

An Interview with  
**Judy Jensen**

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

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interviewed by Brian Woodman  
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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.

Brian Woodman: So, Judy, could you introduce yourself?

Judy Jensen: Sure, I'm Judy or Judith Jensen and I'm a member of the Zonta club of St. Louis.

Brian Woodman: So, we usually start out by asking people a little bit about their childhoods, where they grew up and their family, so could you tell us a little bit about that?

Judy Jensen: Sure. I grew up in North Central Wisconsin and the town is Marshfield, Wisconsin. When I was growing up, it was about 12 to 15,000 and it's not terribly larger now. It's only about 20,000 and I have one brother, my parents and a brother. Do you want to know about my school?

Brian Woodman: Absolutely, yeah.

Judy Jensen: Okay, the neighborhood that we grew up in was very...we're Catholic and actually, our town is quite Catholic and in those days, there was definite separation of, if you went to Catholic school or if you went to public school and never the twain shall meet, was the thinking. So our initial home was very close to our parish and our neighborhood, we played outside all the time so I guess our basic formation was in playing with each other. We would construct tents in the summertime, of putting old bedspreads or sheets up on the clotheslines and then we'd dress up as clowns or whatever. The whole neighborhood did it, just everybody did that and we'd climb trees and stole apples from the neighbors, things that now the kids would get in serious trouble for, and some neighbors, of course, didn't like it. We would go over and ring the doorbell of the nuns' house and then we would hide and they'd come out and say, "Okay, [inaudible 02:17], it's time for you to be home." They always knew who it was that was doing that. My grandparents, Beakler, my maiden name is Beakler, lived upstairs and they were disciplinarians. My other grandparents, Grandma and Grandpa Metten lived further...about a mile away, really, and my grandpa was a disciplinarian more than my grandma was and we always felt we did fun things with Grandma and Grandpa Metten and not so much with Grandma and Grandpa Beakler but now, as I think back, that probably isn't really true. We really had a good relationship with both of them and did fun things.

Brian Woodman: I'm curious, you brought up the separation with the parochial schools and the public schools. At that time, did you feel like there was, like, sort of

an anti-Catholic bias still in the culture? Did you ever feel a little bit of that or was the town kind of past that by then?

Judy Jensen: Probably the town was past it, but actually, that was the thinking of the Dioceses. The Dioceses did not want you going to a public school. They felt it was your duty as the parents and as the kids. I'm 73 so this was in the late '40s and early '50s. You actually had to receive permission from the Dioceses to not go to Catholic school. We used to have only up to 10<sup>th</sup> grade for Catholic school but then in the early '50s, they built a high school. So we had a four-year high school. It was the times. That's just how it was in the times and I don't know if it was more that way because of being in a smaller town. I don't know what it would have been like here in St. Louis. I haven't talked about that with my friends but when I was in high school, I just didn't feel that was right. Plus, my maternal grandparents were not Catholic and I could not see that that meant they were bad people because they weren't. So that kind of, I think, formed some of my thinking on that, was having grandparents of different religions but the Catholic religion was a very strong influence and still is.

Brian Woodman: So I guess I'd like to know a little bit about how school was for you. Did you enjoy your schools?

Judy Jensen: I loved school, I always loved school and, like, in our grade school, we had three classrooms of each grade and there were three Catholic parishes and they all were like that. But I always was very active at school. I had pretty good grades. I wasn't a 4.0 or anything like that but I had good grades but I did have to work hard for it. I always loved reading. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, we were able to start band and I was in band. I played clarinet and I did some dancing. Our town only had one dance studio so I did some tap dancing. Then, I think this is pretty common for gals my age throughout that...there really weren't sports for girls so I didn't grow up doing sports except for swimming...dancing and swimming and, of course, in Wisconsin, swimming was only in the summertime and that amount of time even is limited because it's cold.

Brian Woodman: So in July you were swimming.

