

**ORAL HISTORY T-0036**  
**INTERVIEW WITH ANN DEMPSEY**  
**INTERVIEWED BY IRENE CORTINOVIS AND ANN LEVER**  
**WOMEN IN THE SEVENTIES PROJECT**  
**NOVEMBER 11, 1970**

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CORTINOVIS: Today is November 11, 1970, and this is Irene Cortinovis of the Oral History Program of the University of Missouri and Ann Lever of the History Department is interviewing Ann Dempsey of the Junior College District. This is for our project in Women's Liberation.

LEVER: Why don't we start with some biographical information, your age and profession.

DEMPSEY: All right. Biographical information...! hate to do any kind of formal application, because it always requires you to remember where you went to grade school, what years, and that's something that I'm very bad at, but I do know that I am 34 years old. I was born November 3, 1937 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and my father was an attorney; he specialized in labor law. My Mother was a speech teacher for many years before she married. She married late, and she didn't work except in community projects after she was married, and she is still alive approaching seventy, is a magnificent person; she's just very nice and very funny, very witty, and very delightful to know. My father died ten years ago when I was doing my graduate work. I went to Catholic schools in Oshkosh and, under the tutelage of the Dominican nuns, I thought for awhile that I might like to be a saint, but then I found out that female saints had to be both virgins and martyrs! You weren't given much choice! And so that kind of turned me off.

CORTINOVIS: The virgin was okay...

DEMPSEY: The virgin was okay, but the martyr! I thought one or the other would be fine! [laughter] I have since found out that...I think they even censor hagiography! I have since found out that some ladies have lapsed not only once but twice! I mean, other than Mary Magdalene! But the church has been a little, shall we say, an enemy of women, really... although I really think they intended to be. But I think the women that participated in the church have certainly not had any kind of full equality and, interestingly enough, the most radical people that I have met, since I've become involved with the women liberation group in St. Louis, are nuns. They are really right with it!

LEVER: That would be true of other left-wing groups these days, at least.

DEMPSEY: Yes, I agree. After I graduated from Oshkosh High School, I went to Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin, which is really a teaching institution. It's now called Lawrence University. It merged with another college in Wisconsin. But in terms of my education up to that point, I don't really remember feeling put down as a female. I suppose

that's because of the massive support I got from my parents. I do have one sister, and all the studies say that if you're from a family of several girls and no boys, that you are certainly encouraged to achieve...

LEVER: Which child are you?

DEMPSEY: I'm the oldest. My sister is also...she's only eighteen months younger than I and she's married to a United States congressman and lives in Washington, D.C. and has a child that, I'm really sorry to say, is, at the age of two, a male chauvinist sexist pig! We asked him the other day what his mother did. He said, "Cook meat. Clean house." So, the stereotype starts very early. Janet is going to try to break him of that, of course. But, I suppose, we are deeply indebted to our parents, both of us, for the opportunity that they insisted that we take. After I graduated from Lawrence, I went to the University of North Carolina Graduate School in Latin. And I don't really know why I chose Latin except that in grade school my Latin was always much better than the boys, and yet I could never be an altar girl. It used to just annoy the heck out of me! But, anyway, I did four years of Latin in high school under a superb teacher And I think that I have always respected women because of the contact that I had, mostly with both of the nuns, who were very well educated; many of the nuns that I came in contact with had done Ph.D work and were, as a result, very sure of themselves and confident as teachers. Oshkosh High School, as you can imagine, really took advantage of the women who lived in that town who had other family responsibilities and what they had was this continuing pool of superb teachers for many years.

LEVER: They went to public high school?

DEMPSEY: Yes, many of whom never married. You see, they were totally devoted to their jobs and did a fine job. But as I say, the system never saw fit to promote them very far. So, then, as I said, I went to the University of North Carolina where being a Catholic and Irish and from the North made me rather a suspect person, and there I did, for the first time, feel discrimination against me as a female, and I bucked against it.

LEVER: Is there any one thing...

DEMPSEY: Yes, Preston Epps. Do you know Preston Epps? He taught Greek.

