

June Fowler 2-21-2014

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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JUNE FOWLER INTERVIEWED BY WILLIAM FISCHETTI

William Fischetti: Introduce yourself.

June Fowler: My name is June McAllister Fowler. What else do you want to know?

William Fischetti: Well, tell me a little bit about your childhood, growing up in St. Louis and what your parents did and...

June Fowler: Sure. I grew up in the City of St. Louis, the oldest daughter of my parents' marriage. They had both been married before. My father had sons so I was his first daughter so that was pretty exciting and for my parents' marriage, I am the oldest of three children and probably like a lot of older children, I thought I was in charge. I thought that the younger siblings should listen to me. We grew up early in what is considered kind of North St. Louis, right at the corner of what then was Union and Easton Avenue, now Union and Martin Luther King Drive but when I was eight, we moved west and I didn't know it at the time but we were one of the families that helped to precipitate "white flight" out of our neighborhood. We moved south of Delmar, right near Forest Park and it was interesting to watch the dynamics of the neighborhood change once we got there and a couple of other families of color. My father was actually a business owner and worked for the City of St. Louis. He worked on a street crew. My mother, for a lot of my childhood, was a stay-at-home mom and then when I was about nine, went to work in my father's business. He owned a dry cleaner and then later on, about four years later, went to work for Chrysler on the assembly line. Neither of my parents graduated from high school but they always stressed the importance of education.

William Fischetti: So, where did you go to school?

June Fowler: So, I started school at a small elementary school called Wells Elementary School and then, when we moved, I went to Hamilton Elementary School, and again, remember I shared that we kind of precipitated white flight.

Prior to white flight, there was concern that Hamilton was getting overcrowded so they needed to...you know, I'm right in the baby boom generation so they needed to relieve some of the overcrowding at Hamilton School so they decided that some of the students would be bused to another school. It's kind of interesting that all of the kids who were bused to another school were all black. So, went to a school called Wheatley which, to my parents, was South St. Louis but really kind of mid-town, not very far from where I work now. So I was there until 7th grade, then went to Enright Middle and actually ended up at Enright Middle because, when I was at Wheatley, I was in 7th grade and that was back in the days when they tracked kids. You know, you were in either track one, track two or track three based upon a test or series of tests that you took. I was the only kid who was going to be in track one and so the principal said, "We can't just have one kid in track one but we also can't, I guess, legally put her in track two." So I had to transfer and I transferred to Enright Middle and then went on to Soldan High School.

William Fischetti: Could you tell a difference when you moved to the schools? Were you under any pressure or...

June Fowler: No. You know, I was a kid so when you're a kid, the most important thing about education is your friends so I had friends everywhere I went. So I don't know that I could tell a difference in the quality of education. I could certainly tell the difference in the quality of facilities. So Hamilton, you know, was a very nice school; Wheatley was a school that the district had closed for a while and they re-opened to relieve overcrowding at some of the other schools. So I could certainly tell that that was a bit more tired and a little more rundown but after a while, it didn't matter because I had friends there.

William Fischetti: Did any of your teachers especially inspire you?

June Fowler: Yes, several of my teachers inspired me. The first teacher to inspire me was actually my 1st grade teacher at Wells who actually was an African American woman and said, I guess, to be helpful, but I still remember this to this day and I was six...that all colored people have lazy tongues, and her goal was that her classroom would not have lazy tongues. You would be amazed at how fast I can talk. The next teacher I remember who really inspired me was Miss Rycraw and she was my teacher in 3rd grade and 3rd grade was the year that John Kennedy was assassinated and I

