

An Interview with

Pat Rich

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: Would you introduce yourself?

Pat Rich: Happy to. My name is Pat Rich and I've lived in St. Louis for almost 50 years but I didn't go to high school here so I'm not considered a native.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, you are a native. Talk about your youth: your parents; your siblings; your cousins; your grandparents; how did you play when you were a kid; did you play with boys and girls, both or separately or together, any way you played. And would you talk about who in your family said to you, "Pat, you have ability and you should think about what you want to do in your life."

Pat Rich: I grew up in Detroit, Michigan and have one brother and we lived in a nice middle-class kind of neighborhood until about 5th grade when my parents moved to one of the suburbs because of the educational system. Education was always a really major focus for my parents and the good news was that I was a very good student and, being a good student, I usually did very well in school. I played with kids in the neighborhood. I remember riding my bike over to my friend, Judy's house and all that sort of thing. I ended up going to a junior high school at that time that was 7th, 8th and 9th grade and I made a friend in 7th grade who, to this day, remains a good friend, who's been influential in a number of ways in my life. I just really had what would be a fairly normal childhood, I'm sure, not particularly involved in things. I was involved in theater to some degree, never an actor...

Blanche Touhill: In grade school or high school?

Pat Rich: In high school, but always liked the...I usually either worked either on make-up or the sets or whatever and just always did that. We had a high school group that went to the symphony so that's probably how I started enjoying the arts, which has been a constant through my life.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, that's true. Well, go back a little bit. Was there somebody in your family circle that encouraged you or was it just a subtle environment?

Pat Rich: Well, I think it was an environment where nobody told me there wasn't anything I couldn't do if I wanted to. Now, when I did go to college, my parents said, "The only thing that..." ...they paid for college which, of course, was a lot less expensive than it is today, but they did say, "The one thing we'd really like you to get is a teaching certificate" because at

that point in time, women were teachers, secretaries and nurses and that was about it. You did not have the opportunity to go...I mean, you didn't even think about going to law school or business school or graduate school, for that matter because the thing that you went to college for was to find a husband.

Blanche Touhill: And then why would you need a degree?

Pat Rich: That's right because you stayed home with your kids. They were certainly happy to have me go to college. That was never an issue, although they did say, "We have a very fine school down the road so there's no reason to go anywhere else" and so I went to the University of Michigan, which, indeed, is a very fine school.

Blanche Touhill: Go back though: When you played, did your family have structured play for you or did you just, when you got home from school, you just got your bike and...did you take dancing or...

Pat Rich: Oh, I took dancing. I took piano lessons, really, to no good end, unfortunately. Let's see: dancing, piano lessons, there was a ceramics place where we did that, just sort of the typical kinds of things people did, nothing that I can really think about.

Blanche Touhill: Did you play with your brother?

Pat Rich: No, my brother's about three years younger than I am and he was much more of a free spirit, anti-authority person than I. We got along but we didn't play together, although interestingly, he had a friend down the block named John and just this last September, we all celebrated my brother's big birthday at John's farm in Virginia.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, how wonderful!

Pat Rich: And so it was sort of full circle.

Blanche Touhill: So you were always friendly but what he wanted to do was not really what you wanted to do?

Pat Rich: Right.

Blanche Touhill: Did you play with dolls?

Pat Rich: Yes, I had some very nice...some of them I really wish I had now. I had an aunt and uncle who traveled a lot. They had some money and no children and so they were able to travel and every time they traveled somewhere, they'd bring me back dolls from different countries.

Blanche Touhill: So you had a nice collection.

Pat Rich: I had a very nice collection. Heaven only knows whatever happened to it. I think it's also one of the things that's always made me want to travel and so I have traveled extensively and I think that was part of the beginning of it.

Blanche Touhill: Did they tell you about their trips when they came back?

Pat Rich: A little bit, not a lot.

Blanche Touhill: But it was more or less, they gave you a doll dressed in a Spanish costume or...

Pat Rich: Exactly.

Blanche Touhill: And then you knew where Spain was?

Pat Rich: Exactly.

Blanche Touhill: And you knew it was exciting.

Pat Rich: Well, it sounded very exciting to me because I hadn't been too much of anywhere.

Blanche Touhill: When you talk about going to grade school and high school was there a teacher that encouraged you?

Pat Rich: I had an English teacher who encouraged me who told me I was a good writer and so that was something that I've always pursued and, in fact, my degrees are in English Literature and it was something that I just followed with and it was something that came fairly easily to me. I am not a creative writer. I'm not going to write the great American novel, not even a bad American novel but I do a lot of writing in my work and just have always written a lot of things.

Blanche Touhill: When you were young, can you remember the first little story you wrote?

Pat Rich: No.

Blanche Touhill: Or the age that you were? When did you realize that you sort of liked to write?

Pat Rich: I don't know that I ever decided it was something I really liked to do, but it was something I could do easily and because it came fairly easily to me, I enjoyed doing it.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, okay. I just wondered, writing, I think if you can't do it in grade school, at some time in grade school, I think it's very hard to do it easily after that. I think people do learn to write because it is a skill but for the writer, it comes early.

Pat Rich: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: Did you write poetry?

Pat Rich: I have played at everything, I'll just say that. I do remember I had a teacher in 9th grade, an English teacher who was a fanatic about vocabulary and that was his stock and trade and every day you had to learn three more words.

Blanche Touhill: His words or any words you chose?

