



Mary Yates Oral History Interview, May 15, 2014

Title

“The Sprawling Life of a Career Diplomat”

Date

May 15, 2014

Location

Valley Library, Oregon State University.

Summary

In the interview, Yates discusses her upbringing in Portland and her undergraduate years at Oregon State University, including her memories of sorority life, her academic progression, and the emergence of both her interest in travel and in public service. She then recounts her move to the East Coast, her graduate work in Asian Studies at New York University, and her experience of taking the Foreign Service Exam.

The majority of the session focuses on Yates' numerous diplomatic posts, first in South Korea, and followed by the Philippines, Zaire, Burundi, Ghana, Europe and the United States. In providing an overview of the time that she spent in these positions, Yates also shares her recollections of the political situation that she encountered from country to country, including a people's revolution in the Philippines and the genocide being carried out in Rwanda, neighboring country to Zaire.

Yates also provides a glimpse into the logistics of life as a diplomat, including her memories of attempting to communicate by telephone with her husband, himself a member of the foreign service who regularly lived on a different continent. Yates likewise discusses numerous additional components of an ambassador's world, including learning how to negotiate, diplomatic communications, security details, and multiple individuals who made an impact on her career. The interview concludes with an account of Yates' time working in the Obama White House, her hopes for the future of Africa, and her enthusiasm for developments at OSU.

Interviewee

Mary Yates

Interviewer

Chris Petersen

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/yates/>

Transcript

Chris Petersen: Okay, we are with Mary Carlin Yates today, and we're going to talk about her time at OSU and her career as a diplomat, and we'll start out by having you introduce yourself. Give us your name and today's date, and our location.

Mary Yates: I'm Mary Carlin Yates. This is May 15th, 2014, and we are in the Valley Library—in a lovely room in the Valley Library.

CP: So you were born in Portland?

MY: I was born in Portland, raised in Portland.

CP: And your parents' backgrounds?

MY: My mother was a teacher, and my father did a variety of jobs. He was in sales from—he was in the military during the war, and then he was in sales, and Mom was a high school teacher. They met in Bend, Oregon, when she was teaching and he was working, so.

CP: And do you have any siblings?

MY: I do. I have an older sister and a younger brother. My younger brother also went to Oregon State, and my sister finished at the University of Oregon, so we had a little rivalry in the family, as well.

CP: Tell us a little about your upbringing—things that you were interested in when you were a little girl in Portland.

MY: Well, when you ask me that question, I think about our dinner table, and we always had to have discussions of subjects in education. And I would say that probably three or four times a week, we would get up from the dinner table and either go to the dictionary, or to *The Book of Knowledge*, or the encyclopedia, to try and get the answer to a question. And that was really how my parents believed, but my mother was just emphatic about it, and that's why I named the scholarship after my mother and myself, because even though she didn't go to Oregon State—she went to Pacific University when women hardly went to universities—she instilled that love of education in me.

CP: So you enjoyed school growing up?

MY: I did. Always. I loved it!

CP: You went to Roosevelt High School?

MY: I did, indeed.

CP: Tell us about your experience there.

MY: Well, I was just Little Miss Everything, you know? [Laughs] From cheerleader, to president of the student body, or whatever—editor of the yearbook. But I think what I really remember is in the 10th grade. I had a teacher, Miss Tomlinson, who made Rome, and Roman civilization, and other civilizations come alive for me. When I try and think back to the genesis of my international interest, I think it probably started in high school.

CP: So you made the decision to come to OSU in 1964?

MY: I did.

CP: Why OSU?

MY: Well, candidly, probably financial necessity. I very much would have liked to have gone to Scripps—Scripps or Pomona. I looked at the University of Washington very carefully, but practically and economically. And I got scholarships to come here—but I loved it. I loved being at Oregon State.

CP: Do you remember your first impressions of the university, and of Corvallis?

MY: That's a good question. It seemed so big, and there seemed to be so many people. And I also started, ironically, as a math major, and then I just decided—that was when they had slide rules, you know, and it was not exactly the kind of people I thought I really was, and I loved my English classes, and I loved theorizing about things, and there were just wonderful English professors. So my second year, my sophomore year, I changed my major, and sort of continued in the liberal arts vein.

CP: How did you find the transition to college from high school? Was it fairly smooth for you, once you got over—?

MY: Yeah, absolutely. I lived in a dorm. I lived in Snell Hall, and I pledged a house. I just did the normal thing that a lot of young women in the '60s did. But I mean, I must say, too, that I just love that young women today can think about coming and doing anything. At that time, we were still on the cusp of any sort of real women's liberation, and your role models were to be a teacher or to be a nurse, to work in some social services.

Now, I must say that I was really impressed that there were three or four young women in the Kappa House who were going on to be premed. I mean, they were going on to be doctors, and I just thought that was wonderful! And I think one even went on to law school. But that was, like, not really thought of at that time. I mean, I certainly didn't think about being a diplomat and an ambassador, and working at the White House. It was just wasn't in my scope and vision at that time.

CP: So as a young English major, you were perhaps thinking of being a teacher?

MY: And I was. I went and taught high school for almost ten years after I graduated.

CP: Tell me about living in Snell Hall. That was the women's dorm back then.

MY: [Laughs] I have almost no memories at all. Yeah, well, it was noisy; I remember that. I was on the first floor, so there'd be people yelling outside on the weekend. [0:05:00] I mean, I have no real memories of that time. Probably ate too much food, the dorm food. I liked it much better at the house. It was smaller, and the relationships, and what I really liked was there was a study group, because I was serious into English literature, and studied Shakespeare—Faith Norris' Shakespeare seminar, famous—the wonderful Faith Norris. But we got to sit around and do a study group with six or eight people, so the juniors or seniors, if they were taking the same class. And you learned from talking with others. You read the literary criticism, but somebody else had seen or heard something else, and it was just such an organic way to learn. I mean, I thought it was fabulous!

CP: This was going on in the sorority house that you were at?

MY: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

CP: Which house was this?

MY: Kappa Kappa Gamma.

CP: Uh-huh. Was that sort of the center of your social life for the most part in college?

MY: No, I spent a lot of time in the library. I think that's what I did. I mean, every night after dinner, I'd walk back over here and study.

CP: What do you remember? You mentioned as we were coming in that it looks a lot different now. What are your memories of the library from your time?

MY: I think I slept a lot, because I was so tired [laughs] at the end of the day. No, I thought it was wonderful that you could walk among the stacks, and that there was just such a vast array of books and resources available. And they're probably nothing, as they are now; it was before the Internet revolution, and all of that. But at that time, after coming out

of a high school, and, we loved books at home—but to come, and especially to be able to walk in the stacks. I thought it was great.

