

An Interview with  
**Margaret Mooney**

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.

Margaret Mooney: My name is Margaret Marsurlian Mooney.

Maureen Zegel: Okay, today, Peggy, we're going to talk to you about you, who you are and you're part of this project, Women as Change Agents, so my first question is really open-ended. Just tell me about your youth and your family and what schools you went to and what was it like growing up where you are.

Margaret Mooney: Okay, I was born in Syracuse, New York and that's where I grew up. I was the first of six children and I have four sisters and a brother. My brother was the youngest in our family. My father was a lawyer and his family was Armenian and my mother had gone to college, graduated from Hunter College in New York and had a Master's Degree from Columbia University in New York and they met at Saratoga Springs because my grandfather liked horse racing and my father happened to be a law clerk there after he finished law school at Syracuse University. So they had a romance during the war. They got married in 1944 and I was born in 1946 and we all grew up in Syracuse. So it was a relatively small city, probably around 100,000 people and we lived in a suburb called DeWitt and I went to a public school, a central school, from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and I have some people that I have known for all of those years, since I was five years old. A year ago, we had a 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunion which was really a lot of fun because it was an opportunity to reconnect with people, most of whom I hadn't seen in 25 years and many of them I hadn't seen in the 50 years since we graduated. So that was pretty interesting. It was a very, I would say, conservative community. Upstate New York was pretty Republican, although Nelson Rockefeller was the governor and he was on the liberal side of the Republican Party. But it was pretty conservative. I was raised as a Catholic and there were not very many Catholics in Syracuse at that time and probably still not too many. So I did go to public school all the way through. My three youngest siblings went to Catholic school when the Catholic school was started in our parish. My mother, who was the Catholic, was very determined that I needed a Catholic education somewhere along the line so she really wanted me to go to a Catholic college and I ended up going to Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart which is a sister college to Maryville here in St. Louis. At the time, it was all women and the large majority of the professors were nuns and the nuns were semi-cloistered. They really never left the campus except for medical appointments or

educational studies and opportunities. The nuns were really pretty interesting women, I have to say.

Maureen Zegel: Tell me where Manhattanville College is?

Margaret Mooney: Oh, Manhattanville is in Westchester County. It's right outside of White Plains, New York. So it was about 40 miles north of New York City.

Maureen Zegel: Before we leave Syracuse, talk a little bit about what it was like growing up. Talk about your family. Outside your home, what was it like?

Margaret Mooney: Syracuse gets more snow than almost anywhere in the United States so it was very cold and very snowy in the winter. One of the things that we did as a family and really happened in our neighborhood is every night after dinner the family would go out and shovel the driveway and the other kids in the neighborhood would also be shoveling the driveway and then we'd all take our sleds and slide down the hill. So that was kind of fun. The grade school that I went to was called Moses DeWitt. The community was DeWitt and Moses DeWitt was a governor of New York State and so that was our grade school. It started out; it was a little eight-room brick building. There were some little houses and I went to kindergarten in one house and 1<sup>st</sup> grade in a different house and the finally, in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, I got into the main school building and while I was there, when I was in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade, they built an addition, very modern. So went to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade in that same building and we had an asphalt play yard and tennis courts and such and in the wintertime, they used to freeze the back of the school and we could go ice skating in our lunch hour or after school. I probably lived about six blocks from the school and I remember walking home after ice skating and it was dark and cold and, oh, your feet would be so cold, but nobody wanted to quit. Everybody wanted to be out there. That was the fun thing to do after school, was to do the ice skating.

Maureen Zegel: What was it like to be a girl? Was your life segregated when...

Margaret Mooney: I was not particularly athletic. I don't remember participating in sports at all in school, other than this ice skating. I know we had gym class and we had basketball and volleyball and that type of thing but none of that really interested me very much. I have a sister who's 13 months younger than me and she was very athletic. She really participated in all of the

sports and she would play football and baseball. She was really something.

Maureen Zegel: So she played with boys?

