

Sue Cejka 4-24-2014

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SUE CEJKA INTERVIEWED BY BLANCHE TOUHILL

- Blanche Touhill: Would you introduce yourself?
- Sue Cejka: I'm Susan Cejka and I am the oldest living healthcare recruiter.
- Blanche Touhill: In the country?
- Sue Cejka: Yes, well, at least I say that about myself. It might not be true.
- Blanche Touhill: But you assume it's true because of the travel that you do and everything?
- Sue Cejka: Well, I assume it's true because I was one of the first people in the country to do it.
- Blanche Touhill: That's right, and you're one of the first women to do it?
- Sue Cejka: I'm probably the first woman. I'm one of the first people.
- Blanche Touhill: That's wonderful. Would you talk about where you were born and your parents or your siblings or your cousins or grandparents or elementary or high school teacher. Who gave you the idea that you could make your own way in the world and be one of the first women recruiters for the healthcare industry. Just talk about your early life.
- Sue Cejka: I was born in Kirkwood. I'm the oldest of four. I have three younger brothers. My father was a printer and I went through the Catholic school system. I don't think there was ever any question about whether I would go to college. I think it was expected.
- Blanche Touhill: And of your brothers as well?
- Sue Cejka: My brothers all went through too, yes.
- Blanche Touhill: So even though it was assumed, didn't somebody say you have a special talent or did you display leadership qualities?

- Sue Cejka: Actually, it was the exact opposite. I went to the University of Missouri in Columbia as a Home Ec. major because in 1968, that's what you were supposed to do. I'm not good at Home Ec. I was flunking out of Home Ec. and I decided to take a marketing course. I went to the business school and the advisor they assigned me to did not get up when I walked in. He said, "Women have no place in the business school. I will not waste my time on you." So I majored in accounting.
- Blanche Touhill: So you went over to the accounting advisor...
- Sue Cejka: No, I went to the dean. I went straight to the dean and said, "What is the hardest major in this stupid school?" and he said, "Accounting."
- Blanche Touhill: And you said, "I'm going to sign up for it"?
- Sue Cejka: "Sign me up."
- Blanche Touhill: And he didn't ask the advisors or the person assigning the courses what to say...
- Sue Cejka: Actually, he was really truly one of those people who was really lovely to me. I ended up doing a job share with his wife every year I was in college and I was the assistant recorder of deeds for Boone County.
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, wonderful.
- Sue Cejka: Yes, he was very good to me.
- Blanche Touhill: And he got you that job?
- Sue Cejka: Yes, yes, he did.
- Blanche Touhill: Go back to your elementary and secondary school. What gave you the courage to go to the dean?
- Sue Cejka: I've never lacked for courage. I have the opposite problem. It's taken me a long time to know when to shut up. It's never been a problem having courage.
- Blanche Touhill: So in elementary school you spoke up and...
- Sue Cejka: There is family lore in my immediate family that my parents broke more yardsticks over me than all three of my brothers put together.

Blanche Touhill: Did they encourage you to speak up?

Sue Cejka: No, they couldn't stop me.

Blanche Touhill: They couldn't stop you?

Sue Cejka: Right.

Blanche Touhill: Were you a leader in grade school or high school?

Sue Cejka: I went to an all-girls school and I have no athletic ability whatsoever so I was a leader in the sense that I was the representative to St. Louis University High School and I was prom queen. I did the things girls do because I had no athletic ability.

Blanche Touhill: And how did you meet boys?

Sue Cejka: Well, I'm pretty sure that I went to every prom in every boy's high school in St. Louis.

Blanche Touhill: But how did the boy know to call you?

Sue Cejka: I don't know the answer to that. It just happened.

Blanche Touhill: May I ask where you went to high school?

Sue Cejka: Ursuline.

Blanche Touhill: Ursuline has always been noted for its arts and literature. Did you feel that it had a strong curriculum?

Sue Cejka: So, it's interesting. I sent my own child to a non-secular private school because I did not think the education that I got at Ursuline was very good. Now, I have a math brain and I majored in accounting and I went to a school that was really focused on art and music.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, they were and to this day, they still have that kind of reputation.

Sue Cejka: Yeah, so if you're a girl with a math brain, it wasn't a perfect fit.

Blanche Touhill: Was your math brain...did it surface in elementary school?

Sue Cejka: I think I always had a math brain but I went to a high school that only had three years of math and then I majored in accounting.

Blanche Touhill: And you had no doubt, when you majored in accounting, that that would be your field?

Sue Cejka: Well, I only did it because I was mad.

Blanche Touhill: Over marketing?

Sue Cejka: Right, right. It turns out it's a great field. I am so happy with the major. It was the perfect major.

Blanche Touhill: But you found it accidentally?

Sue Cejka: Oh, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: When you went to Mizzou, were you one of the few women in accounting?

Sue Cejka: There were three of us, yes. I was the only girl in statistics.

Blanche Touhill: And you didn't have trouble with statistics?

Sue Cejka: I have a math brain. I had a great deal of trouble with sewing.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, yes?

Sue Cejka: Yes, so I gave a talk to the graduating class at the business school of Mizzou a couple of years ago and one of the things I said was that I can't cook or sew but what I've learned is that if you can count, you can hire people to do those things.

Blanche Touhill: Do your children have math brains?

Sue Cejka: My daughter is a CPA, yes.

Blanche Touhill: And you encourage her?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: But your parents didn't encourage you. They just said, "You're going to go to college..."...

Sue Cejka: "Home Ec. will be fine."

Blanche Touhill: Where were you the prom queens?

Sue Cejka: Oh, St. Louis University High, mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: Had you gone to grade school with these boys?

Sue Cejka: No.

Blanche Touhill: You just went on dates and then other boys would ask you from that? You don't know?

Sue Cejka: Yeah, I don't remember how that happens.

Blanche Touhill: Do you have pictures from your days of being a prom queen?

Sue Cejka: Oh, yeah. I was prom queen in college too. I was the first girl in the business school to be queen of the business school.

