

An Interview with  
**Ellen Harshman**

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

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**Oral History Program**

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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.

Ellen Harshman: I'm Ellen Harshman and I live in St. Louis. I've been in St. Louis for 44 years now and I've been working at St. Louis University all of those years. I've retired from my administrative work...mostly...about a year ago but I'm working part-time at the university now on a project.

Blanche Touhill: Would you talk about your childhood: your parents; your siblings. How did you play? Did you play with dolls? Did you play with boys and girls both? Did you have free play or did you have very structured activities every day? Just talk about your youth. I'm particularly interested in who told you you could be what you wanted to be.

Ellen Harshman: Well, that's all very interesting. I have to think about how that goes in some kind of chronology. I was born in the farming community in Western Ohio and when I was a year old...that's where my dad grew up...when I was a year old, my mom and dad moved to West Virginia, way back in the hills which was where her family were and about a year after we were there...I have one brother and he was born...he's two years younger than I am and so we were very much a part of her family: cousins, brothers, sisters. They were a family of five and they were all around. The church was important. We lived on a farm...everybody did there; that was the industry...and Dad farmed with a horse and we grew everything we ate. It was either...I remember butchering, I remember my mom canning, I remember the garden. She made my clothes and people won't remember this but we had feed. We had chickens. The chicken feed came in sacks and it had patterns so a lot of my dresses were feed sacks and her aprons and all that. So basically we learned that you used everything you had and we didn't have a lot of money but we weren't deprived because we were pretty self-sufficient, as everybody was. If anybody needed something, you just kind of traded and I remember when I was probably about six, we lived about a mile or so from this little crossing in the road where the grocery store was and Mom would send me with butter...she made butter and people always wanted Mrs. McKorkel's butter and so I would take butter and eggs in a little basket to the grocery store and I'd have a list of things we needed and we would trade. So they'd give me things and then I would go home. So that was my little job and so I just walked up this dirt road and brought back the groceries. So you ask about play: I did have dolls. I remember having three dolls and for some reason, I gave them all the same name. So when I got the first doll, I named her Charlotte and then when I got the second

doll, I named her Charlotte and I must have given the other one a different name. So Charlotte was the name I had and I had two teddy bears and these dolls and I sort of lined them up on my bed and we would have parties. I remember having a little tea set and we had parties but because we lived in the country, I was outside a lot and so we played outside. My brother played with me sometimes but we would swing and we did those kinds of things as well and when I got a little older, then we had our jobs to do. So in the summer, it was help Mom do such-and-such a thing and in the winter, my grandmother, which is my mother's mother, had to have a loom so we would tear rags and tie them together and make balls and then they would weave rugs in the loom house.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, the rag rugs.

Ellen Harshman: Uh-huh. So that was kind of all that. Mom died when I was eight and we moved back to Ohio and so that was a real change in my life. We moved back to Grandpa's farm...Grandpa McKorkel's farm and we moved in with him so Dad could help him farm.

Blanche Touhill: Well, that must have been quite a change.

Ellen Harshman: It was because...

Blanche Touhill: You left cousins and grandparents and...

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, and there really wasn't much of an extended family. Dad had one sister and she didn't live very near and her kids were older than us so we really didn't have any relatives.

Blanche Touhill: Did you go to school on a bus?

Ellen Harshman: Yes, we did. You knew that, didn't you?

Blanche Touhill: Well, I just judged that...

Ellen Harshman: Well, we were in this county school system, Shelby County in Ohio. There are seven schools out in the county and we were on the first stop in the morning and the last stop at night. So I read. I would sit on the bus and read my books. I always read.

Blanche Touhill: Did you do your homework?

Ellen Harshman: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: Sort of?

Ellen Harshman: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: You reviewed it anyway.

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, so I'd do whatever I had to do but then mostly I just read. I'd sit by myself, for the most part. It's about an hour each way. Although it wasn't that far, it was that route and that was the school that I graduated from high school and in my high school graduating class we had 32 students. So most of them stayed on the farms. Hardly anybody went to college. Two of the guys went to college, I think, later. I graduated in the early days of the Vietnam War so people were getting drafted. We lost only one of our class but it was a real tough time.

Blanche Touhill: Yes. Did your family say they wanted you to go to college?

Ellen Harshman: Dad said...Dad never remarried so I was the housekeeper...

Blanche Touhill: You became the...yes.

Ellen Harshman: I cooked and I did whatever and he had said to me one time, "Well, you should get your education because that's something you can fall back on if your husband dies."

Blanche Touhill: That was what everybody said.

Ellen Harshman: And he came through The Depression and he saw people. He had this ethic of never owing anybody any money because he saw people lose everything they had because they had debt. So it was, "Don't buy anything you can't afford" which I'm sure he spins in his grave every time I get my credit card bills now...and so you saved for everything you want to buy and you get your education but there wasn't really an expectation that I was going to do anything different but if my husband died, I had some sort of licensure.

Blanche Touhill: So, were you to be a teacher?

Ellen Harshman: Well, I was.

Blanche Touhill: But, I mean, did he mention teaching?

Ellen Harshman: Well, he kind of thought...people who knew me just thought I would be the teacher.

Blanche Touhill: Well, people would say, in those days, too, they would say, "Well, if you become a teacher, then you're home in the summer with the children and you're off on the holidays with the children." So it was sort of a packaged deal.

