

An Interview with  
**Beverly Sporleder**

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

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interviewed by Maureen Zegel  
transcribed by Valerie Leri and edited by  
Josephine Sporleder



**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.

Beverly Sporleder: I'm Beverly Sporleder, a resident of University City, lived there 45 years. I came to St. Louis when I was four-and-a-half as I stayed on a farm in Illinois when my dad went to war. I lived with other people who could not attend the war, which was an uncle who was deaf and another uncle who was already married with several children. So it was me and my mom, my grandparents, and aunt, Aunt Frieda, and her brother, Uncle Billy, who was dear and we resided in Hardin, Illinois in a house...day to day activities, outdoor john and a lot of sauerkraut, I remember that. Times were good under the circumstances of war but very loving and caring people and we all helped out. I was the youngest, a toddler but everybody enjoyed me. I seemed to enjoy other people and we'd do things outside in the back yard, we had a garden.

Maureen Zegel: There were other children?

Beverly Sporleder: There were no other children, just me because the uncle who had children, they lived on a farm on out so for those five, four-and-a-half years, I resided there but made a couple of trips to St. Louis because my grandmother, she (made?) all the boys, five went to war. My mother's three went to war. All eight went to war and all eight came back.

Maureen Zegel: That's a good thing.

Beverly Sporleder: It's a good thing. But the issue was going to be after they all returned, would be work. So my grandmother made her boys send their money home as much as they could, and she purchased homes here in St. Louis, one on Washington and one on Parkview which is no longer existing because the med school bought that property and those were homes that, when everyone returned, we could go and live in while people looked for work. So the house on Washington, when my dad returned, several people moved there of the brothers and then my aunt, my grandmother sold the house on Parkview because the med school was going to expand. They were buying property so she bought a house in the city on Laurel Street and my mom and I and...by then there were two other children 11 months apart...my two sisters and we all moved to St. Louis. My sisters were, like, one and two and I was by then five. I was going to get ready to start kindergarten. So we all moved in this house on Washington, I mean, Laurel Street and it was time for me to start school. I had not gone to kindergarten in a small town so when I got here, the school no longer existed; it was torn down. It was on the corner of

Hamilton and Maple, was Dozier School and I went there up until the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

Maureen Zegel: What year?

Beverly Sporleder: I was born in '42 that was '47, '48, I think it was, because I had to spend a year-and-a-half in 1<sup>st</sup> grade because I had no "kindergarten" experience. So that was okay. The school was...at that time, at Maple, this would be the west end, not a lot of diversity but it was definitely urban, I could walk to school, walk home for lunch, then walk back to school and lots of friends, lots of activities. I don't remember too much in terms of curriculum. I do remember taking home economics. That was very big back then. You had to learn to sew; you had to learn to cook, the classic type things.

Maureen Zegel: Can you talk about the division between boys and girls?

Beverly Sporleder: Of course, separate bathrooms and the playground, the boys played at one end and the girls played at the other. Jump rope was very popular and tether ball and it was the beginning of Double Dutch...Double Dutch may have been around a long time prior to that but it was pretty exciting if you could buy two ropes, they were cotton and during recess and lunch hour, we all learned to jump Double Dutch and that was a lot of fun. I did have, again, pretty standard curriculum. Dick and Jane was really big then so we all had Dick and Jane, Spot and they had a little sister, I think Sally was her name. I mean, that was the classic curriculum, I think, throughout the whole country because I'd run on to other people who studied Dick and Jane.

Maureen Zegel: I interrupted you with the home ec.

Beverly Sporleder: And I liked home ec because you could sew and you learned to use the sewing machine and we also did a lot of things by hand but in terms of machinery, a sewing machine was the first thing for a lot of girls, that they would come in contact with in terms of having a little power and something going fast, before cars. So I learned to sew. I liked sewing. I liked the hand work. Cooking was okay. I liked all my friends; I had a lot of friends. We could go home after school and behind us was the Velvet Freeze and the Catholic Church and our church was up the street, so, again, very urban, and then we lived on a dead end street and a street car. We didn't have a car when we first moved there.

Maureen Zegel: What was play like in your neighborhood? How did you play?