Blanche Touhill: And did they come out to applaud you?

Sue Cejka: Who?

Blanche Touhill: Your business school colleagues?

Sue Cejka: Oh, yeah, because they elected me.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, they elected you?

Sue Cejka: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: Is that the way it goes? You come out of the schools...

Sue Cejka: No, no, you're in the school and they elect you.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, but you were the first one that was studying...

Sue Cejka: That was in the school. The other ones were always in Home Ec. or Early Elementary Education or...

Blanche Touhill: When you graduated from college, then what did you do?

Sue Cejka: I did what you're supposed to do: I went to work in public accounting. I was the first woman at Touche Ross. I did my three years. I got certified and I did what everyone does: I left.

Blanche Touhill: But you went out on the audits?

Sue Cejka: At the time that I went, because there were no women in public accounting, we were not allowed to travel so it was very career limiting because you could not do what the men did and, let's see, the first audit

that I went on, the client called my partner, with me standing in front of his desk, and asked if he had got a discount if he had to have me. My first staff...

Blanche Touhill: What did your...

Sue Cejka: Well, I didn't hear the other end of the conversation, you know, because it was land lines so I don't know if they gave him a discount or not.

Blanche Touhill: But he knew it was a woman that was coming?

Sue Cejka: No, no, I think I walked in and surprised him.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, and then he picked up...

Sue Cejka: Yeah, yeah. "If I have to keep her, do I get a discount?"

Blanche Touhill: Oh, my.

Sue Cejka: Well, my first staff meeting was held at the racquet club on a floor that I couldn't get off the elevator on.

Blanche Touhill: So how did you get off the elevator?

Sue Cejka: I didn't. I didn't go to my first staff meeting because he wouldn't let me off the elevator.

Blanche Touhill: So did you send word up from the lobby that things weren't going well?

Sue Cejka: They weren't going to change the meeting for me.

Blanche Touhill: So they just went ahead?

Sue Cejka: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: Well, the next time, did they have a meeting at the racquet club?

Sue Cejka: No. Then they had meetings at places that I could go to.

Blanche Touhill: Is that how you got into your business of recruiting?

Sue Cejka: No, at the time, I was working for Rubin Brown & Gornstein and Malin Rubin who was also one of the best people to me, called me into his office one day and said, "Sue, you are going to have a great career. It is not going to be in accounting" and he fired me. It's one of the nicest

things anyone's ever done. He told me the truth. The firm paid for me to go to career counseling and career counseling said that I should be in high dollar intangible sales so I became a head hunter.

Blanche Touhill: You were the first woman at Rubin?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: Did they do that to other women who followed?

Sue Cejka: I doubt it. He was right. I mean, I was not well suited for accounting. He was absolutely right. It was one of the kindest, most honest things anyone has ever done. He would have been wrong to leave me in accounting.

Blanche Touhill: Why do you say that?

Sue Cejka: Because I get the general picture of whether it's right and I move on and I didn't really care if cash balances. That is not the temperament for an accountant.

Blanche Touhill: So if you see that nobody is stealing and that there's no fraud...

Sue Cejka: I say, got it. That's not a good trait in an accountant.

Blanche Touhill: Did he say it out of kindness?

Sue Cejka: Yes. Malin Rubin got the gold medal on the CPA exam when he graduated. He is Jewish and no one would hire him. He did it out of complete kindness, yes.

Blanche Touhill: How did he get started then?

Sue Cejka: He had to go to East St. Louis and work in a firm in East St. Louis until he got enough...you get...at that time, not anymore...at that time, you had to have three years of experience and pass the exam to get your license. So he worked in East St. Louis for three years, had his license, came back and went out on his own because no one would hire him. So, what he did for me was a complete act of kindness.

Blanche Touhill: Did you view it like that?

Sue Cejka: Absolutely. He is one of the dearest people to me.

Blanche Touhill: Did you have any trouble when you were going through taking the business courses because you were probably, as you say, one of three women.

Sue Cejka: I was the only one in the room. You take a lot of grief when you're the only one but that's never been such a problem for me because I can give it back so that part wasn't hard.

Blanche Touhill: Did you join a sorority?

Sue Cejka: Oh, no, no. In fact, I wore a pendant that said "GDI."

Blanche Touhill: What is GDI?

Sue Cejka: God Damn Independent.

Blanche Touhill: Did you live in the dorm the first year?

Sue Cejka: I lived in the dorm the first year and then I lived with roommates off campus after that.

Blanche Touhill: And were they like you?

Sue Cejka: Yes, they were.

Blanche Touhill: Are you still friends with them?

Sue Cejka: I don't see them anymore. I did for a long time but I don't see them anymore.

Blanche Touhill: Are they in the area?

Sue Cejka: No, they've all moved away.

Blanche Touhill: Do you see any of your friends from high school?

Sue Cejka: I don't. I turned out so differently than everyone else that I don't have much in common.

Blanche Touhill: Well, they remember you as the prom queen.

Sue Cejka: Yes, and that's not what I am.

Blanche Touhill: Did you hire people to do the cooking and the sewing?

Sue Cejka: Of course, yes.