Pat Rich: No, he had a whole system where, when you were done with his class at the end of 9th grade, your vocabulary was pretty incredible and, to this day, that has served me well.

Blanche Touhill: Now, did they teach you spelling in grade school?

Pat Rich: Yes, spelling, penmanship. I remember in grade school one day, we had to stand up and be able to list all the prepositions. It was Mrs....somebody or another who I remember as being a fairly stern character, but boy, they drilled it into you.

Blanche Touhill: Did you diagram?

Pat Rich: I can diagram a sentence. I am very good with grammar and all of that.

Blanche Touhill: I do think that's a lot that you owe to the teachers. I think some schools really don't teach it. They don't teach spelling; they don't teach diagramming; they don't teach how to write little paragraphs. They may be good at the paragraph and they may be good at the short story,

everybody can do that, but to really understand grammar...were foreign languages easier for you?

Pat Rich: Absolutely. I started French in 9th grade and took it all the way through graduate school and, indeed, I ended up teaching French, which is another story I will tell you, even though I was an English major, and I took Latin also and I whizzed through Latin because I really do know grammar. So language is easy for me.

Blanche Touhill: Are you musical?

Pat Rich: I can hear it; I can't play it.

Blanche Touhill: But when you went to the symphony, you could hear the full orchestra playing?

Pat Rich: I could hear it, yes. So I'm one of those.

Blanche Touhill: Now, were your parents interested in the arts?

Pat Rich: A little bit, probably theater more than anything else. They would take me to the theater sometimes, mainly Broadway kinds of things and that. Neither of my parents had a college education. I was the first one in our family to go to college but they worked hard and there was a family business that my father worked in. We certainly weren't rich but we weren't poor either.

Blanche Touhill: But that's the entrepreneurship...

Pat Rich: I think so, yes.

Blanche Touhill: ...the organization, how do you organize your business so that it makes it.

Pat Rich: Yeah. Well, my father was a salesman and I will tell you that I have always thought that if he'd ever gone to business school, he would have been dynamite because he could sell you anything, absolutely. I'm not kidding about that.

Blanche Touhill: So his courtship with your mother was smooth?

Pat Rich: I assume so. I was obviously not around at the time so who knows?

Blanche Touhill: Talk about the theater. You weren't on the stage?

Pat Rich: No, I am not an out front actor kind of person.

Blanche Touhill: Did you write scripts?

Pat Rich: No, just enjoyed it and worked behind the scenes and just always enjoyed being with them. You'd have the cast parties and it was just a really nice way to work with people and do things. And I did the same in college.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, you did?

Pat Rich: I did.

Blanche Touhill: At the University of Michigan?

Pat Rich: Yes, Michigan, I don't know if they still have it, they had something called "Soft Shoe" where the sophomore class always put on a play and I was part of that, again, behind the scenes.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, but they must have had a lot of people in the sophomore class.

Pat Rich: Oh, Michigan was huge.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, that's what I'm saying.

Pat Rich: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: That's a wonderful idea, to keep that sophomore class together, isn't it?

Pat Rich: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: That there was a project.

Pat Rich: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: And you could do anything but you should consider really being a part of the project.

Pat Rich: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: What was the play?

Pat Rich: Guys and Dolls.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, how wonderful! Detroit was an interesting place to grow up in in those days, wasn't it? Was it changing then?

- Pat Rich: Detroit was a fabulous city to grow up in in the '50s and '60s.
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, it was booming probably.
- Pat Rich: Booming, absolutely booming.
- Blanche Touhill: Because cars were coming on the market. They had not been on and people could buy them.
- Pat Rich: Right, no question about it, booming, beautiful suburbs. It was really a great place to be. I remember riding the bus downtown to go to Hudson's Department Store or you'd go to Sander's which was the bakery and known for their hot fudge sundaes and, actually, you can still buy Sander's hot fudge. You can actually buy it at Schnucks now.
- Blanche Touhill: Really? I'll look for it.
- Pat Rich: You can. It's wonderful, but it was a booming place and I'll tell you two interesting stories about that: My husband and I married in 1966 and my husband was a car guy, I mean, from birth, I think and he bought himself a Mercedes in 1967, sedan.
- Blanche Touhill: Was he practicing the dentistry?
- Pat Rich: Oh, yes, when we got married he was already a practicing dentist but he loved cars. I mean, our whole life is centered around cars. This came over from Germany and he picked it up and we drove to Detroit to see my family and friends. I'll never forget this: it's 1967 and Detroit has always had a fabulous highway system, mainly because there were cars so when we were driving down the street, it was literally the only foreign car in Detroit. Now, that's probably an exaggeration but not by much. This is before imports were so huge. There was no Toyota, or at least you didn't know about it, and Detroit, you drove an American car and people stared at that car. It was very interesting.
- Blanche Touhill: You know, my sister and her husband bought a foreign car and I'm just trying to think of the year, and my mother was so terrified because it was small and it was one of the first small foreign cars that came into St. Louis and my mother was just...oh, she was so worried because my sister was driving this little...it was an English car. Today I'd say it was a fine size but in those days, it looked so small next to the big Detroit cars.

Pat Rich: Oh, you'd have those huge cars.

Blanche Touhill: Huge cars.

Pat Rich: Huge cars. My uncle used to always drive a Cadillac and I still remember them with the big fins...I mean, huge.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, and the colors.

Pat Rich: It was a black one.