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remember this: we were out on the playground apparently when it happened or when it was announced and we came back in and the lights were off and Miss Rycraw had all of us sit down at our desk and that was in the days where you had your little desk that was nice and self-contained, and she had us put our heads down, which was unusual, you know, because we had a routine where we came in from recess and it was time to do spelling. She had us put our heads down and she said, "I don't want anybody to talk. I just want you all to listen" and then she shared the news that President Kennedy had been killed and she said, "Now we just all need to be quiet for a while" and, like I say, I remember that like it was yesterday but it wasn't until I was older that I realized...it seemed like we had our heads down forever but I don't think it was that long, but I'll never forget, on her desk, after she had us put our heads up and turn the lights on, there were tissues. So one of the reasons, I realize, she had us put our heads down was so we wouldn't see her crying because you didn't see a teacher cry. That was just not something that teachers did in front of you and as an eight-year-old, if you saw your teacher cry, imagine, as upsetting as this news was, how much more upsetting it would be if we saw our teacher cry. So I just thought that that bubble of protection that she put around us, I thought, how generous! So she was a teacher who inspired me. The other one I remember well is my principal in 7th grade which is when we got to...no, actually, she was my principal in...no...yeah, 6th and 7th grade, when I was at Wheatley...her name was Annabelle Walker. She was the sharpest dresser I had ever seen, I mean, just...oh...and all of these teachers were black. She wore her hair pulled back in this bun and she had never gotten married because back then teachers couldn't marry, but I remember she just...she said, "Your job is excellence every day." I knew she was talking to us as students. We would get off the bus because I'm at Wheatley, we would get off the bus and she would say, "Today your job is excellence. It is excellence" and when we would get on the bus, she would say, "When you go home, it is excellence and tomorrow when you come back, your job is excellence; not good; not try your best...be excellent!" So those were the teachers and leaders of schools that I remember and who kind of shaped how I thought about the importance of education.

William Fischetti: And you went to Soldan High School?

June Fowler: I went to Soldan High School. That's also interesting. So, again, remember, I went to Enright because I was the only kid who was going to be in track one out of my class so they had to send me to another school so I'm a pretty good test taker. When I was in 8th grade, a couple of people came to visit my parents and said, "We would like to talk to you about sending your daughter, instead of to Soldan High School..."...which was the neighborhood...big neighborhood...but the neighborhood school where I was scheduled to go, to a different school, private school. "You won't have to pay." It was John Burroughs and so my parents listened and they asked me what I thought and I'm like...remember what I liked about school? I liked friends so I was like, "Oh, I've always wanted to go to Soldan." I had an older cousin who had gone to Soldan and I had seen the yearbooks and this is where I was going. So they politely told them, "Thank you, no." I later on found out...and not that much later...but the reason that they were looking for smart girls to come to John Burroughs...this was in 1969...was there were now African American boys at John Burroughs and some of them were there because they were the kids with doctors and some of them because they were playing sports, but guess what, there was nobody for those boys to do. There was nobody for them to date. So they needed black girls to come to the school so that these black guys would have girls to date. So, you know, it's kind of funny, probably would have had a different kind of...and I have a great life; I have a great life. Guess where all three of my kids went to high school? John Burroughs, and just very different.

William Fischetti: For different reasons.

June Fowler: Yeah, for very different reasons but it was really interesting. I was an Honors student at Soldan High School, loved high school. I went to Mizzou for undergrad. Neither of my parents had graduated from high school so the whole college selection process was certainly not like it is today and not like it was when my kids went through it. I chose what colleges to apply to based on who sent me a brochure and whose brochure looked interesting, where it looked like they had big football and big pep rallies and everybody looked happy because I wanted the experience of having friends and having a good time. I decided to go to Mizzou because I was going to be a golden girl. I was a majorette in high school so I was going to continue in college and because I wanted to be far enough away from home that my parents couldn't get to me, but

close enough that I could get home if I needed to. I didn't know the difference in a public school, a land grant university...I knew big eight, big ten...a private school, liberal arts college versus research university. All of that was foreign to me but when I got there, what rang in my ears was, "Your job is excellence; your job is excellence" so started Mizzou actually the summer before regular classes because I went through this program called Project Start which I thought was just an opportunity to go a little bit earlier to college. I took algebra and chemistry. In my chemistry class, I remember, we're sitting there in kind of a big lecture hall and the teacher is reviewing. He's going over review. I'm an Honors student at Soldan High School, took all the science I could while I was there. In five minutes of his review, he had gone over everything I knew about science, absolutely everything, and he kept going, you know, with what he called "review" and I'm getting further and further and further behind and more confused and I'm like, not only do I not know the answers, I don't even know what questions to ask but on my shoulder was "Your job is excellence" so I crammed. I didn't party; I didn't...you know, the whole friends thing got put on the back burner so that I could cram so that I could continue to perform the way I had performed at Soldan, which I didn't do. I mean, I couldn't. It just was impossible for me to, with the level of knowledge that I had versus what the level of knowledge of the kids who...John Burroughs kids generally didn't come to Mizzou but Parkway or Rockwood had, it was totally different. So I ended up, I think, with a B in chemistry. It was probably one of the first B's I'd ever gotten in my life...and I think a B in algebra too, but again, and that was with me working really, really, really hard. So, that was when I realized that not all education is created equally, that, based upon where you're born, what you have access to, that trajectory is going to be very, very different for you, and again, you get to college where, we're all freshmen but we certainly are not all equal as freshmen.