Judy Jensen: July and part of August but we went in June when we were young and now I won't even put my toe in the water when it's that cold. Then in high school also I was just always really involved and I don't know what

...I drove my parents nuts because they couldn't understand why I was always needing to do this or that. So I was in band, I was a cheerleader, I did not belong, like, to any debate club or anything like that but I was in Girl Scouts and I started Girl Scouts in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and I was in Girl Scouts through high school and I loved Girl Scouts. I loved going to camp, as I was older, being a counselor at camp. When I was a junior in high school, we formed a troop of public high school girls and the Catholic high school girls and we went to the national...they called it a round-up...in Colorado Springs, Colorado by train. So that was a really big experience and I was the troop captain so I was voted as the leader. Then also in high school, we decided that two schools needed to do things together and we formed...I can't remember now...a youth club and we met at the local radio station and we actually would be on the radio and we would talk and have discussions about various items going on and we tried to get a teen center. I was involved in starting some teen dances in the city and I just always have and I don't know why. My mother was very quiet. She didn't join into different groups of things and my dad didn't at that time and my grandparents certainly didn't. My grandpa Metten was very active. He owned his own appliance store and he was active in local and state politics and I don't know if that was an influence. I never really thought about it until I saw some of the questions that were suggested for this and probably a couple of the nuns that I had in grade school and especially one in high school, Sister Anne Lucy were big factors in some of my decisions. I wanted to be a nurse and we had a school of nursing in town. My father just couldn't see that I was going to go out of town and I wanted to go away from home, as most young kids want to, and Sister Anne Lucy had a niece who went to school at St. Mary's in Madison so she had information on that and I was trying to get my dad to let me go and look at that school and I was so lucky because our school of nursing had five girls fail boards the year that I was having to make applications and St. Mary's had never had anyone fail boards and so I told my dad, "See, they're just a party school. They don't really study very hard" and my aunt, his sister, lived in Madison and he finally agreed to let me look. In fact, he took me down and we looked at the school and I did my testing and I wanted to be a nurse since I was in grade school and I read all kinds of library books that dealt with nursing in Madison and the leper colonies and that just...I took my high school classes, we had, I guess we call "track" so you either were general business or college-bound and so I

took all of my classes in order to be able to get into nursing school, even Latin.

Brian Woodman: So I'm curious, I had a couple questions that seemed to sort of ease into maybe the same question: I get a pretty heavy sense that from early on, you had a pretty strong sense of ethics and fairness...

Judy Jensen: Mm-hmm.

Brian Woodman: ...that that was something you cared a lot about.

Judy Jensen: Yes.

Brian Woodman: We also often ask people about people that were particularly inspirational in their lives, especially women early in their lives. I'm wondering if some of the answer to both is the sister you were talking about and being part of that church...

Judy Jensen: Mm-hmm.

Brian Woodman: Because I think that some ethics would play into that. Could you talk about that? Am I onto something?

Judy Jensen: I think that you're right, it's something I've never really sat down and thought about but that always has been a real central part of my life and Sister Anne Lucy I was really able to talk with her and discuss things, probably not the same way as with my mother but she was someone...and that started in 9<sup>th</sup> grade so all through high school, and actually, even when I was in nursing school, she even stopped in and visited us once after I was married. She was never in favor of Ralph and I'm not sure why. She kind of changed her mind at the end. We went to the same grade school. I had a crush on him in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. He didn't know girls existed, only sports. And then when we were seniors in high school, we started dating.

Brian Woodman: Oh, so you've been together ever since?

Judy Jensen: Yeah, and then he went to school in Chicago and I went to school in Madison and we broke up for a short time because I thought I wanted something different and was dating a guy who wasn't Catholic and my mother, who was a convert, said to me, "You know, you'd never be

happy because your religion means too much to you.” So I guess that’s kind of an answer to you, that I just might have been a nun at one time.

Brian Woodman: So if you went off to school at Madison and he went to Chicago, how did that work? That must have been a complication.

Judy Jensen: It was phone calls and, you know, in the early ‘60s, there just wasn’t the freedom. I lived in a dorm. I had to be in the dorm by 9:00 o’clock at night and on the weekends, 10:00 o’clock. So we didn’t have that much freedom to be able to go somewhere. Later on, his dad gave him an older car that he could use in school and so if I had a weekend off and he was going to go up home, then he’d come by and pick me up. Otherwise, it was phone calls and letters that we did and then he came down here in St. Louis in ‘62 and then I graduated in ‘63 but I wanted to have my own experience of working and earning my own money, spending my own money so I worked at the VA Hospital in Milwaukee from September just until April of ‘63 to ‘64 and then we were married in ‘64.

Brian Woodman: So how was working at the VA?

Judy Jensen: I had a wonderful experience. I always worked general medicine when I worked in the hospital which was not a lot because Ralph just didn’t like the hours. I guess I’ll probably get emotional about this too, but I was working when Kennedy was killed and the reaction of those veterans was...you know, all these years later, I remember it, was very touching, meaningful.