CP: Did you have any other hangouts?

MY: Oh, of course, you went to the MU, and that little—I think it's still there. It used to be a—the place that looks out on the commons. It was a small place where we—we weren't coffee people like people are coffee fans now. But we would go in there, and it just seemed, like, you know, it was raining, raining, raining, but you'd get together between class. And then, it was before my senior year, so it was during my junior year—between my junior and senior year, I had a chance to go to Europe, but I didn't have any money to do that. I was told if I could make enough money for the plane flight—which I think was \$300 or \$400—so between every class, it seemed to me, I came in and ran the ditto machine in the commons, you know? It'd be like, now, Xeroxing or doing something like that. I'd go home with purple fingernails. But I made enough money, and I got to Europe, and I lived and worked in Geneva that summer. So I reached my goal.

CP: Wow. Was that your first time abroad?

MY: Yeah, I think it was, yeah.

CP: Wow.

MY: And to me, Europe was just amazing. And then I travelled with—there were two other Oregon State University women, and they had gotten jobs in Europe through a campus program, somehow, one of them in Copenhagen, and then another in Geneva. So then at the end, we had maybe three or four weeks, and we traveled. We traveled to Italy. I mean, it was just so eye-opening, but I didn't realize until much later, that's just the beginning of it. That's easy stuff, to go to Europe. I mean, when you get to Asia and to Africa and other places, it's really a wonderful world out there.

CP: Uh-huh.

MY: And students need to know more about it.

CP: Tell me a little bit more about your academic progression while you were here.

MY: Well, I enjoyed everything I did. I mean, I wasn't a top academic student. I did decide I wanted to complete the English major, and then I was taking—secondarily, I was taking Education hours, and so it took me another half a year. I graduated with the class, but I came back, and I did my student teaching and finished up the education hours. And then I went flying off to Washington, DC, and Maryland to interview for jobs, and so I ended up back there.

CP: You mentioned Faith Norris, is that correct?

MY: Mm-hm.

CP: Were there any other influential teachers or mentors during your time?

MY: Oh, I know there must have been. There was a wonderful woman who was a German teacher, and German was very hard for me. I think how ironic that is, since I, in the Foreign Service, had to learn Korean and then French. But German was very difficult, but she was so kind and so smart. She and her husband were both teaching here, but her name escapes me.

CP: Yeah. Did you have any another jobs, besides the ditto machine?

MY: [Sighs] The ditto machine. I'm sure I did. Well, I always did in the summer. We just had to, and tuition was nothing in comparison to what it is now [0:10:02], but I knew that I had to come back from summer vacation with at least half the money. I mean, there was money from scholarships, but they weren't big ones. They were just—help pay for the tuition, or part of the tuition. Yes, I must have done something at the house, because I must have had a reduced fee there, as well.

CP: So you stayed in Corvallis during the summers?

MY: No, no, I went to Portland. No. And actually, one summer I went to Washington, DC, because I have an aunt there, and I just thought the U.S. government workings were fascinating. I worked for the Labor Department, as just the lowest level-type clerk, but it was just seeing Washington work. And then the next summer was when I was intent that, since I had an uncle in Geneva and an aunt, that I would get there if I could. And I did. But, I mean, I still had to come home with money.

CP: Yeah. So this interest in public service was emerging during your college years?

MY: I think so. Yeah. And ironically, it was the years of teaching, when each summer—well, the first three years, I was in a master's program at New York University, and it took me to Paris, France, for a summer; Kyoto, Japan; and then back to NYU to finish this master's. But it's just like the aperture of my world opened up so broadly that I knew that as well as coming back—and I had a fabulous mentor of an English Department head, and she just said, "Whatever you've learned, if you can work it into a class." I was teaching seniors, and we had quarters or segments, so I designed all sorts of things—a film studies course, an Asian studies course—on the high school level. So I really enjoyed sort of cross-cultural translation. So then, when I saw foreign service life, when I was abroad, I thought, I would love to do that. But it's ironic, because it's the opposite. You're then telling America's story to the world, instead of vice versa. And I thought, maybe I should have had a little bit more American history in my head.

CP: [Laughs] Well, one more question about Corvallis. You were in this town during a turbulent period in American history, from 1964 to 1968. Do you remember what the atmosphere was like in Corvallis? It was, obviously, kind of exploding in many other places.

MY: It was. And then that transferred, as well, when I started teaching. I started teaching in '69 and '70. I mean, I was 21 and they were seventeen and eighteen. They were just protesting in Washington. Yes, I was aware of it on campus. Actually, in high school, I remember some—in Portland, some of the Rose Festival Princesses were asked about the Vietnam War, and the answers were not fully informed. But when I came here there were groups protesting on campus, and it was a matter of discussion. But I think that's, again, why I sort of morphed away from pre-engineering or anything—not that that was my intent—but mathematics, because I found the sort of liberal arts discussion, and the guys sitting around with beards and talking about what we ought to be doing in the world, far more challenging, even though I wasn't thinking of it, aspirationally, as a career at that point.

CP: Uh-huh. Well, you graduated in 1968, and as you mentioned, you went, I believe, from there to New York City. Is that correct?

MY: Well, no, I went to Washington, DC I lived in Washington, but taught in Bethesda, Maryland, at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. But then I applied and got into the—I did one more summer in Europe after my first year teaching. Then I got into this master's program. So I saved money all year long to be able to go and study, and take these quarters up at New York University. So it was wonderful.

CP: What drew you to that program, and to the city? It sounds like you're becoming a pretty cosmopolitan person pretty quickly, [laughs] from Portland to Corvallis to—

MY: [Laughs] I just liked adventure. When I was honored by Dr. Ray to give the graduation speech in 2007, and it wasn't—I listened to a couple of the other speeches, and of course went back and listened to people before, and I thought, I'm just going to speak from my heart. And I said, "You just have to keep opening doors, because you have no idea." And take the hard job. I mean, even when I went in the Foreign Service, somebody said, "Well, if you go—if you take this job in Gwangju, South Korea, you have to study Korean for almost two years before you go. And I thought, now that's a little bit challenging! But then, just wonderful things happened! [0:15:00] So, I mean, that's what I tried to explain, is, "Don't think right now, when you're sitting in college or finishing college, that you know what's possibly going to happen in your life, partly because the world is changing so rapidly; the world isn't going to be the same. But secondly, you grow, and just go in different directions."

CP: Mm-hm. Yeah. So how did you make the decision to go to NYU?

