

Maureen and Mike

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**Interviewee: Linda Louise Smith**  
**Interviewer: Hannah Soukup**  
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Hannah Soukup: Today is January 28, 2020. I'm Hannah Soukup, and today I'm interviewing Lin Smith about *In Other Words*, which was a feminist radio show that broadcast on MTPR [Montana Public Radio] in the 1980s, '90s, and early 2000s. Thanks, Lin.

Linda Smith: Oh, sure. I'm glad to be here.

HS: So, tell me a little bit about your first interactions and exposure to radio.

LS: It's interesting thinking back so many years, that radio was the primary technology at the time. My folks had gotten us, when I thought back about it, how people have little radios in their kitchens and stuff like that, well, this was a big radio. I think it must have been some kind of multi-unit for records because we listened to a lot of music in my home. My mom was a musician. It was part of this larger unit, and we would sit around it and listen to it as a family. So, it's kind of like now, I think the way people must do with TV. It was a very positive memory that we would be listening all together to something, and a lot of it, I think, was music, but it was also talks that some important person was giving. We would just be there listening to it. I remember my sister was really into Elvis, and we would hear Elvis singing. [laughs] My mom was more into classical music, so it was just a mix, but it was just this sort of very warm, friendly feeling of sitting around listening to the radio together as a family. We continued to do that until when I was in my teens, I believe it was, is when TV came in, and so my folks decided they ultimately had to get a TV because we were always going down to the neighbor's place to watch it. These are the visual, the cartoons, and it was just so different, we were intrigued.

It's interesting, because the difference now, in my connection to the radio and TV, I think my initial connection to radio, listening to the voices, I am very attuned to voices now and using your imagination, when you're listening to something to kind of fill in what someone's talking about. Also, I think the pace of listening on the radio was just different. When people are speaking...It's kind of like the radio now, when you listen to National Public Radio [NPR], although, they have sped up too, because you feel this kind of urgency about communicating so much—there are so many issues and things like that. But the pace of it, I can listen to it and enjoy it; whereas television now, it's too hyped up and too loud, too repetitive, too...I don't know, visual images jumping around all the time. I just don't enjoy it. I don't have a television.

HS: But you have a radio.

LS: I do.

HS: Yes. [Laughs]

So then, you served in the Peace Corps after high school, in Ecuador—

LS: After college.

HS: After college, and then after you came back from Ecuador, you were a print maker in Texas. Then you moved to Missoula in the 1970s. What brought you to Missoula?

LS: Oh, it's interesting. Well, the basic reason I came was to visit my sister who was living here then, but after I got back from Ecuador, I had been living in a very remote area up in the mountains, living with an Indian family in an Indian community, and working on an irrigation project. I was very isolated. I didn't know the Vietnam War was even happening. So, I was pretty concerned about ideas and communicating ideas, especially ideas that weren't in the mainstream press. When I went to graduate school at the University of Texas [UT], I thought I was going to get a master's in anthropology, because I was intrigued with communications in these little Indian villages, in terms of that networking theory about how whatever is going on in the community is talked about and decided, or whatever, that women are an essential part of that. There was nothing in this first year of the anthro [anthropology] program at UT about women. It was all this old male theory, and I endured it for a while, then I was like, 'I'm out of here.'

I started working on, it was then an underground newspaper called *The Rag*, which actually existed, oh, I think, 11 years or more, and it was just full of all kind of news and information on what was going on in the country, in the world, and I was totally fascinated and I started working on *The Rag*. Then there were a few times when the printer didn't like the ideas, or the words—the language we were using—and they would refuse to print the paper. I started, when you are very young, started thinking, 'Oh, well, if I ran a printing press, they couldn't stop us!' That's what I did. The community college, well, University of Texas was in Austin, and the community college there had a course on offset printing, and I took it. There were a lot of women in that class. It was just all those questions you wish you had asked yourself or them at the time, 'why are you taking this class?' But I wasn't. I was just immersed in taking the class.

My instructor...I'll back up a couple minutes and say that, it was a two-year program. I took it for about a year and a half, and then I decided I needed to get a job. So, I got a job working in a print shop with a different kind of press than I had learned on. Then not too long after I got that job, a woman came in who had more experience than I did, and I lost that job. So, I went back to my instructor at the community college, and I said, "I need a job."

He said, "Well, how would you like to be the printer for the community college?" So, I had that job for nine months, then decided...Texas was, the climate there is very intense, in terms of the heat in the summer. I knew that...I had been there since 1966, and I endured it, but I just get burnt. I have the wrong kind of skin to be living in that climate. I would just have to wear long

sleeves and a hat. So, I knew that I wasn't going to stay there indefinitely, but after I did those nine months at the community college, I decided that I would move north. I didn't know exactly where I was going to end up. I had this...when I think back on it, I think, 'Where did I get this?' but I had this sense that I needed to be closer to the headwaters of the rivers and I needed to get out of Texas. Austin was a wonderful place, but it was growing—it was getting so big—and I was just needing to move on. My sister was living here in Missoula, and her partner. I thought, 'Well, I'll visit them, and then I'll see what I want to do.' So, that's what I did, and printing is like a mobile skill. I could get a job, but I wasn't taken very seriously as a printer, a woman who wanted to run a press.

