

An Interview with  
**Peggy Gilbertson**

at *The Historical Society of Missouri* St. Louis  
Research Center, St. Louis, Missouri

**23 April 2015**

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**Oral History Program**

The State Historical Society of Missouri  
Collection S1207 Women as Change Agents DVD 35

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## PREFACE

The interview was taped on a placed on a tripod. There are periodic background sounds but the recording is of generally high quality.

The following transcript represents a rendering of the oral history interview. Stylistic alterations have been made as part of a general transcription policy. The interviewee offered clarifications and suggestions, which the following transcript reflects. Any use of brackets [ ] indicates editorial insertions not found on the original audio recordings. Physical gestures, certain vocal inflections such as imitation, and/or pauses are designated by a combination of italics and brackets [ ]. Any use of parentheses ( ) indicates a spoken aside evident from the speaker's intonation, or laughter. Quotation marks ["" ] identify speech depicting dialogue, speech patterns, or the initial use of nicknames. Em dashes [—] are used as a stylistic method to show a meaningful pause or an attempt to capture nuances of dialogue or speech patterns. Words are *italicized* when emphasized in speech or when indicating a court case title. Particularly animated speech is identified with **bold** lettering. Underlining [   ] indicates a proper title of a publication. The use of underlining and double question marks in parentheses [   (??) ] denotes unintelligible phrases. Although substantial care has been taken to render this transcript as accurately as possible, any remaining errors are the responsibility of the editor, Josephine Sporleder.

Peggy Gilbertson: My name is Peggy Gilbertson and I work here at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. I am the internship coordinator in the Business College and I've had this position for about 11 years now.

Maureen Zegel: Can you talk a little bit about you as a youngster?

Peggy Gilbertson: Sure.

Maureen Zegel: Where you went to school...

Peggy Gilbertson: So I've lived in St. Louis practically my whole life. I was actually born in Orlando, Florida when my dad was in the Air Force but that was before Disney World so it wasn't really popular then; moved here probably when I was one and other than one year in Philadelphia when I was younger, I have lived in St. Louis my whole life, so grew up in Crestwood, lived in a neighborhood that at the time, I thought the house was really big and it was one of those neighborhoods where all the kids played and we'd go out early in the morning and come back late at night on the weekends. And then I drive by the neighborhood now and think, boy, these were really small houses. But it didn't seem like that at the time. I went to Catholic grade school, St. Elizabeth's which no longer is a school. Then my parents got divorced and I moved with my mom and my sister to an apartment and moved to the public schools and when to Lindbergh High School. So I always thought that was kind of cool, to have the school that was the spirit of St. Louis as a Lindbergh theme. So I went to high school there and then came here for college.

Maureen Zegel: What year was that?

Peggy Gilbertson: I graduated from high school in 1974 and so came here and carpoled with...there were seven or eight of us that all came here from my high school and we worked this elaborate carpool out based on schedules, before we had spreadsheet and Excel, sat down and say, "Okay, this person's got a class here; somebody's got a class this time; you'll drive this day, I'll drive this day," so that was our version of the...instead of busing, we were using our own cars.

Maureen Zegel: In school, were you considered a leader?

Peggy Gilbertson: When I was in school, I never really was a leader. I joined everything but never took on any leadership roles until I became an adult. So, as a child, I

wanted to be involved with everything and I joined everything but never had really a leadership role. But I did intramural sports and the PEP Club and joined the Year Book and the newspaper. The one sport I was actually half way decent at was tennis and I still play tennis to this day. The year after I graduated from high school, they started a girls' tennis team. So I never got to play an actual high school sport. There weren't that many options: basketball and field hockey might have been it.

Maureen Zegel: Who encouraged inside or outside your home?

Peggy Gilbertson: I was always, for the lack of a better word, the teacher's pet. I did well in school, was pretty much a straight A student, got a full ride here to UMSL and I got actually another scholarship while I was in high school: PTA scholarship that I used to buy a car with. Back then I could buy a car for...I think it was \$700 so that I had a car here. So that worked out really well, because, again, like I say, my parents being divorced, would have been...which is why a lot of people go to UMSL, I really wanted to go away to school; most of my friends did, and I had the full ride here or any university...Missouri school and financially this was the best fit. So then when I got here, I joined a sorority. I didn't want to not get involved here so I joined a sorority and got involved with the Newman Center and did my best to try to do things outside of just going to school and going home, which was hard to do because I was in this carpool. So there were days that I just drove myself. I was determined, once I got here, that I was going to try to make the best of it. I did enjoy my experience here as an undergraduate.