MY: It was the program. I read about this Comparative East-West Humanities program, and I thought, well, how fascinating is that? Also, even at that point in the '70s, it was clear that to continue to teach on the high school level, pretty quickly, you had to have a master's degree, or sometimes at that point they said a fifth year. Well, I didn't want a fifth year; I wanted a degree. And then I enjoyed it so much, I applied for the doctoral program. It was in the social science realm, so I had to do some backup courses to get caught up. And I got all the way through the doctorate, took the comps and passed the comps, and had the outline of my thesis when I got in the Foreign Service, and sort of the rest is history. I went down that path.

CP: Okay. What intrigued you about the East-West Humanities initially, the idea of studying that? Was there something from your undergraduate days that led you to that, or was it kind of out of the blue?

MY: Not out of the blue. It was because, I think, I had been to Europe already, and the idea of making a comparison to another part of the world that I didn't know at all. And I think we're fortunate on the west coast of America to have so many wonderful colleagues, friends. I mean, from the time I was in grade school in North Portland, some of my best friends were Asians—I mean, Japanese and Chinese. And so, it seemed like I ought to know more about what their background and heritage roots were.

CP: And these early trips to Europe that you took in your college years, and maybe right after college—was there any particular moment where it really struck you that this is something that you were really interested in, travel, and seeing the world? Or was it more of a gradual process?

MY: I think I go back to that high school class where I was so fascinated about the culture that was there so long ago, and how much—I mean, it makes you look at the trajectory of a life, and you realize this little part that we're part of is just really nothing, in comparison to the whole scope of history. And I keep having this voyage of discovery. I mean, we just came from a month in India and Sri Lanka. I knew something about India because I had a Fulbright there, but I knew next to nothing about Sri Lanka. I thought, oh, my gosh, I mean, back—56 B.C., they were having these incredibly rich cultures! So, I mean, you just have to educate yourself, and not think that we're the center of any universe, or any period in time.

CP: Uh-huh. What was New York City like for you as a grad student?

MY: Oh, I loved it! Oh, I mean, New York could be home for me tomorrow. There's just pulsations, *amouge* [?] as the French would say. I mean, it just happens. Life happens! I mean, it was challenging. First of all, I mean, the city in the summer, because I was there in the summer—it was hot! We were just staying in a dorm. And there are all sorts of eccentric people in the '70s in New York City. I think the first time I went there by myself, as a student, it was kind of like I had stepped onto a bigger stage.

CP: Oh, I'm sure.

MY: Yeah. It wasn't Corvallis. [Laughs]

CP: Well, it had a reputation as being a much grittier place back then, too.

MY: That's true. Yeah, the crime was much higher.

CP: Yeah?

MY: Yeah, you were careful. You were careful about which trains you rode. But we would—if we could get done with our studies and go get in the line for TKS, which was started about that time, and get two tickets for one. We didn't care what show we saw. We just thought it was thrilling to be able to go to a Broadway show, or Off-Broadway.

CP: Uh-huh. So it sounds like the program that you were in incorporated a great deal of travel.

MY: It did. Yes, yeah. And that's where we were to be making the comparisons. The Fulbright to India was not until I got into the doctoral program, and it was a Fulbright-Hays, focused on education, and how we could take the institutions, and the traditions and culture of India, and again, help to explain that in American education. [0:20:00] And it was really

important, but I think, ironically, that was back in the '70s, and now it's so important that we have a better understanding of our Southeast Asian colleagues. I mean, they're just some of the most brilliant people throughout America.

CP: Mm-hm. You met your husband during this time?

MY: Not during this time. I met him after I joined the Diplomatic Corps.

CP: Okay. Well, I guess it sounds like we're sort of moving in that direction now. Can you give me the background of how you got into the Foreign Service?

MY: Mm-hm. I've explained this when I talk to the Honors College students here. The exam is a tough exam. Most people take it more than once, and that's not anything to be ashamed of, and now they have these new essays, so I've talked to a couple of young people. And you study all you can; you take this rigorous exam, and then you don't pass, and you think, hm, well, maybe I didn't talk right about the law of the sea, or the question they asked about the Middle East. And so I just vowed that I was going to read—and it's almost like reading something in a series, because I read *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, and at that point, *Time* and *Newsweek* and *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Economist*, every week. So you're constantly reading, and all of a sudden, places in the world in crises—"Oh, yeah, I remember that. That's what was going on in Bangladesh," and then last year. So when these questions come at you, it doesn't seem so overwhelming, because you're able to articulate.

And you're not supposed to know the whole policy; they just want to see if you can think on your feet. And also, they ask you a lot of situational questions, and I think my teaching experience helped in that. You know, if you were in charge of the motor pool, and the chauffeur took the car for his daughter's wedding and wrecked it? And then they just put you like you're in an embassy, and you have to make a decision, and they just want to see your thought process. So anyway, second year, I made it through the hoops.

CP: And then what?

MY: And then, that was when they look around at—you take your training, and then you find out where you might possibly be going. Like I said, there weren't a lot of people who were excited to be going to Korea, which I was excited, even though I'd not been there in my studies. I'd been to Japan. But you had to study Korean, because—oh, I joined—at that point, it was before the merger happened between USIA, the United States Information Agency, and the Department of State. It's just like USAID, so there was USAID, State, and USIA. So I was a public affairs officer. I was telling America's story—talk, talk, talk, talk, you know, as my family says; I'm capable of that. [Laughs]

CP: [Laughs] Well, tell me a bit more about the training that you underwent initially.

MY: Well, it's actually quite a bit different now. They have these traditional A100 classes, that you go through a set series of training. I had a little less of that. I had rigorous language training, both in Washington, DC, first—and we were just a small group of three students, and we had these two Korean professors who just were at us all day long, and then you'd go home and study. Then we went for the second year to Seoul, and that was better because you were totally absorbed then. I mean, you could absorb the culture 100 percent of the time, and I think the language skills moved up.

And then I was posted, as I said, it was Jeollanam-do, the southwestern corner, in Gwangju, and I was the sole diplomat there. There were probably about twenty western missionaries. But basically, that was it. And it was a very challenging time. The President, Park Chung-hee, had been assassinated, and one of the dissidents in jail was Kim Dae-jung, and Kim Dae-Jung later became the president. But at that time, he and the whole—I mean, it was if the entire area had a stigma, so it was a fascinating time to be there. And they were also anti-American. I mean, they threw little firebombs. They would soak matches in kerosene, and they threw it at the Cultural Center. One day they threw it at my house. So you sort of realize that you're representing the United States of America, and there are real challenges in this.