LEVER: No.

DEMPSEY: Preston Epps just hated women! He really hated women, and he taught Greek...which was not my strong point, by the way, but he consistently put down women in his classroom, and he used the Bible, of course, to do it with.

LEVER: Oh, no.

DEMPSEY: Oh, yes! Yes, indeed! He would be infuriated if a woman got a right answer in that class. So, that was difficult, and there was really only one woman in the department at that time...who later left. I think she found it very difficult, too. But it was definitely a man's world, in terms of jobs, in terms of support, and in terms of...

LEVER: Of intellectual support as well as financial?

DEMPSEY: Yes, yes. The men almost always got, for instance, the teaching assistanceships, and the women...some, some of us were forced into going into the graduate assistant counselor bit which was a real pain because your time was so limited. But on the whole. Chapel Hill is not a part of the United States, as you know, Ann! It's a fairly free-wheeling kind of community, and among graduate students...and we are talking about before there was a lot of camaraderie...and that's the only thing, I think, that convinced me to complete my Master's which I did do, finally. I came back to Wisconsin and worked in a junior high school in West Allis, Wisconsin, which was a system working toward mediocrity. But they hoped that they wouldn't get there, because if they did, they never knew what they would do. And my principal was an awful man who stated at the first faculty meeting that he didn't believe that women ought to be teaching in junior high school, because of course, they couldn't possibly discipline students, and he made my life miserable for two years...even though I probably worked harder at that job, as a first teaching job, than I ever worked afterward. But he just simply didn't believe in women...at all...in the community. He felt that they should really be at home. The only person that he really had any respect for was the home economics teacher, so you can kind of imagine what kind of atmosphere it was. We left each other with a mutual relief. Then I taught at a wild place outside of Milwaukee called the "Quango" [sounds like]...which had a union free high school...which is an animal that is fast disappearing. We drew from eight different elementary and secondary schools up until sometimes the seventh and eighth grades. They were scattered all over this wild area...including a place called the "Vernon Marsh" where we had a little Appalachian settlement. But it was an interesting experience and a very good teaching experience. There I taught a four-year Latin program, did all kinds of other things... like manage a debate team, had six classes a day, twenty-two weekends a year with the debaters, and then you did the faculty variety show to raise money, you took milk money, you patrolled the halls. I finally worked out a working arrangement for my debaters. We didn't really have a way of raising money, so I threatened the athletic group. I pointed out to them that they had all this money from selling popcorn and things, so they really ought to finance my debaters for summer programs. And they did! Then I was offered a job here, and that's where I came. I have been teaching for...this is my eleventh year and my sixth year here at Florissant Valley.

LEVER: Can you be more specific about the kind of support that your parents gave you? And the fact that they were both college educated?

DEMPSEY: Yes, they were. I think that was one of the things that we had going for us, both my sister and I...that they were married late in life. I think my father was in his forties. I think he was forty-six when I was born, and forty-eight when my sister was born. My Mother was thirty-four when I was born and thirty-six when Janet was born. So they weren't doing any growing up with us. They were very much adults, and they were both well read. If you couldn't talk politics at our dinner table, you may as well not come home for dinner. Books were in the house; good magazines were in the house...Harpers' and Atlantic and Saturday Review, and after we outgrew Life...although I still enjoy that particular kind of magazine...we did things together. We were never forced into the groupie kind of situation where we had to belong to the Girl Scouts or Campfire Girls or go to camp or do anything like that. We really did things as a family. My father came from an Irish farming family with eleven youngsters...and only three are alive today...but all of them were college-educated. At that time and place, it was almost incredible. And my mother came from a family of seven,

and all of them received at least a partial college education. I think one of the boys dropped out. But, I think, that education was thought of with great respect.

LEVER: Did he ever try to steer you away from a profession that might not have been good for a woman?

