

An Interview with
Shirley Martin

at *The* Historical Society of Missouri St. Louis
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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.

Blanche Touhill: ...introduce yourself.

Shirley Martin: I'm Shirley Martin and I'm retired now but I used to be the dean of the College of Nursing at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. I was dean there for 17 years.

Blanche Touhill: Well, then, let me go back to your early life. Talk about your mother, your father, your siblings, if you had any, the people on your block, grandparents, elementary school teachers, high school teachers. Who really influenced you into making Shirley Martin?

Shirley Martin: Well, I was born in St. Louis. My father was a carpenter. He also was a veteran of World War I. My mother was a homemaker. For the first five years of my life, I was pretty happy and then, in the fifth year, my father had a recurrence of a very serious health problem from being gassed in World War I. Really, from that time on, he was never well. I started school very early because my playmates were older than I was and they started school and since I was an only child, my mother didn't know what to do with me and so she started me to school.

Blanche Touhill: Did you like school?

Shirley Martin: I don't remember it very well. I don't remember disliking it but for the first five grades, it was a pretty normal education here in St. Louis, out in St. Louis County. Then my father took a construction job on the dam that was being built up at Clarksville, Missouri so we moved up there and because it's a very small town, we found a place to live in an even smaller town nearby and we moved out there. I loved it. I love small town living. I loved riding my bicycle and there were horses and ponies. I just really enjoyed it. So I started the 6th grade at Painesville and the school that they had in Painesville, I think total enrollment from 1st grade until senior in high school probably was no more than maybe 30 or 35 students. When I started the 6th grade, there were three of us, two boys and myself and there were only 17 students in all four years of high school. So that will give you an idea of the size of the school. The school was all in one brick building. One large room had grades 1 to 5 and the other large room had grades 6 to 8. Then across the hall there were three rooms. That was the high school. So the 6th grade sat in the row just inside the door, then the 7th grade in another row and the 8th grade. The teacher

was a wonderful teacher. She was very kind and I think knowledgeable. I can't remember that. But what she would do would be to come with a chair and she'd talk to the 6th graders and she'd look at different assignments that she had given us or things that we were supposed to write or something. Then she'd tell us something to do for the next period. Then she'd move to the next row and deal with the 7th graders in the next room, the 8th graders and then she'd come back to us. Now, I was thinking about this getting ready for this interview and I was thinking that model may have some merit, but for me it was absolute disaster, absolute disaster because I just spent all my time looking around the room and talking and walking. I can't remember any of the assignments. So the 6th, 7th and 8th grade was spent in that and it was just a disaster for me. Then high school was a little more traditional. I do think we had classes but I can't remember any. Then when I was a sophomore in high school, my father died and my mother knew that I was virtually getting no education whatsoever and she decided we should move back to St. Louis and for some reason she had heard about Soldan High School. How, I'll never know. She thought it had a good reputation and so she decided that I would go to Soldan. So we drove down and we located Soldan and then we started looking for a place to live around there and we found a place. My father had died just about four weeks after Pearl Harbor so the city was really gearing up for war industry and jobs were plentiful so my mother got a job at Curtis-Wright out at the airport and I started my junior year at Soldan. Well, it was just pathetic because my formal education had stopped at the 5th grade and here I was and I do think that maybe the high school was excellent and it seemed to me that the students were just brilliant. They knew everything and I just knew nothing. They might as well have been speaking a foreign language. I just had no idea what was going on. And the bad thing was that they had started me in junior level courses, assuming that I had had something before then. So that was not a good academic experience. I did pass and I did graduate. The idea of college just never entered my mind because in my family, on both my father and my mother's side, I know no one had ever attended college and I don't think anyone ever aspired to go to college. So when I turned 16, I did get a job selling house slippers at Stix, Bear & Fuller downtown and I would work Friday evening after school and then all day Saturday and I did that maybe six months or something, long enough to know that sales was not something I would want to do.