Well, the first job I had here was on a press that I wasn't as familiar with, and when I found a chance to move to another place, another shop that had the kind of press that I knew better, I did do that. But then the owner wanted me to like, collate NCR, or make coffee or do something else. He didn't want to let me run the press. That just really was frustrating. So, then I got another job, over at the university [University of Montana], running a printing press over there, for a particular...It wasn't a department. It was just a particular place on campus. I just wasn't very comfortable there. They did some intelligence testing and all this stuff, and I was just like, I don't know, they were psychologists and they had kind of a hold on their people in a way that made me really uncomfortable. They offered me ten cents more per hour than I had been making in Texas, after I'd worked there for a trial period. Something just snapped inside me, and it's like, 'I'm not doing this,' so I told them I was sick and I went to Salt Lake and I bought some used printing equipment. I had a friend who was coming through from Austin, and he and I kind of got—it was called *Mountain Moving Press*, and we got it started. As you can tell, I ended up staying here, because I didn't have much money to move on.

So, I had *Mountain Moving Press* for 20 years. We did all kinds of printing for the women's community here. My sister was very heavily involved with helping start a number of women's organizations here, starting with Blue Mountain Clinic. I did printing for all of these projects, these conferences, and for environmental groups. So, it was an all-women print shop. I taught some of the women how to run the press, and it was good, but it was intense because of people's expectations. We wanted to produce quality, but people's expectations for the turnaround time to get their job done was just so unreasonable, that we were under so much pressure all the time. So, I pretty much decided I could only do it 20 years, which is what I did do. It was hard for me to phase out of it, because I was working with a Native American man there that I had been working with for about ten years. He didn't want me to leave, but I kind of knew I had to. I needed to. I had a couple years there, and looking around deciding what to do next, then my sister got really ill, so it was good I had worked my way out of it. So, yeah, visiting my sister is what brought me here, but because I didn't have much money to move on [laughs], it made me stay. I had to get a job.

I wasn't really planning to start a print shop when I moved here because I had...It was so interesting because the last six months of the community college offset printing program was on how to start your own small business, and I didn't take it. I never thought I would do that. I

didn't! [laughs] It wasn't until out of necessity kind of, that I can't stand the way I am being treated, and I'm not going to make any more money working for somebody else so I may as well figure this out and do it on my own.

I had \$2,000. My grandmother had given each of her grandchildren \$1,000, and I had put mine in Farmer's Home Savings or something in Nevada, Missouri—that's where she lived. It had rolled over, over the years, and so when I was going to start this print shop, I had \$2,000. But then you could do things with used equipment with very little money. My friend, who was helping me get this started, he just happened to be coming through and decided to stay for a while. So, things just kind of came together. I had to use a paper cutter that was a...I was a little hole-in-the-wall down on South Avenue. I'd use the paper cutter at somebody else's place down the street. Then my sister's partner heard about this building over on Fourth Street that—it was owned by Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul Railroad, and he knew of another person that was really interested in the building too. It had been abandoned though. It had been built in 1917, very solid, but the roof was cracked in from the...It was a two-story, and it was cracked in from the top. It was pretty much a wreck. It had been leased by University Gas that was on the corner of Fifth and Higgins, and they had defaulted on the lease. So, I decided to try to find out how I could lease that space, that building. It took me five months, as I recall. I had to find somebody that I could talk to, so I wrote and tried to talk to somebody at the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul Railroad and I wrote letters. Anyway, I finally found someone named Tikessen (?), and he loved trains, and I did too. The train was still running then on the south side of the river. When the Milwaukee Railroad went bankrupt in 1980, I just called him up and asked him, "What are you going to do with your additional properties?" This was on a spur line; it was a building that was storage for the railroad and there was a spur line connecting it. They said they were going to sell them. I asked him the range that they were going to sell them for. He told me, and I offered him the least and he took it.

HS: Wonderful.

LS: Yes. Then I had to try to figure out how to borrow money. I had to borrow a good deal of money, and I had to get a co-signer. Actually, Jim Wheelis co-signed for me. He was a lawyer here—my sister's partner—and then I paid it off. Then, because it was in such bad shape, I had to find somebody, of course, we didn't have a lot of money. We put a fiberglass roof on it temporarily just to get it covered up. The place was a wreck. University Gas had defaulted on the lease, and so there were all these batteries and tires and all kinds of junk—car-related junk—in the basement. So, we had to get all that out of there. We had to build some walls. Gosh, it had just been abandoned. We thought, 'Well, it's solid. We can make this work.' [laughs] My sister worked on this too, because we owned that building together. Anyway, that's how I ended up in Missoula. [laughs] That's very long [unintelligible].