William Fischetti: So, what did you major in?

June Fowler: I actually majored in psychology. I have an undergraduate degree in psychology which has been the absolute best training for every job I've ever had. I majored in psychology because I was going to be a clinical psychologist and I was going to be a clinical psychologist because that's what Jeannie Bartlett was who worked on Medical Center and I thought she was really, really cool. It was a television show. It was like, I want to

do what she does and then I found out, in order to be a clinical psychologist, you really should go to medical school, that I would have to continue on and get a PhD which was fine until I found out I would have my own rat and this rat would become my friend and that just was like, no, no, no, no, no, that doesn't work for me. So I started looking for something else that would allow me to fulfill the career objective I had put in my yearbook as a senior at Soldan which was I wanted to be a human relations worker. What? I mean, I knew I wanted to help people. So I stumbled across a field called Community Development and it was because the time of the class just happened to fit a space that I had that was open in my schedule and I fell in love. I actually fell in love with how communities develop, how cities develop, how you make decisions on a piece of land or a large piece of land and that helps to determine the fabric of a community. So I said, I really like this. I wonder how I can make a living doing this in Columbia, Missouri? I ended up going to, as part of one of our classes, we had to go to a public hearing in the City of Columbia and there was...I think they were asking for rezoning to put something inane on a corner and I was just fascinated, not by what they were asking for but by the whole process: by the staff person who had done an analysis and was making a recommendation; by the members of the commission who were asking questions; by the members of the public who were irate about whatever was being requested, and I remember saying, I'm going to figure out how I can be that staff person. I ended up talking to her a few days later and found out that there was this field called Urban Planning, again, something I'd never heard of and that most people in the field ended up with a Master's Degree. Very few people would hire you right out of college with an undergrad, with just a Bachelor's Degree and that the Master's program, it was multi-disciplinary. They took people from all fields. So I'm like, that's me. I'm going to be an urban planner. So I ended up majoring in Urban Affairs at Washington University and going to work as an urban planner for St. Louis County government right after I graduated.

William Fischetti: Did you get any scholarships?

June Fowler: For undergrad, I got scholarship offers but I didn't get any from Mizzou because Mizzou's was...the scholarships we knew of were based on need and my parents were kind of solidly lower middle-class or probably middle middle-class so we didn't have need. But it's so funny, so I got

loans to go to Mizzou. I probably got some tiny little scholarships but for my four years at Mizzou, I had right at \$4200 worth of loans. I mean, that was room and board and tuition. It boggles my mind and it wasn't that long ago. I guess it was 40 years ago that I started undergrad. So I didn't get scholarships for undergrad which I didn't even think about but by the time I was going to graduate school, that mattered to me. You know, it's like, I don't want to pay for school if I don't have to. So, one of the reasons I ended up going to Wash U...again, I still didn't know a lot about that whole public/private college thing and rankings and all of that but Wash U offered me the most money. Tuition was all covered; I got a little bit of a stipend and a teaching assistant's job. So that made the decision.

William Fischetti: Did you enjoy Wash U?

June Fowler: I absolutely loved Wash U. You know, this is a horrible thing to say and I love Wash U, love Mizzou, but the caliber of education, you know, for the Delta and the price, I don't know that it was that different. My husband went to Wash U for grad school and undergrad and when we would talk about...and he's also a psychology undergraduate major and we did the same things. His first classes were big lecture classes, you know, for two years, just like mine. It doesn't get intimate until you get to junior year. We were in the same textbooks and so I'm like, hm, why the difference in price? But anyway, major difference in price. But I really did like it. I really liked graduate school. I liked the opportunity to just kind of sit around and talk about things that were strategic and not of the right now, not of the, "How am I going to eat? How am I going to pay my rent?" Instead, "How are we going to make..."...fill in the blank ..."better. How are we going to tackle some of these tough issues."

William Fischetti: Did you have any practicum things?