DEMPSEY: Yes, he did. I think he probably knew me better than I knew myself. We talked about law school, and he said, "Well, are you interested?" I said, "Of course, I'm interested." I had driven him for years, and we would often watch when times of wildcat strikes, and we had to have police escorts and this kind of thing. And I would sit then, because there is nothing else to do at these deliberations, and watch him with labor law, and I really wanted to go into labor law very, very, badly. But he pointed out to me...he said, "Okay. Here's the names of a couple of people in Wisconsin. How would you like to meet them?" One had been Catherine Clary, who was at one time one of the assistant treasurers of the United States, who at that time was the ranking woman attorney in Wisconsin. He also suggested that I see a woman called Patricia Ryan, which I did. Patricia Ryan tried to have a general practice in a small Midwestern town, and she was very good. She was a very good trial lawyer, but she was forced to do divorce work. The other women attorneys that I met were in corporations...were "house" lawyers as Catherine Clary was. She later became one of the vice-presidents of one of the banks, but there seemed to be no channel in the state for a woman lawyer to really achieve on the same level as that of a man. And so I looked. Then he also pointed out to me that if I were going to go to law school, I would be one of very few women in my class, and I would have to wind up in the top 10%. And in talking to women at that time... remember this was 1955...they told me their experiences in law school, and they were pretty awful. I mean, their briefs would come back with failing grades, and there would be no explanation. Yet a comparison of their briefs with someone else would show the same material. So there was, I think, a conspiracy then...an unconscious one...to keep women out of especially the legal profession. And so after I did my own little research, I decided that I certainly didn't want to stop my education at the end of my under-graduate years, and that I did want at least a Master's program. So that's what I did do. I think I chose the most difficult thing available to me at the time, and that was Latin...just out of spite...perhaps. I enjoyed it though.

LEVER: What about the Catholic background?

DEMPSEY: Oh, that's been hard. That's been very difficult.

LEVER; Were your parochial schools sex-integrated?

DEMPSEY: Yes, and many of the people I did go to school with I still know and see frequently when I'm at home. We call one another. It was a nice kind of thing, but the world has changed so much since those days. I think the South still has this kind of family, church-oriented, parish oriented feeling, but even the old parish has changed massively. I mean, it has grown from 500 families to like 1500. I don't know anybody there anymore; I mean, in terms of people my own age, because the town has grown so. But it was a nice family kind of thing, and you were known. The students were known, and they were appreciated for what they could do. That wasn't horrendous at all.

LEVER: Do you think going to a parochial or private school is, maybe, a special world?

DEMPSEY: Not St. Peter's. St. Peter's, in terms of integration, had all kinds of economic levels, so that was not a private world at all. But the economic levels made absolutely no difference. I mean, two of the most brilliant and most well thought of students in school were sons of the maintenance man and the janitor in the school. They were delightful kids. Their little sister came up later. There wasn't any kind of economic discrimination, except that if your mother did have a seven-passenger car, you did very well! The nuns, of course, didn't drive, and they were really put down. They had to be in at 9:30, that was one reason. It wasn't a private school in that sense at all. In fact, both my sister and I chose not to go on to a private high school, because we met some of the people who had gone to some of the available schools in the area, and we thought they were insufferable snobs and didn't like them very well. So we didn't.

LEVER: What about the pressure of religion pushing you into a family role, wife, married, children, like that. Did you feel that?

DEMPSEY: Yes, I did for many years. I don't anymore. I think my mother would naturally feel a lot safer if I were married, but we have a nice working arrangement now. We don't ever ask questions that we don't really want answers for. But I would be very uncomfortable in a family role...although I like children and I'm fond of them. Perhaps if I could, as a single person, adopt a child, I would. I really don't particularly want to get involved in that particular kind of set. I've seen too many of my friends, who are very bright, go into this kind of marriage right after college. And, you know, one of them had died since of cancer tragically, one of my very close high school and college friends. There have been many divorces, several mental breakdowns, and one person who I saw this summer was totally zonked out on drugs. I'd never seen anything like it in all my life. She was so strung out, I couldn't believe it. She had no reflexes left, and she was the perfectionist, the homemaker and, of course, she couldn't do it. She married at the age of twenty-one or twenty-two, and her children are grown to the point to where they're all in school, and her perfectionism meant nothing, you see, even though she did have a profession. It was nursing...rather than medical school...which I think she really would have been better in. But I see this, and I think my generation was particularly unfortunate, because we went to college and high school at a time when the national scene was very calm and very peaceful. It wasn't until 1960 when Kennedy was elected that there were alternatives for everyone... in terms of going out into the society and doing something new. There just wasn't the structure or the channels where you could be part of a movement. With the Peace Corps, of course, all that changed.