HS: No, that's wonderful. So, *In Other Words*, the radio program, was started by Rita De Andrea in the mid-1980s, and it was a continuation of a program, an earlier program, called the *Feminist Forum*. How did you get involved in *In Other Words*?

LS: That's an interesting one to think back onto too, because I didn't know Rita De Andrea hardly at all, but I had been listening to *In Other Words*. Well, I should back up and say too, that Rita was on the Board of WORD (Women's Opportunity and Resource Development), and my sister and some other women had been instrumental in WORD being created. I should back up...The Women's Resource Center on campus, I think, was a very viable, ongoing—serving an important function on campus for some time. My sister taught classes there, and other women did too. It was very active, but the university didn't really support it in the way they deserved in the sense that they were trying to decrease their space. They just didn't value what they were providing. I can remember going to one meeting where they rolled out just a giant role of paper of signatures in support of the Women's Resource Center, but it really didn't change the university's attitude. So, they decided that they were just fed up with it, and so they decided to move downtown and be a community women's center and that was how WORD got started. That's when they named it Women's Opportunity and Resource Development. But it was still connected to, I think an ongoing...something at the university. I'm not sure what happened then, because I think there's obviously...there is something now on campus, right, on campus?

HS: The Women's Resource Center is still active on campus, yes.

LS: So, maybe there wasn't a break. Maybe it just continued in some fashion there and they just broke off and started this. I just don't know that history.

Anyway, so Rita was on the board. When I think back now about the name, *In Other Words*, I never got a chance, or I barely intersected with her, which is what was so interesting to me is, how in the world did I get the idea to...I just didn't think the radio show should stop because she had to leave because her husband had gotten a job somewhere in the south, in Arizona or something. It just seemed to me that that shouldn't happen, that this needed to continue on. So, I talked with Rita, and I ended up shadowing her, just going and watching how she put the show together. Learning to edit and all that kind of thing. When she left, Christine Kauffman joined in with me in working on it. She's now in Helena working with *Carol's List*. We did that for a while, and [laughs]... this was a long time ago. I'm trying to remember because, actually *In Other Words* was a project of WORD, in the sense that it evolved into a place where Janet Scott and I were sort of the co-coordinators of it. We received a very small amount of money that we would divide, just to help us afford to do a few things like subscribe to the Women's International News Gathering Service. We would get a monthly cassette from them, and there were all kinds of interesting stories about what women were doing in other parts of the world. It was always super important to me to get part of...any of the shows I was working on to get some of that information on them. So, you just got this sense that there's a lot of women doing a lot of interesting things all around the world.

The way it was organized, as I recall, it was a weekly show, and we would meet and talk over, divide up who was doing what for that week. The women who worked on it were totally dedicated to doing it, and kind of self-taught, really. That was at a time when the editing was

done by splicing tape, and it took a long time. It was a, how would you say, a local conversation approach to informing the community about various projects. WORD was made up of so many different projects. Let's see, there was...I'm trying to remember. They kind of evolved organically as the needs arose. I mean, I'm not going to remember all the names exactly, but I know there were esteem building classes for women—single moms getting on with their education and getting themselves positioned to get better paying work and stuff like that. Then there was the need for housing, and so that's Homeward...Then there was family support programs, there was Family Basics, there was helping women start small businesses, and that was WEDGO—Women's Economic Development Group. Let's see, I'm trying to remember...

HS: So, these were all community-based projects that you would talk about on the radio?

LS: They were part of WORD.

HS: Okay.

LS: Yeah. Yes, that was one of the main focuses of the program was to interview the young women who worked on these projects so that other women in the community, or people in general in the community, would know about them and could access them. Family Basics worked with fathers as well as mothers. So, it was really a kind of training ground for young women to get comfortable with speaking on the radio and being taken seriously and valued, and just encouraged to become more comfortable so they could be more effective speaking in public. Me, I just never enjoyed it, but I really knew how important it was.

We learned too, those of us who were doing interviewing, a lot of skills about how you do an effective interview, and if you're too nervous, it communicates to the other person. It doesn't work very well. It was a really positive learning experience, I think, for all of us. We'd interview interesting women that we would find out about, who were coming through Missoula, or maybe speaking at the university. Just however we would know about them, and then we would ask if we could interview them. So, it was diverse. There was always, one of the weeks in the month would be a music program.