June Fowler: I did. I worked for a company, a small consulting firm and we did...oh, gosh, I haven't thought about this in a long time...my first practicum project was with the St. Louis Housing Authority and looking at an alternative use for the Darst-Webbe Public Housing Complex and thinking about, how do you better provide housing to low income people in your community? How do you start to think about mixed use communities, and again, that took me back to my chemistry class where, again, everything I knew they went through in five minutes of review. And so I thought, so what you've got to do in order for the playing field to be

more level, is to make sure that kids of all income levels have access to the same kind of education, that they have access to it in a more hard-wired way than...I applaud parents who put their children on a bus at 5:30 in the morning so that they can have access to a better education. To me what's even better is if there was the opportunity for mixed-use housing where those kids live in the community where they go to school, but often, that can't happen because the cost of housing is so high that people who are low income can't afford it. So in some communities, like in Maryland and others, they require, like, a set-aside of affordable housing for residents who otherwise could not get into these communities and they get to...I'm getting way into my urban planning, but they get a little bit more density. They get to build a few more houses in exchange for setting aside some percentage as affordable housing. That allows kids to have what I would call a more level playing field when they are attending school with their neighbors, as opposed to being brought into the neighborhood school and always being an outsider and it's interesting, being an outsider only matters if you're poor. My kids went to John Burroughs. People lived everywhere but level playing field: small school; most people are paying so it's like, it doesn't matter if you live in St. Charles or if you live in the city or if you live in Ladue. You can afford to be here, come on.

William Fischetti: What did you do when you graduated?

June Fowler: When I graduated from Mizzou, I went right to Wash U. When I graduated from Washington University, looked at some job offers, some which were out of town...and I have to tell you, I'm an unabashed lover of St. Louis. I love it here. I did this kind of cost benefit analysis of the things that I was looking for in a community and looked at the places I thought I would like to live and then ranked them and St. Louis won out every time. I was going back and forth between taking a job in Chicago or the job offer that I had with St. Louis County government and I took the job with St. Louis County government.

William Fischetti: And what was that job?

June Fowler: I was an entry level urban planner which my husband would tell you that means I colored maps, you know, colored land use maps because this was before digitized GIS and of that. If you wanted to see where

residential housing was, you came and you looked at the maps we had colored because residential housing was yellow; industrial was gray.

William Fischetti: We have a lot of those here.

June Fowler: So, yeah, that's...and that's what I did. So he thought I was coloring but really what I was doing was learning St. Louis County. You know, I was learning where everything was by coloring these maps but I did other things too. I was in comprehensive planning so we did long-range planning. One of my projects was where should the Metro link go, not the Metro link extension, but Metro link, and looking at the amount of money we were going to be able to get from the federal government, plus what we were going to be able to use from local taxes. You knew you couldn't build new rail line for the first trains. They had to go on existing rails. So people were like, "Well, why would you build the first one north?" That's where the rails were and so you had to prove that this could work; that people would get on the train before you started looking at other places that you would actually pay for track.

William Fischetti: That worked out pretty well, didn't it?

June Fowler: It did work out well; it has worked out very well for this university. So, yeah, it's worked out very well for Washington University. They were on the first extension that was built, and again, had the first one not worked...again, what makes more sense than going to the airport? Nothing, even though it's like, "Oh, we need it down 40 because 40 is so congested." It's like, there are no rail lines that way and people will complain because people don't like change that they don't control.

William Fischetti: So, were you involved in the whole process of public's input...

June Fowler: Yeah...on the St. Louis County side, yes. So I spent every Monday night for about 13 years at a public meeting and it ran the gamut from, "We want to build a new five-house subdivision" to "We want to build a three hundred-house subdivision" to "Where should the next Metro link go?" to "Is there a better way to collect trash..." ...which is interesting when I look at that issue that has become such a fire storm...but, yeah, so it was everything, from impact on only a few to impact on many because I never say anything is little because you're biggest investment...the biggest investment most of us will ever make is in our home and when you are proposing something that is different, that's going to change the area

that you chose to make this investment in, there's going to be concern. So I never say, "Oh, it's only a...this." It's like, there's no such thing as "only" when it's going to impact you.

William Fischetti: I know, I live in Webster and Rock Hill is going through some major problems right now with that.

June Fowler: Yup.

William Fischetti: When you say "with the county," were you doing things in Webster and Kirkwood?