- Blanche Touhill: When you left Rubin, what did you do?
- Sue Cejka: I, believe it or not, I joined the firm that I now own but I did not own it then. I joined it as a junior recruiter. I stayed for only six months. It was perfectly clear to me that I would be good at this and it was perfectly clear to me that I would never rise in a firm that only had men in it. So I went out on my own.
- Blanche Touhill: How do you do your job? How do you get to know the medical people that you're trying to bridge, make them come to a certain place to work? That's what you do, isn't it?
- Sue Cejka: Yes, it's a team sport so our clients hire us and pay us in advance to go find what they want. So let's just pick an example: University of Missouri. So University of Missouri, head of Cardiovascular Services which we just finished, you know what your candidate database looks like because it's the American Association of Medical Colleges, cardiologists who have NIH funding and you know exactly where your candidates lives and then I have recruiters who go reach out to those people and do mostly e-mail and phone and then they screen them and I do all the final interviews.
- Blanche Touhill: Do you go to them or do they come to you?
- Sue Cejka: I do them by video. In the olden days, we traveled all the time. Now we do it by video.
- Blanche Touhill: So it's a live interview?
- Sue Cejka: Yes. We have the video equipment in our office, mm-hmm.
- Blanche Touhill: How do you know, are there key things that you know that will make them a good match?
- Sue Cejka: Fit is very hard and a lot of interview is biased so I tend to like a particular character type which may not be what my client wants. So I go with the numbers. It takes four to six on-site candidate interviews to fill a search. Do I know who will be the successful candidate? I don't. I would say that 95% of the time, the problem is not that we're wrong on candidates; the problem is that the candidate doesn't accept our position.
- Blanche Touhill: Why don't they accept? For a variety of reasons.

Sue Cejka: I'll tell you a candidate now that I have an offer out to. Let's see: I'm trying to move him from the Mayo Clinic to the University of Mississippi. His 16-year-old son plays ice hockey. We have a severe shortage of ice hockey in Jackson, Mississippi. His wife is an OB-GYN and we will have to get her a job too. So moving people, it's complicated because of their lives.

Blanche Touhill: And it's really the family?

Sue Cejka: Yes, it's always the family.

Blanche Touhill: Just for my understanding, why would somebody who's at the Mayo Clinic want to move to the University of Mississippi?

Sue Cejka: Because even a star at the Mayo Clinic will not become a department chair because there's only one. So this is the chair of Anesthesiology. He will never be the chair at Mayo because there's only one so he wishes to be chair. He's ready to be chair. He wants to run his own show. He's going to have to go someplace else.

Blanche Touhill: And if he goes to the University of Mississippi and becomes the chair, then he goes to other universities over the next 20 years?

Sue Cejka: May, may stay there.

Blanche Touhill: But he has to bring his own grants?

Sue Cejka: Yes, he brings his own grants, yes. That's a requirement, is you must bring your own grants.

Blanche Touhill: And he understands that?

Sue Cejka: We screen on that so we don't actually present any candidates who are not RO1 funded so we screen those people out.

Blanche Touhill: Does he bring a team with him?

Sue Cejka: Yes, in general. He'll bring five or six people with him, mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: And Mayo doesn't have the right to give degrees where the University of Mississippi...

Sue Cejka: Mayo does have the right to give degrees. Mayo is a medical school. It is not an undergraduate school but it is a medical school.

Blanche Touhill: I did not know that.

Sue Cejka: In the last 10 years.

Blanche Touhill: And they have men and women?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: So how many people have you placed over the years?

Sue Cejka: Five thousand.

Blanche Touhill: When you left Rubin and you decided to go into business...well, you left the search firm because it was all men...

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: And you decided you weren't going to be able to move up?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: So you just started your own business?

Sue Cejka: I went to work for a consulting firm in Kansas City and then they offered me a partnership after a year and when they explained the compensation plan to me, which was they were all men and I was 26 years old and they said, "Here's how we decide on compensation. You leave the room and we vote on your compensation." I was, after one year, the highest biller in the firm and I had a pretty good idea of how they would vote on my compensation so I said, "I quit" and then I opened my own.

Blanche Touhill: So it was really the compensation that caused you to say, "I have to rethink this"?

Sue Cejka: I was the highest biller, mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: Actually, other people who have been interviewed talked about that pay inequity. So did you stay in Kansas City or did you come...

Sue Cejka: No, I had only been commuting to Kansas City because they were based there. I had always lived in St. Louis so I flew to Kansas City every Sunday night and came back to St. Louis every Friday night. Then I moved back to St. Louis and opened up on my own.

Blanche Touhill: Did you have a child at that time?

Sue Cejka: I did not. I had a baby company.

Blanche Touhill: What does that mean?

Sue Cejka: I had an infant company. I could only support one thing at a time.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, I see; I see what you're saying. Okay, yes. So you came back and you started your own business in your house?

Sue Cejka: No, another very kind man who was the president of First Bank gave me office space in First Bank and let me use the copy machine and the postage machine.

Blanche Touhill: So he helped you get started?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: Is that because he felt some day you would own a big company?

Sue Cejka: I think there are just nice people out there. I was a one-woman show starting a business with no money and I couldn't afford a copy machine.

Blanche Touhill: No, I understand all those things. How did you know him?

Sue Cejka: I had needed to lease one room and I got to know him because I wanted to lease one room from his bank and then when it became perfectly clear that I couldn't even afford the one room, much less postage and a copier...

Blanche Touhill: He said, "I'll help you"?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: And so, how did you get your first clients?

Sue Cejka: I called them. My first client was in Blair, Nebraska. It was terrible...terrible, terrible, terrible, but you know, you start where you start and then you work your way up.

Blanche Touhill: And did you fly to Nebraska?

Sue Cejka: It was a combination of flying and driving.

Blanche Touhill: But you succeeded in getting them what they wanted?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: And then, word spreads?

Sue Cejka: Yes, yes, word spreads. All you have to do is do good work. There's actually nothing else you have to do but do good work.

Blanche Touhill: How long did it take you to build your business up so that you could pay rent and pay for your own Xeroxing?

Sue Cejka: I actually hired my first employee within six months.

Blanche Touhill: Was that a secretary?

Sue Cejka: No, it was a male recruiter because, as a girl, what I needed most was a male.

Blanche Touhill: Why did you need the male?

Sue Cejka: Because it was still in the '70s and it was very useful to me to have a male partner.

Blanche Touhill: Was the name on the door both names on the door?

Sue Cejka: No, only mine.

Blanche Touhill: And he was willing to do that?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: Because he thought the company would grow?

Sue Cejka: He made me sign a piece of paper saying that I would not die or go insane in the next 10 years.

Blanche Touhill: And you signed it?