Then after I graduated, a friend of mine had a connection with a bank downtown and so I did get a very low-level clerical position there but that was terrible. I did not like that. So I was really kind of stuck because some of my friends were going to college but I don't know, it was just something that I never thought I'd do. So one day I saw an advertisement for Cadet Nurse Corps because the war was still going on. They had a uniform and it was kind of cute and it said your tuition would be paid, they would buy your uniforms, they'd buy your books and at the last six months, they would give you a little stipend. So I thought, well, that's a lot better than selling house slippers or sitting with an adding machine. The advertisement said, "Go to your local hospital" so the closest one was St. Luke's so I went over there and the lady looked at me and knew...you had to be 18 to be admitted and she knew I wasn't 18. I was going to be 17 in October but this was still summer. So she said, no, you had to be 18. So I knew about DePaul Hospital there on Kings Highway so I went up there and talked with the lady there and she said, no, 18, and so I thought, well, that's the end of nursing for me. I really kind of put that aside. Then one evening I was coming home from the bank, I was riding a Hotomot streetcar and we stopped at a tailor, there was a stop and go sign there so we stopped and it was a warm evening and the motorman had opened the door. So I was sitting there and I see Missouri Baptist Hospital and I thought, I wonder if they have a school of nursing. I thought, well, I should go in there. Then I thought, well, if the door stays open till I get there, I'll go in. So the door stayed open and I went in and they had a school and so I was admitted there. They did take people at 17. So I wasn't 17 in August but I would be 17 in October, so I waited until the January class and so I started school at Missouri Baptist but I still was not academically prepared. What I had done at Soldan was survive, there was no learning going on. I was just doing everything I could to pass a course. So I was really good with the patients. I loved nursing. I really liked taking care of patients and that but academically I was still in serious trouble. I did not have the faintest concept of study. I knew nothing about that. I could read very well and I liked to read but that was about my only saving...

Blanche Touhill: I suspect you could write.

Shirley Martin: I don't know. I wasn't writing anything. So anyway...but I did pass things with great difficulty. I'm sure if you'd look at my class rank, I was at the

bottom. But I did graduate and I did pass the licensing exam which was a surprise to everyone. So I enjoyed working there and I worked there in the maternity unit and labor room for about four years and then I just became very restless or bored, I'm not sure what, just not satisfied and I heard about a course in ward management which today would be like a class for head nurse. And it was being taught over at Deaconess Hospital by Sister Olivia who was the director of the school there and for some unknown reason...as I say this, I think, I was like a feather in the wind, just things would happen and I'd go in that direction. But anyway, so I decided I'd take that course. Why, I'll never know because I wasn't interested in and never aspired to be a head nurse. I was really convinced I was dull normal but I, nevertheless, went over there. Well, I just thought the course was wonderful. I thought Sister Olivia must be the best teacher in the entire world. Poor soul, I think I frightened her to death because I was so eager. So I just loved that course. I just thought, why have I not been doing this before? It's interesting to me; I was reading things; asking questions. It was kind of an awakening. You know, I just suddenly...it was just a complete change from anything I had ever done before. So after I took that course, I thought, well, what else can I do, and I decided to go to college. I went to St. Louis U and talked with them and I went to Washington U. They both had programs for RNs. They were very uncertain how long it would take me or what I would have to do and so someone told me about a small liberal arts college in Alton, Shurtleff College. So I started there and it was the same as with Sister Olivia and I'm sure those faculty thought what in the world has happened to this person because I was staying after class, talking with them, I was reading, I was looking for new things to read. Every course was, to me, just a complete eye-opener and academically I was just straight A and not only did I like the academics but I really got into the social and I was about 24 or 25. I was older than most of the students. In my junior year, I was director of the homecoming parade and in my senior year, I was elected class president and as soon as I graduated, it was like, what can I do next? I just wanted to go to another class. But with the Bachelor's Degree, I was able to teach. So I continued work there at Missouri Baptist but then I became an instructor also.

Blanche Touhill: At Missouri Baptist?

Shirley Martin: At Missouri Baptist, maternity nursing. So then I started evening courses at Washington U to get my Master's and it was the same thing. I took my Master's in Medical Surgical Nursing, a field I have no interest in whatsoever but it was the same thing, maybe I wasn't as enthusiastic then as I was at Shurtleff but it was the same thing. It was just a remarkable phenomenon that I had. But anyway, so I finished my Master's and I just made A's and just loved every part of it.