Margaret Mooney: Yes, she played with boys and our neighborhood, the block that I lived on, there were probably 75 kids on the street and so we just played in the neighborhood, in different people's yards or there was an empty lot down the street from us, four or five houses down the street and kids would gather down there and play down there. But we played with the boys all the time. My immediate next-door neighbors were two boys and they liked to play card games and Monopoly. We had lots of card games and Monopoly, especially when it was hot in the summer because no one had air conditioning and you'd sit on the porch with a fan and that would be it. That was how you'd cool off. There was a really pretty lake nearby, Green Lake, and we would go out there and go swimming. My mother would load us all into the station wagon and go off, and of course, in those days, there were no such things as seatbelts and she had six kids just all piled in the back, trying not to kill each other. But we did things in our neighborhood and one thing I remember is that we never had anyone spend the night. When my children were growing up, they always had overnight guests and my mother was of the opinion that she had six kids in the house and that was really enough, and besides, there were all these kids on the street. I mean, it wasn't like we were deprived of any playmates or companionship. There were plenty of people in the neighborhood.

Maureen Zegel: What about high school? What was high school like, teenage years?

Margaret Mooney: Well, it was a central high school. We had to take a bus to get there and so there were more kids. In junior high, in 7<sup>th</sup> grade...all these buildings were brand new because people were just moving out to these suburbs. I really liked high school a lot. I really enjoyed the things that we did, although I have to confess, I took Latin for one day and then I switched to French. They let us do that. We started languages in 7<sup>th</sup> grade so I switched to French after one day of Latin. I don't know anything about Latin, really. People seem surprised that someone my age has no knowledge of...

Maureen Zegel: Especially a Catholic.

Margaret Mooney: Yeah, right. So that was good. I really liked the sciences. We had one wonderful teacher. His name was Alcott Gardener, Allie, and he taught the physics and advanced science classes. He was lots of fun. And our chemistry teacher, Anne Sperry, she actually came to this 50<sup>th</sup> reunion and now, looking back, it's obvious she was very young when she was our chemistry teacher. Of course, we thought she was so old but that was interesting, yeah.

Maureen Zegel: Did you have other teachers who influenced you?

Margaret Mooney: I had an English teacher I liked a lot, Rosemary Laster. She taught some sort of advanced literature classes and you could study with her over the summer.

Maureen Zegel: Did you do that?

Margaret Mooney: Yeah, of course, any opportunity to read a book. I definitely was one to spend a lot of my free time reading and so she really helped me learn how to be a critical thinker when I was reading and also to write with some clarity, try to get rid of all those extraneous words that aren't adding anything. So she was very good at pointing those out, and of course, these were the days when you just had a manual typewriter and sometimes you had to use carbon paper, and oh, that was a chore. And I was really lucky, when I went to college; I got this portable electric typewriter. It weighed about 50 pounds and I weighed, at that point, about 90 pounds. So this thing was almost as heavy as I was and moving that thing around, they called it a portable but it hardly seemed portable. But it was a nice thing to have at college. That really was. That was my high school graduation present, was my portable electric typewriter.

Maureen Zegel: So you went to college after you graduated from high school in Syracuse. You went to Manhattanville and what was that like, living so close to New York City and what did you do in college?

Margaret Mooney: Well, we weren't very far from New York but we didn't get to go there too often. The college was in the suburbs. It was a fairly large campus. It had not that many students, right around 1,000 students probably, all women. It was a totally different experience because I had always been in a co-educational environment. So this was the first time I was in an all-female environment. The first two years, I lived in a dormitory and had roommates. In fact, I had one roommate, Nancy, who was, like, 5'10" and

blonde, just about the opposite of me and I remember her saying, when her parents brought her to school and, I guess my things were already in one of the closets and her mother is looking at these skirts and they were so tiny, she figured she was rooming with a midget. But Nancy and I got along very nicely; we really did, and it was fun. I had grown up with four sisters so I kind of knew what it was like to have pretty many women around but it was a very different relationship in school than it was at home. I should just back up and say my sisters and I, there were four of us, like from 13 to 17 months apart so every grade in high school, we had one of the Masurlian girls. That was interesting. But anyway, college was different. I really didn't know what I wanted to study when I was in college and so I ended up majoring in psychology and in the '60s, they taught psychology I think very differently than they do today. I really think it was the beginning of a time period when academics were learning about psychology. There were so many things that people didn't know. We had a class called Abnormal Psychology that was sort of about what all the juvenile delinquents, what motivated them.