Sue Cejka: I did and I can't speak to the sanity part but I didn't die.

Blanche Touhill: And what did he sign for you?

Sue Cejka: That he would come to work for us.

Blanche Touhill: But he was really asking for a 10-year contract?

Sue Cejka: Well, if you're getting a lot of business, a 10-year contract doesn't matter.

Blanche Touhill: How did you find him?

Sue Cejka: Actually, he was the perfect first partner. He was a West Point graduate. He had his Master's from Duke and so he was everything that I needed and he was working at a client.

Blanche Touhill: So he knew the business?

Sue Cejka: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: How did you meet him?

Sue Cejka: He was working at a client.

Blanche Touhill: And so you came that way, you came.

Sue Cejka: Mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: Where did you have your first...other than the bank, where did you move when you...

Sue Cejka: Then we expanded in the bank and we actually paid rent and we got a copy machine.

Blanche Touhill: And you paid for your telephone?

Sue Cejka: We paid for our telephone so we expanded in the bank and then we ran out of space. Then we moved over to a building that Al Seitman owned and at that time, we had been in business five years and I was pregnant and Al Seitman thought that I was a terrible credit risk so he made me put up an enormous security deposit because he thought I was such a terrible credit risk.

Blanche Touhill: That you would have the child and then quit?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: Was that his thought?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: How many people did you have in the firm by then?

Sue Cejka: By then, I probably had 20.

Blanche Touhill: So when you had the baby, did you quit?

Sue Cejka: No, and I must say, later we were huge and we were the biggest tenant in his building and...

Blanche Touhill: And he loved you?

Sue Cejka: Well, when the Clinton's reformed healthcare, our business came to a standstill and I had just leased an entire new floor that we had signed a lease on but had not occupied yet and I went to him and said, "I can't afford the floor" and he took it back, so he paid me back.

Blanche Touhill: Wonderful. Did you eventually rent the other floor?

Sue Cejka: We did, yeah. Then it turned around and we were okay.

Blanche Touhill: Why would the Clinton healthcare affect your business so much?

Sue Cejka: Because there was so much talk about government healthcare and that we were going to go to a single payer and that all healthcare would be governmental and so my hospitals, which were not-for-profit hospitals and not-for-profit medical schools didn't know if they'd exist and if you don't know if you're going to exist, you don't need to hire anybody.

Blanche Touhill: And how long did that last?

Sue Cejka: A year.

Blanche Touhill: So that was a hard year?

Sue Cejka: A terrible year, mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: And not only for you but for all the people who worked with you?

Sue Cejka: And all the people I worked for because nobody knew if they'd exist, mm-hmm. Obama Care came in, not a ripple.

Blanche Touhill: Really?

Sue Cejka: Really.

Blanche Touhill: Because of what?

Sue Cejka: The same plan and it didn't cause a ripple because I think in that intervening time, the world, the market and all of healthcare came to understand that things had to change and that we weren't going to go to a single payer system.

Blanche Touhill: Why didn't they go to a single payer system?

Sue Cejka: Oh, politics.

Blanche Touhill: They didn't want to put the insurance companies out of business?

Sue Cejka: Well, the insurance companies are heavy supporters of politicians.

Blanche Touhill: And a huge number of people work in these insurance companies?

Sue Cejka: Yes, a huge number of people work in them.

Blanche Touhill: And how are the hospitals doing these days?

Sue Cejka: They have had a really good 10 years. They, this year, will most likely be very difficult and it's because of the number of new enrollees they're getting off of the exchanges.

Blanche Touhill: In the long run, won't that help them?

Sue Cejka: For years we've had cost shifting so commercial payers have paid more than governmental payers. All of the exchanges are coming in at government rates so the influx of patients are lower paying patients and the hospital cost structure is not ready for that payer mix.

Blanche Touhill: So there will be terrible squeezes?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: Will we come out of it?

Sue Cejka: Yes, Massachusetts did, yes. They went through it. It was exactly the same. Everything got botched up. They came through it.

Blanche Touhill: And did the people in Massachusetts like it?

Sue Cejka: Love it, 97% of the people in Massachusetts have healthcare. They have access to healthcare and Massachusetts just, maybe two years ago, went to a prospective payment and now they've gotten the cost under control. So it will work.

- Blanche Touhill: But it just will be rocky?
- Sue Cejka: It will be painful but it will work, mm-hmm.
- Blanche Touhill: Will there be a need for more doctors and nurses and Allied Health people and things of that nature?
- Sue Cejka: A huge need for Allied Health because there's a saying that all practitioners should practice to the highest level of their license and most primary care physicians are doing lumps and bumps and colds and sneezes and that is not practicing to the highest capability of their license. So Allied Health really should be able to take care of most of what primary care does but the licenses in the states, including the State of Missouri are not friendly to Allied Health so we don't have a current environment where all practitioners practice to the highest level of their license but we will.
- Blanche Touhill: When you talk about Allied Health...when I talk about Allied Health, I think of physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, nurses...
- Sue Cejka: Nurse practitioners.
- Blanche Touhill: Nurse practitioners...
- Sue Cejka: Advanced practice nurses, yes.
- Blanche Touhill: But when I talk about healthcare, I think of doctors and nurses, RNs and LPNs and things of that nature. Do you define it similarly?
- Sue Cejka: Yes, but Allied Health is going to play a bigger role.
- Blanche Touhill: So physician assistants...
- Sue Cejka: Physician assistants, nurse practitioners, yes.
- Blanche Touhill: Will be in Allied Health?
- Sue Cejka: That's Allied Health, yes; that's Allied Health.
- Blanche Touhill: My definition is from the past and the new definition will put more of the everyday kind of illness into the hands of Allied Health?
- Sue Cejka: Exactly, mm-hmm.

