

William Fischetti: Carolyn, would you introduce yourself?

Carolyn Losos: Well, I'm Carolyn Warner Losos and I've lived in St. Louis all my life. My background was, at one time I was a teacher and then I was the CEO of an organization called the Leadership Center of Great St. Louis and I'm married to Joe, Joseph Losos. I have four children, a Jonathan, Elizabeth, Carolyn, Louise and six grandchildren. I've been a volunteer my entire life and spent a lot of years for the Parents as Teachers.

William Fischetti: So, the Leadership Center, is that Focus?

Carolyn Losos: It has morphed into Focus, yes, exactly.

William Fischetti: We just picked up their paper.

Carolyn Losos: Yeah.

William Fischetti: What were your earliest conversations with Arthur Mallory and how did you two first meet?

Carolyn Losos: Well, I was very involved in educational activities in St. Louis and at one time was chair of an organization called the Arthur Mallory Conference on Education and the Arthur Mallory Conference on Education was an outgrowth of a conference, I think, that President Eisenhower had called the Arthur Mallory White House Conference on Education and people from the St. Louis area went as delegates and came back and formed the Arthur Mallory St. Louis White House Conference on Education which later became the Arthur Mallory Conference on Education and it dealt with issues of education and, because education is a state-wide issue, I became involved in volunteer activities on a state-wide basis in education. Probably the first time I ever saw Arthur was when I went to a conference that he was having on education and invited people from across the state to attend and he was commission of education. So that probably was my first introduction to Arthur Mallory.

William Fischetti: Did...

Carolyn Losos: How did we really get to know each other?

William Fischetti: Right, did you discuss certain things or...

Carolyn Losos: Well, the Arthur Mallory Conference on Education suggested to Governor Kit Bond that he hold a state-wide conference on education with

delegates from the entire state and Kit Bond picked up on it and he called a Governors' Conference on Education and the Governors' Conference on Education, that was back about 1974. At that time, I was chair of the Conference on Education board and I was part of the committee that helped organize it and, of course, we worked very closely with the State Department of Education and Arthur Mallory. The Conference on Education was held in 1976 and the interesting part of it was that the conference had been placed after the 1976 election and Kit Bond was defeated in the 1976 election so we were dealing with a lame duck governor but he was wonderful. The conference came off. It was very successful. The conference dealt...I was co-chair of the conference and the conference had...the planning committee was made up of a representative from every senatorial district in the state and that committee spent over a year delving into five issues: of course, finance, accountability, and one of them was early childhood education and the outgrowth of the Conference on Education was a lot of legislation and so I think that is when I really got to know Arthur Mallory.

William Fischetti: When did you first meet Kit Bond?

Carolyn Losos: I'd probably say during the Governors' Conference on Education. Kit was very interested in it. The chair of the Governors' Conference on Education was Lieutenant Governor Bill Phelps and I was his co-chairman so I worked closely with Bill Phelps and with Kit Bond and our executive director who was Marsha (Nodiff?), now Marsha Kerrs. I spent a lot of time in Jefferson City, from '74 to '76, preparing for this and one of the wonderful things was, I traveled the state and really became acquainted with what a diverse state we have. So, that was basically, I would say, where I got to know both Kit and Arthur.

William Fischetti: You were a teacher. What did you teach and how have your experiences in education impacted your thinking about early childhood education?