Beverly Sporleder: Oh, on the weekends, you were let out after breakfast and then you were to return home for lunch to have something to eat and then we went back out and being by the street car, there was a walkway next to the street car, that was wooden which would take us down to the main street which was Hodemont and there was a filling station, Velvet Freeze, so you could move all around. Then, by the back of our alley, which really wasn't an alley because there was a garage where people fixed cars and kind of an L-shaped landscape of which, when you went out, trash was picked up from the back but you could play also, if your parents allowed you to play outside. I was the oldest of my family as well as a lot of the other kids that were around. We made stick horses, we played cowboys and Indians which, back then, had we known better...but then we did a lot of making up of activities also.

Maureen Zegel: Were the boys playing with you?

Beverly Sporleder: Yes, there were a few younger boys, yes. It was the beginning also of...I can remember politically the family two doors down were...and I don't recall hearing these words...Democrats and they were very politically involved in certain things. I don't know if it had to do with housing or what it was but I just remember my folks talking about the family that lived a couple of doors down. Anyway, they had a boy and then they had a couple of girls and they lived with their grandparents. They went to a different school, they went to the Catholic school. My sisters and I, we went to Dozier School.

Maureen Zegel: You said that went to 7<sup>th</sup> grade?

Beverly Sporleder: I only went to 7<sup>th</sup> grade. It went to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Had I stayed until 8<sup>th</sup> and moved on to high school, I would have gone to Soldan High School. But my parents, when I was 13, had another baby and now our apartment is too small so we bought a track house...they did.

Maureen Zegel: Where?

Beverly Sporleder: In Normandy but I am a graduate of Ferguson High School. So it was one of those dividing lines where the subdivision happened to be in Normandy but the school district line went past and took in most of the subdivision. So I finished 7<sup>th</sup> through high school at Ferguson Junior High

and then High School. So the whole family moved to Normandy and then we all graduated from Ferguson High School.

Maureen Zegel: And what was that like?

Beverly Sporleder: That was very interesting because now it's suburban. The house that we bought was a track house where all the houses were built, looked alike. A long ways from school so I had to take the school bus, about two-and-a-half, maybe three miles to get from where I was to the school, so if you missed the bus, it was not good. My dad would have to take me, we only had one car. I never walked to school but I walked home a lot. It was very different in that now we go to different classes and have more teachers. I had gone to summer camp, the church camp that summer so I did know some of these kids because they had gone to summer camp, we'd all gone together to Steelville to camp. So I did know a few folks. It was difficult, 13, your mom has a new baby, you move to a new subdivision and you got a new house and a new school, a lot going on but very engaging. This was also during the time of which, again, being only maybe 13, 14 years old, late '50s, political things. This is when the Ferguson Florissant School District annexed Kinloch Schools so this was the beginning of a lot of African American kids coming to school. So in my yearbook of 1961, there are African American kids in our classes. It was a small school district and as Kinloch did Berkeley and other places kind of suffered. Florissant had not been annexed yet to be Ferguson Florissant School District. So it was still Ferguson but it was the beginning of annexing other communities to the school system which brought in diversity, especially Kinloch.

Maureen Zegel: When that happened, you had African American...

Beverly Sporleder: Yes.

Maureen Zegel: Did you have African American friends?

Beverly Sporleder: This was a small group of kids...and I remember some of the kids. By then I'm in the first year of high school, maybe first or second year of high school. So I had already a lot of friends, the Y groups were very big during that time and so if you were a member of the Y group, which was YWCA...

Maureen Zegel: YW?

Beverly Sporleder: Mm-hmm...you were a high-Y group. Those were really kind of your friends. There were, like, 15, 20 young women.

Maureen Zegel: And you were girls. Let's talk about those.

Beverly Sporleder: The girls, yeah. It was interesting. It was the beginning where you could wear tennis shoes with nylons. I never quite understood that and it had to be white tennis shoes, straight skirts and blazers. I had a job by then. The person who was the...she hired people at the Kresge's Dime Store in Wellston and that was the big shopping area, was Wellston. You could take the bus to Wellston. So I got a job at the Kresge's Dime Store. And I was fifteen-and-a-half. She hired me. I don't recall signing anything but I made sixty-five cents an hour but I thought I was really something. I had a job and I worked. It was, I think, also the beginning of pantyhose. I worked in the hosiery and tights and nylons and people were really buying those. I worked right across from the record department and it was the first time I really heard jazz and Quartet Tres Bien from St. Louis. Their records were on so I really thought I had just made it. I've got a job, I'm not quite 16 so I can't drive and I found out about jazz and there was a lot happening in Wellston. I mean, this was the diverse community. So life seemed to be fairly good.