Brian Woodman: I would think that that would be hard and yet at the same time, almost cathartic to experience that moment with them.

Judy Jensen: Yeah, yeah, it really was. I learned a lot there. I learned how to be a roommate because four of us shared an apartment. We divided up our responsibilities. One week someone cooked, the other...the people that cooked bought groceries and the other two did the cleaning and we just got together, we got along really well and I had wonderful medical staff when I was at the VA that I really learned a lot from, of who to really listen to and who not to listen to in regards to treatment decisions.

Brian Woodman: I’m kind of confused too. You talk about the learning experience of being there. What about from the veterans themselves, is there something you

took away from the veterans themselves that you really learned from them?

Judy Jensen: I'm not sure. I guess most of them...I actually can't remember any of them being nasty. They always were appreciative, understanding of treatment that was given to them, appreciative of your time, of your being with them but I don't remember any specific types of examples. Well, I guess I kind of do: I was working nights one time and there was a gentleman that had Corporal Manali which I had never heard of but it's worse than COPD actually. I have since learned and the anesthesiologist made his rounds and he wrote in his orders that this gentleman was to receive this medication at nighttime and when I went to give it to him, he said, "Now, are you sure?" because with that condition, they can't have anything that would be, like, a sleeper or anything that would slow them down in their breathing because they're so labored already and I said, "Well, Dr. So-and-So ordered it" and he said, "Okay, I believe you." Well, it wasn't to have been done so the chief was up in arms the next day because he was going to have a surgery, they couldn't do it and they called me in and asked why did I do that and I told them and showed them the order and he said, "You did the right thing. You did what you were instructed to do but if they ever order anything like that again, you call me at home because that should not have been done." You know, when you're 21 years old, it was very frightening for me, that I thought I could maybe have caused that man to die but fortunately, he didn't but it just delayed his surgery by a day or two and that man was so nice to me. He said, "It's not your fault." So that was really...so that's what I mean about a learning experience.

Brian Woodman: Absolutely. I think it also points to an interesting sort of double mind.

Judy Jensen: Sure.

Brian Woodman: That you're supposed to follow orders unless it's a bad idea.

Judy Jensen: Right, right, and of course, at that period of time, you didn't question the doctors. As a nurse, if they came in and you were sitting, you stood up and they took your seat and they didn't say thank you either. They expected it. They wouldn't get away with that now. And I wouldn't let them get away with it now either because I've changed over the years too, of, you're going to be polite but you're not going to be stepped on.

That's just the way...and especially when I was in nursing school because the nuns just treated those doctors like gold. They had the rule of the roost, so to say.

Brian Woodman: So that makes me think...sort of related to this: both why you're going through college and then starting off in a professional career, that experience of being the young professional woman, how were you treated? Did you have problems in that transition? Were there conflicts with doctors, with men among the women?

Judy Jensen: Well, the doctors just...there probably could have been conflicts but we just gave them the respect that we felt that they were due and we didn't argue with them. But as I grew, I guess maybe more in professional assurance and with the times changing, you could sit down and talk with them and have a discussion or say, "You know, I don't really agree with that" or "Maybe we should do it this way" or something like that. And by then, most of the doctors would be ready to listen because most of them changed. Some didn't but most of them also grew and changed with the times and didn't expect that.

Brian Woodman: So with your husband, you mentioned that he came to St. Louis?

Judy Jensen: Mm-hmm.

Brian Woodman: And I'm assuming this is how you ended up in St. Louis as well?

Judy Jensen: Correct, right.

Brian Woodman: Can you talk a little bit about that?

Judy Jensen: Sure. He went to technical school in Chicago. He was the first one in his family to go away to school and when it was time to graduate, he had a job offer in Great Falls, Montana or down here with McDonnell Douglas so we decided no way would we see each other if he went to Great Falls, Montana, so he came here and liked it.

Brian Woodman: At that point, were you already married or were you...

Judy Jensen: Oh, no, I was still in school because his schooling was only two years; mine was three years so I was still in school. Whenever we have a reunion, everybody brings up, "And Beakler wrote, 'Dear Ralph'" every time someone got engaged, I'd say, "Ralph, time to get engaged" but we

both took our time. So anyhow, we got engaged the night before my graduation from nursing school.

Brian Woodman: How did he do it?