Blanche Touhill: Then did you decide right away to get the Ph.D.?

Shirley Martin: No. At that time, see, that was in the middle '50s and at that time, the Master's was considered the terminal degree for nursing. There were very, very few nurses that had their Ph.D. Most of them went to Teachers' College at Columbia University and took their...

Blanche Touhill: In New York?

Shirley Martin: Uh-huh, took their EDD in Education. So Ph.D. was...in those days, as I say, the Master's was really considered the terminal degree and, really, it was adequate for teaching in the diploma programs and the Associate Degree that had just started.

Blanche Touhill: In the community college?

Shirley Martin: In the community college, but the idea of a Ph.D. really wasn't there but after I finished my Master's, I still was restless, I don't know, just looking for something to do. So I decided, well, one morning I woke up and I thought, you were born in St. Louis. You go to school in St. Louis and if you're not careful, you'll die in St. Louis and never see anything. So I decided, well, I'll go someplace. So I read in a magazine about working for World Health and some of the other agencies. So I still had the magazine so I wrote to several, sent them a resume and they were very interested in nurses with Master's Degrees. And so I heard from them right away and I finally accepted a job with the Agency for International Development and it was teaching in a new school of nursing in Iran. So, they called me and said, "We have this opening and are you interested?" and I said, "Yes, I'll go," having no idea where Iran was or anything about it. I just said yes. So, I did go and I did work there two-and-a-half years and I just enjoyed Iran so much. I went in 1959 so it was 20 years before they took the hostages and they were so pro-American. It was just a wonderful experience. I thought the people were so warm, friendly. Our

students were wonderful, very motivated. And when I see what's going on on television in Iran today, it's just; I can't believe it's the same country.

Blanche Touhill: Now, how did you support yourself when you were going through for your Bachelor's and your Master's?

Shirley Martin: Well, I worked because I didn't find them difficult. In fact, I found them very easy. I made arrangements with the people at Missouri Baptist and when I would get my class schedule, we'd figure out when I could work and literally, I worked almost full-time, all the time.

Blanche Touhill: When you went to Iran, did your mother go with you?

Shirley Martin: Yes. She had never married and so when I was going, she was so enthusiastic and she really had not been anyplace and we were able to take family so I asked her if she wanted to go and she was delighted. She really, really enjoyed it. She had a great time.

Blanche Touhill: Now, were you the head of the school or...

Shirley Martin: No, no.

Blanche Touhill: You were one of the faculty?

Shirley Martin: Yes. The contract that AID had with the Iranian government was that the Americans built the building and furnished it. It was the only building in town that had central heating and it was really a very, very fine building. It had a small dormitory attached and classrooms and labs and a library and it was a very good building. And the other part of the contract was that the United States provided three American nurses and we had a boss. She had been in Foreign Service longer than we had so she was our boss and the other part of the contract was that they were to find three Iranian nurses that could speak English and be our counterparts. They found them, not at the beginning, but as time went on, we did get our counterparts and mine was a young Iranian woman who had been sent to England when she was 10 to go to school so she spoke perfect British accent and she had been in nursing and was a midwife. So our abilities matched.

Blanche Touhill: And you were interested in maternity?

- Shirley Martin: Yes, but because there were only three of us teaching, we taught everything.
- Blanche Touhill: When you came back then, did you get the Ph.D. then?
- Shirley Martin: When I came back, I had tuberculosis. It was bad and so I was at Scott Air Force base...because AID was the branch of the state department, we were eligible to go to...the other nurse, Anne, the other nurse, she also had tuberculosis. It was very common in Iran and we worked in a hospital and I thought we were careful but maybe we weren't.
- Blanche Touhill: So you were really treated by the government for your tuberculosis?
- Shirley Martin: Yes.
- Blanche Touhill: But you recovered.
- Shirley Martin: Oh, yes. We could go to any government veteran or military and because I had been away from home so long, Anne went to Baltimore to the VA hospital there because we were in Washington when we were diagnosed but I didn't want to...they recommended I go to Baltimore but I didn't want to be in Baltimore. It was difficult to find a place at that time that would take women and had a TB ward. There weren't that many at that time but Scott Air Force base did and that was so close.
- Blanche Touhill: When you finished that, then what did you do?
- Shirley Martin: Well, then I couldn't go back overseas but I could work part-time so the last place I had really been was Washington U for my Master's so I went down and volunteered. I worked in the workroom and I mimeographed things and answered the phone, until I could work full-time, and while I was there, they decided to open a Master's area in maternity nursing. So the dean asked me if I'd like to start that and I said yes. So I started that at Washington U.
- Blanche Touhill: So you were sort of the founding administrator there?
- Shirley Martin: There and it was a good program. It was successful. I had lunch not too long ago with one of the first graduates. That was okay but by that time, nursing was saying that if you're going to work in a...and universities were saying to nursing, if you want to be a full-fledged program and you want to be a full-fledged faculty member, you have to get your Ph.D. And so