- Blanche Touhill: And will the way the physicians practice change now too?
- Sue Cejka: Yes, so physicians will only do more complex cases which is really more interesting to them. So I don't know how long it will take to level out. It will level out but it will be years before it does.
- Blanche Touhill: When I look at the health industry, just as an absolute novice, I see hospitals buying more practices...
- Sue Cejka: Oh, yes.
- Blanche Touhill: So the physician who has his own private practice or her private practice will sort of slide into working for hospitals?
- Sue Cejka: The physician who has his or her own private practice doesn't really exist anymore. They've pretty much all been acquired by hospitals, yes.
- Blanche Touhill: So if you were going to go to medical school, or you're a fresh doctor coming out now, your future is going to be basically working for hospitals...
- Sue Cejka: Yes.
- Blanche Touhill: ...at a higher level. What do you say, the highest level...
- Sue Cejka: Highest level your license allows, practice at the highest level of your license.
- Blanche Touhill: And so colds and flu shots...
- Sue Cejka: You don't need a doctor for those.
- Blanche Touhill: Will the nurses unions get into this or are there many nurses unions?
- Sue Cejka: The nurses unions are really mostly in Detroit, shockingly enough and on the West Coast but unionized medicine is not a very big factor.
- Blanche Touhill: Why is that?
- Sue Cejka: Medicine has been a cottage industry and as a result, unless you're in pockets where unions have been strong, it just never got there.
- Blanche Touhill: Yes, I understand. And they have a sense that they're a professional...
- Sue Cejka: Yes.

- Blanche Touhill: Just as teachers face that. Do they want to belong to the union?
- Sue Cejka: Yes.
- Blanche Touhill: It might help their salary but do they really want to...
- Sue Cejka: Do you feel...yes.
- Blanche Touhill: Yes, do you really want to just work 8:00 to 5:00?
- Sue Cejka: Yeah, so unions are really not a big factor in healthcare.
- Blanche Touhill: Okay. So in the hospitals, the unions will be the people that wash the floors, the service industry?
- Sue Cejka: May, may not. There might be no unions. I mean, most of my clients have no unions.
- Blanche Touhill: The hospitals?
- Sue Cejka: The hospitals have no unions, mm-hmm.
- Blanche Touhill: What is a predominant group that you try to service, the hospitals or the universities or all of the above?
- Sue Cejka: About 60% of my practice is medical schools and...
- Blanche Touhill: Teachers?
- Sue Cejka: Medical schools, only medical schools and not teachers...department chair: chair of surgery; chair of anesthesia. I'm very limited in what I do so I only do executive level people. So I would do the president of a hospital; I would do what they call the C Suite or I would do a department chair in academic medicine but only medicine. So I don't ever stray outside of medicine. It's a great field, really a great field.
- Blanche Touhill: Did you fall into it purposely?
- Sue Cejka: No. I now own Grant Cooper but when I was a rookie recruiter for Grant Cooper, their largest client was McDonnell Douglas and they did aerospace and so I was an aerospace recruiter but one day somebody asked us to recruit an orthopedic surgeon and I found home. I'm really good with orthopedic surgeons.
- Blanche Touhill: Is that because they have math brains?

Sue Cejka: Very strong personalities. They deal well with other strong personalities. I'm a strong personality.

Blanche Touhill: And I do think that scientists have that math...

Sue Cejka: They have the math brain, mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: They do, yeah. So you're saying that, really, your business, it may have ups and downs for the future but it really is going to be a part of this society?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: Just as the healthcare is going to have ups and downs, ultimately they're going to have to work out the costs...

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: ...who's going to pay for all this...

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: ...and it's going to be probably the government, the hospitals, the doctors or whatever there is.

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: And they're going to bring in Allied Health trainees or Allied Health professionals who will do those other things that the general practitioner of today will give to them?

Sue Cejka: Which will bring the costs down and will solve the access problem, yes.

Blanche Touhill: Now, will the federal government, in just your judgment, will the federal government give money to universities and to train more Allied Health people?

Sue Cejka: That is such an interesting question. You know, they're really not giving more money...

Blanche Touhill: No, they aren't at this moment.

Sue Cejka: Exactly, yes.

- Blanche Touhill: If you add so many million more clients and you have created a need and I don't think the health profession is going to let people fill that need without having appropriate education...
- Sue Cejka: Yes.
- Blanche Touhill: I think there will come a time when the federal government will have to solve that problem in one way or the other.
- Sue Cejka: I mean, today, there are a lot of unfunded residency and fellowship slots for physicians that are being funded by the health system, not by the government.
- Blanche Touhill: So, you mean that problem may fall into the hands of the hospitals?
- Sue Cejka: I think it may, yeah.
- Blanche Touhill: Can you legally give a scholarship, say...I should know the answer to this myself but I don't...I always was told that you sort of couldn't do it but can the hospitals say to somebody, "I will pay your way to become a nurse practitioner but then you will work for me for the next five years"?
- Sue Cejka: Oh, absolutely.
- Blanche Touhill: They can do that.
- Sue Cejka: Oh, absolutely, yes.
- Blanche Touhill: And they say, "We want you to go to our rural hospitals"?
- Sue Cejka: Absolutely, they can, and they do, yes.
- Blanche Touhill: So, what you're saying is undecided at this moment who's going to pay for the expansion of this new enlarged Allied Health...
- Sue Cejka: That is a very complicated question, who's going to pay, it's a very complicated question.
- Blanche Touhill: But hospitals could do it as well as the government?
- Sue Cejka: So, I have a client in Greenville, South Carolina that just started its own medical school and they are accepting no governmental funding.
- Blanche Touhill: And that is the challenge for public universities...