Maureen Zegel: What was it like being a girl in the 1960's?

Peggy Gilbertson: Well, I was a tomboy so all of my neighborhood friends were boys and I have a sister who's a year younger than me, she played with all the girls in the neighborhood and I played with all the boys in the neighborhood. So that was kind of interesting because I really was a tomboy until middle school, then, all of a sudden, it was a different situation. But one of the things that I found interesting when I was...and this happened to me twice when I was working...I worked at MacDonald's when I was in high school and so right when I started working there, they just changed the rules that girls couldn't work after 8:00 o'clock and I was 16 when I started working there and they decided then it wasn't fair to have girls quit working at 8:00 so now girls could work until 1:00 or 2:00 in the

morning on the weekends, when they were open, then you closed and all that. There weren't that many girls that worked there when I started but I was the first girl to be asked to be promoted to assistant manager. Of course, I thought that was really cool and my mom said absolutely not because it would mean closing three or four nights a week as opposed to just an occasional weekend. So I had to tell them no because my mom wouldn't let me. But I had the option to be the first girl to be promoted to assistant manager.

Maureen Zegel: What year was that?

Peggy Gilbertson: It would have been '72, yeah, because I was in high school, but I continued to work there, just part-time, making my \$1.60 an hour and worked there into college, until my sophomore year in college. Then I got a job at J.C. Penney's in South County. So that was my other college job. Then, I think, junior or senior year...maybe more like senior year of college, I got a job at Community Federal Savings & Loan and so I worked there, more of kind of a transition from fast food to retail to working in a bank and I really enjoyed that.

Maureen Zegel: And how long did you work there?

Peggy Gilbertson: I worked there until I graduated. Once I graduated from here, I interviewed with Emerson Electric through the Career Services office here and got hired at Emerson Electric and I worked there as a project planner for four years and my claim to fame there, I was the first woman they ever hired in that position. So when I was hired, I actually was in a year-long training program and at the end of that one year, you got to pick...it was a mutual decision between the three departments I trained in and the department that I wanted, which department to work for. So I picked Planning and there were 25 men in that department and I was the first woman that ever worked...girl, whatever...22...and so I worked there for four years but when I quit four years later, there were still 25 people, but eight were women. So that was kind of fun, to be the trailblazer for that and, again, I was on the cutting edge of things being different for women. During that four years, I got married and was pregnant with my first child. Once she was born, I still wanted to work there and I wanted to job share and so there was another woman who worked in the department with me that had a child and we were planning on each working 20 hours a week, sharing a job, which would have not been hard

to do based on the job responsibilities. Our immediate supervisor said that was fine but we'd have to work up the ladder and they said, "No, we're not doing that. We don't want to start a tradition. If we do that, everybody's going to want to do that" so they wouldn't let us. I found out later they now did let people do it, so I decided to quit and came back here and got my MBA. So fortunately, financially, I didn't have to work. My husband had a good job and we decided that's what I would do. So I came back here and got my MBA in 1982 and never left. Once I got here, I started working as a graduate assistant and got different jobs and I'm still here.

Maureen Zegel: Let's back up a little bit and talk about who encouraged you, who were your mentors?

Peggy Gilbertson: You know, I really can't say. It was more internal. I feel like I had some teachers. I totally remember my 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher who actually just turned 100 and I didn't make it to her birthday party but she was just a great role model and I did have some teachers in high school that I enjoyed. But I really can't say...now, I will say, because my parents were divorced and my mom then became a working mother that I could see her work ethic and so maybe that was it. But I just kind of felt like, once I was able to make my own decisions; I just had this drive that I wanted to do well, wanted to succeed. I think when I was in the sorority here, I became friends with people outside of the people I grew up with, again, living in the same school district my whole life, I didn't have too many friends that were outside of my own peer group, and then you'd come here and it's like, oh, they've got different groups from different...most of them were still from St. Louis but had different backgrounds and then, of course, there were some that weren't from St. Louis. So I just kind of enjoyed getting to know people from different backgrounds. So other people and how were able to excel so I decided, I want to do that.

Maureen Zegel: One of the questions here is: Fifty years earlier, what do you think you would have been doing? What do you think your life would have been?