We always introduced the programs as being from a feminist perspective, and that meant different things to different women who were working on the program. We always wanted to be able to use the word feminist, because however you define that, it's kind of a way of focusing attention on women speaking for themselves about things that are important to them and why. I think there's such a need for there to be a place for women to be able to talk about the issues and interests and perspectives—just different. That's why I think *In Other Words* is another way of saying, we grow up in a different world, girls and boys. We grow up in different worlds, men and women. We have different experiences, and we have a lot to bring to the table. It's just different. We're not at the table yet the way we should be.

So anyway, I think I just kind of fell into it again, where if I hadn't been listening to the radio, who knows! [laughs] I would never have had the idea to try to continue it, and I don't know if somebody else would have. It was great! I love radio. I have always loved it. We'd ask people to call in and give us ideas for programs or give us feedback. We were always asking for that.

HS: Did you find that the community was fairly open about sharing their ideas and thoughts? Did you have a lot of community participation when you would ask for those suggestions?

LS: We had some, you know. It wasn't a lot, I don't think, but I don't know, for me. It was some. We always wanted people to feel like they could bring up whatever, and we would try to respond. I don't remember getting a lot of negative input either. I don't know. Then the other thing is, we kept trying to get the program on earlier in the evening, because more people could hear it. Whoever decides programming at KUFR, we were never successful at getting it earlier, and then we just didn't, again, feel like we were being valued the way we could have been if we could have had a little more time for the program—be it a little longer program and earlier in the evening—but that was what was decided.

HS: You worked as the co-coordinator and also as a producer for *In Other Words*. Could you describe your role doing those kinds of things? Like what did a day look like for you when you would go into the station?

LS: Wow, I'm trying to think back about that. Like I say, we would have these weekly meetings and decide who was going to take the show for that time. [pauses] Well, maybe I shouldn't say we had weekly meetings. We had regular meetings, and we would make up a schedule. The women who were working on the show were pretty much on their own, to put together the program the way they wanted to. I know I was particularly interested in the international women's news pieces, and made that available, and others did use them. Janet was particularly interested in environmental issues, and she had some connections with some national women's environmental organizations and would do interviews with women who were working on various projects. Bryony Schwan worked on the radio too, and she was with...she started Women's Voices for the Earth [WVE] here. So, she would be doing environmentally-oriented programming. Others were interested in music, and just the whole show would be women's music.

You'd call the folks you wanted to interview and set up a time to do the interview. Then I'd develop the questions that I wanted to ask, but I always thought of it as more of a conversation and see what they were interested in talking about. So, most of the program would be the interview, and then there would be the excerpt from the International Women's News Gathering Service. Those were usually like a shorter five-minute piece, and then there would be some music. That was the format that I used. I think the others did a mix of interview and music, and kind of whatever. It was pretty free-floating in terms of who was...Nobody was really deciding for somebody else. We were kind of leaving it up to each other. Those meetings that we had, then people could bring up who's coming to town, who wants to interview them.



It was interesting because we were then connected to the university a little more, still, through interesting programs that women were doing. I know I interviewed—Mary Birch was in the Social Work Department, and I know my sister had worked with her. I got to know her through sitting in on one of her classes, and so I ended up interviewing her. I interviewed Nancy Erickson, and Beth Lo, and just any number of women that I just happened to know, who were doing interesting work. But then a lot of it was the young women in the projects at WORD. Janet also did some interviewing. Well, my sister was very active in the legislature, and then some of the other women who were active in the legislature, Janet would interview them about what kind of issues were going on in the legislative session. Basically, about if there's something they need to know to engage in an issue, then this is a way of connecting them, then, to the legislature.

It was pretty much what you were interested in, and knew about, and wanted to follow up on—that's how the content emerged. [laughs] It wasn't a very fixed thing. I think people enjoyed it, because it certainly lasted for a long time.

HS: Do you think that that approach of letting people follow what they were passionate about was one of the reasons why people stayed as long as they did?

LS: I do think so, yeah. I think that totally was so. We really valued being able to have access to the radio, the public radio, and to be able to have a conversation locally with interesting women about all kinds of stuff that people didn't know about probably. The radio was just—we really appreciate that KUFM made that possible. We just did the best we could. I know that it's really changed now, because the folks who did the local community conversation programming like we did, and then Veterans Viewpoint—I remember Dan Gallagher was one of the main commentators on Veterans Viewpoint. It's the kind of program that I wouldn't have probably listened to otherwise, but I learned a lot about what his experiences had been in the military. I can't say that I would have been drawn to that if I hadn't had a chance to be exposed by it being on the radio. I realize I valued that a lot. There would sometimes be a community program, or I call it a community conversation, with an organization from some other part of the state like AERO, the Alternative Energy and Resource Organization—what they were doing.