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, and that was, I guess, what you did. The only B I got in high school was in typing so that wasn't...I wasn't going to go that way. And the nursing stuff, those were kind of the other jobs but that didn't appeal to me so I was going to be a teacher. But I thought I was going to be an English teacher and that's what I liked, but as it turned out, I ended up getting my elementary education certification. Ohio had, at that time...and so this is in the early '60s...late '50s...they needed elementary school teachers so there were these normal school grads where people...and they were beginning to retire and so they had a process they called "cadet certificate" so you could actually get a certificate, a license to teach in elementary school with basically two years of college but you had to go on and get your Bachelor's Degree. So I started college when I was between my junior and senior years of high school. So I went to Miami, so I went to Miami for summer school and I didn't know what I was going to do.

Blanche Touhill: And who paid the tuition, your father?

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, the tuition was \$15 a credit hour and so he paid that and I lived on campus in the...it was about 60 miles from where I lived so I lived on campus during the week and then I'd come home on the weekend and do the laundry. So by the time I started my senior year, I had 15 credit hours done...I guess that was probably about right...and then I took biology at an extension that was near us and so I had that done and then, right after I graduated, I went back and did another summer. So by the time I would have started college, I had a year's work done and so I thought I was going to go on campus. That didn't work out. I didn't have the money to do that so I went to extensions, Miami extension and I did that year and then I realized I could actually get a job. So we had to do student teaching. Well, you know, you had those education courses.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, you had your two-year program?

Ellen Harshman: Uh-huh, and you flipped it: we had to take the education courses and the methods courses first and so I did that, did my student teaching in this suburban...Dayton school system and they hired me in the middle of the year to take a classroom where a teacher was going on leave. So I had my classroom when I was 19.

Blanche Touhill: And how old were the students?

Ellen Harshman: They were 4<sup>th</sup> graders.

Blanche Touhill: So they were 9, 10...

Ellen Harshman: Mm-hmm, just great, it's the perfect age.

Blanche Touhill: It is a wonderful age.

Ellen Harshman: So that was kind of...I could have retired from that job. I really liked it a lot.

Blanche Touhill: But you kept going?

Ellen Harshman: I did.

Blanche Touhill: Well, your junior year, you just kept going through extension?

Ellen Harshman: Well, I would go to campus in summer and then that was right at the time when Miami and Ohio State had come together to build Wright State.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, yes.

Ellen Harshman: So I finished my work there but still had my degree from Miami.

Blanche Touhill: And that became Miami of Ohio?

Ellen Harshman: That became Wright State.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, that became Wright State?

Ellen Harshman: Yeah. So Miami had courses there and Ohio State had courses there because of the Air Force base there and eventually it came together as the independent campus about the same time the University of Missouri-St. Louis was just getting...

Blanche Touhill: Absolutely, that was that growth, and you know, Wright State always had that idea, they called themselves a "metropolitan" university. They



weren't downtown but they were a metropolitan university and we used to have these intellectual discussions, what's the difference between an urban university and a metropolitan university?

Ellen Harshman: A lot more letters.

Blanche Touhill: That's right but it was interesting.

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, so I was there in the first building and finished my Bachelor's Degree there and then I decided I wanted...I'm always in school so why don't I just keep going? So I thought maybe...I looked at what there was. I didn't want to do curriculum. I took a course in library science and I didn't like that so much so I got to know the school psychologist in our school building and kind of liked what she did so I decided I'd do my Master's in counseling but always I was going to go back to the classroom. So they were nice enough to give me a leave to do that and Wright State was nice enough to give me an assistantship. It was the first assistant that they'd ever had and then I didn't go back. I got married. Carl was the assistant director of admissions at Wright State and he wanted to do his Ph.D. He did his Master's...we did it together pretty much and he went to Ohio State to do his Ph.D. and so I got a job there.

Blanche Touhill: So you went to Columbus?

Ellen Harshman: We went to Columbus and I was director of housing at this little campus on the east side of Columbus. It was a Dominican campus and it's now called Ohio Dominican. So I was the residence hall director.

Blanche Touhill: That's a well-known school. It's still in existence, isn't it?

Ellen Harshman: Mm-hmm. It was in that time and so this is...well, we were in Columbus interviewing for jobs actually at Ohio State the day of Kent State so that kind of situates it historically. So Ohio Dominican was emerging from its past...it was a convent school.

Blanche Touhill: So it trained Dominican nuns to have degrees.

Ellen Harshman: That's where it started.

Blanche Touhill: That's what Merrilack was across the street.

Ellen Harshman: It was a girls school and they eventually realized that there's some male students that might want to come and so they did and I was their first lay housing director. They put men in our dormitory, in our residence hall.

Blanche Touhill: On different floors?

Ellen Harshman: They were sure all the girls were going to be pregnant by Christmas and should they lock the doors. Well, no, you can't because it's a fire hazard. But they were nice enough to give me that job and I replaced the Dominican nun who had been a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher and it was a very interesting time. It was about '69, '70 and you know what was going on on campus, people were really trying to find themselves and the war was hard on people and it was a tough time but it was an interesting time and it was a great job. The students were wonderful. They tended to come from really nice families. They didn't have much money but they were there to learn and they were just great. So we were there while Carl finished his graduate school.

Blanche Touhill: They had a good faculty. I knew people from really prestigious institutions that taught at that school.

Ellen Harshman: Well, and the first person I knew that had a connection with St. Louis University...well, I guess the second person...was a nun who got her Ph.D. in chemistry from St. Louis University and she had gone back there to teach that. And so it began to get a little [inaudible 15:38] one of Carl's mentors at Ohio State had worked for Father Reinert here. He grew up in East St. Louis and he had worked as an assistant to Father Reinert while he finished his Ph.D. at St. Louis U. So that's how I began to get a connection. He was responsible, really, for finding the job that brought us to St. Louis in 1972.