- Sue Cejka: Yes.
- Blanche Touhill: ...because other people will become private institutions...will be developed that will give this kind of credential?
- Sue Cejka: Yes, so they are LCME-accredited medical school, they accept no government funding.
- Blanche Touhill: I've been in the middle of this as an academic administrator, of being in the middle of the state saying they support public higher education but they have withdrawn funds just as the federal government has withdrawn funds...
- Sue Cejka: Yes.
- Blanche Touhill: ...because they say higher education is a private good first and a societal good second and so that means no taxes will be increased but student fees will go up?
- Sue Cejka: Mm-hmm.
- Blanche Touhill: So that's what these private institutions know...
- Sue Cejka: Mm-hmm.
- Blanche Touhill: ...but they will charge more than the public institutions?
- Sue Cejka: Yes. Oh, so much more.
- Blanche Touhill: So much more.
- Sue Cejka: Yes.
- Blanche Touhill: So why does the public not understand that and either say to the government, give more, or say to the students, "You'll have to pay more for your public education"?
- Sue Cejka: Well, Blanche, could we throw into that bucket why the State of Missouri has the lowest cigarette tax in the United States? There are so many things that we say, "Why does the public not understand this? How could this be?" That's just one of them.
- Blanche Touhill: That's right. That is just one of them, like the push for toll roads.

Sue Cejka: Yes. I, by the way, drive an electric car and in the State of Missouri, I have to pay a special tax because I do not buy gasoline.

Blanche Touhill: Really?

Sue Cejka: Really. I am penalized for not buying gasoline.

Blanche Touhill: Well, that's fascinating, when the federal government says, get rid of the gas and the state government says...

Sue Cejka: "We're going to charge you a tax if you don't buy gas."

Blanche Touhill: Because you don't buy gas. Well, that's a wonderful thing. As you look back on this, have you enjoyed it?

Sue Cejka: Loved every second of it, every second of it. I spend all day talking to smart, hard-working people who are trying to do the right thing. What could be better?

Blanche Touhill: That's true. And really, people have been dedicated to this all their lives.

Sue Cejka: Mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: Are you on hospital boards?

Sue Cejka: Nope. I was but I'm not, nope.

Blanche Touhill: Do you feel that's a conflict of interest?

Sue Cejka: No. I sort of did my stint on boards and I don't find board memberships satisfying. I find my job really satisfying. I don't think I'm impactful on a board.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, and you want to do something...

Sue Cejka: I want to be impactful.

Blanche Touhill: Does your daughter work in the business?

Sue Cejka: She does not. She lives in Palo Alto and she's still in public accounting.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, so she stayed in...that goes to show how the times changed.

Sue Cejka: Oh, totally different.

Blanche Touhill: You were told to go and your daughter is welcomed in...

- Sue Cejka: Ah, the partner that my daughter works for pumps breast milk at work. It's so different.
- Blanche Touhill: And what is her specialty in accounting?
- Sue Cejka: Well, she lives in Silicon Valley so guess.
- Blanche Touhill: Yeah. Well, let me ask some questions that are sort of off your career and then we'll go back to it. Can you comment on the International Women's Forum?
- Sue Cejka: I love our chapter and I would say most of my friends have come from there.
- Blanche Touhill: So there's where your friendships come?
- Sue Cejka: Absolutely. Those are people like me, mm-hmm.
- Blanche Touhill: If you had been born 50 years earlier, what would you be doing?
- Sue Cejka: I'm so glad you asked that question: I would have been burned at the stake.
- Blanche Touhill: Because you would be different?
- Sue Cejka: Yes, and in fact, I sold my first company in 1998 and at the closing ceremony, the buyer gave me the book, Joan of Arc, seriously.
- Blanche Touhill: And how did you react?
- Sue Cejka: I said, "Is there a message here?" I was metaphorically burned at the stake. I would have been literally burned at the stake.
- Blanche Touhill: Are there any awards that you want to talk about?
- Sue Cejka: You know, like you, I've gotten almost every award that a person could get and they don't mean so much to me anymore. They probably did when I was young but now I'm old and I don't really care.
- Blanche Touhill: And have you been on boards, for-profit boards as well as non-profit?
- Sue Cejka: Yes. I'm still on the North Side School Community board which is a charter elementary school and I believe that I am impactful but on big boards, I don't believe that I'm impactful, even on a public company board and my interest is low.

Blanche Touhill: Is it that you don't believe people take your advice?

Sue Cejka: All they want is your name and money.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah. What did your mother and father or your brothers think of your entrepreneurial skills?

Sue Cejka: My family pretty much thinks that babies must have been switched at the hospital.

Blanche Touhill: But they accept you?

Sue Cejka: They do.

Blanche Touhill: They've raised you and you're theirs.

Sue Cejka: They do. They accept me.

Blanche Touhill: But they do wonder?

Sue Cejka: But they do think that I must have come from some other family, yes.

Blanche Touhill: Are you still prom queen?

Sue Cejka: No, not at all.

Blanche Touhill: But you get asked out?

Sue Cejka: No, nor do I wish to.

Blanche Touhill: No, I understand, yeah. You've moved on to another scene.

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: What do you like to do in St. Louis?

Sue Cejka: I'm a gardener and so in St. Louis I'm a gardener. Now, you know, I live half time in Deer Valley, Utah and half time in St. Louis. I'm a skier, and you can do my job from anywhere in the country. You don't have to be in St. Louis. So the company is here but I spend half of my time in Deer Valley and half of my time here. So I garden in the spring and fall and I ski in the winter and I'm not heat tolerant so I live in Deer Valley in the winter and the summer because it's cool.

Blanche Touhill: So you just go out in the winter and ski?

Sue Cejka: I ski in the winter but I live there in the summer too because it's so hot here and I travel every week. So I am at some client's someplace every single week. So they don't care where I live. I go to them.

Blanche Touhill: Are you working full-time?

Sue Cejka: More than full-time.

Blanche Touhill: So you really have an individual job?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: Whatever you do, you're doing it yourself?

Sue Cejka: I have a job that is totally controlled by the person doing it, yes.

Blanche Touhill: I don't want to know names but are you particularly proud of some match that you made with a hospital and a doctor?

Sue Cejka: Oh, gosh. You know, there are some that I feel really endeared to but could I pick out a particular one, no.

Blanche Touhill: But when you feel that you made the right match and then the person stayed and would say they made the right match, is that because they raised the level of the institution they went to?