Carolyn Losos: Well, I was an elementary school teacher. I taught the 5th and 6th grades at Glenridge School in Clayton and I only taught for seven years and then I did what everybody did in those days, I got married, quit my job, had a family and stayed involved with the community. I would say that it was so obvious, from the standpoint of a teacher, that education didn't start at five years old. The children I taught, for the most part, children whose parents were involved in their children's education, saw to it that they

were getting the best of what the community could offer, read books to them, sang songs, took them to all the available cultural institutions in the community, followed the children carefully, if they needed special help but it wasn't true of all children and the disadvantage, you could really see, those kids struggled, but all parents need help, and I'm sure you're going to go into that. My favorite story, which is a little off, was...Parents as Teachers was already here and doing well and my daughter had her first child. Elisabeth was about 29 and Elisabeth had a PhD in Environmental Science and she had had a fine education. She'd gone to Harvard and gotten her PhD from Princeton and when I went up to help her with the new child, at about three days old, time to bathe Anna and she whips out a piece of paper and I said to her, "What's that?" "Oh," she said, "those were the instructions we got in the hospital, how you bathe a baby" and I said, "Every parent needs help no matter what." So we read the instruction and Anna got a good first bath.

William Fischetti: So I think Arthur Mallory said you get more information on your new car than you get on your new baby.

Carolyn Losos: That's exactly right, but if you're in Parents as Teachers, you get a lot of information on your new baby.

William Fischetti: So, I guess you've already answered what makes you think that parents need help. You've played a number of leadership roles in the community. Where does Parents as Teachers rank in your mind as an accomplishment?

Carolyn Losos: It ranks very high. When Parents as Teachers started...and by the way, I don't know whether you're going to ask the question so I'm going to insert it here...Arthur Mallory is the one who gets, in my mind, the credit for Parents as Teachers. Here he was, commissioner of education in a state that wasn't necessarily looking into all the advance things you could do and Arthur decided that we needed early education in this state and Arthur convinced the Board of Education to hire Mildred Winter, one person to head a little department on early education, you know? If Arthur hadn't done that, there probably would have been no Parents as Teachers. Now, a lot of other people are very responsible for nurturing and pulling it along but Arthur was a believer and I know since you just interviewed him, he's a believer today and he can convince anybody.

William Fischetti: There are a lot of children who are fortunate that he was there at that time.

Carolyn Losos: Yes, it's an amazing story.

William Fischetti: And Mildred was there at that time as well.

Carolyn Losos: That's right.

William Fischetti: As well as everybody else, I'm sure. Kit Bond was influential...

Carolyn Losos: That's right.

William Fischetti: And it was a lucky thing that that happened. Now it's all over the world.

Carolyn Losos: That's it.

William Fischetti: It's amazing, how it works.

Carolyn Losos: Well, the interesting thing is, in the birth of Parents as Teachers, a great deal of credit goes to that study committee out of the Governors' Conference on Education, convinced Kit Bond, and one of the things that happened after the governors' conference was over, what do you do about all the recommendations? So a committee was set up to carry it forward and see how much of the recommendations could be implemented just by doing something in the state on the part of education or how many of them needed special legislation and the implementation committee existed for several years and I traveled the state, because I headed the implementation, going around, having conferences and meeting with people on, what are we going to do about the implementation of all these recommendations? And there were a lot of early childhood recommendations that needed to be placed into legislation. Out of that also...are you interviewing anybody about the Danforth Foundation and their role in the whole...

William Fischetti: Not yet.

Carolyn Losos: Unfortunately, Jane Payne, who was working with the Danforth Foundation, Jane took on early childhood education and the Danforth Foundation helped fund, along with the Department of Education, a special study of Burton White's new book about parents as teachers and they selected four school districts to participate in a pilot project and