CP: And you were basically on your own? [0:25:00]

MY: Yeah, I was basically on my own. I had a guard that slept outside on the premises, but nothing like probably today, but every embassy is different. But the whole security situation in embassies has changed tremendously in the 31 years I was in the Diplomatic Corps. And fast-forward to the end, after I had finished at the White House, but the president asked

if I would go and do one more thing for him, and that was to be the *chargé* of the embassy in Khartoum, Sudan. I mean, it was fascinating, absolutely fascinating, because just that July—and I went in August—South Sudan had the referendum and separated, and became an independent nation.

So there were lots of people in Khartoum that thought that they'd been ignored, and that they'd done what they were told to do by allowing the referendum. And they thought they were being promised a full-time ambassador, someone who would be confirmed and everything, kind of elevating the status of the relations. But we knew that that probably wouldn't happen, because you have to have Senate approval, and the feelings within the Senate, which came from all of the feelings about Darfur—and that's a long story.

So, I always like to say I was the placebo. I mean, I had the Ambassador title. I was just coming out of the work at the White House. So I said I'd go for a few months, and I was there six months, and it was absolutely fascinating. But, back to the security point—I never went anywhere that I wasn't in an armored vehicle. There was a big security officer in the front seat, and there was a truck behind me with guys with guns. So, I mean, that's an interesting way to move around. But I actually felt pretty safe there, and not because of the guns, because of the relations that we developed. Anyway, sorry.

CP: Well, you clearly had to develop a thick skin pretty quickly in Korea.

MY: Yeah, we did.

CP: What were your responsibilities in this first job?

MY: Absolutely wonderful—running an American cultural center. Again, we had different segments. We were teaching people about American history, American values of democracy. I brought in some top economic speakers, because even their economy wasn't liberated at that point. In fact, USAID had just closed their mission about two years before I got there. The Peace Corps had been there. You just think of the great shift in that nation, that graduated to the heights that it is right now. But that was very much at the beginning stages of that.

I can remember sitting—I had a group of very bright young people; I would say early 20s, and they were interested in what was going on in the Philippines, the "People Power." They wanted to know how you could exercise your democratic rights. So I was very careful, because I didn't want to have our exchanges, every Wednesday evening, sort of stopped. And there were plain clothes policemen everywhere, just crawling around.

And so I remember—that's how old it was—we'd get them on, not Betas but VHS tapes, of the *CBS News*. It was a composite that got sent out electronically, and we would have highlights of the *CBS News* from the week before, which was great. I would always preview it. I would come up with maybe fifteen or twenty vocabulary words, so we were having sort of an English discussion, but it was always on current events and political subjects. And they just enjoyed—and they were speaking in English here. We'd sometimes mix Korean if they got really passionate about something, but I mean, it was very interesting.

Even the English teaching was fascinating. I would bring other people I knew around the country in to help when we would have a one- or two-week—in the summer—meeting of English teachers within the area. Because it was an area sort of—how can I say it diplomatically? They were not given—I mean, there are places in America the same way, that they're not given the same amount of resources for education.

CP: Uh-huh. How long were you in Korea?

MY: Four years.

CP: And then did you move to the Philippines after that?

MY: Mm-hm.

CP: So tell me about that transition.

MY: Well, I got there, and in the first year I was there, the "People Power" revolution was going on. Ninoy Aquino had been killed on the tarmac coming home, and so the people were massing in the streets with the color of yellow, and decided that Cory, his wife, should be a candidate. Of course, the defense minister, Juan Ponce Enrile, really didn't think that was the right answer. Well, Marcos—oh, that's right, this is before. Yeah. When I got there, Marcos was still in the presidency, but it wasn't long. [0:30:02] Wow, I should have that date in my head, because he actually lifted off in a helicopter from the grounds of the American Embassy—it's right there, and there's a little helipad—because it was bad, and he had to get out of the country. I don't know if he went to Iloilo in the north first. I can't remember. But then the whole election cycle, and all of that.

Then the next year, when all of this exciting stuff was happening, comes along my husband from another posting, and he'd lost his wife tragically. And so we actually were doing US-based negotiations at the time, and the ambassador put a small team of six people in the embassy together, to negotiate, and they made me the mouthpiece for the press. And so we worked together. I make the joke that we worked together day and night, and hey, well, the rest is history. But it was a very good experience.

CP: So you met in the Philippines, then?

MY: Mm-hm.

CP: You were involved in negotiations?

MY: Mm-hm.

CP: Was this the first time that you were in that position, of negotiating?

MY: I think that's probably right, and you learn a lot by watching other people do this.

CP: I'm sure.

MY: It's both sides, and some—excuse me, some of the finest negotiators were, well first, a State Department lawyer who came out, and a three-star general who came out, who understood that you always have to be able to walk to the window and have a quiet moment, in a public, more public way, because even if were fifteen or ten at the table, everybody has to grandstand a little. But if you've got a really tough issue, there's a way, "Let's make a little note on this. What language would you use? Let me see if I can get that." You just find a way to move back and forth, so.

CP: It sounds like there's a real art to it.

MY: Oh, there is, absolutely, and I just admire all the people who work on the Middle East negotiations. Dennis Ross—I had the pleasure to work with him again when I was at the White House, and I just have deep admiration for the patience he has, just constantly to go around the track one more time on issues.

CP: So, I'm trying to conceptualize the scene here. You literally have ten people on either side of a table, and presumably the lead negotiator is conducting most of the conversation?

MY: Well, what I learned later, when I was Ambassador in Burundi, about the peace process—you take a big issue, and you cut it into smaller pieces and things, that you then assign people to work on. And that's exactly how it was. So we would have a subject, and someone of the group would have been the lead on that, whether it was what we were going to do with carbon [unclear], what we were going to do about nuclear, what we were going to do about this—and you'd have experts come in for your side and the other side. Then you would come together. But for this day, or these days, or this week, this is the part of this gnarly problem that you're going to talk about.

And what I saw in Burundi—and the greatest honor there was that I got to work with Nelson Mandela, and he was unique because he really was a demigod. I mean, his moral authority was so enormous that the Hutus and the Tutsis that came and wanted to continue their arguing at the peace process, couldn't really in front of him, and he would just shake his finger like a schoolmaster, and say, "Don't be so little. You came here for a reason. You need to go back to people and say that we're accomplishing something here." But we broke it into committees to look at—instead of all being truth and

reconciliation, truth and reconciliation—what were they going to do about a constitution? What were they going to do about economic development? What were they going to do about humanitarian needs of the people who were the poorest of the poor? So then you work on little issues, and it builds. I'll stop talking.

