accountant at Dyecraft, a carpet dying place. There were three partners. One went with another business, another had a heart attack, and the third one shouldn't have been in business at all, poor man, and wanted to get out. Agnes did talk him into making a corporation out of it. Finally he said: why don't you just buy me out? Agnes did. And I put some of my money in, and I [became] a partner, and she built it up. We had machines—the only ones in the whole West Coast. As far as I know, no other women ever had a carpet dying plant. I got to the point that I couldn't stand personal injury law any more. I told Raoul: I'm sorry, I have to leave. Agnes needed somebody. I'm very good with money. I've always been able to take care of money and budget [...]. I was brought up that way. I said: I will come down and get your money all straightened out and get you on a budget. I'm like the "Man Who Came to Dinner." I never left. I wanted to. I didn't like the place; it was so noisy. Anyhow, we got an offer to sell it at a very high price—which was something, for then—and we retired.

Retirement. [What did you do after retirement?] Well, then I came back into St. Margaret's. I started helping at the Y. I was on the board of the YWCA. That was very interesting. We had something going there. I had belonged to a sorority. [What sorority?] Chi Omega. I decided that if they needed one, I would become an advisor. So I was an advisor down here on the row for 10 to 15 years after, because I could do it then, and enjoyed that a lot. And also, I joined the alum group and could go to the meetings. And I did a lot of my political work then. Everything at the Church—whenever they had a sale or anything—I was always helping. Also, soon after I retired, in the early 70's, I worked here every Monday and took care of the money. I counted all the money. I did the banking. [...] I did that up until the mid 80's. So, that took a day out. I did it all by myself. We didn't have computers. I opened the envelopes and marked how much. I sent

out quarterly reports. When it came pledge time I wrote the letters and sent them out to everybody.

Assessing St. Alban's. [Why do you like St. Alban's?] Well, I suppose one reason that drew me to it was Al, Al Henry. She's the one. I sometimes wonder if I hadn't met her that first day and she hadn't taken me under her wing...I don't know. You would have loved her. She was so outgoing. And she worked in the Church office. She did the money then. In those days, that office was open on Sunday until after the last mass, in case someone had a question or wanted to put money in. I did that. Joan Gutrey and I would take turns when we were working here. Al brought me into St. Margaret's and introduced me to this one and that one. [...] I think that's why I liked it, really. I've known all three rectors! Reverend Bryant was the rector here, then Parker Jones. And I was on the Vestry that chose Fr. Norm. So I know what they are going through and will be going through. [It's a big job.] It is.

[What does St. Alban's need right now, in your opinion?] I don't ever want this Church to start going this way again. I think we got to a place at one time where we were favoring too much one age group. Right now we're slipping into that again. And you can't do that and have an active, healthy parish. I would like to see someone who was interested in every age group. Just because they get to be older, don't think that they aren't worth something anymore. That goes on at St. Alban's right now. I know some of the people that feel it. And that's too bad. [...] Like they're not a part of it as much as they used to be, you know. As long as we are going to have two [services], I don't know exactly how to do this, but a little more camaraderie between 8 and 10:00. When I worked here, I knew everybody's name, whether I knew them or not, because I would see their name coming into the plate. I would know their name and where they lived. I would meet them. There was a tie there. Now, I don't know too many people at the 10:00 service. [...] I'm so thrilled that once again we're getting a Church school because that really went down, after a while. [...] But once again, you can't devote the whole Church to the Church school or to the youth group. [...] People need to feel comfortable. [...] I hope the new rector will keep that in mind—that every parishioner counts.

Bringing the parish together. Like Fr. Norm was saying today, it looks like maybe the pendulum is swinging back a little bit, and a few more guilds are coming back. [...] Oh and another thing we had was Bible class during Lent, particularly. I think it was on a Wednesday night. One group would cook dinner. St. Margaret's always made meat loaf and scalloped potatoes. And we had someone come in and speak. [...] The Parish Hall would be full during Lent. I would love to see more things like that again. That brings a parish together, but you have to do things that have an interest for all ages. We would have one night that was strictly a Lenten meal, not very much, and [...] we would have a class. We had a rector and 2 assistants and they would teach a Bible class. It would be nice if we could observe as a parish. It was always at night, but it brought people out. I just hated to see that end. [Why did that end?] I really don't have an answer. People got too busy. [...] People started to work more. That happened with our "Fancy Fingers." They all started working. That's understandable. I think they still have the book club. I don't know exactly. I've thought about it a lot. Did it start to happen when the younger people started moving away? And it was almost [all] 50's and up? It [had] never [been] like that. We always had young people. [...] I've thought about this so many times and wondered [how to] get it back. [I don't think it is just this Church...] That's the sad part. A lot of people just quit going to Church, period. [...] [Well, hopefully we're on an upswing.] I hope so. You don't have to think [...] that [you've got to be] a saint [...] to go to Church. You go to get help. Some days I haven't wanted to go, but somehow you just do. I don't feel that my week is complete if I don't. [...]