Blanche Touhill: So you came and Carl was in charge of the evening program, wasn't he?

Ellen Harshman: Well, not right away but he came to work in Institutional Research and within a year then or so he was working for the academic vice president as director of Academic Planning and then he moved into that job as the director of what was Metropolitan College at the time and he loved that job.

Blanche Touhill: How long did he do that?

- Ellen Harshman: I think seven or eight years.
- Blanche Touhill: And did you get a Ph.D. from St. Louis U?
- Ellen Harshman: I did. So by this time...we came with a baby and shortly we had another one so I got a job at the campus. I went to work the day the furniture van came. It was one of those things where somebody said to somebody else, "I need somebody to do this job" and there I was and I said, "Okay, I think I can do that." And so I was assistant director in the Catholic Center.
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, well, that was your Master's program.
- Ellen Harshman: And so then I thought, well, the university offers free tuition. I should probably take some courses. So I just put myself in the Education program and eventually was allowed to do an interdisciplinary Ph.D. where I did some courses in counseling, some courses in High Ed Administration and a minor in psychology and so they just let me put all that together.
- Blanche Touhill: You know, the man in Education...I went to St. Louis U...man in Education was O'Brien. Was he there then?
- Ellen Harshman: He was there, Rich Kunkel was the chair most of the time.
- Blanche Touhill: I knew of him but I didn't...
- Ellen Harshman: Well, he was one of Jay O'Brien's students actually. Rich went on to be head of [inaudible 17:52].
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, what a wonderful job.
- Ellen Harshman: Yeah, and he was a great friend. He was on my dissertation committee and that was a great experience. So I moved from the counseling center to career planning and took that and I stayed there then...in all that. The first time, it was about 10 years.
- Blanche Touhill: And how old was your baby by the time you left that group? Well, I guess 10 or something.
- Ellen Harshman: Yeah, Todd was born in Columbus so, yeah, nine or ten and then the little one was two years younger. So I finished my Ph.D. in '78. I remember...the things that keep you humble...their babysitter said to them, "Well, okay, now, Mommy and Daddy are both doctors," and I

couldn't have done that without her because we don't really have his family and the little one who was maybe four or five, just looked up at her and said, "But they're not medical doctors."

Blanche Touhill: My family would say to me, "Well, you're a doctor but it's the doctor that can't do anything for anybody" and I thought, well, that isn't exactly true but I understood.

Ellen Harshman: That's the idea, so he wasn't sure what...

Blanche Touhill: Were there many women in your doctoral program?

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, because it was in Education for the most part and some women psych too but the faculty didn't have many women, neither of those faculties.

Blanche Touhill: No, no.

Ellen Harshman: And I wasn't sure what exactly I would do. It was kind of hard for me to get motivated to finish because I was in this job I liked. I didn't want to change jobs so it was...I knew I wanted to stay there if I could and I was able to do that and then a couple years after that, the Business School invited me to join them.

Blanche Touhill: As an assistant dean?

Ellen Harshman: As an assistant dean, mm-hmm, and I still, to this day, don't have a degree in business.

Blanche Touhill: No, but you fit in.

Ellen Harshman: I sort of did. I found out later, I took the job for less money and more work than the three men they had offered it to who refused it.

Blanche Touhill: I had a similar experience.

Ellen Harshman: You know? But it was a good thing for me.

Blanche Touhill: But I didn't know it at the time.

Ellen Harshman: I didn't know it until later either and then they started telling me, "So-and-so said, 'Well, you know, the dean offered me that job but I didn't want to do that work and I didn't want to work all those hours,'" and I didn't know any better.

Blanche Touhill: I think that was my experience. I thought that was a normal offer. I had worked other places where you had normal offers and so I thought, well, this is the normal offer but it wasn't the normal offer.

Ellen Harshman: No, it wasn't, and then, the things you don't know...but it was okay.

Blanche Touhill: And I learned...

Ellen Harshman: It was good for me.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah, you learned how to do it.

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, I did.

Blanche Touhill: Did you work for Emery Turner?

Ellen Harshman: I did.

Blanche Touhill: Were you the first person he...

Ellen Harshman: No. So he came in, I'm going to say '87, so the first dean I had worked for was John Wagner who had been dean probably five or six years before I moved over there. And then John Kingsley who was from the Accounting Department was dean for about four years and I worked for him. Then, Emery Turner was dean after that.

Blanche Touhill: Were there many women in the College of Business as students?

Ellen Harshman: As students? I don't know where it is today but it still was hanging around 30%...well, in those days, the MBA had maybe 10% and the undergraduates, some women in Accounting because they could see a professional track there, but not many, certainly fewer than...I don't know, maybe 30% in those days.

Blanche Touhill: We had very few women in our College of Business here until...I'm going to say the mid '80s.

Ellen Harshman: And that was the kind of time...what happened with the MBA program...and you probably saw it here too because I think your students are a lot like ours...was that women were beginning to see that there were some corporate jobs, you know, there was some Affirmative Action going on and there were corporate jobs to be had, they needed an MBA. They were coming out, they had English degrees or they had teaching

degrees and they were in kind of these entry level jobs in business but they needed something else to move on and so they started coming back to the MBA and the conversation I had over and over and over with women were "Well, I think I need to go to the community college and learn math."