I just felt connected in a way that I don't feel connected now to KUFM in the same way, because it's changed in the sense that, my sense of it now, is that they wanted more professional programming. They have brought in a lot of interesting professionally produced programs, nationally produced, although their slogan is...I'm trying to think. Oh, "News you can trust and handpicked music." Well to me, handpicked music is not the same. I mean it's local, but it's not the same as having these kind of open-ended community conversations. But again, I think that the program people there didn't think we were professional enough. That's my assumption. Or they just didn't value it. So, things change.

But I still think the need is there, that, as a way, particularly for the young ones, to get experience with the media, so that they are comfortable, particularly with the radio. It's much more accessible, I think, than television. Or should be, could be. Because television, gosh, you have to get prepped and wear make-up, and it's all so...I don't know. It's not as easily accessed, I don't think, as radio could be. I know there was some attempt to start a community radio station here, another one, in the last few years, but I don't know what's happening with it. Have you heard of it?

HS: No.

LS: I'm going to have to look into that, because I think, maybe...Well, I should find out more about that. There might have been somebody who had worked on *In Other Words* who eventually went over there and worked on it, but I don't know now. I think this whole need to speak effectively in public is still there. For women to feel, girls actually too, to feel like they have something to say and speak up. It's very, very important to speak up, no matter how well. You don't have to be a good public speaker, but you have to be able...to think that you have the ability to do this, that you don't have to worry that I don't know enough to do this. I think you just have to have some points you want to make, not too many, and get up there and say them the best you can. And That's fine. Like public comment at the city council meetings, or wherever. You need to speak up.

HS: During the 15-plus years you worked on *In Other Words*, you worked with a lot of women. [laughs] Could you talk about or describe some of the women with whom you were close or who stood out?

LS: Well, certainly. It was kind of sequential, in the sense that Christine Kauffman was there for a while, and that was very important to have a person jump in right away, because I didn't really know much about what I was doing. I mean, I knew the basics, but you have to have more involvement and more women. Then, she ended up moving on to Helena. Terry Kendrick is another person who worked on the radio too, and I have known her for years and years. She actually did those...You know when they had the weekly commentaries? My sister did them for years and years, and Terry did them for years and years, too, separate from *In Other Words*.

Then, of course, Janet Scott, I think that she was very instrumental in *In Other Words* continuing on, because I needed to share it. I'm trying to think back about the timing. She worked on it for many years, and she was incredibly well organized and knew how to engage with the emerging technologies. As KUFM was changing away from splicing tape, Janet could just step right into that. She would assist some of the other women. Jane Ragsdale worked on the radio show. She did all different kinds of interviews. She had more of a literary background, but she was not very...she was pretty intimidated by even doing the editing, so Janet would help her with that. We all kind of made it work, filling in as needed. Then when my sister got really ill, I had to back off. That's why I was so glad that Janet was there. I continued on for quite a while, but then I finally had to stop.

HS: How hard was it to decide that you needed to step back?

LS: Oh, I knew I had done it for quite a long time, and knew that I had this tendency to do things, maybe too long. I had been on the Open Space committee here for 12 years, and then trying to find a woman to get to replace me, because I don't think it's just men's issues, a man's issue of open space. I think it's a quality of life issue. So, that took me a while to try to find somebody to replace me. Then, with *In Other Words*, I think I just didn't have the time. I just had too much else going on. I just had too much else to figure out, so I backed out. I can't remember, if Janet was here I could ask her how I did that. I'm not sure how I did it. I think I just tried to phase out, because I knew it was in good hands, and that was fine. I would still continue to do whatever needed to be done, I mean, if something for the show needed to be done, I would try to do it. But things change, and I kind of accept that more now—things you don't have control over. Still, I hope there is this kind of *In Other Words*-type programming going on in other parts of the country or the world. Just asking women, 'what's important to you? Why?'

If it can't be here, I hope it's elsewhere. I was actually thinking about the fact today that for women, somewhat older women, Emily's List and Carol's List—Emily's List nationally, and Carol's List in Montana—are basic training grounds for women to become effective running public campaigns for office at all levels of government, and teaching them about public speaking. Effective public speaking is a critical part of it, and fundraising. It's everything you need to know to run a campaign. So, that is happening more and more and more. It's very encouraging that so many women are running for public office, and winning. Actually, Emily's List, that was one of the names for their projects was "Run to Win," and a lot of women are doing absolutely that. Also, here with Carol's List in Montana. Like running a second time if you don't win the first time, like Kathleen Williams. She's going to win this, I bet. There still needs to be something for younger women.

HS: Or women who don't want to enter politics necessarily.

LS: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. I know that on a national level too, there's also the Women's Media Center. It's based in New York. I periodically get an e-mail from them, and that's their mission, is to find and—I think you can apply and get a scholarship—and reach out, I guess I should say. Reach out to women who are interested in becoming very able with the media, and working with them to be able to do that. Then they can refer—those national media's outlets—they can refer women to them so they can't say, 'we don't have women who could participate on our programs,' because that's not true. But still, the numbers aren't good, but they're better. They're definitely better than they used to be.