June Fowler: Well, a little bit. This will be way more information than you need too, but I worked for St. Louis County government and the municipalities...we had 90 some-odd municipalities in St. Louis County. They are their own governments so land use in Webster or University City or Wildwood or Crestwood, that's controlled by the local leadership and they have their own planning commissions, their own boards of zoning adjustment, so our relationship on a planning side with them was more on the macro level. So one of my projects was looking at parks across all of St. Louis County and, you know, parks are things that people generally like so how do we make sure that we've got enough funding so that parks can be maintained, be they in municipalities or be they in St. Louis County, in unincorporated St. Louis County? The interesting thing about unincorporated St. Louis County and parks is there are some parks that are owned by unincorporated St. Louis County that are in municipalities. So thinking about a whole system of parks and trails and how those could be funded was, again...that's like a macro project. So if you think about Webster Groves and you think about Webster University and the issues with expansion and Eden Seminary and all of those things, that's not decided by St. Louis County; that's decided by Webster University or by...Webster Groves would tell you it's decided by Webster University but by Webster Groves, yeah, like here. We're sitting in a University of Missouri-St. Louis. You're located in Bel-Nor so what happens in...I think you're located in Bel-Nor...

William Fischetti: Normandy.

June Fowler: Okay, you're Normandy. Bel-Nor's across the street. You've got 21 municipalities up here and right next door is Bellerive Acres so, yeah, it's interesting. So one of my projects that was fun, this was probably in the

'80s, we were looking at how to more rationalize all of these municipalities cross St. Louis County. My husband and I bought our first house in Pasadena Park. I'm like, how can this be a city? It's like 102 houses. I approved subdivisions that were bigger than this, but how could you more rationalize some of these small governments and so we came up with...there was this secret map that had St. Louis County divided into 40 municipalities, you know, 40 cities that would be of a size and scale that there would be economic benefit to the residents of St. Louis County to give up having a Pasadena Park or...you know, some of them have gone away...a Green Park or a Bel-Nor or a Bellerive or a Crestwood or a Sappington.

William Fischetti: Or Vinita Terrace.

June Fowler: Of Vinita Terrace, right, of Vinita Park, Uplands Park but it's funny, again, people don't like change that they don't control, because I always say, it's not that people don't like change. You like change. Falling in love is a change. That's a good thing. Having a baby, that's a change. Change that is worrisome is change that you think is being done to you. So that little secret map stayed on the back burner. But, on paper, it made all the sense in the world. Being able to get it done would have been a political nightmare and political suicide for any elected official who was pushing it.

William Fischetti: So, did you go somewhere after the County?

June Fowler: Yeah, I stayed with the County for 16 years. I went in as the entry-level planner, coloring maps, and I left as the director. So I had 40 some-odd people who were reporting to me at that point and I loved it but what happens at St. Louis County and most governments is, once you become the director, you're a political appointee. So I was appointed by the late Buzz Westfall and Buzz was going to run for governor and I knew I didn't want to live in Jeff City, and usually what happens is, people take their cabinet with them and I knew...it's like, I do not want...nothing against Jeff City but I was raising a family. We were very happy here. So I had shared with him that I would stay for another two years and then give him time to find somebody who would be willing, if he won, of course, to move to Jefferson City. In the interim, I was helping...I've always volunteered so I was doing some volunteer work with Fair-St. Louis, helping them think about all of the governmental entities they have to work with in order to put on the fair and making sure that those

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governmental entities, public entities considered this a reciprocally beneficial relationship. So I had made some recommendations and done some presentations and the person who was overseeing this worked for one of the publicly traded companies, one of the large companies in St. Louis and called me on Saturday night to ask some questions about one of my recommendations and then he said, "Really, that's not why I'm calling you." He's like, "You need to come work for the company that I work for" and I'm like, "But I'm not looking for a job right now" and he says, "I know. It doesn't matter" so I went to talk to him and he wanted me to do organizational development which, there was another little side between my wanting to be a clinical psychologist and wanting to do community development which is, I thought I'd do industrial psychology and when my father heard the word "industry," he kind of flipped out and said, "I didn't work this hard and send you to college so you can go work in some factory" so he didn't get that piece. So, because I was kind of an obedient daughter, I said, "Okay, I'll do something else, "But org development is old industrial psychology" so I'm like, oh, maybe I'll get to do it. I kept talking to the folks. This company was Mallinckrodt...kept talking to them and, as I got to kind of the end of the process, I was talking to the head of human resources who said, "You'd be great at org development but you'd be even better at this other job we've been trying to fill for a long time which is head of our community affairs. Are you interested?" and I'm like, "I don't know. What is it?" and he said, "It's a charitable giving officer and the person who is the kind of government relations staffer in all of the places where we have factories all over the world" and I'm like, "Well, that sounds kind of interesting" so he liked the fact that I was a volunteer, understood community and that I understood public policy issues. I went to Mallinckrodt, stayed there for seven years and we were acquired by one of the bad boy CEOs, Tyco which...this is the CFO, a guy named Dennis Kozlowski who was best known for using the company's money to buy \$6,000 shower curtains and giving his wife this grand party in Italy with Jimmy Buffett and a statue of the Venus with vodka coming out of certain places on its body. So anyway, the state of the David, actually...so anyway, so, but it was really funny. People would say to me, when all of this was going on...because this was the Enron...you said "Enron, Tyco and Global Crossings" all in one breath during that time and people would say, "You know, June, we know it's not you. We know it's not your integrity" and