Blanche Touhill: And you said "Nonsense."

Ellen Harshman: I did, I said, "I think you should try this because I'll bet you know more than you think you do," and "No, you don't want to go back and start with intermediate algebra. You had that in high school. Get a book." So after about three years of this, I thought, okay, Ellen, it's time to put up or shut up. So I signed myself up for the MBA calculus class and at that point in time, our older son was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and they had an algebra track. I got his book. I had to teach myself how to solve for two unknowns, you know, any of that stuff, and I had a gazillion hours of statistics but that's not math. So I thought, okay, I'm going to do this. I'm going to go to class, I'm not going to ask anybody for help, I'm going to see what I can do on my own because I've been sending these women there and I don't know. So I remember my husband calling me one night, he was on the road in a consulting job and he said, "Well, how was class?" and I said, "I don't know. The last thing I understood was when he called the roll." So I would go and I wrote down everything and I'd take the book and I'd just teach it to myself and I remember going to the bookstore and getting something that was called "Easy Calculus," and that was a lie. It really wasn't calculus, it was kind of just intro, but I did and Father Daly...God bless him...was our teacher and there were about 45 MBA students in that class.

Blanche Touhill: How many were women, 30%?

Ellen Harshman: Not even 30% in those days.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah, the MBA was slow in getting women.

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, it was, and it still sits for us, it still sits at about a third. But I had a friend in the class who was actually a former Notre Dame nun who had her Master's in English. She was an editor. So Anne and I would work together on our math homework. But I needed to do that. And I signed myself up for a grade because I knew, at some point, I would just say, I'm too busy to do it if I didn't have that accountability out there...

Blanche Touhill: Yes, and you passed?

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, I got a B. I had an A until...it was good preparation for law school...I had an A until the final and I thought, I must have really not done very well with the final, but I did my homework and I did my stuff. So at least I knew it can be done and I didn't feel bad anymore for telling people to go try it.

Blanche Touhill: Just go do it. Well, I know that women who were in that AceNet program to identify women who wanted to be presidents, that they were always saying...they had the workshops. I don't know whether you remember that.

Ellen Harshman: I had gone to some of them.

Blanche Touhill: And finally, somebody said, "If you get the chance to be a chancellor, don't take any courses in budget making. If you can balance your own bankbook, you can manage a university budget." And the truth of the matter, there are a lot of similarities. You have to plan ahead; you have to have a little money in case there's an emergency. I thought, well, if he said it, I can do that and he said, "Women just keep trying to take these little courses and they put off getting in the right program." That's what happened to you.

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, and finally at some point you figure out, you can hire somebody to do that job. Hire a good person and let them do it and you have to trust them and you have to know enough to talk to them.

Blanche Touhill: That's right, and you have to know enough to know how much they start with and how much they end with and how did they allocate it out. But there comes a time, you just have to say, I can do it and you just go and do it.

Ellen Harshman: You can do it; you just have to do it.

Blanche Touhill: And if there's one thing I did know, it was the budget. So if you don't know the budget, you're in trouble.

Ellen Harshman: You are.

Blanche Touhill: Well, how were your days in business?

Ellen Harshman: In the Business School? So I did the same thing that you were just describing: So I get there and I think, oh, I don't have a degree in business. They've hired me for this job. I guess I better learn about business. So I signed myself up to take a class with every kind of student in every discipline we had. So I had an 8:00 o'clock marketing class and it was the undergrads and so I did that. So I learned enough...I wanted to learn the pedagogy and I wanted to get to know the students and how the classes went. So that was kind of my introduction and at some point then I thought, okay, I got that. I still didn't know enough. Then everybody forgot I didn't have a degree in business, I guess. So then I was associate dean and so when Emery Turner came, I was associate dean and I really just managed all the academic programs, the things you do, and the student services. The size of the school was such that everything was integrated. We didn't have a graduate faculty and an undergraduate faculty. And that worked pretty well. Then I had this crazy notion that I was going to go to law school. So I started sort of getting ready for that, about the time Emery came and so I studied for my LSAT and I took my LSAT, talked to the Law School and you may remember, that was the year that St. Louis University started its night law program.

Blanche Touhill: Again?

Ellen Harshman: Again.

Blanche Touhill: They had closed it and then they opened it.

Ellen Harshman: Uh-huh, they closed it the year we came and then saw that there was a need.

Blanche Touhill: You know, we were trying to fill the need.

Ellen Harshman: Well, I heard that. I think they heard that rumor.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, and I think they reopened it just in case we were serious.

Ellen Harshman: I think it was a preemptive strike.

Blanche Touhill: It was.

Ellen Harshman: And there were 87 of us in that first class.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, of course. There was a terrible need.