CP: Oh, please talk. We're here to listen. Well, so it sounds like the Philippines was in tumult while you were there, at least initially, and I don't know how much longer you were in the Philippines, but how did the remainder of that time play out for you?

MY: Oh, the entire time I was there it was fascinating, because they were rebuilding the nation, and even though Marcos was gone—that's what I started to say—is that the military, who were used to having their way under Marcos, they thought that they should go on and rule. There is a certain discipline they have. And the people wanted to have Cory in power [0:35:00], and of course, she became the president. But even that was complicated, because—we see it all over the world—I mean, you can't just become a president. There's a lot you have to know about leading, and hiring the right people, and getting the parliament built. So the institutions, I would say, probably lacked almost any integrity when she took over. And I think her years in power they did a lot to restore that. Then, I believe the next president was Ramos, who had followed as defense minister, but coming out of the military [unclear], but he was elected democratically. But I might have to go back and re-learn my history there.

CP: Did you get married in the Philippines?

MY: We got married—from the Philippines, we came back to Washington, DC, and married at the Willard Hotel, and then went back. I remember I came home for a few weeks to plan it, and John had to stay out there because they were having big elections in January. But yes, it was January of '88, and we returned, and then departed the summer of '89. But this is where it gets complicated for what we call "tandem couples," because oftentimes—especially as you go up in rank—it's not easy to get posting together. So he went off to Nigeria, to be the number two in the embassy, and I was asked to come in the State Department, in the East Asia Bureau. So we shuttled back and forth, but I can remember, that was before e-mail. The next time we had to be separated for a while—and there was e-mail—I mean, it's a crazy testimony, isn't it? But at least on a daily basis, you could just go, "[Mutters]," you know? I can remember waiting for the phone call on Sunday morning to come from Nigeria, and sometimes for two hours you could dial and you'd never get through.

CP: Yeah. [Laughs]

MY: So, better.

CP: So the State Department posting came after the Philippines, is that correct? The East Asia Bureau you mentioned?

MY: Yes, then I came into the East Asia Bureau, and I was the Office Director for Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs.

CP: And where were you located at this point?

MY: In the State Department, in—

CP: In Washington?

MY: Yeah, in Washington.

CP: Okay. And how long was that?

MY: It was two years. We had already started figuring out who was going to leave the post that they were in first, but it's not any different than academics and everybody else in this world today. You have two careers, and you're trying to balance, and I had the good fortune of, as well as getting a wonderful husband, I got five children. So that kept me busy, too, even though some were older. The two younger ones, who were—from the time that my husband spent in India, so they were from the Mother Teresa orphanage that we just two months ago got to go and see again, the Sisters of Charity. And so that's a lot of responsibility to take on.

CP: Absolutely, and not an easy task organizing a family like that, when you're living in other sides of the world from one another.

MY: [Laughs] That's right.

CP: Well, what was it like being back stateside for a couple of years? Did you miss being in a foreign country?

MY: I did. But the good news was, because John was in Nigeria, I spent Christmas, and then we traveled in West Africa, and that was really my first exposure to Africa. And I think it's so ironic that I say, "I put my hand in his, and he took me into Africa, and I'm so lucky that he did!" To see just the richness of the country and the people—peoples.

CP: Yeah. Well, your next post was in Zaire, if I'm correct.

MY: That's right. That's right. That's why we both cut short our tours, which should have been three years, by a year, because the wonderful woman who was ambassador to Zaire at the time, Melissa Wells, wanted John to be her Number Two, and there was a job that I could have, that wasn't exactly in his chain of command; she could supervise me. This is all the nepotism rules that you have to be very careful of. So we headed off to the Congo, but just as I was trying—then I had to learn French pretty quickly, and I didn't have enough of it. I only got about four, four and a half months. And I was headed out there, and they had a huge civil uprising. [0:40:02] The military killed a few people. And so they started evacuating the post, and I thought, after all of this, we're not going to get there. But it took a little while, and a few months later they needed some people to go back in. So I was going to be a political officer at that time, so that was a big change.

CP: And what did that entail?

MY: Well, there were lots of things going on in the country, and—for example, they were trying to have a *conférence nationale souveraine*, and national conference to find a way forward so that those people who felt disenfranchised and marginalized would feel like they had a say in the government. And so they selected an archbishop, Monsengo, who's currently a cardinal—he's become a cardinal—to run this conference. Well, we weren't, as diplomats, at the conference, but they televised it, so my first three or four months, every day for three or four hours I sat and listened—in my less-than-stellar French—listened to this, took notes, read newspaper articles, all sorts of things—and then had to write political reports so people could understand what was going on, and where the sort of challenges and sticky wickets were.

CP: And these reports were cabled to—?

MY: Washington.

CP: Okay.

MY: Before WikiLeaks.

CP: [Laughs] I'm fascinated by the process by which one sort of becomes an expert on Zaire, having never been there before. I mean, it seems like, besides the French training, there must have been some really intensive, just a learning process about where you're going.

MY: Absolutely. At our Foreign Service Institute, they call it "area studies," and of course, it's never enough. But I sort of had a role model from my husband, as I looked at his long shelf of African books when we got married. You can do a lot of reading, as well. And then because I had naturally developed relationships with journalists, I just continued that, and my goodness! When journalists write books, it's almost as if they're still writing their stories, and they dig into things, and—fascinating, yeah. And they're great books on Zaire and the Congo, because the place just defies definition.

CP: Mm-hm. How much of Zaire were you able to—?

MY: See?

CP: I mean, could you go out and see it?

MY: You could see some things, but it was very difficult. In fact, it was sad to me to think of all the money that not only the United States, but France, and Belgium, and the Germans, others, had put into roads and electricity grids, and things like that, that then just were not kept up and fell apart. And so we used to say that anybody who could get into the interior of Zaire, there were potatoes—there were just wonderful vegetables, and things like that, whereas in the cities—because there were no roads to get them in there. I saw that in Burundi, as well.

But we went to live with the Bashi right after there had been the *pillage* there, and they even had taken the seats out of the Cultural Center. But after I did the political job for two years, I moved over to head up the cultural section—I mean, the public affairs and cultural section, and that was very, very enriching. And this was a lesson I learned, that it doesn't make any difference how poor a country is, or how bad the leadership is, or dictatorial—people care about human freedoms. They care about the education of their children. I mean, basic human values are the same, and when you reach out—and you can be very proud of America for our values—and so you try and share those.