Blanche Touhill: What did your family say when you drove in in a foreign car?

Pat Rich: Well, nobody knew what it was. I mean, it was just kind of, "Why did you do that?" So, in any case, pretty interesting.

Blanche Touhill: How was Ann Arbor?

Pat Rich: Ann Arbor is a wonderful place to live. My husband always said getting me out of Ann Arbor was probably harder than getting him, ya know to marry me. Ann Arbor was just a fabulous college town.

Blanche Touhill: And it's such a good school.

Pat Rich: Great school, I can't say enough good things about it.

Blanche Touhill: When I used to go to Detroit on administrative business, there was a group called the "Urban 13" or 13 universities in cities actually that had baseball teams.

Pat Rich: Oh.

Blanche Touhill: And so we tied up in Wayne State with our partner and I went and I can't think of the year but Detroit had fallen on hard times and I remember we went in the art museum. They had a fabulous art museum and they had ever other room was closed and I was so shocked that Detroit, which had been sort of success city...

Pat Rich: Yes, absolutely.

Blanche Touhill: ...had just begun to fall on bad times and Wayne State, in those days, was undergoing terrible cuts and the administration were all talking about how they could manage the cuts.

Pat Rich: Yes, very difficult.

- Blanche Touhill: So it really did...and eventually, did it go bankrupt?
- Pat Rich: Yes, not too long ago, it was a couple of years ago.
- Blanche Touhill: Yes, so it took a long time but you could just see, it was just...and was that the foreign cars coming in?
- Pat Rich: Well, a couple of things happened. The major thing that happened actually also in 1967...I'll never forget this, it was in July, I think, I was going home to see my family and it was a Sunday afternoon and it was beautiful day and we'd get close to Detroit and the pilot came on the speaker and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, we just want to tell you, we don't know whether or not we can land in Detroit because there's been a fire in the air," and everybody was just...I mean, nobody knew what to say and the riots had started in the middle of the night and Detroit had kept it quiet. It had not gone out. We didn't have Twitter and Facebook. There was no internet, actually. There was nothing that way so this kept quiet. Nothing happened and nobody had told anyone and ended up, basically we did land and nobody could go into Detroit. If you are going into Detroit, you will be rerouted. You have to go to Ann Arbor or somewhere else. My parents picked me up. There were road blocks everywhere at the airport and my parents had then moved from the east side of Detroit to the west side of Detroit and my friends were still on the east side. Detroit is bifurcated. The really nice suburbs are on the east side and the west side, not like St. Louis where they're kind of down the middle. It could easily take an hour to get from one side to the other and in reality, I sat at my parents' house and watched Detroit burn on television for a week. You couldn't move. You couldn't go anywhere. It was unbelievable.
- Blanche Touhill: So the National Guard was out?
- Pat Rich: Oh, everybody was out.
- Blanche Touhill: The police departments, yeah.
- Pat Rich: It was huge. I mean, it was huge and to this day, Detroit has not recovered.
- Blanche Touhill: No.

Pat Rich: It still has not recovered. That was sort of the beginning of the end of Detroit.

Blanche Touhill: Was that Martin Luther King's assassination?

Pat Rich: No, it was near the time of the Watts riots and I'm sorry, I don't remember exactly...

Blanche Touhill: What the exact time was...Yes, but it's the time of the Watts riots?

Pat Rich: Yeah, just that same time.

Blanche Touhill: So it's Vietnam in that era as well?

Pat Rich: Yes, right.

Blanche Touhill: So there were people demonstrating against Vietnam and then there were people who were involved in arson.

Pat Rich: Yes, but this was not a war protest. This was a racial whatever.

Blanche Touhill: It was then civil rights.

Pat Rich: This was a civil rights thing.

Blanche Touhill: Civil rights coming up, yes.

Pat Rich: Right, absolutely. In fact, when I was at Michigan, Michigan was pretty much a hotbed, one of the hotbeds: Michigan, Berkeley, whatever, and interestingly, the editor of the Michigan Daily, when I was a freshman, was a senior named Tom Hayden who gained notoriety and fame in a number of ways. He became a real activist. He married Jane Fonda. That was one of the things he did. He actually got elected to the California State Legislature, I think.

Blanche Touhill: So, probably his first encounter in that kind of activity was at Michigan?

Pat Rich: Oh, probably. There was a big SDS chapter at Michigan.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, but Michigan, were there troops on the corners?

Pat Rich: Oh, no, this was before that.

Blanche Touhill: It was just intellectual ferment?

Pat Rich: Very intellectual ferment.

Blanche Touhill: But in your neighborhood, you couldn't really drive to Detroit, is what you're saying?

Pat Rich: This is later. This is after I'm out of college.

Blanche Touhill: But you couldn't drive down the street?

Pat Rich: You couldn't drive to downtown; you couldn't drive through the city.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah. You know, somebody said to me the other day, "America has never been in a worse situation than today," and I thought, I don't agree with that. I remember the riots. I remember the Vietnam War. I remember the Depression of the '30s. I remember World War II. I mean, we have had some terrible times.

Pat Rich: There are a lot of things. People's memories only go as far as they can remember so, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: And what surprised is the person who said it to me is my age.

Pat Rich: Really?