nurses here in St. Louis were beginning. What I really wanted to do was to go to Catholic University in Washington, D.C. They had a midwifery program for Master's, a Master's Degree in midwifery and that would have been the love of my life but at that time, midwifery still didn't have a very good reputation and there were very few places you could practice. So it was really kind of a foolish thing and a classmate of mine was in a Ph.D. program at St. Louis U and I talked with her and she told me how much she enjoyed the program.

Blanche Touhill: So you enrolled there?

Shirley Martin: So I went down there and enrolled in that program and there were quite a few nurses in it.

Blanche Touhill: At the end of that, then, you went someplace else?

Shirley Martin: Well, yes, my advisor knew that I had been in Iran and so she asked me if I was interested in another escapade and I said yes and she said St. Louis U had a contract with AID, the same agency I had been with, to send a team of social scientists to a new university in the Dominican Republic and the team was supposed to be a psychologist, a sociologist, a political scientist, an economist. It never worked out. They never got the whole team together. So I said, yeah, I'd like to go and I talked with Father Henley and he said, "You can be the sociologist" and I said...

Blanche Touhill: But you were getting a Ph.D. in sociology?

Shirley Martin: No, I was getting a Ph.D. in a program they called Health Organization Research, but it was housed...

Blanche Touhill: ...in sociology.

Shirley Martin: ...and he thought that was close.

Blanche Touhill: Close enough.

Shirley Martin: So I said, "Well, okay." But it did work out that way.

Blanche Touhill: But your mother went too?

Shirley Martin: Yes. When we got down there, the faculty...we were supposed to help them establish a program of research but they were really not interested in research. They were young and they just weren't interested. So we

taught. So I'd been there a year and you could renew your contract and, really, it was not something that would look good on my resume, teaching sociology in Spanish which I couldn't speak. So I elected to come home.

Blanche Touhill: Well, when you came home, what did you do then?

Shirley Martin: Well, in my Ph.D. program, I got a job as a research assistant for the...what's CBHE?

Blanche Touhill: Oh, the Coordinating Board of Higher Education.

Shirley Martin: Yeah, for the Coordinating Board of Higher Education and the idea was to...what they said the study was was to study the physicians in Missouri and so the man that was the director of the study was the dean at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. It was a physician. So he would come, like, on a Thursday night and he would tell me things that he wanted collected or I should do and then Friday we would ride around and see people and talk. Then the rest of the week, then, I would collect the data or I would tabulate the data or whatever. And I did that a year and in that program, I met Dr. Vernon Wilson who was the vice president, at that time, I think, of Medical Affairs.

Blanche Touhill: For the whole system?

Shirley Martin: For the whole system, and so he and I used to go around. We'd go over to Kansas City and visit with the people that were planning the...

Blanche Touhill: ...UMKC Medical School.

Shirley Martin: And we'd go to Kirksville and we'd go to Columbia. So, in the riding around, he had told me that they were planning a nursing program at UMSL and we talked about that. So finally he said, well, he would like for me to plan this program and I said, well, I can't...

Blanche Touhill: For UMKC?

Shirley Martin: No, for here, for UMSL.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, for the nursing program here?