I now think about young women in high school and being really carefully listened to and valued in terms of what they have to say about their lives and climate change. I've been to a couple of these rallies, and they are eloquent. They are really eloquent. But what kind of public outlet is there for people to hear them? Because the topics they brought up, nothing that I ever had to

think about in high school. So, I think the radio, a community radio station, should be responding to those kinds of things and making a space for them on the community radio, which I think KUFM should be more of. [laughs]

HS: So, going off of that, how did you feel...I mean, you talked about this a little bit, but how did you feel when you heard that *In Other Words* was ending in November 2014?

LS: Well, it made me sad to realize that there wasn't an opportunity for, say, another set of women to take it on and take it forward and possibly into a different place, who knows. That that wasn't made available. It was just like we were kind of phased out. I think the need is still there, and so, when I reflect back on it now, I realize that it was sort of serendipitous that I was in a position to go to the station or to continue a program that had already been started. I don't know if the changes in technology now, whether young ones in high school value the radio. I don't know. I think that National Public Radio, when they pick up pieces from local communities, it's very powerful. You get a sense of what is happening all around the country. But I don't know. The young ones now, I don't know what their technology, I don't know if they think it would be helpful to educating people to work on the radio. I just don't know. I don't have those contacts. I don't know how they think they're going to reach people either—educate their communities. I don't know how they—If I was younger and had more time and energy to explore that, I would encourage them to consider the radio. There's just so much, I think, need for authentic content on the radio. Speaking in your own voice, your own words, not being translated by somebody else.

HS: When you were talking about the way the show was put together, and it was kind of free-form a little bit and spontaneous, and everyone just helped everyone out, and that communal approach to working on this project, was that similar to other projects you've worked on? Or could you reflect on the way that it was unique to other jobs you've had or other projects you've worked on? Because, I haven't really experienced that in my career, a particular job like that. I'm wondering if that was something you'd experienced a lot, or if that was incredibly unique to that one position.

LS: That's an interesting question. I've taken some photography classes, and I know that criticism is an important part of that, but constructive criticism. I know, I suppose...I don't know if that is part of most jobs these days or not...We were open to feedback, but I must admit, on *In Other Words*, we didn't really critique each other. We didn't always listen to the programs. I always tried to. I mean, I often tried to, but I didn't always listen to them. I think I just...I was just comfortable. I just thought, 'They'll be fine. They'll do whatever. It will work out.' I wasn't worried about it. It never came up in a meeting. I don't remember it ever coming up in a meeting that we needed to critique each other. I just don't think there was an interest, or a need, to do that. That might have been another reason why we weren't as professional as they thought we should be. Then I think back, what your initial question made me think back to was *The Rag*. When I phased out of graduate school and started working on *The Rag*, that would have been...Let's see, I came back from Ecuador in '66, I was in Dallas '67 because I hadn't been

home in two and a half years. I have a younger sister who's ten years younger, and I wanted to spend some time there. Then I think it was in '68 when I transferred, or moved, down to Austin. Then, that's when I went to graduate school for a few months, so it must have been late '68, '69, when I started working on *The Rag*.

What was interesting about *The Rag*, is the way it was structured. It was started by three guys who were in graduate school, as an alternative media to the mainstream press. So, I always thought of them as the triumvirate—these are these three guys who are running the paper. So, the women started very, how would you say, in a very basic entry way, by typing. We typed the copy. We edited it; we did the paste [layout]. It was all done by hand then, and it was paste. The copy was columns, and it was pasted on sheets. So, we did all that work. The men pretty much decided the content of the paper. But then over time, things start to change, because women kind of worked their way into being a part of the meetings to decide the content. It was just interesting. I ended up doing all possible functions there, in terms of typing, editing, I wrote some pieces, sold the paper, took it to the printer—just all kinds of things. So, women became very much a part of deciding about the content of the paper, and we would get into these quite significant disagreements—I would say even harangues—because we got along really pretty well with each other, but we would vigorously differ on some content, particularly ads, if we thought they were sexist. I can remember this one male law student who worked on it. Man, he just didn't get it! We would just have to go round and round. We are not having that in the paper!

Anyway, it was, again, kind of a free form experience, and we would disagree but we wouldn't...That's another thing that was interesting about *The Rag*. We weren't very comfortable editing other people's work. But we got to the point there was too much content, so we had to, so we had to edit it. What we would do is, we would give it back to the author and we'd say, "You edit it down." That's generally what happened. Then, if it still couldn't fit, then we would try to do something about editing it. It was, again, pretty free form. We weren't really interested in telling people how they should edit their work. It was just like, "okay, we'll put your name on it, and that's fine." I think it was that experience too. That's kind of the times. That's the way it was, and I ended up becoming the office manager for *The Rag*. Then I also worked at the UT Library, because I didn't make very much money working on *The Rag*.