these school districts were Independence, Flat River...two more...anyway, and they implemented Parents as Teachers in their school districts and they brought in Burton White and after several years, there was a study done which showed very positive results on this four school district pilot project and it was picked up by the New York Times and ABC, Peter Jennings and they talked about it and that was all around the time that the Governors' Conference on Education happened. The pilot projects were going well and the question was, how can we get the ideas behind Parents as Teachers into legislation because we had no legislation allowing early education in the state at that time. So, legislation was introduced during the time...I'm not sure exactly when the legislation was due but it failed. It was in the late '70s, early '80s and it was not Parents as Education. It was some simple things that you could start to do, such as screening of early children. So this legislation would be introduced and about that time, after the positive results of the evaluation and the articles, Arthur Mallory set up the Commissioners Committee on Parents as Education and this committee was made up of people interested in education from across the state: pediatricians; business people; teachers; volunteers. I think there were maybe 20...25 people and I had the good fortune to be able to chair it and Arthur did me a favor and asked me if I'd chair it so I said yes. So we were pushing the legislation and every year the legislation would go and it would fail and we'd have people from the education community, like superintendants, talking against it because they were worried the money would take away from their schools. Then we had the good fortune that Kit Bond became governor again and Kit had a new baby, Sam, and Kit was determined that this was...was going to get early childhood education through and Arthur Mallory was still there as commissioner and we had this Commissioners Committee to help push it. We had Mildred; we had Jane Payne. Anyway, and finally Kit said that he wanted this legislation passed and if it wasn't passed, he was going to hold up pay raises for the legislators and on the last night of the session, when crazy things happened, the bill came up and a rural legislator, his name was, I think, Jeff (Shopenhauer)...no, (Shapencopper?), I think that was it, put an amendment on the bill and the amendment was that if Parents as Teachers passed and got funded, it had to be offered in every school district in the state. That was a dream. Can you imagine if that had been the original legislation? It would have been the first thing they would have taken out. Anyway, it slid right through. It was the last night

and so one day, we had four Parents as Teacher school districts and the next day, we were mandated to be ready, a year from then, to offer it to 565 school districts in the state. So Mildred and the commissioner and this little Commissioner's Committee raised money and a number of corporations and people donated to it and they donated the money so that the Department of Education could train the people from 565 districts to be ready to offer Parents as Teachers a year from then. It was like a dream. I mean, from four districts to 565.

William Fischetti: So, was there a gap between the results of the study and the positive article about the results and the actual legislation path?

Carolyn Losos: You mean, time-frame?

William Fischetti: Yeah.

Carolyn Losos: You know, I would say two or three years, maybe four. I'm not quite sure. I'm not up on...

William Fischetti: But there were a lot of attempts to get legislation...

Carolyn Losos: Oh, there were a lot of attempts to get the legislation through and it was Kit who got the legi...the interesting thing was...here's one more interesting thing on it: Once the legislation comes through, as all legislation, it said there were certain things that had to be offered in early childhood education. It did not say Parents as Teachers. What it said was, the State Department of Education will write the rules and regulations for what kind of things qualified and, of course, they wrote "Parents as Teachers." I mean, everything that Parents as Teachers did was written into the rules and regs and there it was.

William Fischetti: Who were your role models? I don't know how that fits into this conversation but...

Carolyn Losos: Well, let me say Arthur Mallory, Jane Payne and Mildred Winter were certain my role models as far as Parents as Teachers goes. They are extraordinary people and it was their vision, in my estimation, responsible for Parents as Teachers. So I need to mention that. In my personal life, my mother. I'll make it brief because I'm not sure it's relevant but she was a widow at age 32 and, in my life, education was very important. My mother hadn't gone to college but there was no

question that I was going to college and where the money was going to come from, I wasn't sure but it was, I was going to college and I went to college and in those days, when I went to college, women became teachers or nurses. I went to law school for a year and never finished. I was the only girl. Times have changed there. So my mother was a role model. One of my teachers...I had a number of teachers that I admired and, starting down with my 1st and 2nd grade teachers who I visited when I was 45, 50 years old and they were much older because they'd been important in my life; a special teacher in high school called Miss Brunz who spoke six languages and taught mathematics and I didn't like math but I took it because she was there and I held her hand the day before she died; and my Girl Scout leader who taught me that I could do things that I didn't think I could do, like build fires and sail boats and camp because my mother didn't offer that to me and I also was with her to the end; and then a wonderful woman named Edna Gelhorn who was an older lady who was a suffragette and who helped the League of Women Voters and is responsible for many, many good things here in St. Louis and I worked with her in an organization and at 80 and 85, she was still up at 6:00 o'clock in the morning, so an incredible woman.