Shirley Martin: Yes. He said that that's what was in the plans and would I take that job and I said, "No, I can't do that because I'm already committed to go to

the Dominican Republic.” This was my last year in the Ph.D. program. So I said, “No, I can’t” so he said, “Well, okay, when you come back, give me a call.” So when I returned to St. Louis, I called him and, well, within a week we were down here to see Chancellor Bugg and there was no affirmative action then or anything. He just said, “Okay, you’re hired” and that was it. So I spent that year, 1968 to 1969 on this campus planning a four-year nursing program. But it was to be in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, all of the programs were to be in Arts & Sciences?

Shirley Martin: It was going to be a division of nursing. So I planned it and it was all set and then Chancellor Bugg said...when the budget came out, he said the money didn’t come through for it but never mind, stay another year and it will come. Well, I had spent an entire year by myself, a secretary and I, in the Blue Metal office building and everyone was nice and everything but it was very lonesome. So I said, no. Sister Teresa, down at St. Louis U had called me so she asked me if I’d be interested in coming down there and so I said, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: As a teacher?

Shirley Martin: No, I was head of their graduate program. So, while I was there, a classmate of mine was working down at Florida State University and so they were looking for a dean and she submitted my name. So they called me and said, would I come down for an interview. So when I went down, I had lunch with her and I said, “What did you say?” because I certainly didn’t have the background to be a dean, maybe an assistant or associate dean but not dean. I said, “What did you tell them?” She said, “I told them you drive a convertible.” I guess that was the finishing touch. So the interview went very well and so I got the job and I thought I was prepared but I didn’t have the faintest idea of the responsibility.

Blanche Touhill: But you stayed a number of years?

Shirley Martin: Four years and I was successful. We got a new building. A new building was constructed while I was there and we did some things with the curriculum and it was okay but what I found was that I really wanted to come to St. Louis and when I told this one friend of mine, he said, “Well, why in the world...”...he said, “Everyone’s trying to get to Florida” and I said, “I know but I just...”...I think one of the things was that socially I wasn’t ready for the administrative position because Tallahassee’s a small

town and I was working very hard just to keep up and the only people I knew really was the faculty. So I really didn't have friends that I felt I could socialize with. I remember a friend of mine here in St. Louis, I was talking to her and I said, "I really, really am lonely" and so she sent me a card and it said, "its lonesome at the top but it's miserable down here."

Blanche Touhill: So then you left Tallahassee and where did you go?

Shirley Martin: Well, I went for a short time, which everyone told me was a mistake but I had to make the mistake myself; I went to Indiana State University to be dean. I was there two years but it was not a good fit. So I heard that they were looking for an area coordinator for Allied Health & Nursing at Maryville so I interviewed for that and I got it. So I returned to St. Louis and I was so happy.

Blanche Touhill: And how long were you there?

Shirley Martin: I was there four years. Then I heard about the job here at UMSL, at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and so I came and interviewed and I really did want this job very desperately. It was a very slow process. I remember I was getting very discouraged but finally it came through. So I started in December of 1980.

Blanche Touhill: Now, what year were you considering coming here with Bugg?

Shirley Martin: '68 to '69.

Blanche Touhill: And didn't come here until 1980?

Shirley Martin: '80.

Blanche Touhill: So when you came, you were only in charge of an RN completion program?

Shirley Martin: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: So tell me what you did in your career here.

Shirley Martin: Well, I understand one of the questions in this interview is to talk about awards or treasures and I thought about that and I think the treasure that is most important to me is to receive this job because I was so fortunate that every person that came to work with me was as invested and as interested in the job as I was. We were a small group but we were so

enthusiastic and so creative. It was an experience that I think very few professional people. It was just a joy. So we started the RN to BSN program but as soon as we started, we all knew we had to have a Master's Degree so I began to meet with the dean at Columbia. I knew that it was going to be very difficult to get a Master's Degree here but I met with the dean at Columbia and said we should start working on a cooperative program because the interactive telecommunications system had just opened and we could use that. Instead of traveling 70 back and forth, we could use that. We could put the two faculties together and the resources. So she was agreeable but I don't think her faculty ever agreed.

Blanche Touhill: So how did you do it?