Maureen Zegel: And psychopaths and...

Margaret Mooney: Yeah. So I actually had two summer internships that had to do with psychology, one I worked with in individual psychologist who had this idea that you could learn something about children and their families by studying your drawings and so he hired me to rate these drawings and I would have stacks of drawings to go through and try and figure out what was going on in the drawing. That was very interesting but as I look back on it, I think I probably wasn't the most reliable person to be rating them. I never saw any published results so I don't really know what happened with that. Then I also worked in a summer program at a hospital in Syracuse for disturbed adolescents. I did that after my junior year in college and that was a stunning experience for me. The young people who were in that program were so disturbed and people like me were there in a way as role models and companions. I mean, we had no knowledge or ability to do any therapy. All we could do would be to participate in activities with them, play cards or play some kind of a board game or a ballgame or whatever but again, I didn't really see anything happening with these young people that I thought was going to help them and it convinced me that I probably didn't want to spend five years getting a doctorate in psychology because I wasn't sure it was going to

benefit anybody. So that's when I started thinking about becoming a lawyer.

Maureen Zegel: Who influenced you when you were in college? You talked about your high school English teacher whose skills probably helped you be a lawyer.

Margaret Mooney: Right.

Maureen Zegel: What about college?

Margaret Mooney: Although I enjoyed college a lot and there were lots of wonderful people there, I have to say, the two professors that I had that were in the psychology department was one man named John O'Hara who was this great big old bluff Irishman, and the other one, Everett Delehad, he was kind of a younger Irishman. They were nice people, although Dr. O'Hara, I didn't really get anything much out of the classes I took from him and Dr. Delehad, he was interesting and fun but that wasn't really...it was another reason why I guess I didn't decide to pursue psychology after I finally got into it. This was during the time period in the '60s when the Catholic worker was big; the Varigan brothers were very well known and would show up on campus from time to time; the nuns that taught at Manhattanville, although they were semi-cloistered and they didn't go anywhere, they had plenty of people come to the campus.

Maureen Zegel: So they could see what was going on.

Margaret Mooney: Yeah, so that was interesting.

Maureen Zegel: What about leadership roles? Did you take on any leadership roles when you were in college?

Margaret Mooney: Nope, I didn't. I pretty much studied, although not as much as I probably could have. It was really just an opportunity to kind of see other places. We did go to New York City. It was the first time I ever went to the Guggenheim Museum and that was just absolutely stunning, absolutely amazing. I remember seeing a Paul Clay exhibit and just was like...my eyes were open.

Maureen Zegel: [Inaudible 19:53].

Margaret Mooney: Yeah, it was so interesting, lots of fun, good times and we would go...oh, the other thing about Manhattanville that I know people today think is so

strange is that even though it was a women's college and there were virtually no men there, we weren't allowed to wear pants. We had to wear skirts at all times and you could only wear slacks or jeans if you were leaving the campus. Then you had to have a coat on over it so that you're not showing that you were wearing pants.

Maureen Zegel: What years was this?

Margaret Mooney: 1964 to 1968. That was something.

Maureen Zegel: And they couldn't be short?

Margaret Mooney: Well, actually, short didn't seem to make that much difference and I remember having a really short coat and freezing. I mean, you'd have this short skirt and short coat and be wearing tights and it was like, oh, my God, cold weather, and the campus was fairly open and we only had one dining hall that we would go to for all of our meals. There were a couple of times when I felt like I was going to get blown over. It was very, very cold.

Maureen Zegel: So your senior year in college, you decided...