Blanche Touhill: And I thought, I don't know where she's been, or at least she was protected from those crises and I guess I wasn't. I had relatives, male relatives in World War II and in the Depression, I remember people couldn't find jobs and we had a big house and they'd move in with us for a couple of weeks and then they'd get a job and they'd move out. It was not a...I'm not saying I didn't have a pleasant childhood but it was a childhood filled with people suffering.

Pat Rich: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: Other people suffering and I guess I transferred that suffering to me as a child. Well, so, go on. Then you graduated from the University of Michigan...

Pat Rich: I did.

Blanche Touhill: ...and you got your teaching certificate?

Pat Rich: I did.

Blanche Touhill: And you had an English Literature Bachelor's Degree.

Pat Rich: I did.

Blanche Touhill: So what happened?

Pat Rich: I went to... One of my good friends and I, we moved to California where we both taught school for a year and then I ended up going back to Michigan to get my Master's Degree.

Blanche Touhill: In English?

Pat Rich: In English, I got it in English, with a minor in French and during that year, I met my husband-to-be and we got married at the end of the year and I ended up moving to St. Louis. He was already in private practice in St. Louis. He's a native of St. Louis.

Blanche Touhill: So he was getting a graduate degree or something at Michigan?

Pat Rich: No, I passed through St. Louis and he was a blind date.

Blanche Touhill: No kidding?

Pat Rich: No kidding. So you just never know.

Blanche Touhill: So you had a friend here?

Pat Rich: My mother had a friend here and I stopped here for a few days and he was one of the blind dates she managed to fix me up on.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, how nice! So you came back to...well, now, how did St. Louis strike you?

Pat Rich: Well...

Blanche Touhill: What year was that roughly?

Pat Rich: 1966, and it was hot that summer. I'll never forget that because I moved into my husband's apartment which was a teeny tiny little apartment in Maplewood. He'd been a bachelor. He cleaned it quarterly, you know, one of those kinds of things. I always joke that when I lined the drawers in the dresser, in the bedroom, I doubled its value. Anyway, I didn't know anybody in St. Louis and my husband's friends...my husband was quite a bit older than I was and so all of his friends had been married for a long

time, had kids, had their lives, most of them were the natives who had been here forever and so, very hard to make friends. He thought his friends' wives would all just take me in, but they didn't know what to do with me.

Blanche Touhill: No, they were at a different level in their married life.

Pat Rich: Different stage of their lives totally, totally different stage and so I knew I had to find work and we took a delayed honeymoon in September and so I went around and interviewed and I actually had a job offer for January, the next January, with McGraw-Hill, used to have a big publishing...

Blanche Touhill: Yes, I remember them, out on Manchester Road.

Pat Rich: Yes, they were.

Blanche Touhill: I published something with them.

Pat Rich: Yes, they had a big publishing thing and so they offered me a job as an editor in January which was great because we were going to be away in September and I'd sort of roam around and try to find where things were in St. Louis and ended up, we went away in September and when I came back, I got a call from the Ladue School District...this is like mid-October...I had put in a substitute teaching form in Clayton and Ladue, three or four of the different school districts...Kirkwood, whatever, and as I mentioned, I've been a French minor and it was October, like the second week of October and the young woman who they had hired to teach French had come in and said she was quitting, after six weeks of school, and they didn't know what to do. So they called me in and they said, "Well, we don't want you to substitute but we'd like to know if you'd be willing to teach 7th, 8th and 9th grade French" and I thought, well, I've taught English so I kind of got that, but I'd never taught French and I said, "I don't know." I said, "Let me watch her for a day." So I followed her around for a day, went to all of her classes and this was a young woman who had a degree in French from a university I will not name, local, not UMSL...there hardly was an UMSL at that point...in any case, she clearly didn't know the grammar and when the kids who were typically fairly bright...

Blanche Touhill: Yes, and aggressive.

- Pat Rich: And aggressive, they caught on real quick and they knew she didn't know what she was doing and they just did her in.
- Blanche Touhill: Yes, of course, because they want to learn. They're aggressive but they're not a mean aggressive. They're aggressive because they want to go to college and they want to know languages and they want to travel. I know that student very well.
- Pat Rich: Yeah, so I watched and I could see what the problem was because, as we talked about earlier, I really know grammar and she clearly didn't know it and so, make a long story short, I said, yes, I would do it and I taught French for two years, which I loved. It was wonderful and I made some teaching friends and then I ended up quitting when I was having a baby, which was what you did in those days and then I stayed home and at that point, I got very involved in volunteer things because I had to have something to do. I'm not very good at sitting around and eating bonbons.
- Blanche Touhill: And there are a lot of opportunities in St. Louis.
- Pat Rich: A lot of opportunities.
- Blanche Touhill: So, now, I know I met you when you were the head of the Arts & Education Council. So how did you get that job?
- Pat Rich: Well, I'm going to have to back up. I taught school for two years and then I volunteered heavily, mainly with the League of Women Voters for another 10, 12 years and then finally, my kids were 10 and 13 and finally my husband and I agreed that I would see if I could go back to work. I got hired by the Missouri Botanical Garden...
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, yes, I remember that.
- Pat Rich: Yes, and I got hired by the Garden. I met a fellow who was working there who was going to run the campaign to get the garden into the Zoo/Museum District.
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, my goodness. That was just when Peter Raven got there.
- Pat Rich: No, Peter had already been there. Peter got there in '71 and this was '80, so Peter had been there and so they were working on that.
- Blanche Touhill: That was Wolfe, wasn't it? Wasn't the lawyer Mr. Wolfe?