Shirley Martin: Well, this is where you come in. We were at a curators meeting and someone...I don't know if it was you or maybe someone from Columbia...we had been waiting, waiting, waiting for the dean of the graduate program to approve it and he was just not coming through and someone told me that he had decided he would not go further with the approval process on that campus because he didn't believe it would be successful and someone told me that, at the curators meeting. It was over in J.C. Penney and I was just at my lowest point because we had literally spent a year or maybe two years and I remember that you said you would meet with the chancellor from UMKC and the dean of Nursing and the four of us went someplace for lunch.

Blanche Touhill: Well, ultimately we were at K.C. House when we did it.

Shirley Martin: That's right and they said they would be delighted to join with us. And the telecommunications system really facilitated that because Kansas City would have been even more difficult without it. So they were much easier to work with. Faculty and administration was much more receptive. So we started the...I think the name of it was Cooperative Master's Program.

Blanche Touhill: And then you moved to the BSN or the four-year program?

Shirley Martin: No, we moved to the Ph.D. first.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, you moved to the Ph.D., okay.

Shirley Martin:

And I remember that you were at a curators meeting and the people from Columbia said that the School of Nursing...they were going to bring a proposal for a Ph.D. program from their School of Nursing, to the curators or to someone and you said, "We have one too," and we didn't. But you called me and said, "Get going" so, oh, boy, we hurried up and Peter McGraw was the president and he said he would approve or he would give the go-ahead for one cooperative program but not for two. And that kind of put a little pressure on Columbia. They didn't want to be either/or and so we did work on the cooperative program and they were much more receptive. So Kansas City then said they would work with us. So the three campuses, we worked together and we did get it approved. I believe that Kansas City didn't open right away but we opened about the same time as Columbia. And we shared faculty and we shared courses and I thought it was a good model. I think it was very effective. So we were able to open that. I'm not sure the year of that, but the four-year program came years before. I knew that the school had to have a four-year program because that simply is the platform for all others. It couldn't be a two-year program for RNs and then the Master's. It would be much more symmetrical if it was a four-year program but I knew that there would never be enough money because a four-year program is very expensive. But I thought, well, this is going well with Kansas City and cooperating and that so I called a meeting of the directors from Barnes & Jewish Schools of Nursing. They were both diploma programs then. And so I tried to approach them that diploma programs were really on their way out because nursing as a profession had decided that we should move into institutions of higher education. So I tried to butter them up that way and I had a plan and it made them mad, really mad. They stormed out and, why would I ever think that and they were not interested. So some years later, about 1993...I'm not sure how many years later, but '93, Barnes had decided to suddenly become Barnes College of Nursing, no longer a diploma program but Barnes College so they hired a new dean and what I tried to do when a new person came to town, I would call them and have lunch with them and offer any sort of help I could, that sort of thing. So I was having lunch with the new dean and I was telling her about this effort that I had made some years before of asking those two programs to come to the university and I thought we were just talking for interest's sake and she said, "Well, you might want to get that plan out again." Well, I nearly fell out of my chair and I

thought, well, is she serious because she hadn't been in St. Louis very long. So I said, "Well, okay." So I came back and talked with you and you thought it was a great idea and so we talked it a little bit more and we had a meeting with some of those administrators and all of us and we decided that they did not want to have a College of Nursing at Barnes at that time. So they were interested in merging with us. So in 1994, they merged with us.

Blanche Touhill: So then you had the four-year program, the RN completion, the Master's Program and the Ph.D. So how did you get a building? That was your other goal.

Shirley Martin: Yes. Well, we were housed in the Merrilack classroom building over on the south campus and it was not adequate, and then with the merger, they had 45 faculty and they had 10 staff. So there was no place to move 55 people and they had over 400 students. So it was a big merger. It was just at the time that the Daughters of Charity were thinking of...I don't know if they sold the rest of Merrilack...I don't know how that worked.

Blanche Touhill: But they sold it.

Shirley Martin: Yes, and the Administration building.

Blanche Touhill: And I was looking for somebody to take the Administration building.

Shirley Martin: And...

Blanche Touhill: You took it.

Shirley Martin: Yeah, and so you said, well, we could have that and Seton Hall.

Blanche Touhill: Yes.