But I also learned the lesson that it's much better to have an African, any other African, come and share their story. So I would send people off on International Visitors Grants, and they would come back. They had had a wonderful time; they had been to—imagine a political convention. That's a different era. But they would come back, and I then I'd say, "Oh, let's have an event at the Cultural Center." And then I found—and this was when HIV/AIDS was becoming so prevalent, and there were these women who were all HIV-positive, but what they wanted to do was tell other women their lives weren't over, you know? And so they taught each other, first of all, the most important thing was to have a nice dress. So they'd get cloth; they'd make it. They'd fix each other's hair. [0:45:01]

But what you're going to do is you're going to go and do something valuable for someone else, and I just thought that was amazing, to be able to work with people like that. I mean, it's sort of democracy with the smallest "d," but it's sort of restoring hope in some ways.

CP: Yeah. You were adjacent to the genocide in Rwanda at this time, if I'm correct.

MY: I was indeed. Yeah.

CP: And your observations in that, in real time, I suppose?

MY: Yeah. Interesting that you would touch on that, Chris. I can still be brought to tears almost in a moment when I think of the month I spent out there. I took it upon myself to interview, I mean, I guess you could call them *génocidaires*. I mean, these were some of the people who worked at the American Embassy, and they had worked side-by-side for years—Hutus and Tutsis. And because of this hatred that was stirred by the radio and by the leaders, that they would turn upon each other and kill them, or kill their children. And I mean, literally, there were piles and piles of bodies, and they would wrap them in these small—it was just awful! I came back from there, and I thought, I'll never complain about anything the rest of my life, because of what those people went through.

And the women, especially, walked and walked to get out of Rwanda. They came to Goma. They came to Gisenyi, the border, and literally, when I went out to the border a couple of times, the soil was just stained with blood, so you can only imagine what you hadn't seen. So it was a powerful experience. And I made the statement at the time that if I ever could do anything to help prevent something like this again, especially with Hutus and Tutsis—and so that's how I ended up, after four glorious years in Paris, in Burundi, as the ambassador.

CP: Well, let's touch on those four glorious years real quick.

MY: [Laughs]

CP: It was obviously a big change for four years.

MY: It was! [Laughs] It was absolutely magnificent! It was kind of like heaven. It would only have been better had my husband been with me, but he was asked to be ambassador again. He had been ambassador before I met him, in Cape Verde, the first ambassador in Cape Verde. They had sent him there as *chargé*, as an O-1 officer, and elevated him to ambassador—which was important for the relationship, as well. Then he went to Nigeria as number two, which was a

big country, then to Congo, and then he was asked if he would be ambassador to Benin. Well, the size of the embassy—I couldn't possibly work there, I mean, for the nepotism rules.

So I just got very lucky that the press *attaché* was leaving Paris, and Pamela Harriman, who was famous in and of her own right—the one that did the PAM PAC to start Bill Clinton—interviewed me, and decided—I mean, it's not normal that somebody interviews you. Usually, you're assigned to a job. But she was so powerful that she wanted to have someone that she wanted to have in the job, because the press were just—they all wanted to interview her and talk to her. So it was a rather demanding job. So I mean, I was in the thick of it with the journalists, and my French had gotten quite a bit better at that time, so. Anyway, it was fabulous, and then I got to—then we lost her, her tragic death. And the next ambassador, Felix Rohatyn—brilliant man from Wall Street. And so the job of the senior cultural *attaché* opened up, and so for two years, I had that position.

CP: Well after that, you became an ambassador for the first time, to Burundi. How did this come about?

MY: Well, I think it was exactly what I was saying. It was a difficult assignment, because you had to be unaccompanied. Everybody in your embassy was unaccompanied. I mean, they couldn't have their wives or husbands and children with them, so you had to have someone who could sort of keep the morale up. I also would have, of course, been without my husband. But also, I felt pretty passionate about not letting a genocide occur again, and the elements—even though it's a different mix and a different situation, but because they'd been at civil war. I mean, it was almost ten years. The peace process was making some progress—see, I went in '99. It was making some progress, and then President Nyerere of Tanzania passed away, and so they asked—I believe Nelson Mandela stepped down in '98 [0:50:02]; maybe it was in '97.

So this was one of the first things he was asked to do as the *eminence grise* on the continent, and he just did a magnificent job of it, even though his health was weakening, even at that time. So I give him a lot of credit. And then he also was prescient enough to see—and this happened right toward the end of my tenure—that they needed to have peacekeepers on the ground. And it was just more than the international community and the UN, could put together. Just like right now, it's taking so long to get them to the Central African Republic after all the horrid things that are happening there. But Mandela just sort of said to his parliament, "Yes, we're going to send some South African peacekeepers."

And I can remember the difference on the streets, because the fear at night was palpable in the city of Bujunbura, but to have a South African—and there were white and black South Africans walking together, with the Burundian military. So people just felt a relief, and I think that helped psychologically, as well as what was going on at the conference, little by little. But that was a two-year process to come up with a transition that they decided would take at least two or three years. You think of a transition being a couple of months, but they needed to get people used to having a Hutu as a vice president, and then possibly a president.

CP: I'm interested in knowing, as an ambassador, how much autonomy do you have to act? How are you coordinating your actions, or your rhetoric, or your strategy, especially in a place that's fairly isolated from the—obviously, from the US?

MY: Yeah, well, the isolation was good, in a sense. I mean, I think all this instant messaging can sometimes get in the way of what you'd really like to do in diplomacy. I used to have my cell phone cut out all the time. It was those big, brick, black things, and it would drop and cut out. I mean, we knew what we had to do. We knew we had to rest in place, and not go out. If I had to call curfew for seven o'clock, people just had to get out of the embassy by six o'clock, get home, and stay in their home, because we would hear shooting and gunfire and the rebels coming over the hills. They're not coming after us, but if you get out there—we lost the Papal Nuncio, who was just a wonderful Irish man, but he was constantly saying, "Mary, these tracer rounds are just amazing." I said, "No, you don't watch the tracer rounds go over." So. [Laughs] You think anybody's going to think this is interesting, Chris?

CP: Well, I'm finding it interesting. Something else that happened while you were in Burundi was September 11th, and I'm interested in knowing your perspective on that from far away. How did you learn about it, and what impact did it make on your work?

MY: Well, ironically, I was with John in Cameroon. He was the Ambassador in Cameroon at that time, and I will never forget. He would usually come home—I was just over there for a week. In fact, he was going to be retiring in November,

so I wanted to go back for that, but I wanted to go over and sort of plan something, because it was his final posting, and it was a week in September I could get away. So he was home for lunch, and he left, and the news—it was those shots of the journalists watching the plane in the one, and then live, we watched the plane go into the second tower. And it was beyond what you could even comprehend!