Peggy Gilbertson: I think I would have probably been a teacher and that's what I started...when I came here actually as an undergrad, my thought was...and I think my mom kind of instilled it in me too, I remember that. She goes, "Every woman should be a teacher because it's a great field to be in when you have children," and I thought, well, I don't know that I...

actually thought I wanted to be a lawyer, to be quite honest, but then I didn't, once I got here. I ended up going the business route but I think I would have felt like I should have been a teacher and I did start out here as education and my first year-and-a-half, I was a Special Ed major because back in the '70s, teachers weren't getting hired, so I thought, well, I don't want to do that. I didn't even know anything about business but I took a few classes and did some...I don't know what you want to call it...I volunteered in a special school, in a special camp my freshman and sophomore year and said, no, this isn't what I want to do. Then I kind of looked into business on my own and decided that, you know, the business classes were what I wanted to do. Like I said, I think 50 years earlier, I probably would not have gotten hired at Emerson Electric because if I was the first one hired in 1978, I don't think much before that it would have been easy to get hired. So I probably would have been a teacher, and I might have liked it but I kind of like being...working in a business environment.

Maureen Zegel: What kind of influences did you have throughout your career?

Peggy Gilbertson: Well, again, I worked at Emerson for four years and what was interesting when I worked there, I worked in the defense...it electronics and space so we really were competitors with Boeing for employees, not necessarily for products for employees and I think...they hired so many young people because Ronald Reagan was the president and defense, defense, defense and so when I started working there, I had this brand new peer group and everybody was young so even my immediate bosses weren't much more than two or three years older than me. And so it was a real social group too and so I think having that peer group that was also a group that you worked with made the job more fun. Actually, and then I forgot...actually, I don't even know what the question was. Did I answer?

Maureen Zegel: Influence.

Peggy Gilbertson: Yeah, so I got influenced because I realized you could do well without necessarily...it doesn't necessarily take that long to climb the ladder. But, of course, that all changed because I ended up not staying there more than four years but once I got here, then...the job I had here, so I guess I'll go into that.

Maureen Zegel: Talk about your MBA.



Peggy Gilbertson: Yeah, so when I got here and started working on my MBA...

Maureen Zegel: And married.

Peggy Gilbertson: I was married, I had one child and then I ended up having a second child during the course of working on my MBA. I never knew what I wanted to do. I just knew that...I thought I'd go back to work eventually. I just decided that, because I didn't know what I wanted to do next, getting an MBA was a good thing to do where I could have some other direction but still be there with my kids. So, when I started working here, I was in one of my graduate classes and a person there was working for Peggy Lamming and she was a graduate student and she was saying how she got a chance to work with Doug Smith, another faculty member here, and she was going to leave that job and she hated leaving her in a lurch and somehow in the conversation, I said, "Well, I'd kind of like to do a job while I'm a graduate student" and so I literally went into her office and she goes, "Oh, I hear you're the one I'm going to hire because you were referred to me by Judy Music, and so I said, "Well, are we going to interview or whatever?" and she goes, "If Judy refers you to me, that's good enough." So I never really interviewed for this job. So I started working with Peggy Lamming as a graduate student and she was the director of the Business Development Program. And so we worked with small businesses and I worked 20 hours a week doing business plans and marketing plans and helping with SBA loans. So we worked with small businesses and it was free to them but we got paid with a grant by the Commerce Department. So I did that and then I eventually graduated but still wasn't ready to go back to work full-time. By that time, I got more involved with my kids, who were in...I think my oldest was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and my other one was in pre-school. Then I started getting really involved with their school and I thought, I kind of like what I'm doing, and they let me stay, even though I'd already graduated, I got to stay in the job. Well, then, Peggy Lamming ended up leaving that job and just teaching more. So I became the director of the Small Business Development Center...let me back up there...I actually had a third child and then I decided at that point, okay, I think I'm finished working and so I just told Peggy, I said, "I'm going to..."...I was also doing some other part-time teaching at some community colleges and some local groups. We would go in and just talk about business loans and things. So I did kind of that on the side. I kept doing that. So I said, "I'm quitting." This was in October of '89 and I just