Judy Jensen: We went to a really nice restaurant near the Dell's called Ishnala. It's still in existence today and he asked me to marry him and gave me a ring at that. But I'd been sending pictures of rings so he had a clue of what I wanted.

Brian Woodman: So it wasn't exactly a spontaneous moment?

Judy Jensen: No.

Brian Woodman: There was a little bit of pre-planning in all this.

Judy Jensen: Yes, and we just celebrated our 51<sup>st</sup> year of marriage, in April.

Brian Woodman: Congratulations.

Judy Jensen: Thanks. So when we came to St. Louis, he had found an apartment, actually was, somebody had built an apartment in their house upstairs but we had our own entrance and that so we lived there a year.

Brian Woodman: Where was that?

Judy Jensen: That was in Overland and I worked at St. Mary's in Richmond Heights for a time and had put in an application for a medical center called Overland Medical Center. It doesn't exist anymore but it was a group of doctors and it was close to where we lived and it was regular hours instead of hospital hours but when I worked at St. Mary's, it was really, really neat because that was in 1964 and nurses were just starting to be able to give IV's, do IV's. In fact, I take that back, they couldn't do IV's yet but what the hospital was trying out was developing an IV team and so I got a position on that and we did all of the IV's in the hospital, including PICC lines and that was unheard of at that time and by then, disposable needles started coming into being, that you didn't have to do all of the sterilizing of the needles and have burrs on the ends like they still had when I was at the VA. That's the type of...they didn't have the disposables because of cost. So I actually only worked there maybe five or six months and then I got a call that they had an opening for a dermatologist at the medical center and then I worked there for nine years but we took a field

trip, they called it, with McDonnell Douglas and we lived in Ridgecrest, California for six months, which is a horrible place, to tell you the truth. I hated it and I couldn't work there although I could have gotten my license because I did well enough on my boards, that I was able to get licensed all over. Wisconsin boards were very high and if you passed Wisconsin boards you could go to California, New York, which also had high requirements. But for six months, it doesn't pay to do that. So we had a one-year-old and we were in the middle of the Mojave Desert at the...I can't think of the name...it was a naval base and they did sled testing. Do you know what that is? Sled testing is when they put the pilot seats on a sled and they shoot it across the sand and test the ejection of it. And so I wasn't allowed on base. I didn't have any clearances to go on base.

Brian Woodman: So basically you were stuck in the desert for six months?

Judy Jensen: With little lizards running around the yard, yeah. I watched soap operas and have never watched a soap opera since. I said I would not ever do that again and I haven't. I just can't do it. But we got to go to Death Valley, we got to go up in the mountains, we were able to do a lot of sightseeing that we wouldn't have been able to do otherwise. The downer was at that time disposable diapers did not exist so you either threw away and that's what we usually did if it was necessary, and our daughter had croup and we had to do an emergency room visit. It was a challenge but it drew us even closer together because we did not live by any family and even when we lived here, we didn't have family because they were all in Wisconsin so we had to do with each other and for ourselves.

Brian Woodman: I would think that the transition would be particularly difficult because when you describe your life, you went to school, you really started working at the VA, you jumped to St. Louis, continued working there, okay, six months everything goes on pause.

Judy Jensen: Mm-hmm. I actually experienced my first and only homesickness when we were in California. I guess you're so many thousands of miles away, at least here we were only 500 miles away that we could get home if we wanted to but that was really the first time of all the times of being away from home that I had any homesickness.

Brian Woodman: How did you get your freedom from the Mojave?

Judy Jensen: I joined a gym and I lifted weights and this was a man's gym. I mean, it was that old-fashioned kind of gym with...I did that and read a lot. I've always been a reader. Sometimes we were able to...we went to Bakersfield and went to a roller derby. I'd never heard of roller derby before but a single guy that worked with Ralph watched Diane and I worried because he had this lizard that had bit his nose and I had visions of that lizard. It was one of those big lizards. I've had visions of this lizard biting Diane's face or something but obviously that didn't happen.

Brian Woodman: Don't tell you joined roller derby too?

Judy Jensen: No.

Brian Woodman: Aw.