Margaret Mooney: ...I needed to think about doing something besides psychology and I thought I would take the law school admissions test, which I did and I did extraordinarily well on it.

Maureen Zegel: Your father was a lawyer?

Margaret Mooney: My dad was a lawyer. He was kind of shocked, actually, that I wanted to be a lawyer because he knew, like, one woman lawyer in all of Syracuse. There just weren't any and he was a little skeptical about whether or not this would be something that I could pursue and do successfully, and of course, my mother was of the opinion that the most important thing was to get married and have children. So she thought law school was okay because there would be a lot of men, but it might not be so good because they'd think I was too smart. And I remember, years later...I have one sister who's eight years younger than me so she was still at home when I was about to graduate from college and she said she remembers my mother saying things like, "Peggy is going to be an old maid. She'll just never get married because she isn't married yet; she isn't engaged."

Maureen Zegel: Wasn't your mother the one who sent you to the all-girls school?

Margaret Mooney: Of course, she is, yeah. Oh, well, we had mixers. We had various men's colleges. Yale and Princeton were high on the list. The nuns liked Yale and Princeton. They also liked Fordham, which was a Catholic school but those were the schools where we...

Maureen Zegel: Did you have a boyfriend when you were in college?

Margaret Mooney: You know, I went out with various people but there wasn't anyone that really interested me that much. So, no, not really, although one of my roommates was engaged at the end of college and the rest, not so much.

Maureen Zegel: It was '68, when people were beginning to wise up.

Margaret Mooney: Well, sort of.

Maureen Zegel: So, you decided to go to law school?

Margaret Mooney: Mm-hmm, I did.

Maureen Zegel: You went right from college to...

Margaret Mooney: I did, I went to Columbia University in New York and lived in the graduate women's dorm which was immediately behind the law school. The law school at Columbia was a really unattractive concrete block building, kind of like the old law school they had here at Washington University. I think they were probably built around the same time, in the late '50s or early '60s. Great big classrooms, amphitheater style and you had an assigned seat. Your first year you had to sit in alphabetical order and A to L was in the first section and M to Z was in the second section so I was in the second section and sat between Mike Mulligan and Bill Mudderpearl.

Maureen Zegel: And there were more males than females?

Margaret Mooney: Oh, my God, yes. We had the first class at Columbia Law School that had more than two women. We had about 30 women but there were 450 in the class. So we were way outnumbered. Some of the men were okay with the fact that we were there. There were some who were not and I would say a great number of the professors didn't like the fact that there were so many women, even though there were only, like, 30 of us. They just didn't like the fact that there were so many and at that time, when I started in 1968, there was no woman tenured law professor.

Maureen Zegel: In that school?

Margaret Mooney: At Columbia University, yeah. The first woman tenured law professor was Ruth Bader Ginsberg and she came in the early '70s.

Maureen Zegel: Had you left by then?

Margaret Mooney: I actually hated law school. I left after the first year. I just hated it. It was awful. So I took a leave of absence and I did become engaged to one of my classmates and he got drafted to go to Vietnam so we got married before he went to Vietnam in December and he went in January. I took a two-year leave of absence from law school and then when my husband came back from Vietnam and he was going to return to law school, he actually convinced me that I should probably go back to law school too. And by then I was ready because I had not a fun work experience.

Maureen Zegel: What were you doing?

Margaret Mooney: Well, the first six months I was out, I worked as an editorial assistant for the National Foundation which was the March of Dimes organization and I edited medical books on birth defects and that was interesting. That was in New York City. That was interesting and I met some very interesting people, some very interesting people doing that but then, after I got married, I went back to Syracuse and lived with my parents for a year and I worked for Mutual of New York Life Insurance Company in a customer service position, basically responding to letters from insurance customers or insureds who had questions about their policies and, ah, it was such a boring job. I did learn how to dictate though. I learned how to do dictation, giving the punctuation and all the other things that you had to do and there were a couple of other women who also were doing the same thing. I think the three of us were just as bored as we could be and, of course, our boss was a man who really wasn't very bright but he was a man. So he got to be the boss and I didn't like that. So I pretty much agreed with my husband, I should go back to law school where I might have a chance at being a boss, although it turns out not so much because, when I graduated from law school, which ended up being in 1973 instead of 1971, law firms in New York City were only hiring women to do trust and estate work because they felt that women could work...most of the work had to be with widows after the estates were being settled and they felt that women would be good working with these other women and actually, the job that I got was with a firm that had exactly that point of view. They had one woman lawyer there who was in her 50's, I guess,