Sue Cejka: Well, I'm going to give a different answer: If my candidate does not raise the level of the institution every single time, I've failed. So that's a minimum requirement. If I don't do that, I've failed. I'll tell you who my favorite client is: At the University of Maryland, the only African American Dean of the School of Medicine in the country is my client and he has very refined academic tastes on a very little budget. So I recruit for him only triple and quadruple RO1-funded department chairs because he will accept nothing less but he doesn't have very much budget.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, but he's doing such good work.

Sue Cejka: Yes, yes.

Blanche Touhill: And it does make a difference who you bring in?

Sue Cejka: Oh, yes, mm-hmm.

- Blanche Touhill: Have you ever recruited somebody for one job and then five years later have moved them to another job?
- Sue Cejka: Yes, I have. So I have moved one candidate three times...and I've done this 37 years...I am on my fourth search for the president of an organization in Seattle. I've done the search four times for them.
- Blanche Touhill: How wonderful. That is wonderful, that they have come back.
- Sue Cejka: They keep coming back, yes.
- Blanche Touhill: That's wonderful. They found the solution to their problem?
- Sue Cejka: Every time they need a president, they come back, mm-hmm.
- Blanche Touhill: Does your daughter want to come and get in the company at some time?
- Sue Cejka: She is at a stage of life where she needs to make her own way and prove herself and that's exactly what she should do.
- Blanche Touhill: But do you think some day she might go into this business? And how many people do you have working for you?
- Sue Cejka: We're a company of about 35 people now so the old company was quite large. This company is about 35 people. The only score sheet I pay much attention to is Modern Healthcare's Top 10 healthcare search firms. I am the only person that has ever had two companies on the list. So we're back on the list.
- Blanche Touhill: So your staff must treat these people very well.
- Sue Cejka: Our clients and our candidates?
- Blanche Touhill: It's not just you...
- Sue Cejka: If we don't raise the caliber of talent in the organization every single time, we have failed.
- Blanche Touhill: How do you do that quality control?
- Sue Cejka: I don't pass off searches. So if we're going to accept the client's money, I'm going to do the search and I'm going to interview every single candidate myself.
- Blanche Touhill: But you need staff support.

Sue Cejka: If we fail, it will be because I've failed. The staff does all of the research; they do all of the recruiting; they do all of the administrative work, but there will be no candidates going to one of my clients that I have not interviewed.

Blanche Touhill: Do they talk to the hospital and do they talk to the doctor?

Sue Cejka: Oh, yes.

Blanche Touhill: Well, then, they must be good people because you can't have a staff that is not on the team when you are exerting so much of your own life...

Sue Cejka: Yes. I will give you an example of one of our recruiters. He's been with us about a year. He has a PhD in neurosciences from Washington University. Our recruiters are very well qualified.

Blanche Touhill: All right. So that's what he wants to do?

Sue Cejka: To be a recruiter? He loves it. You talk to smart people who are trying to...he loves it and his other option was, oh, be on the NIH grant treadmill which now is funding at 8%.

Blanche Touhill: Will that change with the new healthcare?

Sue Cejka: I don't know. Now 8% of all grant applications get funded. I don't know but it's not a happy time in research.

Blanche Touhill: But that's what the country needs, isn't it?

Sue Cejka: I don't know. You know, it's all a question of where do you put your financial resources? I don't know.

Blanche Touhill: Whether it's a public good or a private good?

Sue Cejka: I don't know.

Blanche Touhill: So, when you go to Colorado...

Sue Cejka: Utah.

Blanche Touhill: I'm sorry...Utah...how do you get to your place? Do you go into Reno?

Sue Cejka: No, you fly into Salt Lake. I'm 45 minutes, door-to-door from Salt Lake and I can't be any farther from an airport because I must fly every week.

- Blanche Touhill: That's right.
- Sue Cejka: And really, Salt Lake is a Delta hub so I'm a direct to Seattle; I'm a direct to San Francisco; Los Angeles. It's, in some ways, easier to fly from Salt Lake than here because I'm a direct...East Coast, easier from here; West Coast, easier from Salt Lake, and I work the whole country.
- Blanche Touhill: If you had to go to any hospital in the country for a certain ailment, would you go?
- Sue Cejka: Any hospital?
- Blanche Touhill: No, not any, but you would pick out a hospital for a certain disease, would you or would you just come back to St. Louis?
- Sue Cejka: Well, St. Louis has extraordinarily good healthcare so I had a very unusual eye cancer 10 years ago and one of the eight ocular oncologists in the country is at Wash U.
- Blanche Touhill: So you came back here?
- Sue Cejka: Why not? One of the eight ocular oncologists in the country is right here. Why go anyplace else? So, I think we have...because of Wash U...we have extraordinarily good healthcare. I can't think of something that I might get that would make me want to not go to Wash U.
- Blanche Touhill: Are there lists of hospitals around the country or surgeons in certain fields that the public can look at and say, this person ranks higher than that person?
- Sue Cejka: No. I can but you can't.
- Blanche Touhill: No, I know you can. No, that's what I'm asking.
- Sue Cejka: So, there's an organization called American Surgical that is an elected society of academic surgeons that is based strictly on quality criteria. I don't know how you access that.
- Blanche Touhill: Yeah. Well, I'm not asking. I'm just saying...
- Sue Cejka: The St. Louis list of best doctors, that's a popularity contest. That's not quality.
- Blanche Touhill: No, I understand.

Sue Cejka: So, yes, I can figure it out but I...

Blanche Touhill: Because that's been your business.

Sue Cejka: Yes, but there is not much transparency in healthcare so if you want to correlate cost and quality yourself, you can't. Theoretically it's coming, but I don't know.

Blanche Touhill: Do nurses have more control over the patient than they did in the past or do you know that?

Sue Cejka: It's not my field but I think not but, admittedly, it's not my field.