stayed home. It's the only time I ever didn't do anything. So I stayed home from October of '89 and then in June of 1990, she called me back and said, "Well, they've changed the function of the grant..." ...because I was getting tired of the SBA loans. We just kept doing SBA loans more than anything. So she called me back in June and said, "The grant has been changed. Now we're working with non-profits and local cities, governments and would you be interested in coming back?" So I thought, "All right, maybe I'll try it again." So other than October to June, when I wasn't working...and actually, I did teach a small business class at Webster University for one semester just for something else to do because I was still looking for something to do. I just wasn't sure what it was. So I did that for one semester. It was for somebody on maternity leave and then when they came back, I didn't have that anymore. It's really hard to teach a class for one semester and then never teach it again. You have to do all that work but I didn't need to because I went back. So then we did work for...which I loved that part of it...non-profits and I would go in and meet with some of these non-profits. Back then, that was when websites were just beginning. I didn't put the website together but I would get the information that they needed to put on the website or I did some research for them for different grants. I did some surveys for the non-profits. The City of St. Louis, they had a lot of grants and they needed data and so I spent a lot of time in this library. This is really before the internet even...you couldn't really use the internet to access, to Google things. So I was going to different places that I could get records and I liked that kind of digging in and getting an answer and solving problems or whatever. So I did that. Then Peggy Lamming left to just teach full-time and then I became the Business Development Center. So I worked, again, 20 hours a week but that was what the grant allowed. So I couldn't work more than that. Then, the grant finally ended June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004, and so I thought, okay, I guess I'm going to have to find a real job and before I even started looking, Tom Isol was the interim dean of the Business College at that time and he called me into his office and said, "We've been wanting to start an internship program here and we'd like to have someone coordinate it. What would you think of doing that?" and I said, "It sounds like a great thing. I'd love to do it" and so, again, I didn't have to look for a job; it came to me. So, since July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, I've worked as the internship coordinator in the Business College. As my responsibilities grew and I got involved with more things there, my hours

went from 20 and then in 2007, I guess it was, I started getting involved with this international MBA program where I had to find internships for these students from China and Taiwan and I could not do it for 20 hours. I was working 40+ hours a week and so we finally said, "Okay, this needs to be a full-time job." But I still didn't want to work 40. I still had three kids and I was in this variety tennis and I just had a lot...I was very involved, like I said, with my kids' school so just said, "Can I work 30 hours a week" because you can still get full-time benefits, which I love here, for 30 hours a week. And then I have a graduate student now that works for me a few hours a week. So I've been doing that since 2004 and then, like I said, I'm retiring at the end of this year. When I turn 60, I'll be retiring.

Maureen Zegel: Have you received any awards or recognitions for your work? You're a busy person.

Peggy Gilbertson: I don't know that I received any awards for any work I've done here.

Maureen Zegel: Or recognition, throughout your whole...

Peggy Gilbertson: Yeah. I mean, like I said, I got the scholarships here. I got a lot of recognition more for things I did outside of work, some of the volunteer in school things but I don't have any trophies or anything that I can think of.

Maureen Zegel: Talk a little bit about balancing...I was a mother who worked and went to school and children, so talk a little bit about balancing that because years ago, women stayed home pretty much full-time, if you're going to look at 50 years ago on that as well.

Peggy Gilbertson: Sure. When I grew up, none of my parents'...my mom was one of the first to work because my parents got divorced but I was, like, 10 at the time. Before that, I didn't know any moms that worked. Like I said, I was in this neighborhood where everybody played together. The moms were there, went from house to house throughout the day. I never, ever knew a mom that worked. But it was interesting, so, as I said, I was working 20 hours a week. I finally did get my degree so 20 hours a week was nothing. Once I finished my degree, then I felt like I had all this time in the world but what was interesting, I was with my daughter...so I have two daughters and a son, and my oldest daughter is a stay-at-home mom with two little boys that are three and one. She's a CPA, worked Price-Waterhouse and Miller -Proust and had her kids and said, "I'm taking some time off."