as I look back on it now, and she had obviously been to law school a long time before me so she was really the rare bird but then, she had stayed home for 18 years with her children and came back to work and was doing this trust and estates work. So that was something.

Maureen Zegel: How long were you there?

Margaret Mooney: I was at Burke & Burke for not quite five years. That was the other thing, taking the New York bar exam was an experience. It was at the Vanderbilt Hotel next to Grand Central Station and they had the ballroom and it had literally 1,000 card tables in it and there was a person at every card table taking the bar exam. That was quite something. Anyhow...

Maureen Zegel: ...you passed.

Margaret Mooney: I passed the bar exam on the first try and then, in New York, you had to have your character checked. Well, it took them another six months to check character so I didn't actually get admitted to the bar until the following March or April. Luckily, even though I was hired to do trust and estates work, there was a man in the office, his name was George Harris, and he was terrific. His wife was a scientist and he had two daughters and he really wanted to see women progress and he lived in Carol Gardens in Brooklyn. He just wanted to move women along. So he got me doing some litigation and that was a lot of fun. I enjoyed that and I also worked with another lawyer, Tony Long, who was the first Asian partner in a law firm in New York, I think, ever and Tony's wife was an investment banker. And so he also felt that, as far as he knew, women would do whatever they wanted to do.

Maureen Zegel: It was the era of change.

Margaret Mooney: It was an era of change, so I was very fortunate I had the opportunity to work with these two guys who really wanted to see women move ahead and not be stuck in traditional roles, I would say. So that was all good.

Maureen Zegel: So there you were doing litigation. You got out of trusts and...

Margaret Mooney: Got out of trusts and estates, yay!

Maureen Zegel: What kind of litigation?

Margaret Mooney: Well, it was for large corporations. It was a lot of the early basic stuff, doing motions and discovery. I was lucky to be able to work with some of the clients and we had one matter that ended up going to the Consumer Products Safety Commission in Washington and I got to go down there and meet with members of the staff and that was all pretty interesting for a new young lawyer. That was good.

Maureen Zegel: And your husband had finished at the same time?

Margaret Mooney: Yeah, we graduated at the same time and he was interested in accounting. He had an accounting background. He had gone to St. Louis University and had both a Bachelor's and Master's in business from St. Louis University and so he went to work for an accounting firm. He went to work for Coopers & Lybrand so that was what he was doing and he was busy getting a Master's Degree in taxation.

Maureen Zegel: And you lived in New York?

Margaret Mooney: And we lived in New York. We lived in Tutor City on 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, between 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and United Nations. We lived right across the street from the Ford Foundation. It was a great spot and when I first went to work for the law firm that was down at One Wall Street and so it was just three subway stops, the express train and it was great. Then the first moved to Rockefeller Center so I could walk to Rockefeller Center and that was good, too, yeah. It was all good. I liked living in New York a lot.

Maureen Zegel: And then you decided...

Margaret Mooney: Well, my husband was from St. Louis and did not like New York, just really wanted to come back to St. Louis and so we made a deal that after we'd been in New York for over seven years, if he got a job in St. Louis, I went to St. Louis. So I came here in 1977 and I've been here ever since.

Maureen Zegel: So here you are in St. Louis.