I'm like, "I never knew my integrity was in question" but the kind of spillover that falls on the employees when the top leadership is behaving badly just was...it was very disappointing. But anyway, we got new leadership at the top. He went to jail, the CFO went to jail, got new leadership, leadership that I actually respected and liked a lot and they liked me and they liked me so much that they wanted me to come work at corporate. So Mallinckrodt at that point, was a division and I was running community affairs and communications then for that division and communications because my function had been located in the communications department and every time we would downsize or right-size or do a reduction in force, my boss would come in and say, "Hey, do you think you could..." ...fill in the blank. So by the time Tyco took out all of the people they wanted to and needed to take out in order to make the acquisition financially solvent for them, and left in Mallinckrodt in communications was me. They asked me to stay, told me I could keep a manager and an administrative assistant. So that's how I morphed into communications. But again, so I was running communications for the division of Mallinckrodt which was a part of Tyco. There started to be pressure to move to where corporate headquarters was and I said, "Oh, I don't need to move. I'll do whatever you need me to do. I can do it from here" and it used to be easier to do from here before American cut so many of their flights so it was taking me longer to get where I needed to go. They're like, "No, we really want you here; we really want you here" and I kept saying, "I can do it from here."

William Fischetti: Where was here?

June Fowler: Here was St. Louis. They wanted me to move to Boston. I had a choice: I could go to Boston or I could go to Princeton, New Jersey. Neither of them was very appealing to me...you know, nice places to visit but I like living here. So I'll never forget, I was at a dinner, I was the only person who wasn't from the corporate office at this dinner in Washington, D.C. and the dinner was over and we're all chatting, the ten of us at the dinner. The nine of them are getting ready to get on the corporate jet to go back to...I think they were going back to Princeton and I'll never forget, the treasurer turned around and said, "It's just wrong that you're not getting on this plane" and there was something in the way he said it that I said: you know, it's going to stop being my choice because they're going to move the function itself. I started taking calls from headhunters.

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You know, it used to be when they called, I'd say, "Thank you, I'm not looking for a job." So got a call...actually, not from a headhunter but from the former CEO of Mallinckrodt who on the board of BJC Healthcare and he said, "You know, they'd like to talk to you about a job. Are you interested?" and I'm like, "Well, I don't know but I'm certainly willing to have lunch." So I met with the folks at BJC. They were looking for somebody to do employee communications and I said, "Oh, that sounds very interesting but I'm not that person; that's too narrow of a job," I said, "but I know some people who might be good for this job" so I gave them a bunch of names, we shook hands and I went on my way. Well, about a year later...again, remember I say, I've always been a volunteer...I was doing some volunteering with an organization called Focus-St. Louis and we were, along with the regional...at that time RCGA and East-West Gateway were trying to figure out the best way for the civic, the government and the private sector to work together, were there projects that if we all put our collective will behind, that we could really get some things done in this community. One of the folks who was on this committee was the CEO of BJC Healthcare and I probably had talked to BJC about six months before but I had not met him and I didn't think anything of it but about four months into this project, I get a call again from my former boss at Mallinckrodt saying, "BJC would really like to talk to you again." I said, "Well, I talked to them. That job doesn't work for me." They're like, "No, they've expanded the job and they'd really like to talk to you" and so I went back in, talked to different people this time and they described a job that was perfect. It was communications; it was community affairs; it was public policy; it was overseeing internal communications but it was a much more comprehensive job, that I said, well, this might be fun and then I found out later that the CEO of BJC who had met me...he had been trying to figure out what he wanted. He said he knew there was a position missing on his team and he said it was when he met me and listened to the way...the community, the government, he said, "That's what we need because, if you think about healthcare, there are very few industries that are more regulated and if you think about hospitals, what do they do? They build and they expand and so you've got to understand how to bring a local community...how to have that community believe that you add value, and when you think about it, we've got 26,000 employees who are all pretty close to each other. How do you make sure that they're your brand ambassadors and