Shirley Martin: And so it was just a windfall. The first year they stayed on Kings Highway and we stayed here but the second year, then the Daughters, I think, had pretty much moved...although they still wanted the first floor so we had mostly the second floor but little by little they moved and then we had the entire building.

Blanche Touhill: Where they are today.

Shirley Martin: So, as I said earlier, none of this really would have happened because there are not many administrators and I'm not saying this to jolly you up but there aren't many administrators.

Blanche Touhill: Well, I was the only female administrator...

Shirley Martin: Well, that might be.

Blanche Touhill: ...so I think that did make a difference, that everybody was protecting their turf and...

Shirley Martin: Yes, it was difficult.

Blanche Touhill: ...and we had a struggle. It wasn't easy.

Shirley Martin: It was a struggle. I always remember that one time, when I was...maybe it was that disastrous meeting where they told me that the Master's that we had worked on for so long had fallen through. I can't remember, but it was a low point. Something had not gone right and I remember you saying...you knew that I was very upset and I remember that you said, "We are not sprinters. We're long-range runners" and that's what we had to be.

Blanche Touhill: Yes. It was very hard because you would get demoralized...

Shirley Martin: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: But then you just had to say, "No, no, we're going to still do it."

Shirley Martin: Right, that's right.

Blanche Touhill: And we had Eleanor Schwartz and the nursing team.

Shirley Martin: That's right, Kathy Botson.

Blanche Touhill: I know that you had a lot of national posts. What national posts did you have in the nursing world?

Shirley Martin: I was thinking about this this morning and I thought, don't say, "In my day" but I have to say, in my day, because the Master's was the terminal degree, it was more a practiced discipline than research. People who held administrative positions in nursing, instead of seeking to be involved in research or publications, were more interested in professional organizations. So I got involved in that while I was at Florida State

because the dean before me had been very active in the Florida Nurses Association and some way or other, I guess they thought because I took her place, that I guess I could just take her place in every way. So I'd only been there a year and I was elected to be president of the Florida Nurses Association. Well, I was about as unprepared for that as I was to be dean so between the two; I really had a struggle for the first year or so. So I got more involved in the professional aspects, professional organizations. So little by little...and when I came back to St. Louis, then I was elected president of the Missouri Nurses Association and someone told me I'm the only nurse that has ever held...but that was years ago so maybe it's not true anymore...been president of two nurses association presidencies. And then, because you serve in that capacity, you have involvement with the national. We had two very strong national organizations, the American Nurses Association and the National League for Nursing. So, you know, you get to know people. You get on a committee and so I have to say, I was fortunate enough to serve on those boards, both the board of directors of the American Nurses Association and the National League for Nursing and I held some committee things. When you're in that, then people hear your name and they'll say...and when I came here in 1980, I was on a national commission working on the shortage of nurses.

Blanche Touhill:

Oh, yes.

Shirley Martin:

And that involved the American Hospital Association and the American Medical Association and various other groups besides nursing. It was very interesting. So I was on that board for three years. By the time we finished with the recommendations, the shortage was over.

Blanche Touhill:

Yes, but it came back.

Shirley Martin:

It did come back and it always does come back.

Blanche Touhill:

Yes. How has the nursing field changed over your career?

Shirley Martin:

Oh, gee. Well, I think the thing that made it change the most was the beginning of the Associate Degree, putting nursing into the community colleges. I think we would have been better off to go from the hospital schools of nursing which really, at one time, was, like, 92% of all nurses graduate from hospital schools of nursing. We would have been better off had we just then moved into universities.

Blanche Touhill: Into the BSN?

Shirley Martin: Into the BSN and I think the community college kind of distracted us and made another layer which makes it harder for a group...it's almost like the dental hygienist would...and then there's be another group and it just confuses. And so I think that probably was the biggest change. Now I think there are no more...maybe one here in the city, a hospital school of nursing. I'm not sure that's still in existence. But, it's changed a great deal because when you had the hospitals schools of nursing, it was such a closed society and everyone really had essentially the same education and they were very, very demanding. So if you graduated from a hospital school of nursing, you were more like another nurse even if they graduated from California, than not...

Blanche Touhill: Do you think the nurses should have kept the caps?