And of course, I was so afraid for him that I called him after the first one, and then I called him back after the second one, and he said, "Oh, yeah." Well, they were already getting flash messages. Well, then I started worrying about my post, where I wasn't, you know? But I had a fabulous deputy, deputy chief of mission, and I got him on the phone. I mean, there was just so much confusion! So, for a while. [Sighs] Yeah. And, immediately, we had a memorial service. I was still there, because I was staying for the week. They had a memorial service at the Cameroonian embassy, because everyone wanted to come and sign a grievance book, and bring flowers, and things like that. So you do something at an embassy to let people come and express their condolences. So I was on the phone to my embassy, and my deputy did a fabulous job. [0:54:59]

CP: Your next position was in Ghana, Ambassador to Ghana.

MY: Heaven. It was heaven. Yeah. You learn a lot the first time you do a job that's that challenging, because you're alone at the top. You have wonderful counselors and people around you, but ultimately, the decisions are yours, and the responsibility is yours. So I wouldn't have wanted to have gone to a post like Ghana having not had another ambassadorship first, because it was bigger. It was more complicated; I had more agencies there. Just many, many things, regional things, going on.

The whole war in Liberia was going on, and so the peace talks were happening in Ghana. Of course, it was the Africa Bureau responsible for that, but I had US military and all sorts of people. I used to say I ran two meetings; from seven to eight o'clock, we did Liberia, and eight to nine, Ghana, when you have your morning meetings. So, no, it was complicated and fascinating. We had the regional USAID mission, as well as the bilateral mission, which meant issues that had to do with regional affairs. They were trying to come up with a common currency, problems with genetically modified organisms—all these things. And it's a wonderful country. Wonderful people! Ghana has a part of my heart.

CP: Yeah. Well, we're flying through these different posts, because we don't have a whole lot of time left, but I want to try to get to everything. The next job that you had was somewhat different, it sounds like: Foreign Policy Advisor to the U.S. European Command, coordinating foreign policy for an area encompassing 92 countries. What does that even—how does one even describe that?

MY: Well, I have to tell you; this is what's really ironic, because I had signed on and agreed to do a job far more like being around Oregon State. There is a position in the Diplomatic Corps called "diplomat in residence," and they're at universities. There are certain universities, probably nine or ten across the country. And then you go out and attempt to recruit and tell people about the Foreign Service, and why this is a career that you might want to consider. So it was at Berkeley, so I would have been posted to Berkeley for two years. My mother was still alive and up here, but Oregon State would have been one of the eight or nine universities. There's another one at USC, but nothing up in this way. And I would have had University of Washington, and WSU, and you travel all the time, and talk about all of this. I didn't think I got Hawaii in this.

But anyway, I was signed up for this when—it was because of my work in Ghana, and working with the U.S. military, and trying to help bring peace in Liberia, that the four-star general in the European Command said, "I want you as my foreign policy advisor." And I said, "I've already been assigned somewhere else." I said, "Besides that, I just signed a lease." And he says, "You break the lease. I'll get you here." So that's how I ended up at the European Command. But fortunately, I'd had the experience in Europe, with my posting in France, and so much of the work when I was press *attaché* was to do with the Balkans, because all of what was happening in Bosnia and Croatia and all of that. So I didn't feel like I was totally unprepared, but still, 92 countries was a lot.

And we were training Georgians to go into Iraq, and I mean, there were just all sorts of things that—the learning curve was pretty steep! And the acronyms in the military just make you feel like you're ignorant, and that goes on for five or six months, until some of them start making sense. But it gave me a total new appreciation for the U.S. military, and why they're so critical for the national security of our nation. I mean, I just deeply admire the U.S. military. And, I mean, I was

also the squeaky wheel. I'd say, "Look it, now you guys are really off-base! You can't think about doing that." And, "What have you done to talk with the embassy?" You know? So I mean, I was constantly on the phone, and trying to help.

And they have very organized theater security conferences, which bring in the number two of the embassies, and you try and think about how the plan that you have, and the State Department has, matches up with what the military wants to do. So that was—oh, no, it was fascinating. I mean, I was in places I never thought I'd be. I mean, I thought the other day about going to the Ukraine, and standing there, and it was snowing. [0:59:58] Actually, I think they had to put down a piece of plywood so the plane could take off, because it was so slick out on the runway. I mean, this is a while ago.

But it was fascinating. And they stood there in those gray uniforms; it made me feel like I was in a Russian movie. And that's when I had the honor of meeting General Jim Jones. So I worked for both of them, Chuck Walter and Jim Jones. And he was—they call it the SACEUR, the Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, for all of Europe, for the NATO countries, up in Belgium. And we were in EUCOM, which meant the forces of all the different militaries—the Air Force, the Army came under that four-star.

But working with him made me realize how complicated it is that so many of the military jobs actually are diplomatic in many ways, as well. I mean, we had an American ambassador, as one of—I think at that time, there were only 25—ambassadors—24. But the work of the military leader to sort of orchestrate, and try and figure out where interventions by NATO could be made, and then sort of the European Command had to figure out what they needed to do bilaterally with the militaries of these countries, to get people ready and exercise with them, have interoperability. And so, I just learned a whole different world.

CP: Yeah. I'm interested—a long diplomatic career, you are serving with many different administrations coming and going in Washington, and I'm wondering what—obviously these have been administrations that differ significantly from one to the next. What kind of impact does that make on a diplomat afar?

MY: Actually, I mean, there are times that are more challenging than others. But we swear—just like the military, we swear on the Bible, when you become an ambassador, when you become a Foreign Service officer, to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America. And I have no problem at all doing that. And I also really believe in American values. I used to talk to some of the young diplomats, because some of the junior officers would say to me, "If so-and-so gets elected, I don't think that I can do it." And I said, "You can." I said, "If you really believe in your country, you can do it."

There are directives that come out, with certain administrations, that you can't do this, you can't do that, you should be promoting this. So that's when you have, as a chief of mission—and that's what you're called, a "chief of mission," as well as the ambassador, because you're in charge of all of the different agencies; you're not just there representing the State Department. So whether it's the FBI, or the CIA, or the USAID, or CDC, and they're working in your embassy, you are their head, as the chief of mission, and the deputy chief of mission. So anyway, it's not easy at times, but it's really not as hard, and especially in Africa, because I would say, if you went back and looked at the last 25 years, we're trying to do the same things. Democracy. Building economies that are stable in liberal trade. Human rights. I mean, so the basic precepts of what you're working on haven't changed that much.