LEVER: You just sort of barely escaped Betty Freidan's generation group.

DEMPSEY: Yes, yes, I have, and I'm very grateful. I made some conscious decisions along the way to do that. I had been engaged a couple of times, and I finally found that one young man who I really thought I was going to marry at the age of twenty-six was just not listening to me anymore. He thought I ought to work and put him through a PhD. program, preferably at kindergarten and then weekends at the local Kroger store, and he wanted five children. He thought also that we ought to be able to travel...always, of course, on the money that I made that wasn't being used for something else...and that seemed to me a rather unequal kind of way to live. It wasn't taking into account any of the expertise or training that I had developed.

So, I decided that wasn't for me.

LEVER: You mentioned before that you were involved in the civil rights movement in North Carolina when you were there. Do you feel that that got you, you know, into consciousness as a woman?

DEMPSEY: Yes, that impressed much. And my Greek teacher who I was about talking to you/before, certainly made me very conscious. At that time, if you worked for the university, you had a little goodie to sign called the "loyalty oath"...no loyalty oath, no checks. So, you had to be a little bit careful about that...what you did...and the civil rights movement in North Carolina at that time, except for a donation to the NAACP, was pretty well closed to any white person. It was pretty well run from Greensboro, Durham, and even from New York City. But, yes, certainly, seeing it and living through that...which was nothing compared to the tension which we find with our black students today. Seeing that certainly did make me aware that human rights were...

LEVER: Do you think there is any historical connection between the black movement and the women's lib movement?

DEMPSEY: Yes, oh, yes!

LEVER: Can you give your theories about why?

DEMPSEY: Yes, I do. I think women for many years have felt put down. We can go back to John Stuart Mill...in my stars for philosophers...the only two men who get stars are, of course, Plato and John Stuart Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft...who didn't say so. Yes, I think that for the first time with the Equal Pact of 1963 which, of course, preceded civil rights...women began to be aware that they could do something, especially in their jobs, about the discrimination they were suffering. Then when the Civil Rights Act came with Thomas Sullivan and sex, all of a sudden was included, it gave the movement a legal basis to start on. I'm firmly convinced that the majority of the women who are in the women's liberation movement today are in the middle of the road section. They are not going to go to the red stockings, and they are not going to go to any of the radical [can't understand] kind of thing, but they are going to stay in the middle in terms of legalities. Grace Atkinson said that every feminist that she ever met has the only male feminist tucked away in her life. She has rejected that completely; but, yes, I do think that the movement has been brought back to life, in terms of the civil rights act. The suffragette movement, which I've been doing some reading on...by the way, it's difficult to get any kind of unbiased viewpoint of that movement... but, as I read it, they got so involved in all the other problems that women had, that it took them about twice as long to get the vote as it might have. I mean, they got strung up in temperance, prison reform at one time, and all these extraneous matters, so that getting the vote, of course, took longer.

LEVER: It seems to be true that...take the ante bellum period you've got all that going on...anti-slavery and female rights, the Progressive Era and the Twenties, you've got the same thing; you've got the same thing in the Sixties. Are women going to slide off again the way they've done in the past?