Anyway, we ran into an old neighbor that used to live in our neighborhood when my daughter grew up, we were talking to her and she said that she was a stay-at-home mom and she looked at me, she goes, "Oh, just like your mom and I were," and I looked at my old neighbor, I said, "No, I worked. I worked at least 20 hours a week the same time I was going to graduate school." She goes, "Really?" She goes, "You were always at all the room mother...you were always there," and I was a PTO president and in charge of room and all that. I said, "Yeah, I just made it work" because I would work when the kids were at school and when I was here with the job with the Business Development Center, I could set my own hours. I could work from home, so I was able to do that balance of working and having kids, which my daughter, being a CPA, that's a hard thing to do. You have to work busy season, it's really hard. She goes, if she could find a job where she could be more flexible, so she might some day, but the point is, my kids never probably knew I worked because I was able to do it when they were at school. When they were younger, they had to do some daycare. I live in a neighborhood now like the neighborhood I grew up in except the women are working in that the kids all play...the kids have all grown up together. When my kids were going to school on the school bus, our bus stop had 30 children on it and they were all kids my kids' age. Ten people on my block were my exact age. And so we all helped each other out. So I was in a lot of situations where, "Can you watch my kids after school on Monday, I'll watch your kid after school on Tuesday," so I was able to make that work. I think I held every position there is to hold in the...between my three kids, I was at the elementary school 15 years because there's eight years between my oldest and my youngest. I held every position you could hold and I was a Girl Scout leader, a Boy Scout leader, did all that because I just really wanted to get involved with my kids too. So I was able to make it work. But once they got older now, I don't mind at all that I actually come here to an office four days a week as opposed to working out my schedule and maybe working from home. So it's worked out well.

Maureen Zegel: Women tend to support each other, especially when it comes to childcare.

Peggy Gilbertson: Absolutely.

Maureen Zegel: Do you want to talk a little more about that? When I was younger, we had a babysitting co-op.

Peggy Gilbertson: Right, and there was one of those at the elementary school my kids went to. We didn't need it because my specific neighborhood, we all were there for each other so we didn't need to be formal about it. So what's really interesting now, all our kids are getting married and I just went to a wedding two weeks ago and there were 20 couples that were at the wedding that...our kids all grew up together, so 20 families that were at this wedding that were all invited and I did the same thing with my daughters' wedding. They're my family. My neighbors, we all moved in when it was a brand new neighborhood. I think that's what helped because we all moved in together. We all were brand new. Nobody knew each other. We all had all these kids. My daughters were four and one, and then my son came along later. It was like, we considered ourselves family. A few of us are from St. Louis but I was at a shower about a month ago and there were 15 of us, I'll say, just standing around talking at the end of the shower and I was the only one that actually was from St. Louis. These other friends of mine have lived here 25, 30 years but they did not grow up here. So I'm unique in the neighborhood I live in because most of the others moved here from other places. They didn't have family here. And so our neighbors became family. We just all bonded really well. So I am very fortunate that that has worked out that way.

Maureen Zegel: And [inaudible 25:55] depend on each other.

Peggy Gilbertson: Oh, yeah, and we vacationed together; we socialized together; we just randomly have happy hours. We started a thing...this summer will be the fourth year...where we pick a city where the Cardinals are playing baseball, a new city that many of us haven't been to, and we go there for a long weekend. So it started out with 10 one year, then it got to be 12 the second year, 16 last year, this year we're going to San Diego and there's 20 of us. It's just all people that were in that phase of our lives where we can pick up and go and afford to do that and have fun and not have to worry about baseball games and soccer practices and things like that. Yeah, so I've been really lucky with that. Plus, I have family here.

Maureen Zegel: What about the people you went to grade school with and high school with, how did their lives turn out? Where did they go? You keep talking about how lucky you are. Are they as lucky as you?

Peggy Gilbertson: I still see most of my high school friends too...well, I don't see most, I graduated with a class of 1000 students and what's interesting with my high school friends, again, we all were busy raising kids. Now we're getting back together again so I have one group of friends who we go on trips together. I have another group of friends that we just started it about a year-and-a-half ago, now we're in a book club together but we live all over St. Louis and so we meet in restaurants every other month and two of them, I didn't even really hang out with much in high school but they were friends of friends and now we're becoming friends again. So I would say most of my friends have had pretty good lives and can be successful about where they ended up and I don't have anybody that didn't...none of my friends didn't work. Everybody worked but we're all getting to that age now where we're either retiring or working part-time. But everybody had careers. All my good friends went to college. I can't think of anybody that didn't that I was friends with. Obviously there were because 1000 people but my own group of friends, we're all pretty much...

Maureen Zegel: Where do you live now?

Peggy Gilbertson: Chesterfield.

Maureen Zegel: That's a wonderful place.

Peggy Gilbertson: Yeah. No, I live in Chesterfield.

Maureen Zegel: [Inaudible 28:20].

Peggy Gilbertson: It's a long drive from here and we always say, too...again, there's probably 25 to 30 of us that are really good friends and none of us are divorced. We are always amazed at how everybody's still married to their first husbands.