William Fischetti: She was. Of all the milestones for Parents as Teachers over the past 30 years, which ones do you think were the real turning points?

Carolyn Losos: Well, I have to go back to when Arthur Mallory convinced the Board of Education that he could have an early childhood department in the State Department of Education. That's more than 30 years ago. I think the Danforth Foundation collaboration with the State Board on the pilot projects in four districts certainly was a milestone. I think the Governors' Conference which was in 1976 because the whole state was looking at early childhood education and there were recommendations and legislation emanated from then. Certainly Kit Bond's reelection was very important and, of course, the legislation. One of the things in the legislation which was important, I think, to the beginning was that it was open access which meant that Parents as Teachers was available to everyone and it was free. So after the legislation, we had 500 and maybe 60 programs in the state and we had this little Commissioners Committee on Parents as Teachers and that was sort of its advisory committee and we thought we were going out of business and then what happened was, after a few years, people wanted, from other states, to take our training

and wanted to set up their own Parents as Teachers and they wanted to buy our curriculum which we were developing and the next thing we knew, we had programs popping up all over the country and we had no plan for being a national organization. We just wanted to go from four to maybe ten and we went from four to 565 and the next thing you knew, we were having Parents as Teachers being offered across the country and suddenly we realized that we were a national organization. At some point along the way, Arthur decided that Parents as Teachers should no longer be housed in the State Department. They would still run it but not in the State Department and the program went to University of Missouri in the Education Department. At that point, Arthur was no longer the commissioner of education and for several years...and it went with Mildred and we still had our little advisory committee and it didn't really work out the way it should work out. It was housed in a department and it became obvious to Mildred and to the commissioner, who was Bob Barkman at the time, to the governor got interested in it and the governor then was Ashcroft and we had some help and the next thing you knew, Parents as Teachers was out on its own and it set up a national organization and had a board of directors. The advisory committee didn't do anything but advise. It was the only one there but the board of directors became the governing body of the separate organization, Parents as Teachers and on the Parents as Teachers board, Kit Bond was a life member. The commissioner of education was a member, Kit and the commissioner and Ed Siegler...I don't think Ed Siegler was right there from the beginning. Anyway, the board was set up. It was basically a Missouri organization. Then, one day we woke up and guess what? We were an international organization, you know? We were growing and in that growth, it was nothing that we had planned for. It wasn't planned growth. So that came with a lot of issues. So then, at some point, we set up a separate international organization which really was run by the national...that was for legal standards. So all of these have been very interesting growth areas. The thing that has been wonderful about Parents as Teachers, it has had challenges and it has been able to meet the challenges. It has been able to work through the funding cuts that we had in 2008 and onward where our money was basically reduced in three years, from 33 million dollars down to...I think it's at 16 million dollars and that's money that goes to the school districts in Missouri. That's what funds them. One of the other biggest challenges we've had is that in the

growth to a national organization, we basically have just, in the past couple years, set up standards that have to be met if they're going to carry the Parents as Teachers' name because we don't fund them. They're funded either by their state, by private organizations or a piece of Parents as Teachers has come through in other programs so it's been a struggle, to set up standards but we've met it because there are certain things that we think need to be done in order for it to be a top-notch program and to be able to deliver on our promise that any child who's in Parents as Teachers will be ready to learn when he starts school. It's been a fascinating trip and I've been lucky to still be there.

William Fischetti: Well, it must be very gratifying for all of you who have been involved for so many years to see the growth because the growth obviously validates the value.

Carolyn Losos: Right, right.

William Fischetti: I'm wondering about the money. The legislature had initially funded the entire operation or...