Shirley Martin: Yes, I do, but I know everyone...I've tried that with students for years and they wouldn't buy it. So I don't know if it's caps that we should have but every so often, I write an e-mail or call someone to ask if they wouldn't have some way of identifying the RN on a nursing unit, that right now everyone wears the little scrubs with the ducks and the little chickens and the flowers and all that stuff. You cannot tell a technician from an RN to the head nurse to the supervisor and I think that we lost something and I've thought also about what we should be called and a few times that I've been in the hospital, I've really been very unhappy because the head nurse will come in with a little pin that will say, "Hi, I'll Sally." Well, how would you like it if your doctor came in and it said, "Hi, I'm Bobby" and so I think there should be some way...and I've decided to call...even if it was "nurse," "Nurse Touhill," "Nurse Martin," that in England...I don't know if they still do but in England they used to call them matron or sister, not religious sister but sister. So I see detectives call each other "Special Agent" or "Lieutenant..."...something or Army. You never hear a captain say, "Hi, I'm Bobby." Priests are fathers so there'd be nothing wrong with saying "Nurse Martin" or "Nurse Touhill" or "Nurse Smith" and that would be the way patients and families and administrators and everyone would know, I'm in charge of this unit. See, the reason we wore the cap was so people could identify who we were. Not only that, but where we graduated from because every school had a different cap and every

school had a pin and so you could look at a nurse and you would know immediately if you graduated from Missouri Baptist or St. John's or...

Blanche Touhill: Yes. Let me ask: If you had been born 50 years earlier, what would your life have been like?

Shirley Martin: Oh, gee, I tried to count back. If I was born 50 years earlier, I'd have been in the 1800's and I probably would have been born on a farm, as my forefathers were, and married someone in the next farm or someplace and had a lot of children and lived and died. I don't think women much were...maybe teachers, school teachers and nurses, I guess. So my life would have been very, very different.

Blanche Touhill: I think there are about 1000.

Shirley Martin: Close to it.

Blanche Touhill: And how many of you graduated, do you have any idea?

Shirley Martin: No. Just when I retired, it was about 400. See, with the addition of the four-year program...see, we were so small but with the four-year program, I think they graduate maybe 40 or 50 students twice a year. I could be wrong. I haven't kept up with old stuff.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah, let's not say that because that might not be accurate.

Shirley Martin: No. Well, I just...let's see, what would I say?

Blanche Touhill: Would you like to sum up your career?

Shirley Martin: Well, I'd say that before I came to UMSL, I had worked in five different universities and I think I had always been reasonably successful and I always enjoyed my job and I think people that I work with would say that I did a pretty good job. But I'll tell you, when I took the job here, I don't know, it was like magic because every person we had...and we only had maybe five or six...but in the beginning, the people we had were so outstanding and they were so devoted to the school and we used to spend hours thinking how we could make our program more student-friendly and we would start classes. At one time, Marilyn McGuire had sights, I think, in 10 different hospitals in this area and she would take English and general psychology and sociology and our advisors would go to those hospitals and we had people from the purchasing department

taking courses but we'd also encouraged the nurses to take and that was a real strong recruiting. I just looked at a report not too long ago. We had over 600 students enrolled in those courses, off-campus.

Blanche Touhill: Off-campus courses. Yes, you did. I remember when you went to Hayti, Missouri and you went to Raleigh, Missouri and you delivered the courses on the television...

Shirley Martin: That's right.

Blanche Touhill: And you had a woman that went down to make sure that everything was right...

Shirley Martin: Absolutely.

Blanche Touhill: So you did affect the eastern side of Missouri and really the western and mid-Missouri too through the Ph.D. program.

Shirley Martin: Yeah. So we did and, you know, it was never like, "Oh, gosh, we've got to go someplace." It was like everyone was saying, "Well, where can we go next?" or "We haven't been here" or "Let's try this," and it was...I've told this before but one morning I was coming to work and I thought, there is not another job in this world, in this world, that I would rather have than the one I have right now, and we had a degree completion program with maybe 200 students and 6 faculty and it was just joy. It was magic.

Blanche Touhill: Well, thank you very much.

Shirley Martin: You bet.