DEMPSEY: No, I don't think so. I think that the movements before... and this is my own pet

theory...stopped short, for instance, in the vote. There were some women, by the way, in 1920-21 who felt the vote was just the beginning. But the energy that had been put into the vote, and the victory for the vote had so overwhelmed women that I think they were ready to go into a different era. Of course, I think the Twenties actually gave women a great deal more freedom than they'd had. But the bill now before Congress, the Equal Rights Amendment...with men...has been there for 43 years, as you well know. It doesn't look like the boys are going to let it out of committee in the Senate without some crippling amendments... including our old buddy Erwin from South Carolina. I thought of blackmailing him about his son's activities, but I don't think that would help very much. But, no, I don't think it's going to stop. I think it's going to go right on. I think that communications and the media have done incredible things for women's liberation. Now, this may be a different kind of viewpoint than you've gotten before, but I'll give you an example. The other night, I went out to talk to the Junior Women's Chamber of Commerce, and their membership is from a kind of junior-executive administrative assistant to an executive secretary. These women are all very competent in their jobs, and they are all very under-paid. Normally when we go out to speak for the National Organization for Women, we give a general introduction to the movement as N.O.W. sees it, with goals and objectives. You know, we're not going to be able to do that anymore, because these women are all sensitized. They really are sensitized. They feel put down. They are writing their own letters to advertising agencies and companies, and they simply will not put up with it anymore. So that is one of the questions that they asked us, "Why are you here talking to us? Why aren't you talking to our bosses?" Now, this is a total change from a year ago. So, as I say, the more women who get involved in the movement, I think it's going to be much, much harder to slack it off and to slide down. Barring an incredible national crisis, I think it will go on. There are some crises that might actually make this movement progress faster, and I think the economic one is one which could do it, because more women are having to work outside the home. I don't think it's going to slack off.

LEVER: Being with N.O.W., you're sort of committed to a more legalistic, legislative approach to change.

DEMPSEY: That's right.

LEVER: Are you counting on the media to do your social change for you? [laughter]

DEMPSEY: Oh, lord, no! Well, the media, I think, has helped. Let's look, for instance, at one of the most widely read books among middle-class white Americans. Let's take the Redbook, for instance. They have actually run in the past year three totally feminist novels; now, that's almost incredible. McCall's, of course, has become almost radical, in terms of its own older kind or orientation. I think the thing that will change the socialization of women is the incredible numbers of women who are entering the labor force. 40% of the labor force is women, and I think that's going to go up. I also think that the imbalance between the male and female population in this country is going to cause a real crisis in terms of marriageable ages in this country. I think that women who are thinking are going to say, "Well, nuts to it! I'm going to be able to support myself. I don't want to have to be dependent upon marriage for my support for the rest of my life." I think that is going to be very gradual, but I think that in the next ten years, you're going to see that this whole idea of sexist child-raising is going to be greatly undermined by this new kind of woman in society, and I think that a lot of these

things are going to disappear.

LEVER: Have you ever been in a real cell-group of consciousness raising?

DEMPSEY: Yes. It was awful!

LEVER: Do you think it was awful just because you didn't need it?

DEMPSEY: No, I did need it...I did need it! But it was a pretty fair look at all the myths that we surround ourselves with to protect ourselves, and at all the old prejudices that I held against women.

LEVER: Well, you sound like a rather exceptional woman from childhood on. What did you need to get rid of in a cell-group situation, as a mature woman?

DEMPSEY: I had a tendency to patronize women who had married and who were very content in their homes. That's one thing. And I still have to watch that, especially if I get into a faculty party and I don't know where to go at a faculty party! Let's put it that way, because here I am...single and a threat. Certainly I'm not very much of a threat to anyone's husband, but I don't fit in, you see, to any accepted social group. Okay? I don't know really where to go. I don't like to sit in the corner and talk about Kenmore washing machines versus Maytag, and to be quite truthful with you, I still feel put down by my own laundry. I hide it in a laundromat, because I cannot get a dish towel clean! I don't know how my mother did it, or how anyone else does it, but I just can't do it! And so I hide my dish towels! Now, that's terrible, but, see, I'm still reacting to the stereotypes. And I don't have the kind/patience, I guess, for the woman who is really a homemaker of great ability. That's one thing I have to watch very carefully. Nor do I really understand the problems of a woman with children...the kind of security that she absolutely has to have within a home in order to give those children security. Those are two things that I'm learning a lot about but, of course, I can only share them vicariously because I do not have children. And I can't understand a woman who would ever put up with a man who is striking her or hitting her. I just can't understand it, and that's one thing that we run into time after time after time.