Carolyn Losos: Originally, we got grants. We got big grants. Under Mildred, we were funded originally by grants from the Ford Foundation and I'm sure there's...but they were big and our money was...let me go back because I'm...originally, Parents as Teachers organization was funded by the money that came from the legislature but that could only be used to the school districts. I mean, that money was the flow-through. I think probably Parents as Teachers got a little something, I mean, the statewide organization but when they sent a teacher to us to be trained, then she tried to pay for the training and they had to buy the curriculum from us so our funding originally came from training and curriculum and then, when it started nationally, that brought more money in for training and curriculum but we had to raise money to start special programs, to write the curriculum and we had big grants and it wasn't until, I would say, maybe 20 years ago that we started fundraising in a big way because we had lots to deliver on and we had to staff this huge organization. At one point we were up to maybe 65 people and we were housed here. As organizations grow, you have problems in housing and staffing. So we went fundraising. We've been fortunate to have to find executive directors besides Mildred who have really carried the program on. One is Sue Stapleton. I hope you're going to get an opportunity to interview Sue

because she did an extraordinary job in being able to take the program in new ways which all programs need refurbishing and meeting what the necessities of the time is and she started a program called Heroes at Home. I'm not sure which was a pilot project and we thought we were going to be on every Army base and the pilot went fabulously but somewhere along the line, somebody axed it which was a shame because, very interesting little bit of history of that...am I talking too much?

William Fischetti: No.

Carolyn Losos: A little history on that is that Heroes at Home really, in some ways, Kit Bond was very helpful in getting some money to back that and Kit Bond has been helpful to us as a senator; he was very good at earmarking money for Parents as Teachers even when earmarking was a bad word. But Kit was very helpful with this. Anyway, in Missouri, we have Army bases like Fort Leonard Wood and the children of Fort Leonard Wood went to public schools in Waynesville and Raleigh and all the places around and then when they got transferred someplace else, they would say, "Where's Parents as Teachers?" because of being a member of those school districts, they were eligible to have Parents as Teachers as it was available to everybody in the school district. So we did know that that was a real source. What could be more wonderful than offering to these young families, some families, some single parent families who are deployed overseas, to have a program that helps them while they're here and when they go? Well, unfortunately, the program was canceled. I think they are doing something, I'm not sure what, but not to the level that we had hoped to do the program and we had 35 pilot projects and it was going smashingly, got stopped. Anyway, Sue Stapleton would be a person, I think, because Sue has done a marvelous job and Scott Edward, our present executive director, has a different vision and different background and is doing a splendid job.

William Fischetti: It's good that now it's managed to have good leaders. We did interview Sue for IWF so...

Carolyn Losos: Oh, of course, of course. Do you think it's (across?). I hired her. I was chair of the board when she came aboard.

William Fischetti: Where do you see Parents as Teachers in the next 10 years?

Carolyn Losos: Hopefully, my dream would be that every child had access to Parents as Teachers or some similar program. We can never, ever serve every child but, as you know, and which a lot is written about, it's my dream that everybody will understand, you have to start at the beginning. A child who enters kindergarten who can't speak or have the vocabulary that children who have had more privilege have will be behind throughout their entire school career because the other child is moving ahead and in this world, we can't afford not to have children who have every advantage, not only in language arts and parenting and who are able to have the introduction to computers and...my grandchildren teach me. So anyway, so I hope that early childhood just doesn't stop at age four. It has to go down to the beginning and one of the other things is, Parents as Teachers empowers parents. Really, it is working through the parent or the caregivers. We now have many programs for many different segments who need special attention but it empowers those people to say, "I do understand what my kid needs and I do know it's important that I work with them" and, you know, if you empower a parent, good things will happen for children.

William Fischetti: The teachers who go into the home to help the parents, they're not regular public school teachers, are they?