Maureen Zegel: Did you belong to organizations at school?

Beverly Sporleder: Yes. Well, the Y-FI was the big thing but I had this job so I couldn't do much after school. I did play varsity hockey.

Maureen Zegel: Field hockey?

Beverly Sporleder: So hockey was my only sport.

Maureen Zegel: Field hockey?

Beverly Sporleder: Field hockey, mm-hmm. I did that and then coordinated that with working. But then the after school job really kind of took over and everybody kind of likes a little money and so money, school and the job kind of went together. My interest in a lot of things showed up in high school. I loved art, I did like sports but the art was really good. I had some really good art teachers.

Maureen Zegel: Can you talk a little bit about those teachers, how did they influence you?

Beverly Sporleder: Yeah. The one art teacher was a graduate of Wash U School of Fine Art. It was where you could really do something. They would show you had to do things. They would give you the materials and then they expected you to use your imagination or whatever the assignment was. That was really different in science and math. You were given things to do, but it wasn't the creative part of things. Gym class was pretty much fun too because you could...the trampoline, it was the introduction and no one had a trampoline in those days in their back yard like they do now. I could do a back flip and we were all spotters around the trampoline and we all took our time. I was pretty good at basketball also, but just being with other people, good friends, exercise, having a good time. I liked school. I always liked school, no matter how much time I had to spend there. School was a good place to be, make friends, go to other people's houses; they could come to my house. Even though I had a job, there was always weekends because at the Y we had to have bake sales to raise money for our Y group. And then after football games, we would go up to the Y on Airport Road and it would be a dance and I loved to dance also. So there was a lot of combination of those things that took place in a learning environment that wasn't too bad, so...

Maureen Zegel: Did you have boyfriends? What was it like for boys and girls? Did you have friends who were boys? Did you have boyfriends?

Beverly Sporleder: There were a couple boys that I met through the Y groups because we would all meet after football. But it was pretty segregated. Even in the Y group, there were those girls who had boyfriends they'd made in junior high, all the way through high school. I didn't quite understand that. Of course, there's no recess so getting to know boys on a different level outside of school...Ferguson High School then was next to Wabash Lake and we could all leave campus, leave the grounds and we'd go over to Beerman's and they had a juke box and hot dogs and hamburgers and French Fries and you could listen to music and then you had to watch your time so you could walk back to get to school. And that's where you met kids on another level in terms of who was popular; who could dance well, what was going to happen during the weekend. But mostly, I did not have a steady boyfriend that was from high school, in high school because that's when my folks insisted that we continue going to the same church that we went to in the past where we lived at that apartment. I happened to meet somebody there which...I'll jump forward a little

bit...who I ended up marrying. So that was very interesting. This was a college graduate who came to...again; a lot is happening urban areas. The place that we left was now going to be a huge influx of people from Mill Creek because they were going to tear Mill Creek down and there needed to be places for these people to look for housing and they hired the person who I ended up marrying as a community worker in the church to run groups on the weekend, from Friday and things on Saturday and then activities on Sunday. So my parents insisted that we continue to go to church there and so I met this individual and he hadn't graduated yet, he was at Washington University and he thought he was going to be a minister and he thought this would be a good activity, to come and take this job at this church because, looking ahead, there was going to be an influx of people who were going to need some introduction and these were going to be young African American kids in 1959 and 1960 to this community which was an all-white community.

Maureen Zegel: Before we leave high school, what kind of influences or what kind of support did you get from your family as a high school student, as a kid growing up? Who are those?

Beverly Sporleder: I was pretty self-motivated. My parents were the only ones in their family...my mom was one of five and my dad was one of ten...at the time to graduate from high school. My mother, for sure, was the only one of her family and then my dad graduated from Jerseyville High School which was only two years and then they went to Harden High School. So they were both graduates of high school. They felt education was important. They were both smart. It was during the time where no one ever talked about college. It was work, finding a job, when my dad returned from the war, one kid and then before you know it, there's three kids. So when he did get to St. Louis...he took his GI Bill and he went to a rank and trade school. My mom had three kids already and so she stayed at home. But they helped me with my homework, if need be. But I was pretty self-motivated. We had to have our homework done right after we got home from school, if that was what the schedule was, but again, then once I got a job, that took up most of my time but I did do my homework. I was never late on any homework. Teachers were very helpful. My art teacher I really liked, Mr. Mosby who ended up out at Kirkwood, I think, High School. He was my science teacher and science was pretty exciting, a lot of unknown things that you necessarily didn't know about but I think it

was more self-awareness of who I was and how I kind of fit in to all of this. So I didn't pay much attention to what I may not have or missed. It was just, things kind of evolved.