believe in the mission and vision and values of what you're doing?" So that's what I do now. I'm the Vice President of Corporate and Public Communications for BJC Healthcare and it takes everything I've got.

William Fischetti: It's working.

June Fowler: Thank you.

William Fischetti: I mean, they have a wonderful presence in St. Louis.

June Fowler: Thank you, yeah. So that's us.

William Fischetti: So, one of the questions Blanche asks every...

June Fowler: So, if I had been born 50 years before I was born...I was born in 1956. That would have put me at 1906. I would have had no opportunities. I shouldn't say that because that actually denigrates what I think is a very, very important role that my ancestors played. I would not have had the breadth of opportunities that I have now. I likely would have been a seamstress or an ironer or a domestic. I mean, that's what I would have done and I would have done it the way Miss Walker told me to, with excellence but that would have been...

William Fischetti: And lastly, would you talk a little bit about the International Women's Forum? How did you get involved with it?

June Fowler: Sure. So I came to the Women's Forum in much the same way I went to Wheatley-friends. I've stayed because this is a group of women who, they're accomplished already. They're not looking for an organization to validate who they are. They're not looking for a place to channel their civic and community passions. They do that already. This is a place where a group of women who...we're alike in a lot of ways but we're very different in a lot of ways but where we can come together and have safe space to just talk and just enjoy each other and just get to know each other and when I was approached to join, I almost couldn't believe it. First of all, I didn't even know they existed but it was like, "So, wait, you're not going to ask me to work on a project? You're not going to ask me to write a check to support X, Y and Z organizations" and they're like, "You already do that. We just want an opportunity for other people, people we don't know as well, to come together and get to know each other." So I love it. I love it.

William Fischetti: How long have you been involved?

June Fowler: I don't know but...let me think...let's see, I was at Mallinckrodt...so probably since about 1998, I think...I think, but that's one of those things that I might have to check...'98, '99, 2000. I've been the chair of the organ...I've been the board president before and that was probably four presidents ago. So, yeah, it's a great organization.

William Fischetti: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?

June Fowler: I'd like to talk about somebody else who I've always looked up to and it was the person who was the head of the Department of Planning when I came, the person who hired me who's actually a Women's Forum member. Her name is Dee Joyner and I have told Dee this: There are few professional women who have had more of an impact on the way I approach how I do my work than Dee Joyner. Dee was the only woman on the cabinet for the county executive who at that point in time was Gene McNary, when she was there and she just always held her own and she didn't become one of the boys in holding her own. She always was, you know, a very accomplished woman and I watched her and thought, this is amazing; this is amazing because that was in the '80s and that was at a time when the books were all about, in order to be successful, women have to be more like men and she wasn't having it. She was going to be her and so it just ingrained in me that in order to be successful, you have to be you because otherwise you're faking it and that will work for a little while but it's awful tiring.

William Fischetti: You're the 43rd IWF interview we've done and that's a common thread.

June Fowler: Is it really?

William Fischetti: I think they're very strong women. Well, is there anything else you'd like to talk about? I don't know where we are on time.

June Fowler: I don't think so. I also would have to say that the other woman who is instrumental in who I am is certainly my mother. This is a woman who did not have a high school education but who ingrained, pounded into me the importance of getting an education and living your life so that you could not just have your needs but also have some of your wants and I have three children: girl, boy, girl, and when my oldest daughter, who is a doctor, when she was graduating from medical school, we all went to

graduation and we're in the car and she says, "Who would have thought that the granddaughter of..." ...my children's four grandparents, only my mother-in-law had graduated from high school and she just says, "Look at what education does just two generations later. Look at what we have." So she's my quiet hero.

William Fischetti: That's great.

June Fowler: Yeah.

William Fischetti: Okay, well, thank you very much.

June Fowler: Thank you so much.