LEVER: Did you ever take any karate?

DEMPSEY: Yes, as a matter of fact, I am getting my sister and myself a little anti-personal weapon in case the karate doesn't work. We have a judo course that wouldn't let women in for awhile, but I hope that next semester I'll be able to take it, because some of my friends in women's liberation have taken it and done very good at it. And not only does it give you a little more self-respect when you walk down the street at night, but they say it's a marvelous thing for getting yourself into good shape. And, you see, if I actually had a purpose, I could actually exercise...maybe, for self-defense.

LEVER: You did take karate?

DEMPSEY: I just took one little lesson, and it scared the life out of me, because it demands incredible physical coordination...which I have never had...and I blame that both on myself and on people's willingness to allow me to forget about that particular part of life. You know, you didn't really have to be particularly physically fit if you had a good mind. You know,

there is that sense in America, and I really blame that both on myself and on the kind of physical education that I didn't have...or, maybe, wasn't forced to have. Yeah, it really made me feel good, and it made me feel weird, in a way, too. Do you know what the scissors kick is?

LEVER: No.

DEMPSEY: Well, you have to stand up, and you have to kick very, very quickly, and one foot is always off the ground and, of course, at that speed, it's an incredible weapon against the shin or the ankle-bone of your attacker, you see. But you're supposed to be able to do something like sixty a minute, one a second, which is incredibly fast, and I'm not really very good at the fast things. It gave me a sense of real power, you know, to think that physically I could actually overpower a male adversary, when I always had to depend on a caustic comment or being better read or being more logical. It really did give me a sense of power. One of my favorite people in the women's liberation movement is Jo Ann Gardner, because during the Pittsburg problem when women arose during the gross discrimination, Jo Ann Gardner was talking to the dean of instruction at the University of Pittsburg, and hit him, right on the shin, and she's about five feet tall and weighs about 89 pounds, and he was so shocked apparently by this bit of aggressiveness. But I admired her for that, because she allowed herself to express herself physically...what I suppose many of us have never been able to express physically. Thereby, it goes into this inner rage where you just stomp around.

LEVER: It's nice to have the outlet.

DEMPSEY: Right, exactly, so I do want to continue karate but, as I say, it's really time consuming, and I don't have much time anymore.

LEVER: What about teaching her where you have some black students. What do you feel about Kate Millet's idea that, for instance, the black revolution would never succeed without a sexual revolution?

DEMPSEY: Well, I'm not sure I agree with her whole premise there, because I believe the blacks, maybe, eventually are going to have to accept equality for their women, but they have a much different situation than we have. I'll give you an example. In the classroom, if there are no black men present, the black women that I know will support abortion, they will support contraceptives, and they will support at least sexual experimentation before marriage, but the minute a black man comes into that classroom...although they don't deny that they support all these things... they will not talk about them in any way. They'll talk about them just on paper'. But, they, too, are in a tremendously, you know, pressured kind of peer group, because the black man wants to regain some of that "masculinity," wants to support the woman, and he wants to put her in a gingham apron in a house in the suburbs and be like the white middle-class. He says he doesn't want to, but it seems to me, basically, that that's what many of our black students are here in school to do. For instance, they want the standard dialect immediately. All the soul searching about whether we should accept a ghetto dialect is, I think, almost a moot question at this point, because the blacks who are coming to us here want to be acceptable in a white society. They may eventually do business in the black community, but they want to be acceptable in a white society. So, the women, of course, are the ones who are going to have to make that decision eventually in the black movement and,

of course, Stokely Carmichael and the likes of him haven't really helped them very much. I think, though, that within ten, fifteen years perhaps, the black women will join.

LEVER: Do you feel that they're being discriminated against from two angles, both as blacks and as women?

DEMPSEY: They really have a hard time.

LEVER: Don't they feel so much more pressure that they are really not going to be able to...