- Ellen Harshman: It was pent up demands and there were three physicians in our class. I was among the oldest but a lot of MBAs...
- Blanche Touhill: And a lot of women, I bet. No?
- Ellen Harshman: I would say...
- Blanche Touhill: ...not in the beginning?
- Ellen Harshman: Not in the beginning but probably...I'm thinking about who I knew...probably about 30% because they were established professionally and they were coming back to get this law degree. So I was going to that. So I did that for a couple of years.
- Blanche Touhill: How long did that take you?
- Ellen Harshman: It took me five years from the start to passing the bar.
- Blanche Touhill: Well, not bad for a part-time program.
- Ellen Harshman: And I was always going in the summer and I took a concentration of employment law and it was really odd. The experience was unlike anything that I could have imagined. There were some classes that were like graduate classes, I thought, constitutional law. Some of the practice things were very different than anything I could have imagined. But I enjoyed it in a kind of perverse way and wasn't sure what I would do when I finished but I did have to leave that associate dean's job.
- Blanche Touhill: Oh.
- Ellen Harshman: We were going through accreditation and I said, "I will stay until we get through our accreditation visit" because I was managing that but then I went back to work at Student Affairs for a couple of years, in a much less high demand job but it was still full-time so I still could get my tuition remission, although sometimes it took more hours, then I had to pay a little bit but it was still a great benefit. So I stayed there and the semester I graduated, they hired me back that fall to teach business law.
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, of course.
- Ellen Harshman: And so I came back and Emery was dean still and within six months I was back in his office as associate dean and then he left that role and we had

a new dean who said, "Okay, I'd like you to stay. You can do these things" and so there I was again.

Blanche Touhill: You know, Emery was the one that started me in administration.

Ellen Harshman: Well, he told me he knew you and he knew Joe but I didn't know exactly...

Blanche Touhill: He came to me...there was an opening in the vice chancellor's Office for Academic Affairs as the associate vice chancellor and the fellow was leaving for a job at a larger institution and I had been the chair of the faculty senate and I had sat with the academic officers all year and he had been the dean of the Business College and then he was the interim chancellor. So he said, "Well, that job is open" and he said, "I'd like you to apply" and I thought, isn't that interesting, and then I thought about it and I thought, why not? So I applied and I got it but if he hadn't said that to me, I would not have applied at all.

Ellen Harshman: Isn't that interesting.

Blanche Touhill: So I always give him credit for saying, "Just come along, Blanche."

Ellen Harshman: "You can do this."

Blanche Touhill: "You can do this."

Ellen Harshman: Did he leave then that next year?

Blanche Touhill: Well, when they got a new chancellor, he went back to being dean of Business but it was really, he was going to leave. He was not going to stay as the dean and ultimately he wanted to become a chancellor, I think.

Ellen Harshman: So he came to us from Tulsa.

Blanche Touhill: No, then he went to Tulsa as...

Ellen Harshman: ...vice president.

Blanche Touhill: The vice president of Business Affairs or something and then he came to St. Louis U and then he just had a career all over the place.

Ellen Harshman: He has, he was just the dean of anybody who was having a problem.

Blanche Touhill: That's right, and he would go in, yeah.

- Ellen Harshman: Yeah, go in and try to help them figure out what they were supposed to do.
- Blanche Touhill: But while he was at UM-St. Louis as both dean of Business and then as chancellor, he was very much conscious of Affirmative Action and he really was, while chancellor, he hired the first Affirmative Action officer and really was instrumental in Title Nine implementation. He did a lot in the way of pushing women and African Americans, in particular, at UMSL, forward. So I assume he always had that in the back of his mind.
- Ellen Harshman: He has one daughter and the book I always wanted to write but never did and never will was I thought it would be interesting to interview men who were corporate executives who had daughters who could reflect on how their opinions about women in the corporate world had changed because of their daughters. It's probably too late for that now anyway because it's a different time but I think just knowing that your daughter is maybe going to have opportunities that are foreclosed when that's not right, gives people a different perspective, at least that was my hypothesis for this book I didn't write and never will.
- Blanche Touhill: How did Carl react to your daughter, your Carl?
- Ellen Harshman: My Carl? Well, we just have two sons.
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, you have two sons?
- Ellen Harshman: Yeah, we have two sons.
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, that's right, okay, I'm sorry.
- Ellen Harshman: And, well, each of them...I had girls things...you know, in those days we didn't know what was there so I had girls things picked out for each one but it was two boys.
- Blanche Touhill: So then you were in the College of Business. Then how did you jump to Campus Administration?
- Ellen Harshman: Well, at two different times I had my boss, who told me it was time for me to move. The first one was when I moved from the current Planning Center to the Business School. My boss called me and said...the associate dean, who was trying to fill this position..."Just called you and offered you a job and you didn't get it." Well, what he had done, he called me and

said, "We've got this position and we'd like to have somebody who has a Ph.D. who knows how to work with students and can manage things," and so I'm in my Career Planning hat and I said, "Well, I think I know two or three people," so I started giving him names. Well, in about 10 minutes, I got a call from my boss who said, "He just called you to offer you a job, to see if you were interested in this job. I think you should talk to him." Well, I didn't get it. So that was hard for me but he was encouraging me to move. He said, "You're in a dead end job," and I remember that and I said, "Well, I'm in a job I like a lot," and he said, "No, go do this job." So that was what got me basically from Student Services into Academics. Well, then in the late '90s, we had some reorganization at the leadership level. We had a provost who'd been in the role for a year and her associate provost for Academic Affairs had been trying to retire, was just a wonderful man, a Jesuit, and so Father Sotter said, "I'm going to retire." So here she is and it's spring and she's thinking and [inaudible 37:22] looming in about two years, "I've got to have somebody" so she called the dean in the Business School and said, "I want to talk to Ellen about this job," and so we did and so I went and talked to him and he said, "You should take that job," so then I did. So then I was in the provost's office and the associate provost then has...it was called senior vice provost, for four years and then when I went back to the Business School, I went back as dean.

Blanche Touhill: So you really worked your way...

Ellen Harshman: ...all over the place.

Blanche Touhill: And then you moved back to the Campus-wide Administration.