I will not let St. Margaret's Guild die. [Is there a coordinator for the St. Margaret's Guild? Who leads that?] I'm the president. And you know what? [...] I keep saying it's time for elections but they say: "We know Eileen [that] we [will] elect you again." [How long have you been doing that?] Since the early 90's, I think. As I've often told Fr. Norm: I am determined [that] I will not let this Guild die, as long as I have any breath in me and [am] still alive and here. [...] Maybe people in this Church think it's just a bunch of little old ladies. We work. This year, I am so thrilled, we have a speaker coming from the Huntington Library in October. The interim rector is going to come talk to us in November. January, our friend Betty Finger, her daughter's friend, is a maker of jewelry. She has art pieces. She is going to talk to us. Malcolm Cole is going to come in February. The new president of the Women's Group of the Diocese Overall is going to

talk to us. The election is going on in January. They are the ones who have a lot to do with the Bishop's Guild. They have the "Save the Pennies," a special cause for buying prayer books all over the country. They have a women's program and speakers. We had members of St. Margaret's in it, but I never was too interested in doing that myself. I guess it was timing. When I worked I couldn't do it. And then I got so busy doing other things after I retired, that I just couldn't go into that field. [...] I used to be on the committee from St. Alban's when they chose the last Bishop (the one who retired). [...] I went to conventions, but that was more because I was on the Vestry. [How often were you on the vestry?] Two different times. [What years approximately?] It had to be after I retired, so the 70's and 80's, I guess. It was a happy day when a woman was included on the Vestry. This first occurred during the time of Parker Jones. That woman was Lou Neeley, and that opened the door. (Unfortunately, lay readers did not enter the picture until a bit latter.)

[...] [What are you hopeful about?] [That] there are many more young people in their late 30's and 40's. There was a dearth for a while. [...] [Those are busy years if you have a family and children.] Yes, that's why you need to keep a parish healthy, in my opinion. I have this feeling that we are all in this together. [...] If you don't have some correlation between all the ages, I don't think it's going to be as happy a place. [...]

All my life I've fought two discriminations: ageism. [I don't know how you feel about this, but I didn't get your age] No, and I'm not going to give it, you know why? I don't really care that you know it. All my life I've fought two discriminations: the woman thing and age discrimination. I've seen that happen [and] I hate it! I've written down that when I go to Glory, don't put my age in the paper. It's nobody's business. What difference does it make? People today make too much about a person's age. If you're such and such an age you can't be considered for this. I've fought it all my life. So I just don't give it. I didn't join [feminist] groups because I didn't believe in them, but I've fought for women's rights ever since I can remember.

Sexism. [...] There's one last thing I will tell you. There were several girls ahead of me [in Law School], but no one in my class. There were 75 men and me, when we entered. I was very

fortunate with my classmates. They always treated me as one of them, but they never forgot I was a girl—which I appreciated so very much. As they tell you in that first semester before you have your exams: Look to your right and to your left; one of you will not be back next semester. And that’s the truth. 35 of us graduated, so that shows you. My daddy was there and aunt Lou and my other aunt [for the graduation]. Being “McHenry,” I was at the center of the alphabet and when we all filed up [before] the Dean of the Law School was standing there. As we went up to receive our tassel and [be] handed a degree, he refused to shake hands with me. I couldn’t believe it. They always said: don’t clap for individuals, wait until the whole class [had received their degree], which I understood. Poor Dean Hardman didn’t know and his face got just as red as any red you’ve ever seen—and he deserved it. A group of my sorority sisters were graduating at the same time from other schools, and they did this (clapping). This embarrassed me. I just put my head up. What a slap [to the Dean]! The very first class I attended, the professor teaching it didn’t want women in Law School. He didn’t want them there at all. One morning he said: Miss McHenry, you still have time to withdraw. You should be home or in some other school like nursing or home economics. You don’t belong in Law School. This is what endeared me to all my classmates: the guys all [began] saying: “that’s awful!”

A terrible insult. [We forget what progress has been made...] Exactly. It’s amazing. I’m still angry. That was a terrible insult. My daddy, aunt Lou, aunt Reita—they didn’t pick up on it so much as the younger people did. Where they were sitting they might not have seen it. Another time—I was a social butterfly—I liked to party. The men all did, why couldn’t I? I loved football and I would go when I could. We were playing in Manhattan and a group was driving up and invited me. My sorority sisters were going, so I went along. And at the end of the year I had a course I didn’t make as good a grade in [as I might have]. It was a course I had a hard time with. I hated it. The Dean called me a “social butterfly” and almost kicked me out of school [just] because I went to that football game. I don’t know how many males went, but he was going to punish me by saying my grades were bad and dismiss me. Another professor got wind of it and stopped it. He was the one friend I had. He was from the South—Alabama—[and] he taught corporation law (which I hated), but I studied and tried. He said. “Miss McHenry, I want you to promise me something. Please don’t ever practice corporation law.” I said: don’t you worry. He came to my rescue. You fight as best you can. [...] I never approved of a lot of the things the

Women's Movement did. There are ways of doing it: you can get a lot more with honey than with vinegar.

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