DEMPSEY: I don't know. It's very interesting. We hired a marvelous lady this fall named Pearl Sanders, who is both black and a woman. It seems to me, that in terms of oppression, the oppression has been economic for the black woman. She's always been able to get a job, because, you see, she's less of a threat to the white community. The problem has been paying her a living wage, and now, as those jobs open up, I wonder if her fascination with the black militancy, you know, from the male chauvinistic point of view, isn't going to dwindle, because for the first time, she's being offered more money for what she does. And, I think, economically....that is what's going to change the picture, I hope.

CORTINOVIS: Ann's point, though, as far as them getting it from both sides, have you had any discussions here with any of the girls here on campus along the lines of their submerging their own interests in an effort to build up the black male ego, as some black writers have told them to do...notably Eldridge Cleaver?

DEMPSEY: Yes and no, but it's a put-on with these girls. They're superb actresses when it comes to this ego-building-business! They'll turn right around when the guys are looking and make a face at you.

CORTINOVIS: But isn't that a pressure?

DEMPSEY: That's a terrible pressure.

LEVER: That's the same old theory about whether slaves were really "sambos" or they weren't. I mean, how far down does it really go?

DEMPSEY: Right. I'm not sure...I'm not really sure. But I do know that a lot of these black young women that I know are most anxious to be financially independent. That's one of the things that they are most anxious to be, but on the other hand, they can't really talk about this too much, because they won't date. The black men won't date them or won't take them out if they find out that they're really set on this kind of career idea. So that if they want to have a social life in the black community...and they do...they must be very careful. One thing about black women is that they distrust white women a great deal, because so often they have seen the best of their peer group that are male date white women. And they have a natural, natural hatred, and really, they despise the white woman who gives them competition for the black man, and I can understand that. So, we have a long way to go in terms of white and black women learning to trust one another, in terms of male and female competition.

CORTINOVIS: Have you had any' conversations with any of the girls who seem to feel that it's their job, their duty, to build up the black man?

DEMPSEY: No, I've never heard anyone say seriously that "It's my thing to build up his ego." No, not at all. I've heard some of the opposite comments, but I've never heard the other comments. They also want to be financially independent, but they don't want to be in a position as some of their mothers and aunts and grandmothers were, supporting the black man financially. They do want to avoid that. So, they're looking for the black man who is making money and who can support them, so that they can go into this kind of relationship without the fear that they'll end up supporting them.

LEVER: Do you think that economic pressure is going to keep blacks from repeating the white middle-class "housewife" stereotype?

DEMPSEY: I think so. I think that it's a dream, but I think that it's going to keep them from falling into that same kind of trap. First of all, the blacks, as I know them, and I know quite a few blacks in Kinloch, this has been where some of my experience has been, are much more community-minded than the whites are. They talk to their neighbors. They're much more Christian about the whole community living kind of thing.

CORTINOVIS: Having lived a long life in this area, I do think Kinloch is a bit of a special case.

DEMPSEY: I agree with you.

CORTINOVIS: I taught over there for three years.

DEMPSEY: But didn't you find a sense of community there?

CORTINOVIS: Oh, very much so. Very much so. It couldn't have been more. But I think that that is one of the things that they are a little bit of a special case.

DEMPSEY: Yes, I agree with you. Although North St. Louis is beginning to develop that kind of thing, too.

CORTINOVIS: Is it? Well, Kinloch is a fine place to work. It's a fine place to teach. You get a lot of cooperation.

DEMPSEY: Yes, I have found that there is something there which a lot of communities are lacking. In that the neighbors take the trouble to know one another and know one another's children, know their problems and their accomplishments, and achievements.

CORTINOVIS: It's quite old-fashioned in that respect.

DEMPSEY; But this is coming out in North St. Louis, too, in the area around Northwest High School. . .which is a pretty transitional area right now. But the students that we are getting from there are part of that same kind of thing. The children grow up in the same neighborhood, they go to the same schools, they know each other's parents. All this kind of community thing is coming to bear on them. And even if you threaten... one of our militants last year...to call in his mother, he really backed down often, because there was still that tremendous respect for his parents. He said, "Oh, don't do that. I'll get my work in." And he

did, because he knew I'd make good my threat to call his parents.