Ellen Harshman: Well, yeah, there was that too. So while I was in the provost's office that first time, I was CIO for about six months, which was like, okay. They needed somebody who could manage things so I'll go and do that a while too. But it's always...well, it's not instead of; it's in addition to.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, yes, of course.

Ellen Harshman: And so I enjoyed that but I really wanted to get back...I had said, I want to go back to the college. That central office kind of administration doesn't appeal to me.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah, you like the faculty and the...

- Ellen Harshman: I like the faculty and the students.
- Blanche Touhill: ...and the academic issues and students and all.
- Ellen Harshman: Mm-hmm, and I was missing that. I was glad to do it for a while. I learned a lot but I was ready to go.
- Blanche Touhill: So how long were you dean?
- Ellen Harshman: Ten years, a little more than ten years.
- Blanche Touhill: So you got to see a lot of people go through.
- Ellen Harshman: I did.
- Blanche Touhill: Did the Business School change?
- Ellen Harshman: The Business School has changed and I think it's probably evolutionary. I think we've been able to keep up with the times and our accreditation standards change and so have to adapt to management education. Of all the schools probably and colleges at the university, the Business School is probably the one that's still draws the most students from the region and with the idea that they'll probably stay here so it's that. So we have a lot of our alums in the area. When alums graduated, there were good jobs to take. People stayed in St. Louis.
- Blanche Touhill: Yes, and they could move up.
- Ellen Harshman: Right, these big corporations so they could work at the brewery and never leave. And so that, I think, characterizes the Business School to some extent. I've always said we were of the city. We really are of the city. So, yeah, technology is constant changes...
- Blanche Touhill: Well, you went international too.
- Ellen Harshman: Yeah, and we've always had that kind of international focus.
- Blanche Touhill: Yes, you have, St. Louis U has.
- Ellen Harshman: But it was that kind of then how do we get to be a little more competitive on that stage and we have a campus in Madrid, Spain so we worked with them...
- Blanche Touhill: To have a business program.

- Ellen Harshman: To have a business program and it has to be accredited. It's a real partnership although you could go to Spain and start as a freshman and complete an undergraduate degree in International Business and it would be from St. Louis University and it would be an AACSD accredited degree. But that's the only one.
- Blanche Touhill: And that wasn't easy to get, was it?
- Ellen Harshman: It took a little doing but those faculty are good and that was the biggest issue. We had curriculum in place that we could adjust.
- Blanche Touhill: And your faculty probably went back and forth too, no?
- Ellen Harshman: A little bit. Not so much because, you know, that's hard and we don't do short courses and so it's hard for somebody to just go for a semester. We tried some exchanges. We like to do it. They'll go more in the summer and we take classes, we take students there but it's still a little hard and it's hard for us to get them to come here too because of the same reason.
- Blanche Touhill: Do you do internships in the businesses here?
- Ellen Harshman: Yeah. In fact, that was a program that I started in 1973 or '4 for the College of Arts & Sciences. It was field experience in business and so we have it as credit. That was one of the things Emery asked me to do because we didn't really have an internship program in business. So when he came, he asked me to get that going and so I was able to do that in business and so they can do it for credit and it's wonderful.
- Blanche Touhill: So, for a time, you were almost the acting president, weren't you?
- Ellen Harshman: Well, I wouldn't say that.
- Blanche Touhill: What would you say?
- Ellen Harshman: I would say it was, we had this transition time. We did have an interim president. The leadership...
- Blanche Touhill: But the interim president was the board, wasn't it?
- Ellen Harshman: Well, no...
- Blanche Touhill: It was a faculty member?

Ellen Harshman: Bill Coffman was named the general counsel was named interim president but it was structured so that it was a committee. I'm trying to think what the board share named it, like the "chairman committee" and so we were sort of a collective presidency.

Blanche Touhill: I always thought you were the main force though. I did.

Ellen Harshman: Did you? It was, I was probably...

Blanche Touhill: ...the link to the faculty?

Ellen Harshman: Yeah... yeah.

Blanche Touhill: And the students?

Ellen Harshman: Yeah. I've been around longer than anybody and one of the things that I think is a great...it's a little daunting to think about it but it's something that I'm proud of, is people trust me.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, they do.

Ellen Harshman: And so that was one of the things...the faculty were hurt, you know, the struggle with the top leadership...the faculty were hurt. They felt frightened. They were acting in crazy ways to...it was that, how do people react to stress. It's just unpredictable. So everybody had to calm down. We had to settle down. We had to say, "Okay, this is a great university and the university is bigger than any one person and everybody here wants it to be better. Everybody wants to be here. So let's just see, how do we settle down and how do we move forward in a way that is productive and not generating all this energy for negative reasons." And so I remember going and meeting with the faculty senate. I miss that. I went to a faculty senate meeting about a week ago and it was nice to be there again. They were actually kind of happy to see me, it turned out. But we needed healing and I can do that. There were academic things we probably needed to move forward on as well but sometimes you just can't.

Blanche Touhill: What they needed to know is if they could call you and you'd tell them the truth.

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, I think they felt that.

Blanche Touhill: And I think that that's true. Let me change the subject for just a little bit: What is the theme of your life?