Maureen Zegel: Did anybody come from divorced parents?

Peggy Gilbertson: Like I said, I did. That's a good question. Most of them didn't. A few have gotten divorced after their kids were married, a couple like that, that they waited until then. But, yeah, most of them did not come from divorced parents. In fact, I will say, when my parents got divorced, I was 10 and it wasn't until I was in high school that I ever knew anybody else that had divorced parents. That was a stigma that I had to...

Maureen Zegel: Because you were in a Catholic school.

Peggy Gilbertson: Yeah, so there was...yeah, I just never knew about divorced parents but what I see now with people that are divorced, it's really easier. The parents seem to get along well. They still go to things together because it's much more common. But, yeah, I think I was unique, having divorced parents at a young age.

Maureen Zegel: You have two daughters. How did you bring them up? How did you talk with them about being a woman in what's still pretty much a man's world?

Peggy Gilbertson: I think they both have that drive and wanted to excel at what they do and I basically...my husband and I did the same thing..."You can't depend on a man. You have to get a career." It was never an issue. They both have Master's Degrees, and again, that's part of their peer group too. Everybody does now. Girls go to college and now it is the math. My one daughter, like I said, is a CPA. Even though she worked for five years before she has taken time off to be a mom. My other daughter's a speech therapist and she does work in a school district. She had her first baby in September so, again, we're all helping out. I'm off work on Fridays. I take them on Fridays. She's got different people helping her. But she loves her career. Both my daughters, I think, picked careers that were good fits for them. They've always been around a lot of strong women. My mother is going to be 82 in July. She still works and she's going to be 82 in July. She will never quit work. You'd have to drag her away.

Maureen Zegel: What does she do?

Peggy Gilbertson: And she's a self-made woman. She didn't go to college because her brother got to go to college but her dad said, "You don't need to go; you're a girl" and so she didn't work until my parents got divorced and then she was a welcome wagon lady. That's what she started out doing. Well, then that led into sales jobs, so she's always been in sales and now she sells items...UMSL Bookstore is one of her clients so she sells items at UMSL, to bookstores and stationary. She's done different things but that's what she's selling now, like, school supplies to mainly college bookstores and some retail stores and she gets in her car. She has a friend and they've been doing this together and what's interesting, her friend doesn't do it for the money. She's 85 and they've been doing this

for 40 years. She just wants to get out of the house and so they go together and they call themselves “the St. Louis twins” and so my mom buys her friend lunch every day and they just go together and they come up here. They just enjoy getting out and seeing people. Again, I can’t even imagine my mom not working because she never remarried and she’s slowed down. She certainly doesn’t work 40 hours a week anymore but I bet she works 25. She does paperwork when she comes home, had to get a computer to start e-mailing because she would be faxing things. I said, “You know, you got to really learn how to e-mail” so she now e-mails. I had to go over there and teach her that about two or three years ago. So she was a good role model in that respect because she definitely keeps herself busy.

Maureen Zegel: What about your son?

Peggy Gilbertson: My son is 25 and it’s interesting, because my husband, he’s a CPA also and he’s got sisters that are go-getters and whatever. Anyway, he went to Mizzou. He graduated three years ago and then he actually got a sales job with AT&T who moved to San Diego. Monday he’s going to start a new job of sales. He just didn’t like it at all. So he’s out in San Diego. He’s still not sure what he wants. His degree was in finance but he ended up getting this job in sales, so now he wanted a second job and he wanted to get back into finance but his resume says you’re in sales. So he’s trying another sales job but he lives out in San Diego and we just were visiting him last week. But he doesn’t seem to have the drive that my daughters do, which I find interesting, and I’m hoping he’ll get an MBA someday but he’s got to figure out in what. But he is very laidback. He’s so laidback.

Maureen Zegel: He had all those females taking care of him.

Peggy Gilbertson: I think that’s it. I think that’s it, he had all those females and I think, in retrospect, because he’s eight years younger than the two girls, I think we kind of babied him too much or they babied him and I babied him, so I don’t think he has that same drive that they do, but he’s fine. I mean, he’s excited about his new job.

William Fischetti: I’d be interested in hearing a little more about the job now as the internship coordinator. I’d be interested in hearing more specifically how that works also. It seems like working with people, trying to place them in internships could also be pretty fulfilling.



Peggy Gilbertson: Mm-hmm.

Brian Woodman: So, address it Maureen Zegel.