Maureen Zegel: So you graduated from high school in?

Beverly Sporleder: I graduated in 1961 from Ferguson High School.

Maureen Zegel: And what were your plans?

Beverly Sporleder: Well, I thought I had some plans but somehow I ended up getting married in August and I married Jim Sporleder and he was in school. He was in school for a long time and a year later, we had a baby and we moved back to that house on Washington where my grandmother kept that house and then her daughter kept it. It's been in the family for over 75 years. It is a licensed rooming house. We moved to two rooms and a shared bath and had our first baby. Here was a whole new chapter, and, like, holy cow, what is happening now? It was also the beginning of the Civil Rights movement, lots of activity everywhere, the church that we were going to, the church in which we were married, we had the first integrated wedding at this church. All these kids came to see us get married because we had been with them over the last two years in all these activities that my husband and I were involved with. The first time there was a lot of music, all these new songs: the Twist, all of these new dances. This church had never seen these kinds of things, and so was my husband and I.

Maureen Zegel: What type of church?

Beverly Sporleder: This was a white Presbyterian church and here comes all of these kids one night because we had a talent show and they were lined up around the block to come in and show their talent, very exciting. So we continued on with the activities at that church and a lot of Civil Rights activities. My husband is still in school. I'm raising kids.

Maureen Zegel: You raised, plural, kids?

Beverly Sporleder: Right. We stayed in this rooming house until our son was, like, three or four months old and then we moved to South St. Louis to another apartment and then from there, my husband's still very much involved in a lot of Civil Rights things and we moved and rented a little farmhouse in

Afton and then we're going to have another baby and we had that child there and then it's time we think we're going to buy a house. So we buy a house in Washington and Skinker area because we're going to have another baby. So we have three children and we live twice on Gravois and twice on Washington, four moves but we finally buy this house and we were very, very excited. We bring the third child home, which is a girl, I so we have three children and one day my husband comes home to say he finally graduated after 10 years from Wash U and the mailman is going to deliver the diploma. So we waited for the mailman to come and he delivers the diploma and by then, my husband is very much involved in Civil Rights and he graduates and he applies...he was a Danforth fellow.

Maureen Zegel: What does that mean?

Beverly Sporleder: That means that his education was paid for through the Danforth Foundation because of, first of all, he's very bright, very smart, but very giving of giving back and very much wanting to right a lot of wrongs and so he applies for this job and he's now the executive director of Freedom of Residence and we have these three kids and we live in an urban area again but we have three children.

Maureen Zegel: What year is that?

Beverly Sporleder: That move, it's 1966. My husband has a really good job. My kids are going to, two of them, to the St. Louis public schools and things begin to go awry in several areas, not only in Civil Rights but in schools and we decide to move six blocks to a family who, they want to sell their house because they want to be small town doctors and nurse and so we move to University City which worked out fine for us because this was a community we chose to live in. So we move six blocks to University City and my husband's still at Freedom of Residence. Now our kids, all three, are in the U City schools.

Maureen Zegel: What were the U City schools like in those days?

Beverly Sporleder: Even in 19...let's say '66...'67, our daughter starts kindergarten, Delmar Harvard and our kids are also at Delmar Harvard getting ready to go to the middle school. Both the boys were in the middle school and then moved to the high school. By then, integration has hit University City, big time, and the white flight has started and we bought our house for less than \$19,000 in University City because nobody wanted to live there.

People are moving out. Our kids loved school. They could walk to school. They're by the library, the Play Station, the Firehouse, their friends. They could walk back and forth and we just loved it and had lots of friends, both black and white and Asian. It was a real metropolis of what things should and could be. So everybody's kind of moved on and school is going well. All the kids moved to the U City schools, they all graduated, made a lot of friends. They are friends still, graduating in '82, '84 and '85. They still have very, very close, a lot of them, high school friends. That was great. That was just really wonderful.

Maureen Zegel: What about Bev?