Ellen Harshman: When I was in my Master's...this is my rationalization anyway...when I was in the Master's program, a guy that I kind of thought of as my mentor although we didn't use those terms in those days...said to me one time, "Don't ever be afraid to try something different" and so I think the theme of my life is...and maybe it's fools rush in where angels fear to tread...was, I'll try anything and not to be risky, but if somebody says, "Would you do this?" I would say, "Okay, I'll try it." So I think the theme of my life is stepping up and saying, this needs to be done, look around and there maybe isn't anybody else who's going to do it, I'll do that for a while. And it kind of goes back, I think, to when Mom died. What are we going to do? We lived in the country. Somebody's going to cook. We have to keep things going. We moved to Ohio. We get a tractor and Dad says, "Okay, here's the clutch. Here's where you go. Drive this tractor over here." Well, I couldn't push the clutch and I had to stand on it but you just do what you have to do and you can do it. So I guess that's the theme, is sort of seeing what has to be done and saying, okay, I'll do that.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, and doing it.

Ellen Harshman: And doing it, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: Of all the awards you've been given, what one or ones means something very special?

Ellen Harshman: It's the teaching awards because I love being in the classroom and I love working with students so when the students come forward with that award, that's really the one that I think has the most meaning to me.

Blanche Touhill: And what were you teaching when you got your award?

Ellen Harshman: Business Law.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, how nice. If you had been born 50 years earlier, what would your life have been like?

Ellen Harshman: So 50 years earlier would have been before the turn of the century so, assuming I had been born on a farm in a rural community, I think that sort of work ethic would have been there before technology and before transportation. So I think probably much more isolated. I doubt I would



have had much...my mom finished high school. Dad did not finish high school. He wasn't allowed to go to high school because he had to go to work on the farm...that Mom would get on the train every day that went through the pasture field near where they lived and she'd ride the train to where she could go to high school and then in the night, there happened to be another train going the other direction and she'd ride the train home. So, I probably would have gone to high school. I don't know if I would have had any education beyond that and probably not, I wouldn't have seen the parts of the world I've seen. I just think I always would have worked hard. I'm sitting here picturing the women in those hats and those dresses that kind of came down to the ankles and thinking, okay...actually, Grandpa had a Ford Model T in the barn. I probably would have ridden around in one of those and thought I was a big deal. But probably would have had more children because people had bigger families. I'm sure I would have married...I shouldn't say I'm sure...yeah, I would have married. I would have stayed on the farm.

Blanche Touhill: Would you have taught school?

Ellen Harshman: I would have wanted to. Maybe I would have been one of those that goes to a normal school.

Blanche Touhill: And in the summer, to take courses and slowly...I don't even think in those days you had to have a degree. I think it was more or less you had to have, like...as you're saying, two years they wanted but you could do it while you were sort of teaching.

Ellen Harshman: Yeah, and if you had a high school diploma, that was...

Blanche Touhill: Oh, that's right, absolutely.

Ellen Harshman: I can't imagine that I would have been satisfied. I'm kind of curious and I always want to learn more and I want to do more. So I think that would have been part of me.

Blanche Touhill: Do you still can goods, things?

Ellen Harshman: No.

Blanche Touhill: Do you still cook?

Ellen Harshman: I cook. I have a pressure cooker too. I remember Mom canning and the pressure cooker. I sewed at one point but I don't do that anymore. I gave my sewing machine away. I just don't have the patience for it. If I would make a dress, I want it done that day. I don't want to wait. So, yeah, I like to cook. The time we're talking...we're talking today...Thanksgiving isn't far away so I will make Thanksgiving dinner. I like to do that. Our second son has learned to be...his dad will call him a chef and I say he isn't a chef until he gets the big hat. Well, he doesn't have the big hat yet but he's in that process and he's certainly a cook and has his moments as a chef. But even with that, he's not going to cook Thanksgiving dinner. I'm going to cook that. It's kind of my thing.

Blanche Touhill: And are your children coming home for the holidays?

Ellen Harshman: He'll be here because he lives here. The other one lives in San Francisco so it's too far. He'll come home for Christmas for a few days. We've already negotiated when that's going to be.

Blanche Touhill: Are you grandparents yet?

Ellen Harshman: No, and I don't see any prospects for it.

Blanche Touhill: Well, someday.

Ellen Harshman: You know, I think if you...

Blanche Touhill: You never know.

Ellen Harshman: You never know. When I need to know, I'm sure they'll tell me.

Blanche Touhill: What are you doing now?

Ellen Harshman: Well, I have some projects. So this retirement thing, I'm working about half time at the university, planning for the university's bicentennial.

Blanche Touhill: Wonderful.

Ellen Harshman: Well, there's some controversy about this. You're an historian so you know all these controversies. We've adopted and we're firm with 1818 as our founding...

Blanche Touhill: Was there a debate on that?

- Ellen Harshman: There's a debate on that because there weren't any Jesuits here there. It was just Bishop Deverre who was starting this thing and he didn't have his Jesuits.
- Blanche Touhill: Yes, this college.
- Ellen Harshman: This college, that's right. It was the St. Louis College and he got the Jesuits about five years later but then they were downtown for a little bit and then they were out in Florissant a little bit so there's an 1829 thing, when they came back...
- Blanche Touhill: Moved to Grand?
- Ellen Harshman: Not to Grand yet. That's later. So there's some debate but we said it's 1818 and that's it.
- Blanche Touhill: Absolutely because Missouri is 1820 so you're before.
- Ellen Harshman: We predated, that's right. And Father Hagan actually was the one who got the...see, that's the other thing, I could be wrong about this date but I think it was 1832, was when we got our charter from the state and so some people would say, "Well, that's it," but, no, it was well in operation before then. But before there wasn't a state to get a charter from.
- Blanche Touhill: No, of course not.
- Ellen Harshman: So that's our birthday.
- Blanche Touhill: And you have that 1-8-1-8 program which really celebrates that founding of the university.
- Ellen Harshman: That's right, it does and you're probably one of the two people in the entire world that knows why it's called 1-8-1-8.
- Blanche Touhill: I think that's true.
- Ellen Harshman: So I'm working with that. I had meetings this week and we have an internal steering committee and we have an external advisory council and we're moving along. We hope to have a soft launch in the fall of '17 so for us that would be next fall, at the river front, with a mass, during Homecoming and so that would be, really, our beginning and we've got academic conferences. We've got a lot of things planned and things in planning. So what I've been saying to people now is, because we've just