Judy Jensen: When you drive across a desert late at night, you can see how people think there are foreign objects flying around because it's so dark. It's like when you're out on the ocean on a cruise ship, when you're in the middle of the ocean, it's so dark out that you can see things. But we did that. We went to an air show and actually, we went into Mexico and Ralph was solicited even though he was pushing a stroller and walking with me. That was just such a foreign experience for us, for both of us. We were so taken aback by it and Ralph used to always say to me, "You are so naïve for being a nurse, I can't believe that you are so naïve," and I guess I always have kind of ignored some of those aspects of life, I guess is the best way. I don't think I was completely ignorant of it but maybe I was. Not anymore. Well, I still kind of am, I think.

Brian Woodman: The appointment out there, that was just a temporary thing?

Judy Jensen: Yeah, six months.

Brian Woodman: And you guys already knew you were going to get to come back after six months?

Judy Jensen: Right.

Brian Woodman: So, you leave...

Judy Jensen: We came back, we had to find a...well, actually, it was a little stressful when we left because Diane was born in '66 so this was in January of '67

and we had to store our furniture somewhere. We could only take, like, 500 pounds so we took dishes and pots and pans and her crib and that pretty much was all that they would pay to move and at that time, we certainly couldn't afford to pay anything ourselves. One of the reasons Ralph did it was because he got a per diem and we thought we could save the per diem to get enough money to start saving up to get a house. That big tornado hit the week before we were to leave and we lived in St. Ann at that time and we weren't affected but all of the storage places took furniture for the people that had suffered home damage so there we were, one week from leaving and our storage place couldn't take our furniture and we did a self-storage then which we worried about for six months but it turned out okay. But that was pretty stressful.

Brian Woodman: What an amazing moment to have been around for in St. Louis too.

Judy Jensen: Mm-hmm.

Brian Woodman: What do you remember from that time because that was a big deal?

Judy Jensen: That was a big deal, it was a really big tornado. We were frightened because it came very close to where we lived and it was our really first experience with a tornado, even though they do have tornados in Wisconsin. We never had one anywhere near us and, of course, you didn't hear that much about them so experiencing it and seeing the color of the sky and the winds and everything, it just was scary.

Brian Woodman: So you guys get back to St. Louis.

Judy Jensen: Then we had to find a place to live and get our furniture and then we lived in St. John. So we had lived in Overland, then we lived in St. Ann and then St. John and in the meantime, when I left, I had thought that I had been guaranteed I would have a job when I came back. Well, I did have a job but they didn't want to give me my...if you want to say seniority, they didn't want to count because I didn't have any kind of retirement or anything like that from them. But they wanted to count me as a new employee rather than I'd already worked there seven...however many years it was at that time. And then I got a position with a urologist and I really only worked an evening a week to keep my hands in the field, but we just couldn't afford to have a babysitter all the time. So I went to work when Ralph got home. Before we went to California, I was working just three days a week and we did have a sitter but I worked from 12:00 to

6:00 and Ralph got home, like, at 3:30 so we just had a sitter from 12:00 to 3:30.

Brian Woodman: I would think that must have been really difficult too, feeling like you wanted to keep your hand into that world but also raising the kid.

Judy Jensen: Yeah.

Brian Woodman: Can you talk about that? How did you deal with that?

Judy Jensen: It just kind of seemed like the thing to do. I didn't feel resentful. I felt like at least we had the option to do that, that I didn't have to work full-time because we chose to do that and not have the extras. So we never were hurting for money but we didn't ever go out to eat or things of that nature. When we went out, we would go out with friends to each other's houses and we would play cards or that kind of thing and the kids would come along. We had a nice little circle of friends and one couple was from Michigan, one couple was from Ohio and another couple was from Wisconsin and we're still all friends. So as the kids got older, then I was able to find positions, when I felt I really wanted to get back into working. I even sold Rubber Maid for a while, as home parties in the evening just for some little extra money and because Ralph was home to watch the kids. I'm not a very good salesman. I get too anxious, not my bag of tea. I appreciate people that do that. I never made very much money. So anyway, when they were in 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, I went back to work at the hospital, at St. Joseph's in St. Charles, and I only really worked, again, only, like, a year-and-a-half because I worked evenings and it was a really busy floor and I didn't get home until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. That was tough and I worked every other weekend and so that just lasted a year and then I got a job in an ophthalmology office for a couple years and then the love of my career came. I answered an ad in 1979 for a position for a nurse and the Heart Association was doing a research project. It was an NIH research study for men with high cholesterol and blood pressure and it was an intervention. It was called "MRFIT," Multiple Risk and Fitness Intervention Treatment and they had gone from techs to RNs and so they needed another RN and they wanted someone with emergency room experience and when I interviewed I said, "I'm a fast learner. I don't have emergency room experience" and that's actually what got me the position because I said I'm a fast learner, and I am. So I worked there for three years and it was wonderful.