Pat Rich: Frank Wolfe was always...to this day, he's still the lawyer but he wasn't the person who I met. And so he was looking to hire somebody to help him with the campaign and I had been active in the League of Women Voters and then, actually, I went to work for what was then called The Metropolitan Association for Philanthropy.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, I know that one, too.

Pat Rich: Which now is Gateway to Giving and was doing a project for them and the League was involved in supporting the garden getting in to the Zoo/Museum District which had to go through the legislature and on and on. So, what ended up happening is I was hired to do some fundraising research for Peter Raven and then I would work on a campaign when it was time for the campaign to come, and so I was at the Garden for two months. I was working part-time and Peter called me one day and we had this sort of surreal conversation. This was at the time of building the Ridgeway Center and he said to me on the phone...and the only good news, it was a Thursday and my husband was off on Thursdays and he picked up the phone to listen to the conversation because I don't think he would have believed it if he hadn't really heard it...and Peter said to me, "Would you be interested in taking over doing the construction of the Ridgeway Center?" and I said, "You mean, doing the fundraising for the Ridgeway?"; "No, no, no, the construction," and I said...you know, the fellow who was doing it had just resigned and was going to move out of town for another job and I said, "Let me think about that one." It would be working full-time but doing construction, which was not exactly in my portfolio. So I ended up talking to a couple of guys who I knew who were in the construction business and I said, "Can I do this? Is this really crazy" or whatever, and they said, "You know how to work. You know how to organize things. Sure, you could do this." And I said, "Okay," and I became the construction manager for the Garden. I was what was called the "owner's representative." I signed all the checks for the Ridgeway Center and had some very funny encounters along the way because this was 1981 and not a lot of women in construction, to this day.

Blanche Touhill: No, but you know, now that I think about it, you're the first woman I've ever heard of that did that, but yet today, women are now breaking into being the administrative services part of universities so it's not unusual to have a woman, but it took a long time.

Pat Rich: It's a long time.

Blanche Touhill: It's a long time. Did you have trouble with the men?

Pat Rich: Well, the first day, I go to the job site meeting and, needless to say, I am the only woman and so we had this meeting and they're all looking at me like, "Who are you?" and then they finally understood that I really was going to be the person to sign the checks which was the thing that counted. That's what counted. And after the meeting...it was McCarthy Brothers and HOK...so we're dealing with major top firms. So the fellow who was the McCarthy person, afterwards...and this is sort of our famous story...he said to me, "What's your experience in construction?" and I looked at him and I said, "You know, I remodeled my kitchen," and I will tell you that to this day, we are good friends. We became very good friends.

Blanche Touhill: He laughed? He didn't get angry. He laughed.

Pat Rich: No, he laughed and we helped each other out along the way. He started his own construction company. His name is Bob Brinkman...

Blanche Touhill: Oh, I know Bob.

Pat Rich: You know Bob, and it's Bob, so Bob and I have been friends since 1981 and every year I go to his party but it was a wonderful experience. It's probably the thing I enjoyed doing the most of anything I've ever done.

Blanche Touhill: And you looked at it with great pride, I bet.

Pat Rich: It's my building. My name is in the time capsule.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, is it?

Pat Rich: Oh, absolutely.

Blanche Touhill: Well then, go on.

Pat Rich: Anyway, so I did that at the Garden and then the construction, after a couple of years, was coming to an end and I ended up becoming the director of development and I basically put together the fundraising program at the Garden which, to this day, is still going rather gangbusters...

Blanche Touhill: It is.

Pat Rich: ...doing very well. And that's kind of where I made my mark in terms of fundraising and was active in the Association of Fundraising Professionals which had a different name at that time.

Blanche Touhill: I think we had lunch at the Garden one time.

Pat Rich: May well be.

Blanche Touhill: I was first meeting you.

Pat Rich: May well be.

Blanche Touhill: Maybe it wasn't the Arts & Education Council. Maybe it was when you were down at the Garden.

Pat Rich: Yeah. I'll never forget, one day I was asked to be on a panel, and maybe you were there too...

Blanche Touhill: It could be.

Pat Rich: ...of women who ended up in sort of interesting jobs and I think there were three or four of us and I very honestly don't remember who else was there except for one woman and the question was, "Did you plan your career?" and I said, "You've got to be kidding me; didn't happen that way." And so, interestingly, there was only one woman there who said yes, she had planned everything she'd done and I will tell that whoever we all were on that panel, she is the one who has changed her career path more than anybody else. So, you know, you just never know. But I think when you learn basic skills and you're willing...doing the construction thing was clearly a challenge.

Blanche Touhill: Could've that gone back to your diagramming, that you knew where everything had to be.

Pat Rich: Well, I've always been very organized. That's why I'm good at that whole diagramming thing. The fellow who I worked with at the Garden who did that campaign, I ended up being in the same office with him and today he's one of my business partners. He and I and Patricia Barrett were the three founders of our consulting company.

Blanche Touhill: Well, talk about your consulting company.

Pat Rich: Well, after the Garden, I was hired as a CEO of the Arts & Education Council. I sort of go in 10-year chunks and then my husband retired and one day, he said, "I'm going to go on this trip..." ...it was, like, a five-week trip, and he said, "I'm going to go on this trip and if you want to go with me, that would be great and if not, I'll send you postcards."

Blanche Touhill: Well, that had come to be his time to travel.