CP: Well, we're running low on time, and I'm wondering—I have three more positions that you were in [laughs], over the last five years of your career. If you want to just sort of take us through those pretty quickly.

MY: Sure. Actually, when I was doing the European Command job, and we had 40-some countries of Africa in that, then the decision was taken by big DOD that there should be a command just dedicated to Africa. And they studied this, and then all of sudden they decided they were going to do it in kind of a hurry, but it took a year to build it. There were several people who were considered, because they decided they wanted to have—as well as the four-star military, they wanted to have a military deputy at the three-star level, and for the first time, a civilian deputy, who would be in charge of civil-military engagement and activities. So I was very, very honored to have been selected for that job.

But there was nothing easy about it, because, first of all, many of the other military didn't want to have another regional command. The services didn't want to give personnel. The Navy doesn't want to give their 20 or 50 or 100, or whoever they were supposed to give, you know? Then the other inter-agencies—I remember going around to the Commerce

Department and the Energy Department, and trying to convince them about why it would be good for them to be part of this command. [1:05:00] I was just back out there two weeks ago, and had the honor to meet with the new four-star, and I said, "Knowing that I was going to meet with you made me realize how difficult that early period was." And the academics, all around America, said, "This is like, America wants to run the continent, militarily," which was the farthest thing from the truth. So we made progress in those two years. Anyway, I think it was because of that.

And I could have stayed on six more months at the Africa Command—and there was a lot we were just getting around to doing, because the first year was building, and then interoperability of programs on counter-narcotics, because so many of the drugs were flowing from the Latin American countries in the craziest boats and planes and things, into the West Coast of Africa, and there were enough problems there—all the trafficking in persons, as well as the drugs. So I was able to bring the inter-agency together and really do some things.

But anyway, General Jones was the National Security Advisor, and he asked if I would come, and there was a little confusion at first about which position, but in the end I got to serve in both of them. He needed someone to draft the National Security Strategy. I had a very small team of four people. It was the 2010 National Security Strategy. Ben Rose actually wrote it, because he was—he is still with the president now, and he sort of channels his brain. But we did all the building blocks, the ends, ways, and means. And it'll be very interesting to see how history treats that document. And then the second one, which I'm quite sure is out but I haven't really seen it—Susan Rice, I know, felt very strongly about some changes in the direction, so that was that.

And then I finally got to do my dream job for eight months, before I hit my retirement age, and that was to be the Special Assistant to the President for Africa. And when you walk into the Oval Office, and stand in front of the desk, and brief him about something on Africa, it's kind of a knee-knocker the first time you do it.

CP: I'm sure.

MY: Yeah. He's a very nice man.

CP: Yeah.

MY: So it was an honor, and actually, it was a stellar day my last day there, because we managed to get five African presidents from the West Africa, who had all made big strides in their country towards democratization, so in a sense it was a reward. But he sat there talking with them. But even when there were other presidents who came that he would see, like Jonathan and others, I would participate in the meeting in the Oval Office. That was all pretty interesting.

CP: Can you give us a sense of his style in a meeting like that?

MY: Well, I can tell you one thing. I knew what he had done to prepare a briefing paper, and it was always short, pithy, and then you had your two minutes prior to a meeting to catch him up on anything. And sometimes there were crises that were rolling, and then you had to say, but I almost never found that there was something he didn't really know about. I was completely impressed with his intellect, and interest in the details, and actually morally weighing decisions—I mean, that's the legal mind—of what should be done in the country. And that was just my personal observation. I'm not making a political statement. I'm just saying I had the honor to watch him.

CP: Yeah. You've had a remarkable career, and it's sprawling. You've been all over the place.

MY: [Laughs] Sprawling!

CP: I wonder, when you reflect back now that you've retired, what comes to mind in terms of things that you really cherish about your life in the Foreign Service?

MY: Oh, I just feel very, very honored. I felt honored even to be out in Khartoum, and trying to make a difference for the women and some of the disenfranchised in that country. And the interesting thing is, you retire in the sense that you're not—I mean, they called me back to do an inspection of a bureau, and I did that for four months last fall, but it's much—and it's going to be interesting to see how it works, because we're moving out here again, instead of being in the heart, the throb, of everything there in Washington. But being on the board of the Atlantic Council, you know, coming here to be on

the Regents Board—giving back at this point is really what's so enriching. And I was sorry, because we were off in India, that I couldn't do for the 20th anniversary of the genocide. They did several big programs in Washington [1:10:00], and they asked me if I'd be on panels, and things like that.

That's very important, I think, to be able to share the stories and experiences, and I'll continue that here at Oregon State, as well. I mean, every time I come and watch the students in the Honors College—we have the Thesis Fair tomorrow, and I get to go and have my handful that I get to look at, but I'm just so impressed! I think, "Oh, my gosh! I never thought of any of that." You know, my world was this little when I was at Oregon State, but I broke out and found the world out there. But I think we need to—and there's a little group of rump alumni in Washington. They're going to continue this. We need to do more! Oregon State isn't just about Oregon. You've got to think nationally, and national service, and internationally. And the Honors College is great, because they really encourage, with these little scholarships, that they go off and work in far-flung places. But I'll keep working on that, too, when I'm here.

CP: Yeah. Are you hopeful for the future of Africa? You've seen a lot of struggle.

MY: Oh, absolutely. Oh, my goodness, yes! Doesn't mean—oh, I was reading this long article about Gnassingbé. It doesn't mean that there aren't people who just continue to draw their countries down. But when you look at a map—I mean, you look at sort of episodic charts, how many more countries are democratic, and how many more people understand—it's partly the internet, and the ability to communicate. They can't just—if they control the television stations, that's not the only way that people can get information. So, as the dictators die off—but it's also the economy! I mean, the Chinese have certainly figured out that the resources there are absolutely vital, and it is one of the last rainforests on the face of our continent. And of course, I'm speaking to people at Oregon State who know a lot more about this than I ever will. Oh, no, I have great hope for Africa. Yeah.

CP: What made you decide to come back to Oregon and reacquaint with your alma mater, and become more involved with the Honors College?

MY: Well, actually, it was when Dr. Ray invited me to speak here, and I had not been back, and it was just kind of like, again, my eyes were opened. And then I wanted to do something for my mother, because she's so extraordinary, and I decided that as a thank-you to Oregon State, I would establish this fund. And I think it was five years or more before we lost her. But it was a fitting tribute to her, because she was so passionate about education. So then I just got more and more involved. And I think the fact that we're moving to Vancouver means I'll get even more involved.

CP: Mm-hm, great. Well, we're happy to have you. [Laughs]

MY: Thank you. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

CP: Sure. [1:12:57]