Carolyn Losos: Well, it depends. In Missouri, they are. They are part of the system. They don't get paid what public school get paid...or I don't know what they get paid. It's different arrangement but they are hired by the school districts and they have to have special training and it's a perfect job for a former teacher who now is raising his or her family and would like to use their skills and don't want to work full-time and so they may work 20 hours a week and so we have highly trained people in the school districts. Now, the other challenge is, our curriculum has been translated into Spanish, German and Chinese. Now, that was the basic curriculum. I don't know where it is right now but if you are sending a parent educator into a Hispanic family, what an advantage it is if you can have a person that looks like them and who understands their culture and their language. So there's great emphasis on that aspect. The original curriculums got translated by people who wanted to offer the program and they got them translated so that they could teach but we trained when we went internationally. We trained the trainers, the international people and we

would take along a translator. So there's so many aspects of this program that we never thought would happen in the beginning.

William Fischetti: So if I wanted to become a teacher...

Carolyn Losos: A parent educator?

William Fischetti: Right, that's not something I would do at the college though? I would do that separately, right?

Carolyn Losos: Well, I would say that you would go to the school district and the school district would have requirements. They would want you to have certain basic skills.

William Fischetti: Yes, I understand that but where would I train?

Carolyn Losos: The training is here and you would come for a week. Now, some of the training is now offered off-base and some of the training now is being offered by computers. But it is an extensive training program and every couple years, you have to have retraining and a lot of the retraining is probably done through computers.

William Fischetti: Well, they must be able to train a lot more people if they're using computers?

Carolyn Losos: Yes, but it's very good training and it's interactive and I'm not an expert on that end but...

William Fischetti: But the school districts, because of funding, can only really have so many people, right?

Carolyn Losos: That's right.

William Fischetti: They can only go out so often and...

Carolyn Losos: Well, the interesting thing is, some school districts supplement the funding now because they think it's so important. I think the School District of Springfield funds the whole program. They said, "You know, it's important that everybody has it and so we're going to find the money." A number in the Greater St. Louis area would be the usuals: Clayton, Ladue, Kirkwood, Parkway, all funded to filling in the resources, and there are more. I just don't know all of them, yeah.

William Fischetti: But the places where it's probably most important, the city schools and things like that, is there some kind of a financial fundraising thing?

Carolyn Losos: It's interesting in the city. The way it's set up, Parents as Teachers gets compensated. The school district gets compensated for a home visit so originally in Missouri, I think they were set up maybe, to be Parents as Teachers program, you had to have maybe eight visits a year. In at-risk areas, you can have up to 25 visits a year and get compensated for it. So, the challenge in many areas is how you get into those families and so there has been a great attempt to serve them...this is Missouri...to serve them through their school, through their neighborhood meetings, through their caregivers, through daycare centers. I mean, all these people have to be trained as parent educators. So it's, reaching out to get the at-risk urban communities is a challenge and one that we want to make and we have tried very hard. Interestingly enough, this is Missouri, but the State of Texas Parents as Teachers program is run by the Mental Health Association of Texas. In other places, Parents as Teachers is the home visiting component in a daycare program or in...what's the old legislation that is in so many school districts? Anyway, it's offered in those programs as a home visiting component. Now Parents as Teachers is collaborating with other home visiting programs. Parents as Teachers is by far the largest but in some areas, our presence isn't there but we are helping them in the ways where we're experts or helping programs that deal mostly with medical problems and nursing and we're the education component. So the program looks very different than it did way back when it began.

William Fischetti: Well, Carolyn, you should be very proud of your contribution. I'm very impressed with the program. I didn't even know about it before I started doing these interviews. Is there anything you'd like to say at the end?

Carolyn Losos: Well, lucky me, you know? It's something I sort of fell into and it is a passion with me and, you know what? If you could just talk to some of the parents and let them tell you how Parents as Teachers, in their estimate, saved their child's life and saved their lives in so many ways and what a different it made. So I'm grateful that I've been able to be involved and grateful for people like Arthur Mallory and Kit Bond and Mildred Winter, Jane Payne, who are really the heroes of this program. So, thank you.