Pat Rich: Yes, and we had always traveled. We traveled a lot. We have literally been almost everywhere in the world and so that's when I retired. We took...it was a fabulous trip, going to all the ancient places in the world and after we got back...I'm not very good at doing nothing and so I didn't know what I would do and some people would call me to do some consulting and I was doing a little bit of that, a little of this and that and at one point then, finally in 2001 or so...let me back up...Pat Barrett was a longtime friend of mine. We met in Leadership St. Louis in the late '70s and we had just been friends for a long time and she had retired from Ameren which had been Union Electric, where she'd been for 22 years at that point. She retired a couple of months after I did.

Blanche Touhill: What was her title at Ameren?

Pat Rich: She was a senior vice president for communications and whatever.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, she reached out to the community a lot.

Pat Rich: Yes, but she did all their crisis communications and she's the one who came up with the name "Ameren." I don't think she came up with it but she worked with the company that rebranded the...she did all of those kinds of things.

Blanche Touhill: What does Ameren really stand for?

Pat Rich: Nothing. It's just a made-up name.

Blanche Touhill: It's an easy name, Ameren?

Pat Rich: Right, and so she had worked in that industry but she'd been their philanthropic person giving away money and before she went there, she'd been a fundraiser at the old St. Joseph's Hospital in Kirkwood and for Junior Achievement and a couple other places.

Blanche Touhill: And she had something to do with Webster at one time.

Pat Rich:

She worked at Webster. She actually was in Admissions at Webster. We were talking one day and said, "You know, maybe we ought to try doing consulting together" and so we did a project together for a client and we figured we could work together and so we sat down and started thinking about what we would put together and literally, the same week, this fellow, Rick Daly, who I had worked with at the Garden, and we had remained friends over the years and he'd been the director of several other gardens around the country and we'd remained friends. What was really nice was that we were both CEOs and you could call each other and vent and ask questions, which you couldn't do of your staff. You need somebody outside to talk to. And so we talked to each other, not often but enough. And, in fact, he hired me on one of his jobs to come and do some work for him so we always kept in touch. And he called and he said that he'd made a decision that he was done with being a director, which he'd done for 30 years by that time, or whatever...20 or 25 years, and he knew I had done some consulting and wanted to know if I wanted to go into business with him doing consulting for gardens, and I had always consulted with gardens throughout my career. When I left Missouri, I did some work for some other gardens and when I was at A&E, I did some work for a couple of gardens. I had that kind of an agreement with the board because they were always out of town, I mean, obviously not here, and I said, "Funny you should do that because Pat and I are sitting here..."...and he knew Pat but not well but they knew who each other were. So he flew into St. Louis and the three of us sat down and for two days we kind of went through what we would do and how we'd do it, sort of out of your back pocket kind of business plan and we decided what we wanted to do and not do. We decided we would not have an office, that we would all work from home, and Rick didn't live here so that was the easiest thing and Pat and I didn't want to have an office. We each had an office at home and we decided we wanted no employees because the personnel issues are always the most difficult, as I'm sure you know and we would do fundraising, strategic planning and whatever anybody else really needed. So we went into business and started walking around town and talking to people and Rick worked only for gardens and he's now worked for probably 100 gardens around the country and he does anything but plants. We don't do plants. We do the other side of botanical gardens.

Blanche Touhill:

Yeah, the business side.

Pat Rich: The business side, and I always work with him on one or two gardens every year. I'm always doing some gardens, sort of thing but most of our consulting practice is here in St. Louis and we have grown the firm. We now have seven partners and, sadly, we lost Pat in June.

Blanche Touhill: Pat's loss was a loss for St. Louis.

Pat Rich: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: She was truly a good person.

Pat Rich: Oh, yes, she was, and an interesting person.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, but I mean, you meet a lot of people in the world but she was what I would say was good.

Pat Rich: Yes, I would agree with you, and I get all teary. I've had to do now a couple of memorial things for her and I have to practice a lot because it's difficult to do that. So, anyway, we now have seven partners and we're heavily St. Louis but always have some national things. Rick is only national. I do some national. One of our newer partners is doing a lot of national but we do a wide variety of things.

Blanche Touhill: I want to ask two other questions and then come back to your business. Have you received some award or awards that you're really proud of?

Pat Rich: I've been very fortunate. I've received a number of awards. I think one of the ones that I'm very proud of is I received the local AFP, which is the fundraising group, Fundraiser of the Year Award, about 20 years ago so it's been a while. So that was very nice. I received an award from what is now Safe Connections at one point.

Blanche Touhill: And what is Safe Connections?

Pat Rich: It is an organization that deals with women who have been abused. One of my passions in life is trying to work to make sure that women are equal, treated well and all of those kinds of things. Just several other awards that have been just very nice.

Blanche Touhill: And if you had been born 50 years earlier, what would your life have been like?

Pat Rich: Well, I would have been a suffragette, there's no question about that. That would have probably been my goal in life, is to get women the right to vote.

Blanche Touhill: Did your mother vote?

Pat Rich: Oh, yes, absolutely. I clearly wouldn't have been in the world I'm in now because women weren't there. I probably would have been a teacher. Teaching has been a constant all through my life.

Blanche Touhill: Well, you're still teaching in a way...

Pat Rich: Consulting is always teaching.

Blanche Touhill: ...with your consulting. And when you do strategic planning...

Pat Rich: It's always teaching.