Margaret Mooney: I came to St. Louis. I was pregnant with my first child. I moved here, like, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend and my daughter was born on December the 10<sup>th</sup>. I had been in Missouri one summer after Joe got out of the Army. We were up in Kirksville because he was finishing a Master's Degree up there. Boy, was that an experience. Kirksville, Missouri in 1972, the summer of '72...no, the summer of '71, ah, hot as could be and no air conditioning

and nothing to do. I would go to the library and read newspapers and read magazines. There was absolutely nothing to do. It was my first experience with a town with a square and everything was on the square and those were the only paved streets. It was a paved street in the town. The square was paved and it was a paved street out of town, nothing else was paved. I couldn't believe it. And there was a mail order Sears Roebuck that you could go into. There was a grocery store and the grocery store...this was the first time I had ever seen this...they had counter checks. There were two banks in town and they had blank checks from the two banks and you could just write a check for your groceries on whichever bank you banked at. I had never seen such a thing and that was one of my summer jobs when I was in college, had been working in a bank and it was like, wow! This was really something. So, the only place to go to eat was a Pizza Hut and there was a drive-in movie and the movie changed once a week. So that was it for recreation or entertainment. Oh, and the other families who were there, they were mainly male teachers from Iowa who were coming to get a Master's Degree and their wives and their children and most of the women had not been to college or had been to college for one year before they got married. I remember them asking me what it was like to live in New York City and one of them talked about having taken a bus trip from somewhere in southern Iowa, I guess, to New York City, at high school graduation and they had walked around and they had been afraid to go into any stores because they thought they'd have to buy something. I was just totally...realized that I had had a much different life experience than these women. I mean, they made cookies. That was what they talked about, was making cookies and different cookie recipes and I had the best suntan I ever had in my life because there was nothing else to do but sit in a lawn chair and read a magazine. It was really something. And one of my sisters got married that summer. There was a beauty college in the town so I went and had my hair done at this beauty college and I had this great big puffy thing. It was really, really funny. But anyway, so there was that summer in Kirksville, so that was the only time I had really been in Missouri for any length of time until I moved here, and actually, I had come out and looked for houses with my mother-in-law and father-in-law and I spent four days looking at houses and I picked one and my husband never saw it before we moved in. It was okay with him. It was in a good neighborhood. It was in University City. His main requirement was that it

be in University City because, actually, his dad was on the city council and his dad, the following March, was elected mayor of University City so I could vote for my father-in-law and he could vote for his dad so that was all good.

Maureen Zegel: So you had a little girl in December.

Margaret Mooney: Right, and then, I had to study to take the bar exam because I hadn't been admitted to the bar because of the long delay in the State of New York in examining the character of all these thousands of people who took the bar exam. I had only been admitted to the bar, like, four-and-a-half years, when I moved to Missouri. So I had to take the Missouri bar exam.

Maureen Zegel: Was that a requirement after five years [inaudible 40:47]?

Margaret Mooney: Yeah, if you had five years of being admitted in a different state, you could be admitted by reciprocity. The other big change was that things had changed in the bar exam field too because there was now a multi-state exam which was one day and then the second day was the Missouri part of it. So I started studying for the bar exam, like, in Thanksgiving, right before my daughter was born and so that's what I did. I just stayed home and I studied for the bar exam and then I had to go to Jefferson City and take the bar exam in February. That was another crazy experience. My husband was in a law firm and somehow there was somebody that came to his firm, I guess who had taken the Illinois bar but not Missouri who was going up to the Missouri bar so he and I drove up together but what I hadn't thought about was, I had been breastfeeding the baby and I wasn't used to pumping milk. Oh, it was agony but I passed that bar exam too. It worked out and I had to look for a job, which I did and a good friend of my in-laws introduced me to somebody at his law firm who needed an associate to do some litigation. So that worked out.

Maureen Zegel: And that was...

Margaret Mooney: I'm at the law firm of Lashley and Barrett. I've been at this firm 37½ years. I started on March 15<sup>th</sup> of 1978 and I remember going in and talking to this guy and saying, "Well, I have to take the bar exam and I have to take my baby down to see my parents in Florida and then I can start after that." So the bar exam was the end of February. I took that,

took the baby and went down to see my mom and dad and I came back and went to work and I had to find somebody to watch the baby. That was the other thing because my mother-in-law had no interest. She still had, like, a 12-year-old at home and she was not going to become the babysitter.