Blanche Touhill: We have a nursing school which I helped to start and the nurses would talk about the relationship with the doctor and just the other day, I asked somebody involved in that and they said, "Well, the doctor thinks about what the patient needs and the nurse delivers it," which I thought spoke of the old system still in place in a way...

Sue Cejka: I think that's true.

Blanche Touhill: ...but I guess the nurse never deviates from the doctor's orders or they would be out.

Sue Cejka: No, it's malpractice. The nurse does not have the license to write orders so the nurse can't.

Blanche Touhill: That's it, okay. All right.

Sue Cejka: Highest level of your license. Their license doesn't do that.

Blanche Touhill: Then that's why you're saying in Missouri and in other states in the union, as this Allied Health develops, they have to change the license...

Sue Cejka: Yes. Until they change the licensing, the nurse can't do it, mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: What lobby would pressure with that, the hospitals? The doctors? The medical schools?

Sue Cejka: The doctors.

Blanche Touhill: The medical professionals.

Sue Cejka: Mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: And the medical organizations?

Sue Cejka: Mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: And are they willing to give up those jobs of giving shots?

Sue Cejka: You know, it's so silly. You can't get into any primary care physician, right, for, what, two months? So they're completely overbooked. So one would think that they would want Allied help but for reasons that are way beyond my pay grade, they don't.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, yes. That's what I've sort of noticed to be.

Sue Cejka: Yes. So, I'm doing a chair of neurology right now and my client has one thousand patients on a wait list. Well, many of those patients could...

Blanche Touhill: ...will die...

Sue Cejka: Well, yeah, but they could be seen by Allied Health if the laws were different.

Blanche Touhill: Yes.

Sue Cejka: So...

Blanche Touhill: Well, I guess, as the healthcare system changes, there will be pressures from groups interested to make the adjustments but it probably will take many years. Well, did Massachusetts change its laws...

Sue Cejka: Massachusetts changed its laws when Mitt Romney was governor. That's when they put in Universal Health. They spent two or three years with an incredible access issue because now so many more patients had insurance, so many more patients wanted to see doctors, hospitals that their access just fell apart. The finances just fell apart and then they started changing the laws for Allied Health. They started changing how providers were paid and now it's all smoothing out.

Blanche Touhill: But that just took pain...

Sue Cejka: Pain.

Blanche Touhill: ...and the interest groups getting active.

Sue Cejka: Yes. I have a client that calls that "getting the rat through the snake." If you've got an access problem, you have to figure out how to get the rat through the snake.

Blanche Touhill: Yes. Well, when do you go back to Colorado?

Sue Cejka: Utah.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, Utah. Why do I keep saying that?

Sue Cejka: Because nobody thinks of skiing in Utah, though it's great.

Blanche Touhill: They don't; they don't.

Sue Cejka: No. I don't go back until June because it's mud season.

Blanche Touhill: Oh. So there's a change from the snow...

Sue Cejka: Three hundred inches of melting snow equals mud so I don't go back until mud season is over.

Blanche Touhill: Do you meet your daughter there?

Sue Cejka: I do. She's a skier, mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, how wonderful. And did you move out of your house in Ladue?

Sue Cejka: I built a house on Spoede and sold my house on Ladue.

Blanche Touhill: Am I right that you were putting up a conservation...am I right about that?

Sue Cejka: Yes, I have a solar geo-thermal house, yes.

Blanche Touhill: Where is it?

Sue Cejka: Well, it's the only house on Spoede that looks like a...this is other people's words, not mine...that looks like a small contemporary art museum.

Blanche Touhill: Okay.

Sue Cejka: It's easy to pick out.

Blanche Touhill: Okay, I'll drive over Spoede and I don't need an address but I'll...

Sue Cejka: No, it's the only one that doesn't look like the others.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah, and are you satisfied?

Sue Cejka: I love it, yeah. It's really great.

Blanche Touhill: And you get the sun's rays?

Sue Cejka: I have a flat roof so my entire roof is solar panels. They had to dig...I think it was 700 feet, to hit a water table for the geo-thermal wells so I'm not on a flood plain I'm pretty sure and it works perfectly.

Blanche Touhill: So you have an electric car...

Sue Cejka: I do.

Blanche Touhill: And a house that runs on solar panels?

Sue Cejka: I do.

Blanche Touhill: And everything works?

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: Are you going to have to pay a tax to the state because you've built...you're not using energy?

Sue Cejka: No, but I have a bi-directional electric meter so I can buy power from Ameren or I can sell power to Ameren but I buy power from them, it's something that is roughly times what they pay me for it when I sell it back to them.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, yes, I understand but that means you have a constant flow of energy?

Sue Cejka: Yes, I'm bi-directional, mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: That's right. And do you think that's going to be more and more in the society?

Sue Cejka: I do, yes; I do.

Blanche Touhill: Do people come by to look at your house?

Sue Cejka: All the time, mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: And which architect did you use?

Sue Cejka: I did everything you weren't supposed to do. I used a non-degreed architect which you would think was impossible.

Blanche Touhill: But he has a license.

Sue Cejka: Yes, you can work for another architect for five years and get a license.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, that was the Frank Lloyd Wright model.

Sue Cejka: Really?

Blanche Touhill: Yes, when he went out to Phoenix, outside of Phoenix, that he just would invite people, young people basically...people, who would work with him and then he would be sort of their teacher and his colleagues would be their teacher and I didn't exactly know how they credentialed them.

Sue Cejka: Five years and you take a test and you get licensed.

Blanche Touhill: Yes. That used to be the way for a lot of engineering, really, and law.

Sue Cejka: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: You read yourself and then you took the test.

Sue Cejka: Mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: And I always wondered why do these young people come because I thought, how would they get credentials. That part of the tour was...that information was left out and I couldn't get an answer to it. Well, I learned a lot and I'm thankful for your coming today and I look forward to the new healthcare system and see how it all works out and how the State of Missouri redoes its licensing directions.

Sue Cejka: And I think you have a future as an interviewer.

Blanche Touhill: Well, thank you very much.

Sue Cejka: Thank you.