Beverly Sporleder: Well, let's see, yeah, I finally got all those kids in school. I decided, well, gee, if my husband could be a Danforth Fellow, maybe I ought to apply for that. Well, that didn't go really well, I think two Sporleders in that field, at least for that form of education so I went to the community college at 32 and there was a program called the CDA program, Child Development Associate and...backing up just a little ways...I was the nursery school teacher in Laclede Town from 1962 at Baria Presbyterian Church until the early '70s...maybe '72, '73. So there was a program that the Department of Health, Education and Welfare were looking for people who already were in a position and so I applied for that and I got it and so my education was paid for, two years at Forest Park Community College. There was where I met some people, some really dynamite people in Early Childhood: Catherine Nelson, Lilly Kowski were my instructors. So I decided that's what I would do. I loved kids, had kids very young. All my kids were before I was 24 so we kind of all grew up together. We kind of all liked the same things. So I finished that degree and then at the same time...and you only notice it if you look at my transcript...I had applied to Webster College as an art student so I went to both schools at the same time, one during the day and the Forest Park thing during the evening and then I worked during the day. So I was pretty busy, school during the morning at Webster and I'd go to work in the afternoon and then I would go to Forest Park in the evening. So that moved along really well. I loved art school at Webster. It really allowed me to do a lot of things. I took as many courses as I could but I couldn't be a major in art because I couldn't take drawing and painting because I worked in the afternoon. So I took as much as I could. I already knew how to weld and so I took my welding stuff to Webster to show them. We

each had an opportunity to do something to show people what we could do. So I took my welding but I just loved painting, designing things. I couldn't take, as I said, drawing and painting through an instructor but I could do it in the other classes, and pottery. Oh, I could throw pots like anything. So, on the kids' sick days, I allowed my children to have at least two sick days a month and they could come to school with me at Webster so they could sit and watch, see what was going on in art, met a lot of nice people.

Maureen Zegel: Can you talk a little bit about those people, how they influenced you?

Beverly Sporleder: Art people, we're not different and I'm only putting myself in that category because they allowed you to do free expression. They weren't lecturing all the time and listening to what they felt was important for you to know. I took art history and that way you could find out about those folks who came before, way before us. But to be able to do things on your own and mix your own colors and learn that there's over 5000 colors in the color spectrum, it was like a whole new world, and have paper and a lot of things that, in other classes, you just had a book. Here, you had so much stuff that you were allowed to form it in whatever you wanted to. The one teacher, he says, "Now, this class is for six months and here's what you have to do. You have to make a musical instrument, a costume, a kite and you have six months to do it in and you have to go to the art museum," so I couldn't wait to get started. So I decided...we had a place in the country that my in-laws had, I cut down a tree and I'd make a xylophone. And then, I already knew how to sew because I learned that from earlier schooling and my mother always insisted that...she made most of our clothes so we had to sew...so I made this elaborate costume and a kite to fly. It had to fly. If it didn't fly, then it wasn't part of your grade. And the musical instrument, you had to be able to play it. So you had to know enough about toning, so I had to find other people to help me make the xylophone and then to make a kite, how it would fly, so that through that assignment incorporated all of these other things that you could learn from. It was project-oriented but you learned about reading, visual, going to the art museum, the science part of how a kite is constructed in order to where the wind's going to hit it, and then the xylophone...I didn't take a musical instrument but I could sing and dance. I thought, well, surely this could go along with it. So cutting down the tree and cutting all these pieces to make the xylophone

was wonderful. I got an A, everything worked. It was just so marvelous and this teacher allowed us to do those kinds of things in art and design, where you learn about taking the beginning of something like color and making color wheels and how colors blend together, the primary colors. It was just so project-oriented that I just loved it.

Maureen Zegel: So here you are, Bev Sporleder, you have an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood...

Beverly Sporleder: I graduated from Webster in art and my emphasis was in Early Childhood because, remember, I didn't take drawing or painting. They wouldn't let me graduate "as an art student."

Maureen Zegel: And there you are with those two...

Beverly Sporleder: ...those two things, uh-huh.

Maureen Zegel: Early Childhood and...

Beverly Sporleder: Oh, great combination because children and art, it's just a given. It's sad where we are now that we don't allow...let me see: we've given up recess, get rid of the music teacher, the art teacher, we teach detesting. There's nothing left. So during the '60s, I decided, well, if my husband can go to Wash U, I'm just going to do it without anybody's help. So I did find some helpers. So I applied to the School of Social Work...