Maureen Zegel: So, did you find someone else?

Margaret Mooney: So I did find someone. I was very, very lucky, found a lovely, wonderful woman who came and stayed with us for about 12 or 13 years. She was great and she would live in the house with us, Monday to Friday, and on Friday, I would take her to her daughter's house and her daughter lived in Maryland Heights and then on Sunday night, her daughter would bring her back to my house. It was perfect. It really worked very well. It was a lucky thing.

Maureen Zegel: So talk about your career.

Margaret Mooney: Yeah, the case I was hired to work on was a huge anti-trust lawsuit against the Shell Oil Company and Amoco Oil Company and I learned more about the oil industry than I ever thought it was possible to know; really, a lot of interesting people and information and the trial was so exciting. It was a six-week trial in the federal court and the judge was John Nangle who was a great judge and the lawyer for Amoco...it was so interesting...the lawyer for Amoco was John Shepherd and John Shepherd was eventually, within a couple of years, the president of the American Bar Association. He was such a courtly gentleman and he just had it down. The lawyer for Shell took the laboring oar on defending the case and after every witness, John would stand up and he'd say, "Well, I just have a question" and he'd ask some absolutely bland question to point out that his client never did anything and sit down and I'll be darned if those guys didn't win. But it was such an interesting experience and I learned so much watching them and listening to what they did. Oh, those were the old days in the federal courthouse here in St. Louis, in the old courthouse. Now there's a new courthouse that, of course, was built to much controversy at the time it was built, about 15 years ago or maybe 20. It was the most expensive federal courthouse in the United States.

Maureen Zegel: I do remember that controversy.

Margaret Mooney: Yeah.

Maureen Zegel: Where were women in the law by that time, by the time you started practicing in St. Louis?

Margaret Mooney: In the late '70s in St. Louis, there were some women, not very many. Of course, there were two law schools here in St. Louis and they did admit women and they had admitted women for some time but it was really in the late '70s that the first woman judge got on the bench and that was Anne Meaderlander who was just amazing. I mean, she was really, really something. Then there was Anna Forder and there was Susan Block, but in the late '70s and the early '80s, there were virtually no women judges or just beginning to be women judges and very few women lawyers. I mean, it's totally changed. Now, more than half of the students at Washington University and at St. Louis University Law School are women. Many, many of the professors are women. Back in those days, in the late '70s and early '80s, there were very few women teaching in the law school. And you didn't see that many women in court, doing litigation. There were some. There were probably more doing family law, domestic relations. There were some doing criminal defense work. That's where they could get positions. Some of the judges were really totally unreceptive to having women in their courtrooms. I mean, they just really were negative and they would sometimes disregard what women had to say or sometimes were outright disrespectful of women. They would remark on what women were wearing or what their appearance was. There were some court judges that wouldn't allow women in court in pants. I mean, crazy stuff. I mean, how could this be of any significance?

Maureen Zegel: In the 1980's.

Margaret Mooney: Yeah, that's pretty much the way it was. But there got to be women doing all kinds of different things in law and that was good. And now, they're everywhere.

Maureen Zegel: Who influenced you in your career?

Margaret Mooney: Well, certainly my parents. My parents always told me I could do whatever I wanted to do or be whatever I wanted to be so that was a very positive thing and although I think both of my parents were a little uncertain about my decision to go to law school, neither one of them ever said, "You shouldn't do it" or "You can't do it." I mean, they were always very encouraging. So that was good. And then, I think I was very

fortunate in the employment that I had as a lawyer in working in firms where people really encouraged women to try to do new things or do things that maybe women hadn't been doing for a long time. The two men I mentioned in New York were great supporters of mine, and then actually, the lawyers I worked for here in St. Louis, Joe Rutherford was great. He had four daughters and really was very much a promoter of women advancing and doing things in different professions. None of his daughters were lawyers but he was very much encouraging and he'd send me out to go and do whatever needed to be done. He never hesitated that I was a woman and never presumed that I couldn't do something because I was a woman, for sure, and another man who worked on this first lawsuit with us also had two daughters and two step-daughters and his wife was a professional. So they were all very encouraging and I think I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work with them. I learned a lot from them and that was good. When I started working at the Lashley Law Firm in St. Louis, there was another woman; she had started a week before me.