Peggy Gilbertson: I love my job. I feel like I have the best job here on campus. So when I was asked to do this job, there was no job description. It was just, we had so many...well, the issue was Career Services list internships on their website. You had to pay to access the website and students weren't doing that. And so, there was nobody out there trying to encourage companies to hire interns and then they needed someone to work with the students so that they knew there were internships available and then help them get the credit for it. So I just started, it wasn't even that long ago, 11 years, I got out the Yellow Pages and just started calling companies and now I can get on websites and look at them. Now they come to me and alumni come to me so it's great but I meet with these students and find out their interests and then start sending them opportunities once I find those from companies. We have such great students that they're getting hired. Last year we had 400 students that I knew of that got hired. But what I love about my job and I feel really guilty about it is students are thanking me, companies are thanking me, so I get thanked daily but it's not me that's doing it; it's the students who are good. If we didn't have good students, then they wouldn't get offers. And there is something to be said...people say they have "thankless" jobs all the time. I almost feel like I get thanked too much because I'm always getting thank you's, e-mails and calls and students will stop by. So it makes you realize how important it is to tell people, thank you, and again, I don't feel like I deserve the thanks because if you weren't such a good student, if you didn't have this great UMSL work ethic and all that, nobody would be hiring and then I wouldn't have a job. So, I really do, I feel like I have the best job here. I'm very visible. I work with a lot of different areas and I meet with students...500 students a year I probably meet with. So it's great. I love the job and I think that's, the interaction is wonderful.

Maureen Zegel: So you've been here long enough to see women going through the Business School, have more women going through business than were, say, getting their MBA when you were here.

Peggy Gilbertson: Oh, absolutely. Oh, yeah, when I was in the MBA program, there weren't that many women in the MBA program, but now...sure, I see more

females than males and I think part of that has to do with the maturity level too. A lot of guys, they'll come in to me sometimes and say, "My mom said I should come see you," you know, and they're a little older when they come. Maybe they're already seniors, where girls will tend to come in more as even sophomores, juniors. So I think they're just a little bit more...like I said, because of that, I definitely feel like I see more girls than I do boys...men, women, whatever, but yeah, definitely. I have never done the research but probably more women get hired than men as interns. If I was to go back and actually summarize it...you know, not significantly more but I definitely think so.

Maureen Zegel: The companies that you work with, you went through the Yellow Pages.

Peggy Gilbertson: Yeah.

Maureen Zegel: You had to do a pretty good sales job, especially, in the beginning.

Peggy Gilbertson: Right. I put together a brochure, back then before there was...now there's a website, but we had a brochure made and I made up letters and I mailed them letters and mailed them these brochures and say, "This is why you need interns; this is why you want UMSL students, because [inaudible 38:17] around and most of them are going to stay in St. Louis so if you're looking for an intern, you should check us first," so I put together that kind of information. I really reached out mainly to accounting firms at the beginning because we had the big firms hiring and the big firms were Big Eight, now they're Big Four, they already worked with our Career Services office and come on campus so I was trying to reach those smaller firms. So that was my big focus at the beginning. But then I would go to a lot of networking events with business cards and every time I went to a networking event, I'd just talk to people and give them my card and say, "Have you ever thought about hiring an intern?" so there was a lot of that at the beginning of my job. But now, again, people, once they have a good student, then they just come back. So many of our alumni...I've been doing this 11 years so students who were interns eight, nine, ten, eleven years ago now are in the position to hire interns so they're contacting me or they're contacting faculty and they'll refer them to me. So now, instead of getting out the Yellow Pages which doesn't hardly even exist, where I would go get the Sorokin's Book and the Business Journal, now I go on websites and I can find internships listed on websites and so I'll do some digging until I find

the person who's in charge of that and confirm that that is a legitimate position and then say, "Do you mind if I promote it to our students here?" and most of them are very excited to do that because companies don't go to college websites anymore. They just post it. They put them on monster.com, indeed, their own website so they don't feel the need to contact all the local colleges. So, by me reaching out to them, it's one step they don't have to do and then I say, "I'm going to promote it to our students and put it on our Career Services' website," so that's what I'm doing differently now than I did 11 years ago. So that's how I'm finding some of these opportunities.

Maureen Zegel: So you really are like your mother.