Blanche Touhill: ...it's a teacher.

Pat Rich: Yeah, but I've taught here at UMSL, I taught here for 15 years doing the fundraising class.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, for non-profit management.

Pat Rich: For non-profit management. I finally retired at the end of last year, last May but I've always done teaching of some sort and, interestingly, both my daughters are teachers.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, really?

Pat Rich: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: So you have two girls and...

Pat Rich: I have two girls.

Blanche Touhill: And they're not in St. Louis?

Pat Rich: No, they are not in St. Louis.

Blanche Touhill: Are any of them dentists?

Pat Rich: No.

Blanche Touhill: So they followed your career path?

Pat Rich: Yes, they followed my career path.

Blanche Touhill: And were they English majors?

Pat Rich: No. The older one was a history major, actually at Washington University, and the younger one, her first degree is in art and her second degree is in math. So she's a math teacher and Barbara, who did the history degree at Wash U is actually a chef. Her graduate school was going to cooking school and she teaches cooking full-time at a cooking school in New York City.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, how wonderful!

Pat Rich: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: And what your other daughter's name?

Pat Rich: Catherine.

Blanche Touhill: And are they married and have children?

Pat Rich: They are both married, neither has children. They've actually married fairly recently, one two years ago and one three years ago. I still have a hard time remembering when they got married.

Blanche Touhill: I understand. Well, go back to your business. How long have you had the business?

Pat Rich: Well, we started in 2002 and so we're 13 years in.

Blanche Touhill: And you've grown.

Pat Rich: Oh, yes, we've grown a lot. We are, I believe, the largest consulting firm doing what we do in St. Louis, just in terms of numbers of partners and the scope of the work that we do. We have taken in new partners, slowly but surely, kind of over time.

Blanche Touhill: Do you have an office?

Pat Rich: No.

Blanche Touhill: Everybody works in their home?

Pat Rich: Everybody works in their home, except for one of my partners who doesn't like to do that and she rented a room from a friend of hers who

has an office so that she would have a place to go, but all the rest of us work from home and we don't have any employees at this point but we do have a number of subcontractors because consulting work goes kind of up and down and there are times we just can't do all the work that we have and, at least for some of us, while we want to work full-time...my personal goal is to work full-time when I'm here but to be able to take off enough time to travel.

Blanche Touhill: That's right. What do you think was in your personality or your background that made you move into these various challenges, even though there weren't many women around in those days moving into those area...?

Pat Rich: Yes. I will tell you, it was college. It was at Michigan I sort of blossomed, if you will, whatever you want to say and I became a leader on the campus and it, frankly, just never occurred to me that women weren't equal.

Blanche Touhill: Was it a surprise to you when you found out that in the minds of some people, you weren't?

Pat Rich: Yes. Well, I finally figured that out. By the time I got out of school, I'd figured that one out. But, you know, when you're a kid, you don't think about those kind of...at least I never thought about those kinds of things, lived a fairly sheltered life, if you will, where you did the sort of normal things. I'll tell you one of the things I did all the way through high school, was Girl Scouts, interestingly.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, so you think the Girl Scouts had an effect on you?

Pat Rich: Well, I think it probably had some effect, how much I don't know but in college, I really became a leader on the Michigan campus.

Blanche Touhill: What did you do that meant you were a leader?

Pat Rich: Well, I told you, I got involved in this "Soft Shoe" and I was an officer of that and then I was in a sorority and I became very involved in Panelenic which was the sorority piece, and I ended up becoming the president of Panelenic and was on Michigan student government. It was a way to meet all kinds of very interesting people, some of whom are literally still friends to this day, fairly good friends who I see from time to time, although nobody lives here so you have to travel.

- Blanche Touhill: Yeah, but you're right in keeping with the times. You talk to them probably.
- Pat Rich: Well, we e-mail, we send Christmas cards.
- Blanche Touhill: You know that if you visited them, you'd be welcome?
- Pat Rich: Absolutely, and vice versa, no question. One of the really interesting things that happened was that one of these friends was writing her senior paper. Now, this is 1963, '64 and she was getting her degree in psychology and she wrote her paper on the Feminine Mystique and I offered to type it for her because I was a much better typist than she and we had typewriters at that point in time, and I was a much better typist than she was.
- Blanche Touhill: So you read it as you typed it?
- Pat Rich: Well, I typed it, I'm reading this and I'm going, oh, my God, this is what's happening, and was sort of one of those seminal things that you read that makes a difference long-term.
- Blanche Touhill: And she was a senior?
- Pat Rich: Yeah, we were both seniors and she had chosen to write her senior paper on this new book that had just come out.
- Blanche Touhill: But she interpreted it or traced their origins.
- Pat Rich: Whatever, you know. Do I remember what exactly was written? No.
- Blanche Touhill: Did you go out and read the Feminine Mystique?
- Pat Rich: Absolutely, I've read it at least twice. She ended up getting her Ph.D. at Michigan and she became an industrial psychologist and has done a lot of interesting work, mainly a lot of...in the '70s it was assertiveness training and then it was...remember that?
- Blanche Touhill: Yes, I do. I do, I remember it well.
- Pat Rich: The past...but she's done a lot of diversity training and she's done a lot of that kind of work, and she worked for some big corporations doing that.
- Blanche Touhill: You know, I bet she might have been one of the first women industrial psychologists.

Pat Rich: Maybe. I have no idea.