Maureen Zegel: And you were the first two?

Margaret Mooney: We were the first two. Well, they said that there had been a woman many years before but we never met her. We didn't know who that was so Amy and I were the first two, yeah, and our firm actually became a firm that had more women, almost 40% women, I think, than most of the other larger firms in St. Louis.

Maureen Zegel: Any awards you've won, awards or recognition, you've been recognized?

Margaret Mooney: Yeah, I've done work for organizations like Legal Services and I've been recognized for that work. In 2005, they started having some kind of a designation of super lawyers so I was a super lawyer in Missouri but mainly the recognition I've had has been in the work I've done in the non-profit area.

Maureen Zegel: Can you talk a little bit about that? It showed up in your life, early on in your life, taking care of [inaudible 53:24] and the psychology.

Margaret Mooney: Yeah. Well, the first non-profit I guess I started to work for was Kids in the Middle which was an organization that provides therapy and supportive services to children whose families are going through a divorce or other major loss and I worked with them for a number of years. I've worked

with a theater group, The New Theater and with a music quartet, the Quartet Seraphim. I started doing work with the YWCA back in the 1990's and worked with YWCA for approximately 15 years and ended up being the board chair there. Now, I still do things with the YWCA but I didn't age out but I kind of worked through all the different things I could do for them so now I'm on some committees for the YWCA and I work with Girls Inc. and I'm also on the board of the Community College Foundation which is really interesting. I've learned a lot doing that. Oh, and I did the Women in Leadership program and I did the Focus St. Louis program and all of these are great opportunities to meet such interesting people. There are really lots of people here in this community who are working very hard to lift everyone up. That's the goal.

Maureen Zegel: So now we have about four-and-a-half minutes left. So let's divide that time.

Margaret Mooney: Well, one thing I haven't mentioned, I have two daughters.

Maureen Zegel: That's right.

Margaret Mooney: And I personally think they're both pretty outstanding. My older daughter, Claire, is the CFO for a federally qualified health clinic in the Washington, D.C. area and she works with people from mainly Central American countries, probably mainly El Salvador and Guatemala and has a couple of kids and she's doing great. Then my younger daughter is also a lawyer. She graduated from law school at Berkeley but before that, she got a Master's in Special Education here at UMSL and worked in the Teach for America program and also at a middle school here in St. Louis where she worked with special needs children and then also the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. So, put in a plug for my girls.

Maureen Zegel: Is there anything we missed other than now, your two daughters?

Margaret Mooney: Now that I covered the girls, no. Yeah, I think that's...

Maureen Zegel: There's one question: What do you think life would have been like if you had been born even earlier than 1946?

Margaret Mooney: Well, could have been a lot more like my mother who was well educated and only worked for a few years before she married and had a whole bunch of kids, or maybe more like the mothers of some of the people I

went to high school with whose mothers were primarily teachers. I don't know whether it would have been possible or whether there would have been the opportunity to really have a profession that I have and I think the '60s were definitely a time of change, no question about that. Everything was changing, and one of the things we didn't even talk about was birth control. I mean, I didn't have to have six kids. That was huge because, I think lots and lots of women in the generation before, especially the immediate post-war generation, they just had so many children, it was very difficult to do other things and they didn't have childcare. I think having the availability of childcare is very important too. So times have definitely changed.

Maureen Zegel: That's a great note to end on. I don't even think I talked about...maybe the doctor, when I talked to the doctor, she was an OB-GYN and she talked about birth control and how it had changed.

Josephine Sporleder: Okay.