really started to get the campus community involved, we had some advice from other colleges and universities who've done kind of milestone anniversaries and their advice was, "Don't get people too excited too soon because it's a long time that this goes on and you don't want to get people worn out with the notion of the birthday." So we've had...I called it our "silent phase" and we've done a lot of planning and now we've been out with people, saying, "Okay, what suggestions do you have for historic markers?" and we might put around campus and "What would you put in a time capsule?" and "If you were to do something in your unit, whatever unit you are in, what would you like to do and we could help you with a little funding. We don't have big money to spend but if you need it or if there's something you regularly do..."

Blanche Touhill: Then you can put out a calendar with all of these things.

Ellen Harshman: Yes. So we're beginning to get those ideas now out. There was just a thing in our news link today, actually, about ideas. We've got a little form up where you can write out some ideas that you might have and say, you know, "I need \$100" or "I need \$500" so it's that. So that planning is coming and so December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 I think I'm retiring again.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, okay. Just talk about your future.

Ellen Harshman: Well, there is a future.

Blanche Touhill: Let me just say: As you moved around and up, did you have trouble as a woman?

Ellen Harshman: Well, and what I have said to people is, I don't think so but I don't know if I was smart enough to know because I kind of just took what was presented to me. I didn't expect it and I think that comes from that farming background again, is there everybody just does what they have to do when they do it and it doesn't matter your gender. You just go do. So I just expected that. But I did have...it wasn't until I moved to the provost's office in 1999 that I ever really worked for a woman. When I was teaching 4<sup>th</sup> grade in the '60s, our principal in the building was a woman but in that whole other time...and I had very few instructors who were women. So I really did count on men to help me and tell me when it was time for me to do whatever it was I was going to do and to really be mentors, I guess, would be. I just always was willing to accept advice.

Blanche Touhill: Did you have a sense that you were sort of one of the few?

Ellen Harshman: At St. Louis University, we've got a big conference room and it's in the Student Union. It seats about, in lecture style, it could seat close to 1000 people. It's known now as the St. Louis Room and I remember walking in there one day when I was working in the Business School and probably in the '80s when I was just newly associate dean, I remember walking in and looking at this room and I was standing in the back and what I saw was this ocean of shoulders with gray and navy suits and white collars and looking around that room and thinking, my God, there isn't a woman in here. And so every now and then, it would hit me like that but normally I would just kind of unconsciously just sort of move on. But there were some of those visions. In Higher Ed, and certainly at St. Louis University, the leadership were men and they were priests until they started being replaced with laymen so I didn't ever have an expectation of being in those jobs because they were priests' jobs so the upper administration, when I came, the Graduate School, the academic vice president was recently a layperson but it had been a priest. The president's cabinet were mostly priests. So I just...I'll just do what I'm given to do and I'll do a good job at it and for me, that's okay. Then I moved around and I was given those opportunities by some of those very people.

Blanche Touhill: Yes. And what's the future?

Ellen Harshman: Well, I've worked for a long time with the Business School accreditation processes and I'm still doing a little of that work. I'll age out of that pretty soon because they don't want you to do it too long because if you're not a dean, you begin to lose that sensitivity. So I've been working with schools who are wanting to be accredited and that's taking me to some interesting international places because most of the schools now who are seeking business school accreditation are off-shore and pretty much the domestic market is this...

Blanche Touhill: And they American accreditation?

Ellen Harshman: They want the certification from the Western style but they see the AACSB as the gold standard. So two weeks ago I was in Budapest, in Hungary and it just happened...I wasn't there about accreditation but we were at Corvinus University which is probably the number one university in the country and at one point it was Karl Marx University and excellent

faculty. Well, they're going to be the first AACSB, accredited business school in Hungary and so when the dean said that, who was a woman, I said, "Well, I worked on the committee that wrote those standards that you were now puzzling through." So they're in early stages and I'm working with a school and I'll go in two weeks in Beirut that's trying to do the same thing. And so I've worked with a lot of schools in Korea and South Korea and in Taiwan, in Europe. It's been very interesting and every time I go, I learn something.

Blanche Touhill: When you were a young person in West Virginia, did you ever think you'd be traveling all over the world?

Ellen Harshman: Oh, gosh, no. I knew how to get from my house to Liverpool which was...that's the one where I walked...and Sandeville was the other one, that's where I got on the bus and went to school. We'd go to Parkersburg every now and then I really didn't know much other and that was 40 miles away. That seemed like...

Blanche Touhill: Let me ask you one question: When you were trading with the grocery owner, do you think he ever gypped you?

Ellen Harshman: No. I never would have thought anybody would and I'm sure he wouldn't have.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah, okay. Well, thank you so much for your interview today. It was fun and you have been somebody that I think people have trusted over the years and that's a wonderful reputation to have built.

Ellen Harshman: That's the highest compliment.

Blanche Touhill: Well, thank you very much.

Ellen Harshman: Thanks for the opportunity.