Blanche Touhill: Because that is a steady field. UMSL offers the Ph.D. and it's a combination of business and psychology.

Pat Rich: Uh-huh.

Blanche Touhill: And those people all get jobs. They don't graduate every year, but when they do, they do well.

Pat Rich: Interestingly, when she left Michigan, she couldn't get a job because they weren't hiring women.

Blanche Touhill: That's right.

Pat Rich: And it took her a long time to get a job, and then she did but I remember we had a conversation at one point where I said, "Are you ever going to leave, just get your degree and get out of there?" and she said, "Well, not for a while because while I'm here, I have a job and I know that out in the world, that isn't going to happen for a while."

Blanche Touhill: Did she have faith that it would happen?

Pat Rich: Yeah, and she's an interesting person.

Blanche Touhill: Well, I was living in New York when the Feminine Mystique came out and it was a very fascinating time.

Pat Rich: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: I was the first woman hired at Queens College in the History Department of Queens College, which was part of the city, University of New York, and what I'm saying is, it was just beginning to open for women.

Pat Rich: Yes, and it still has a long way to go. What can I say?

Blanche Touhill: It still has a long way to go, yeah.

Pat Rich: Yes, no question.

Blanche Touhill: There was a lot of change in the air.

Pat Rich: You know, I think people who didn't live through the '60s don't understand, there was a sexual revolution; there was Vietnam; there was all of the civil rights, that was Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy and

John Kennedy all getting assassinated in the '60s, enormous political upheaval in every way, shape and form, yes.

Blanche Touhill: Talk to me about how your husband reacted to, really, your interesting career, I'll put it like that, and how did your mother and father react?

Pat Rich: Well, my mother and father ended up moving to St. Louis when I had children because they wanted to be near their grandchildren and my brother was wandering the world. So it was a long time before he had any children and I have to say that they never understood what I did. I would explain fundraising and it just really was not something...they didn't quite get it, which is fine, but they understood I had a career and they were happy.

Blanche Touhill: And they were proud of you?

Pat Rich: Very proud of me, as was my husband.

Blanche Touhill: What about in charge of the construction?

Pat Rich: They thought that was sort of amazing and I'd get them down to the Garden every once in a while and they weren't real garden people, per se, and I think they were probably somewhat astounded by what I was doing. When I went to the Garden, my husband said to me, "Why would people give money to grow flowers?" and I said, "Well, it's probably because it's a little bit more than that" and so I would go into the speech.

Blanche Touhill: They had a big research arm.

Pat Rich: Huge research, the Garden's all about research.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah, but there are a lot of people who don't know that.

Pat Rich: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: They go and they look at the flowers and...

Pat Rich: Yes, and it's a beautiful place.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, beautiful.

Pat Rich: You know, it's a wonderful place just to go and walk and get your mind off the world. Gardens have become incredible places of respite during difficult times, saw huge increases of attendance after 9/11 and times

like that, very interesting because it's a place where you can go and get away. They're contemplative.

Blanche Touhill: I'll tell you, with the Garden, was very smart in. When I was very young, my mother was interested in flowers and she would take us all to the Garden. I really, at that time, was not too interested in flowers but we would all go with her and we would walk through the Garden but I think that basis, I now love to garden and I think it's because I was young and I went through the Garden, I knew the Garden and I think if you're introduced to it as a child, it really becomes part of your life.

Pat Rich: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: It's like, you went to the theater with your parents and so theater became sort of a part of your life.

Pat Rich: Exactly. My husband was very proud of me.

Blanche Touhill: Well, he must have been because he let you do sort of what you wanted to do.

Pat Rich: Now, see, "he let me do it" is what you said.

Blanche Touhill: Well, I did, and that's an old-fashioned way, but you'd become an independent woman and you told him you were going to do it?

Pat Rich: Well, I said, "I think it's time to do this" and we talked about it and he said, "Well, you're spending so much time doing volunteer stuff. You might as well get paid for it."

Blanche Touhill: I was with a woman the other night and her husband told her not to do something and she said, "I'm an independent woman and I'm going to go do it" and she went and did it and it was a great benefit to the family and I thought, yes, you're absolutely...you caught it.

Pat Rich: Well, I think we all do that but interestingly, as I mentioned way earlier, his friends' wives were in a different generation and a different place in life and...

Blanche Touhill: Well, did they then sit up and notice you?

Pat Rich: Well, I'll never forget it. One day I was in the Ridgeway Center and I met a group of dental wives, his friends from dental school and they were all

10, 12 years older than I was and they saw me and we stopped and we chatted and one of them said to me, "How many days a week do you volunteer here?" and I said, "Well, in reality, I'm here every day because I work here" but it was a concept that they didn't understand, and to this day, I still have a number of friends who really have never worked because I was sort of on the forefront of that.

Blanche Touhill: Yes. Well, I have that same experience. I'm the only one of a group of 15 women that went to college that worked all her life. Three others took off for a couple of years while they were raising their children and then went back to school teaching because that's what they...

Pat Rich: That was a good thing to do. That's what you did.

Blanche Touhill: But with your certificate, that's what you did. Well, thank you so much today. It was so much fun and I appreciate it and I would say you ought to write about your life.

Pat Rich: Well, I don't know that anyone else would be at all interested.

Blanche Touhill: No, I think we went through an interesting period and it's a shame not to have it left for history.

Pat Rich: Well, I appreciate your doing this. This really was great fun.