Brian Woodman: So what was so wonderful? Why was this your dream job?

Judy Jensen: I guess because I had independence. Well, of course you have protocols to follow but I learned how to draw blood. I drew blood...I have to backtrack a little bit: When I worked at the medical center, I worked for a Jewish doctor who had hours on Sunday. I would help fill in and I learned how to take x-rays then, and to do blood counts because the lab didn't work at that time. So I already had that experience and I always really enjoyed learning something new. So when I got the job with the MRFIT study, then we did EKGs and we did...what is it called...when you...we did breath...the volume, lung volume and we did a lot of the lab work. We drew blood, we did the hematocrits and that in the office and sent the other blood out to a general lab. And I learned a lot about heart disease because there were dieticians that were on staff and there were psychologists that worked with the men who were smoking and we did a lot of teaching so that was my first involvement of patient teaching. We had dinners for the men and their wives and we did teaching. We did a newsletter so I started contributing to a newsletter and that opened up a whole new avenue for me and that is the area that I stayed in the rest of my career, and that kind of governed my thinking of what I needed to do and I knew when I got that job that it was only for three years because the study would be ending. But because of that job, I got a job with Washington University, with Dr. H.M. Perry for hypertension study and that's leading into Zonta, is where I learned about Zonta because Sharon Comity worked for Dr. Perry and she was a Zontian and she was governor at that time, of our district. So anyhow, his office was at the VA so here I was, back at the VA but I didn't work in the VA. His office was on the grounds of John Cochran and then eventually we worked with a big study called SHEP which was Systolic Hypertension in the Elderly Program and I eventually got to be the lead coordinator for that study and then when the national study was, I actually was the lead coordinator from 17 centers of the nurses. We had a physician on the board for that study and it was the first time the nurses had ever been recognized and given a voice and I like to feel that I was really instrumental in a lot of things that happened and it was because of the way that I presented things that actually the nurses were listened to. The docs were talking about doing some changes in the visits and that that they listened to the nurses because I was able to present the facts and not go beyond the facts of what was going on and not do something personal, which sometimes in

that area can happen. They'll say, "That's the way it's always been done. We're going to do it this way" and we would say, "Yeah, but if we did this, this would happen" and they actually listened to us. So that was six years and that was a really good experience and Dr. Perry was excellent. He could be really difficult to work for but I really learned a lot from him and I learned a lot about interpersonal relationships. One time a doctor really got on my case from Sacramento and I wrote a letter back to him and Dr. Perry always wanted to read what you did. I gave it to him, he said, "That's great. Now just go tear it up." He said, "When we have our next meeting, you go talk to him in person and tell him that. Don't put it in writing because that will cause a lot of friction that you don't want to deal with" and he was a gentleman and that's how he handled things and that's what I did and it was successful. I can be really hot-headed and fly off the handle really fast but as I've gotten older, I learned to control that and he was instrumental in helping me do that.

Brian Woodman: I think a little bit of a temper would be useful to not be intimidated by doctors.

Judy Jensen: No, you have to have a backbone and stand up for yourself and you can't go running off crying but you also can't just be obnoxious about things either.

Brian Woodman: I think you got this until about '91?

Judy Jensen: Mm-hmm, and then in '91, that position ended and he didn't have really anyplace for us but his son worked for Dr. John Marley at St. Louis University with geriatrics and his son, Mike, worked with osteoporosis and he also worked at Jefferson Barracks VA and they were trying to get an NIH study and they asked if I would come on board. They didn't have anyone who had experience in clinical studies. In the meantime, I had gone to school evenings and earned my Bachelor's Degree, College of St. Francis, from Joliet, Illinois, opened up outside schools and they had one here in St. Louis and it was for the working professional and I did have some college credits. I never said I'm a three-year grad of a nursing school and so I did have almost a year of credit because our freshman year, we had classes at Edgewood College in Madison so I did have college experience. But I was realizing I needed to have a degree because Wash U didn't want to give me a raise because I didn't have a degree and so I thought, well, then I guess I need to get a degree and this

opportunity came up and so I went to school a couple evenings a week for a couple of years because I didn't go in the summer, with my family and I did get my Bachelor's Degree and then, when I went to St. Louis University, I had the opportunity to go to school with tuition remission and I got my Master's of Public Health and worked full-time, was in Zonta, had kids in school and I didn't graduate until I was 54. So I definitely was the non-traditional student.