Peggy Gilbertson: Yeah. I'm in a sales job. I feel like I'm in a sales job, exactly. You asked earlier what I would do, I probably would have been a teacher but if I went back to work without being offered...like I said, I fell into the two jobs I had here at UMSL. I think I felt like sales probably would have been...and that is what my son is doing but sometimes we feel like we have to light a fire under him, like, "You got to work a little harder, you know? It's not a 40-hour..."...you know, that kind of thing. That's one of the differences there. But, yeah, I definitely feel like that's probably what I would have ended up in if I hadn't stayed here. And I'm not sure I might not do something else down the road. I have no idea but at this point in my life, I feel like I'm ready to do more fun things.

Maureen Zegel: You said you just joined Zonta about a year-and-a-half ago?

Peggy Gilbertson: Mm-hmm.

Maureen Zegel: Talk a little bit about that.

Peggy Gilbertson: And that was part of the situation too. I was looking for something else. Like I said, when my kids were in school, I did it all, as I said, PTO president, football mom...my daughter was a cheerleader, I was the cheerleading person. I just was that mom that did a lot of stuff. Then, even when they were college, they were in fraternities, sororities and I organized, like, homecoming, tailgates and I was involved with their sorority and fraternities and then they finally all were done and I thought, I need one more thing. And so one of my friends is a member of Zonta and she invited me to a trivia night two years ago and I said, "I couldn't make the trivia night but tell me more about Zonta," and she did and I

said, "This is exactly what I'm looking for." I wanted something else to do, volunteer-wise and service-oriented and so I went to a couple meetings and I liked their service aspect of it, hands-on, everything's kind of hands-on service and I said, I want to join. So I just joined.

Maureen Zegel: What do you do?

Peggy Gilbertson: What does Zonta do?

Maureen Zegel: Mm-hmm.

Peggy Gilbertson: Okay, well, Zonta is an organization that helps women. It's an international organization and they get involved with many causes including...well, like, Malaika just did a thing on pay equity and they do things on a lot of the third world, helping women there that are abused. Locally, we work with women who are trying to go back to college. Women's Another Chance comes and takes your clothes and things from your...if you want to donate clothes and things and that's one of the organizations. Then we get that money as scholarship money and we then select women who are single moms that are in college that need scholarships to help them. So we select those women and I specifically work trying to find women for business scholarships. So I just got involved with that. I just set up a thing at my house with women that are in an organization called Friends of Refugees and Immigrants, and these are women who came over here from other countries, war-torn countries. They can't work so they've been taught how to make crafts and then they sell those crafts so that they can help support their family. So that's one of the things we're involved in. So, if it's women-related, helping women...one of the groups we do is a shelter for women who are drug-addicted and they're not from St. Louis but they're from the surrounding area and so they live in the shelter, a faith-based shelter to try to help them get off their addictions. And so we provide meals for them and take them on outings and one of our women actually works there so it's really, really interesting. So I'm meeting a whole new group of women. The interesting thing about this organization is you have to be a professional woman to join, I guess basically have a degree, but one you retire, you can stay on. You can't join it if you're already retired or if you're not working. You have to be a working woman to join it, put it that way but most of the people that are doing the bulk of the work now are retired so I imagine once I retire, I'll probably even get more involved

because then I'll have more time and it seems like a good organization and I'm looking for some other things to get involved with when I retire too.

Maureen Zegel: Is your husband going to retire?

Peggy Gilbertson: No, that's why I can. No, he's got at least another four years. But I do have three grandsons and I'm going to help my one daughter, babysit and I bike and I hike and I play tennis. As long as I can still do all that, I want to do that, join another book club, a Bible study. I've got lots of things I want to do. I do have a lot of energy so I just feel like...probably you're the same way. I knew it was time. It's like, I'm ready, it's time so I think by the end of the year. The one other thing I did want to bring up...and this is what I tell students when I meet with them, "I don't know what I want to do, where my career is going to be" and I say, "You can't plan it. You never know where your life will take you." I didn't plan to do what I ended up doing for when I came here as a graduate student and we have so many people that come in and talk to the students that say, "Your career just happens." You can't plan your life and you just have to let life happen and get involved in different opportunities and you just never know where your next job will come from or where you'll meet your future spouse so you just have to not...that's the thing that I think a lot of students...and I know I was like that too, you think you have to plan your life and say, "This year I'm going to do this; this year I'm going to do that; I'm going to work here" and you just can't. It just happens and so that would be my one thing that I would tell younger people, is just sit back and enjoy your life because it will all work out.