Maureen Zegel: Why social work?

Beverly Sporleder: Well, it was during the '60s. There was a lot going on, being the nursery school teacher at Laclede Town, meeting people from all over the world. It was a proactive venue as opposed to...and I already had art and Early Childhood. Why not top it off with social issues. Kids and their parents were definitely kind of my new forum in that now I have to deal a lot with people from all over the world in Laclede Town, were all these people from Iran, Iraq, Pakistan. It would help to really know why these people are here and what their issues are and then what our issues that we're facing, where is this going to lead to? So I just kind of thought it would be the icing on my cake. So I applied and now I'm going to school again, every morning. So I got up every morning to go to the library at 7:00. I had to be at work. By then, I'm running the United Way agency in Soulard so I can work from, like, 9:00 to 6:00 and then go to school in the evening

at Wash U but it took me five years. So I got it done. I graduated and now I have an MSW. So it looks pretty good, credentials that would help in a lot of areas.

Maureen Zegel: What year was that?

Beverly Sporleder: I graduated in 1987, so I graduate...now I'm 45 but I've been doing all along things that I want to do and dove-tailed all of that into work, while I'm working as opposed to getting all the schooling and then go to work. That didn't seem to be really a logistical kind of way to do, that we should work and school at the same time.

Maureen Zegel: A work/school family.

Beverly Sporleder: Oh, yeah, the family, right. So, having three kids, they're slowly graduating that that school part at the end is where my kids, two of us went to college at the same time. So I have one at the Eugene O. School...well, I leave Webster and I have a son that goes to Webster, in theater, and then the first child I sent to Mizzou. He came home. The other one I sent to Webster and then the other one I sent to C-MO. So I'm keeping the Missouri college industry going.

Maureen Zegel: You got a job.

Beverly Sporleder: So I got a job, right. My bigger job, after I graduated...was kind of hard to find a job. I spent all summer in 1986 or whatever, looking for a job and I thought, now; I've got all these credentials. What's going wrong here? And I just happened to get the job here at this university, at the grocery store in the vegetable aisle. I ran into someone who said, "We're looking for somebody to be our practicum director and I heard you graduated with your MSW and that would work out well" and before you know it, I'm here at the University of Missouri, in 1988, and I have this great job of being the practicum supervisor and I get to help students go find a place to learn before they graduate...every drug rehab center, charter school, prison, community organizations, United Way agencies and I place students and so I get to be in the community while helping students find where they really will do best. And it just was another layer of icing on my cake. So that turned out really well. My 24 years here at the University of Missouri-St. Louis turned out to be...again, met great people, a good experience in dealing with a lot of students here who do not necessarily fit the mold of going to college. They, too, needed good

people and it's good to run into them here and there here in the community of...I don't always remember their names because I had many, many, many students but, "Oh, thank you, you made a difference," or "I just loved what we did in class" or "I'm glad I continued. You helped me to look at all the things that were obstacles," and what was nice about social work was there were a lot of returning women who would come to this field because they wanted to make a difference. They wanted, through their church, open a center or a home for unwed mothers or a home for juvenile delinquents or whatever and they had to have the credentials. They had to have a BSW or eventually an MSW. So it was nice to be here when the University of Missouri-St. Louis went to the curators to encourage them to have a School of Social Work in a public institution. So I got to be involved in that also, early on. So, life has moved...

Maureen Zegel: I keep asking you if all the different people in your life who have influenced, you just talked about people you influenced. Go back and talk about some of the people who influenced you during your careers.

Beverly Sporleder: Right. As I said, back in Early Childhood, it was Catherine Nelson and Lilly Kowski, both Early Childhood people here in St. Louis and then within that community, the Early Childhood community, one worked for the Danforth Foundation, an African American, and the other one was just an Early Childhood person at the Ethical Society. They made a big difference because they could see qualities and attributes in me which brings about nature/nurture. It was just natural. I'm just a natural person to be with kids under the age of five. That's hard to teach. So luckily, they were my first inspiration and noticed that so I could follow through on that. The people in the art world, I would have to say all of them at Webster were very giving, letting you discover yourself within whatever medium you wanted to find. In Social Work, there were a couple of folks, the Sheridan's were people who I ended up...Mike was an instructor at Wash U and my first class was with him, and then here at UMSL, I taught with Margaret so we became...which is really nice...very good friends, and people from out of town and they, too, had recognized..."Keep doing what you're doing." Although one would want a Ph.D. if you wanted to teach in other areas, I was not interested in that at all. I had felt that to the academic world, for me, was where I was at and that was fine but having that combination of all three things, I would definitely suggest