Yeah, so I think working on *The Rag* was an incredibly formative experience for me, being the age I was, and the times in Austin, in terms of all the sort of political engagement that was going on in terms of protesting the Vietnam War, the draft, and basically in support of women's reproductive rights. There were big demonstrations about that. People in the streets, people, we just went into the streets. That's what I think people need to do now is go into the streets. We don't have that tradition in this country like they do in France. They just go into the streets. I'm not saying that's always good, but I think that's kind of what it takes. You have to get people's attention. I appreciate whenever there are big demonstrations, like the Women's March recently. It happened in D.C. [District of Columbia] and they controlled the numbers, but then it happened in 180 cities. It's that activism that really helps things change. Nothing's going

to change if you don't get out there and do something about it. I still like to go to rallies.  
[laughs]

I think it was a lot to do with *The Rag*, was basically—It was a time of questioning everything in Austin. I can remember one of the slogans then was something like, "Don't trust anybody over 30", or something. People were just, they were just questioning authority in so many different ways. It was a time too when a lot of us were questioning institutions. Say for instance, marriage. A lot of people were living with people they decided they wanted to live with, but they were not getting married. Because why can I only have a legitimate relationship if I am married? If the state is sanctioning my relationship, that's the only way it can be legitimate? Well, I don't believe that. So, people would create their own ceremonies, and just carry on.  
[laughs] It's true when you think about it, why the state wants people to get married. I'm sure there's many reasons. I think they probably consider it a more stable factor there. It's also business related. The economics of weddings, I mean.

I think for a lot of the feminists, that was when women's liberation was really getting going in Austin at that time, which was a really fascinating time. Meeting in each other's back yards and talking about what it felt like to grow up female. Judy, my sister, had sent me...I went to Ecuador right out of college, and then she went to Nigeria later. She had sent me the *Feminine Mystique*, and I had read it. There were various articles in the underground press about women's liberation. So anyway, the movement got started in Austin when I was there too. This talking about growing up female and what it felt like—I felt so isolated, in some ways, if you didn't want to get married and have kids and live in the white picket fence. No, no, that's not really what I think I want, you know, that something was incredibly wrong with you. Then you find out, no, there's a lot of folks, a lot of women questioning all this too. In the *Feminine Mystique*, that whole business about moving to suburbia, and having kids, and being isolated, and going nuts, and drinking too much. It's just like, well, there's got to be more to life than this. So, it was very...there was so much going on. It was a very exciting time in many ways to be there, and I think it's really how I got educated, rather than going to graduate school.

HS: And so that connects right back to *In Other Words*. Do you see *In Other Words* as an extension of that questioning that you were doing with *The Rag* and during the '70s?

LS: I'm sure, I'm sure that we just continued to question. Like, neither my sister who lived here or I got married. We weren't interested in it. Not that we didn't have relationships, or Jude and Jim had a long, long, long-term commitment—committed relationship. I think it was continuing to explore, you know? Wanting other women to feel able to look at their lives and talk about them, do something about them, if they decided something was not okay. It was like, well, you have to kind of figure it out along the way.

Then, public speaking. Being in the public sphere, it's just incredibly important, because if we don't claim that sphere then...What's so fascinating is I went to many, many, many city council meetings here and I would try to speak, but I just noticed the patterns where, as soon as public

comment was available, a man would get up and speak immediately. He wasn't particularly concerned about whether he was making good sense, or knew what he was talking about, he just got up there and talked. Well, I'm not advocating that for women, but that sense that I'm here and it's important, and I'm not going to just hold back and just let all the guys talk first. No, I'm going to do it.

Then you're going to run up against people who don't like you because of that. I can remember some of the environmental meetings that were trying to put...trying to talk about affordable housing and jobs, or a couple of issues that really could be talked about together, but people would really have a hard time, particularly environmental issues. They would get just...The anti-folks would just sometimes be very...They would stand in the back of the room and just give you a hard time. But I think you have to get used to that. That it's okay, really, to disagree, but to do it respectfully, but there are going to be people who are not going to treat you very well if they don't like what you are doing or saying.

I can remember when I was just selling *The Rag* too, on the streets. That's interesting too, to have this experience, because, of course, it never happened to me before. I was probably just holding the paper up and offering it for sale or something—I don't know what I was saying—but an old woman came by and just spat on me. It was just like, whoa. You know what I mean, because people have strong feelings. They can't express them, reasonably, verbally. So, then they do other things. I just think you have to be, not expect it, but just not be totally surprised if it happens, because if you're doing something that's against the mainstream, a lot of people just want things to stay status quo and they're comfortable with that. When things start changing, the way they are now, too, with the women's movement...I mean, with the different phases of the women's movement, and then now the "Me Too" movement, all these ones where women are really analyzing how they've been treated and speaking up. I think a lot of men are really uncomfortable about all this, because they don't know what to do. Then it comes out in pretty unpleasant ways.