Brian Woodman: Well, if you're going to get that many things, that's a lot to take on.

Judy Jensen: Yeah. I always have had a supportive husband. He doesn't like to do those kind of things but he thinks it's fine if I went to and he supported me. But I look back at it and I think, how did I do that? But I would stay at work because we didn't have a computer at home and I had one at work and when you're in a Master's program, all of your presentations are Power Point and in Public Health, we had oral presentations all the time so I had to have Power Point presentations and I'd stay at work, sometimes until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning to get my work done.

Brian Woodman: You look you don't know how you did it, yet the way you describe how you do things, I have a hard time envisioning you not doing that in some ways. It seems like you always had to be doing.

Judy Jensen: Yeah. What my mother used to...she says, "You are always doing something. How can you always be so busy?" and I always have been. I don't know, it's just something I have to do and I don't know what has caused it. It's just me because my brother isn't like that. Is it an older child syndrome? I don't know. But it's just my nature and I like to volunteer although my volunteer work now is through Zonta and in Zonta, I've become much more cognizant of women's issues. I wish I could be more in the forefront of being involved but I don't quite have that push but at least I can do support through our organization and the way that we support other women and families.

Brian Woodman: I would also think it's a pretty valuable just a social...

Judy Jensen: Oh, yeah, absolutely, and what's great about it is that you're with women of multiple fields. Like, nurses, you tend to just be with nurses or teachers, you're just with teachers and with this, I'm involved with doctors of education, with lawyers, with CPAs, dentists. We're all together for a common goal and it is, it's really neat and this is another

backtrack...when I first went away to school, in my age group, if you went away to school you were a teacher or a nurse and I purposely did not want to go to school to get my degree in nursing because at that time it meant that you then were teaching nursing and that's not what I wanted to do. I still wouldn't want to be a teacher.

Brian Woodman: Thinking about this career in nursing, what was the thing that was most valuable to you, having that experience being a nurse for so long? What did you get the most out of, do you think?

Judy Jensen: A lot of personal growth, I've really learned to have a lot of empathy for people and just being able to keep up with what's going on, learning the newest things going on in medicine and being involved in research, I think opened a completely different aspect of not so much just nursing but of medicine. I never wanted to be a doctor. I still wouldn't want to be a doctor but I felt like I was a partner and that I helped actually people grow and so, in that way, I was a teacher but it was teaching what I loved and not book teaching, but teaching about health and I guess that would be it. I don't know if that answers your question or not.

Brian Woodman: Absolutely. So one question we always ask people, I pre-warned you about it, how do you think your life would have been different had you been born 50 years before?

Judy Jensen: Well, I would like to think I would have been a pioneer. I don't know. I don't know if I would have been brave enough, like the women that went across the country in wagons. I'm not sure that I could have survived that but I think that, knowing how I am, somehow I would have been involved in something that would have been meaningful and probably outside of the home, which wasn't necessarily...I'd like to think that I would have been like the women who founded Zonta. They did it because there were men's groups and there was never anything for women. So I would like to think I would have been instrumental in working with people to improve their life somehow, maybe working in poverty areas or something of that nature.

Brian Woodman: Do you still have any connection to nursing? Are you still involved in any way in the field?

Judy Jensen: Actually, I'm not but I kind of miss it. It's been about 10 years since I've worked.

Brian Woodman: So what do you do now?

Judy Jensen: I quilt, I've become real involved in quilting and I am just as involved as ever in Zonta so I continue to work in that way, of supporting women. I keep up with medicine. I'm learning all the time. I'll get out one of my books if something comes up and try and read about it. I have some really good medical books. Some of them are getting a little bit outdated but some things are never outdated. It's just maybe a newer treatment. So I still consider myself a nurse but I'm not actively involved.

Brian Woodman: So final question: If you were talking to a new nursing student coming in, what would be the best piece of advice you could give them?

Judy Jensen: I think I would tell them to keep their ears and eyes open and that nursing now offers so many options that you can go into and that they should be open to different opportunities and definitely they need their degree. A lot of nurses are now getting doctorates and nurse practitioners and I would probably be a nurse practitioner now if I was just really starting out and that's what I would recommend for them.

Brian Woodman: Okay. Thank you very much.

Judy Jensen: Thank you.