that other students or other people “Don’t put all your eggs in one basket. We’re all multi-talented.” Right now, having grandchildren that cannot write cursive is pretty scary and the other ones, where they’ve taken away art and recess, it’s going to be very scary for what we’re allowing children to do now for the sake of whatever testing is, that we’re not allowing children to be themselves. I can say I had people who allowed me to be who I was.

Maureen Zegel: Can you talk about any awards and recognitions?

Beverly Sporleder: Well, I’ll go back. In high school, I did win, from that art teacher...Bill Vose was his name...I won a Scholastic Art Award and that meant you got to go to Styx Baer and Fuller for lunch and my parents went and it was scholastic, of course, it’s these scholastic folks who put out the magazine and sponsored lots of things. And I just didn’t know what that was all about, those kind of awards, but that was wonderful. That was in high school. Then when I went on to...after all the education and then when I came here, I won a couple of awards for being Lecturer of the Year and that was fun. Again, I got to have lunch at the alumni house and invite whoever I wanted to, and that always is really nice in that those people who recognized those skills that you have, those attributes that are, again, natural. I thought, “Well, what did I do?” “Well, you did this” “You did that,” or “You helped students” and that was very, very nice. The big one was when I was going to retire, I have a scholarship here named...in the School of Social Work that “Beverly Sporleder Scholarship” and I didn’t know, I raised a lot of money and there’s now this scholarship that we will be able to do the distribution here this year for someone in the School of Social Work.

Maureen Zegel: Every year?

Beverly Sporleder: It would be every year. That was quite an honor. I had raised the most money and someone will get to go and that’s really nice in that there’s so many people who want to go to school and can’t afford to go to school and that we would have an opportunity through this funding to send somebody. Hopefully I’ll get to help pick that individual. I’ve learned a lot since I’ve retired the things that are different in that people should be allowed, after high school, to spend some time somewhere else to figure out who they are. For me, I knew exactly who I was so I was a different kind of student at 32 than at 17 or 18. Now that we have found out all

this stuff about the brain and narcissistic behavior and all kinds of things that kids need to venture out and find out who they are so they can make a decision about what they want to study, if they do want to study and that whoever receives this scholarship, I would like to see it be an older individual who knows exactly what they would like to do. I found out that the best students...not all but mostly...are people who've got a lot of experience, some age under their belt, some rough spots, whatever, that they can look at all of that, put themselves together and say, "Okay, I figured out a lot of things. I'm a much better person and I probably could make a difference now."

Maureen Zegel: This is a wonderful question: What do you think life would be like if you had been born earlier than 1942? What do you think it would be like in the 1920's?

Beverly Sporleder: Yeah, I was trying to think. My parents were born in 1921. My aunt, who I'd spent a lot of time with who just passed away this year was 98 and so I think a lot about her who never went past the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Education...I mean, that was it, it was work and survive. There's no one in my family that had accomplished any of those things. Survival was the main thing and it took everybody to learn to survive, perseverance or being somebody who really knew who they were really doesn't...I mean, survival was it. My grandparents lived on a poor farm. They had to grow food. I know it would be very different and I'm very grateful for where I'm at, what I've had the opportunity to do, lots of choices. That was not true back then. I am glad I had children young. My children and their children...my grandchildren, the first four, got to meet their great grandparents and got to share a lot of stories and experiences. I'm glad for that.

Maureen Zegel: We have about four minutes left. Do you think there are some things that you wanted to talk about we might have missed?

Beverly Sporleder: Well, being here in Missouri and being in the Midwest, I do have to say my whole experience, being both rural very young and urban later on, we have a lot that we can't forget and I'm a real proponent of "it takes the village to raise kids and family." I asked a grandchild not too long ago...he's 17...I said, "So what do you think is going to happen in the future? What will we discover or bring about or what will be different?" and he said, "Well, don't we have everything?" and I said, "Well, no. I

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don't know. Do you think we have everything?" because he has everything. He has all the things that we think will make a difference but I think, as we're moving through, that's not true...

I'm done.