Well, I think that's the way it is. For things to change, there's going to be some discomforts. And that's okay. For women not to back down, but to try to understand what it's like when you're changing these power dynamics. It's tough. Because if you've had the power to be aware of that, and your privilege, and to realize you're going to have to change or if you want to have relationships with other people who are changing, then you have to be more aware of what's going on with you. It's just interesting how things change between the generations, after you live for a while, you begin to realize, 'Oh my gosh, things have changed a lot, and they will continue to.'

I know my mom wanted both of my sister...well, I guess my other [younger] sister in Vermont, she's the librarian, but she teaches classes and stuff like that too. But my mom, probably my dad too...My dad died, though, when I was very, very young, so I don't know. Anyway, she wanted us both to become teachers. To become teachers and get married or whatever, because that's what her mother did. I think she just thought it was secure. We'd be more

secure if we did that. It was like, well, I don't think that's what I want to do. [laughs] Actually, she came to accept it. She actually moved up here near the end of her life. We always thought she'd go live with, near our sister who was married. Why would you want to come live up here? But there was a part of her who was really into supporting the women's movement. She went to rallies with us. Actually, I remember, we went to one in Dallas where, oh god, I can't remember...it was the Ku Klux Klan, I think. Or it was some really far-right-wing group, and it was a scary thing to go to, or to be near them. I can't remember the context of it now, and she went.

I think it helps if your parents are open. Because she grew up in the South, and I remember, she got into it. There was a black man who came to their house wanting something one time. I think she actually, when she was older too, she hired a black man to do some yardwork or something, and then she was really criticized for that. So, I think it's the kind of role models you're exposed to, too, because I remember when I came back from Ecuador in the Peace Corps...oh no, I'm sorry, before I went, there was an epidemic of dengue fever in Puerto Rico, one of the places I was supposed to go for training. They backed up the training, so I worked for my uncle who was an oral surgeon in Dallas, at the desk, or sterilizing instruments, or whatever. It was just kind of filling in until I could go to Ecuador. We were the black sheep of the family because he and his family were pretty well off. Anyway, he was up in some high position in the dental society there—I can't remember. But he had his office set up so that his white clients, or what would you call them, patients, would come in one door, but his black patients come in another door, like the back door or something like that. When I realized they were doing that, I told him I wouldn't do it, and he got furious with me. He came and talked to my mother about it. [pauses] Anyway. It was just one of those things where you had to...you know what I mean? They grew up that way, so even using the n-word, I think, was something they did. Just having to resist what your family [unintelligible], what your family's doing. So, I think we did that. [laughs] We just did that. It just happened!

HS: Well, are there any questions that I didn't ask that you would like...or anything that I didn't ask that you'd like to talk about? Related to *In Other Words* or anything else?

LS: [pauses] I don't think so too much. I think you did a very thorough job. I'm optimistic now, that things are going to improve a lot for women, now that so much is coming out into the open. Also, for six women to try to run for president is a phenomenal thing, and we'll see what happens. We'll see what happens. Because I think now is the time for women to move on, to move forward. It's time for us to have a woman president, and we have two very able ones still left in the race. But I think Warren is able to inspire people in a way that could turn out the vote—the women's vote and the youth vote. There's a lot of reasons, I think, to think she could win.

But I think it's the times are calling for something different, not just the moderate middle. No. [laughs] I don't think so. At first, I wasn't sure. I thought maybe Elizabeth Warren was too progressive. See, I thought she had so many plans and great ideas, and she started the



Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, even in the minority position, and got that to work. A lot of consumers got reimbursed. It was terrific. But then all these other plans she had, I thought, 'Gosh, a president can only accomplish a few things. Isn't this too much?' I don't think so now. I don't think so. And all those selfies she took. She took thousands of selfies with people, and I was talking to one of my neighbors who thought that was just wonderful, and I thought, 'Oh man, that's over the top.' But the way she explained it to me recently was, "Well, you know how we used to shake hands? Well, now this, the selfie maybe is a way of doing that." I hadn't even thought about that. People feeling acknowledged. It's really important. So, she's right on about that. She's got tons of energy. I think we need that now.

Anyway, I'm thinking women are moving on in all different kinds of ways, and I just hope the young ones can figure out how to basically be heard, and that the older ones, not just women in office at all levels, that they can really hear this and talk about it. Bring in the young ones in a meaningful way. Anyway, I think there's a lot of good stuff happening.

HS: Thank you so much, Lin. I really appreciate you doing this interview with me.

LS: Oh, it was my pleasure. I think I talk too much, but... [laughs]

HS: You're just fine.

[End of Interview]