LEVER: What about women on this campus? Have you done much organizing?

DEMPSEY: Well, we did last year. This year, things have been very slow to start, and I do advise a women's group here but it's a nebulous kind of thing. First of all, we're a commuter campus, as you know; secondly, our age range is incredible, from 18 to 60 or to the 60's. There is a Late Starters Club that's beginning to do things, although some of the women there resent baking cookies and selling them. But I hope that next month we're going to show some films for a women's media group and try to have a program a month. It's been very difficult to get students organized this year. First of all, because of the problems we've had on the campus in terms of disruptions, and we've been running pretty scared. Other organizations seemed to have suffered a great deal.

LEVER: Do you agree that, say, the upper, mobile, economic group that you've got here is the same blacks looking for the dream of...

DEMPSEY: Well, I'll tell you. Five-six years ago when I came here, I had to go into homes where students were offered scholarships to continue, and I had to beg and plead with their parents to allow these girls to accept full scholarships to complete their education, because what they really thought a girl ought to do is get married. One of our staff members here, and I don't want to be too specific, had an absolutely brilliant daughter, and his son was bright...but not as brilliant as his daughter was...and guess who went away to school and went on to graduate school? The son, of course. The daughter finished college and then, I think, simply in desperation got married. She wasn't getting the kind of emotional support at home that she really needed, even though both of her parents had college education. It was most important for the son to be the big wage earner out of that family.

LEVER: Do you think that that is still true?

DEMPSEY: Yes, north county is pretty conservative. I had many girl students...female students...insist that the only way that they could survive was to get married, because the pressure was so great.

LEVER: Do they sort of seek you out as a kind of...

DEMPSEY: Yes, I've kind of become the feminist-in-residence! However, this year and last year, there's been a much more awareness among the female students that, yes, they do have ability, and yes, they are capable of doing these things. No, they do not have to chose secretarial curricula to succeed in life and, yes, there are scholarships available. We don't do half enough to publicize these things.

LEVER: What would you say about characterizing in general your fellow colleagues here, in terms of your free-thinking in classes?

DEMPSEY: Well, quite frankly, most of the men on the campus are a little bit afraid of any woman who is at all assertive, because they don't want to step on any toes. Promotion-wise, it's a little slower for women, and in a generalized study that was made throughout the district last year, we found that women almost always with the same kind of preparation were a step

below the men. Although, by the way, we do have many more women here than you do at UMSL, of course. We're close to 36-37% of the full time staff, but always with a little bit less money. We think that happens...although we're on a published salary schedule... in the evaluation of credentials, as women come into the campus. Because, for instance, a man's army experience...if he as much as went into a classroom to teach good manners to the colonel's wife, is counted as teaching experience. Whereas, if a woman has run a recreational program, you know, during her school years and really had 120-125-170 children to deal with, that's not counted as teaching experience or anything relevant. And that's how the schedule, I think, is unequal. Another thing that bothers me is the number of full professors who are women. There are, of course, not half as many as there are of men. We do not have on the campus a ranking woman administrator in terms of line authority. We do have a woman who is head of the instructional resources division who does her job superbly and who is called the "dean" because of the nature of her work in the library, but other than Betty, there really isn't anyone. Grace Tripp is a full professor as is Anita Taylor. Anita is chairman of speech and drama, and I think found out about chauvinistic tendencies last year. She's also president of the District Faculty Association...which is a departure. I found the women here to be, for the most part, professional and well trained but, like any other minority group, any deviation from a professional standard is much more noticeable in a woman than a man. In other words, incompetence in men just kind of fades into the background. It is really never talked about. But if a woman shows any sign of weakness, or absence from classes, it's remarked upon immediately. Yes, there is a chauvinistic attitude.

LEVER: Do the women have doubt about their fellow women?

DEMPSEY: Well, yes, to a certain extent. Women, of course, refuse to organize. Most of the women we have here say, "Don't talk to me about any groups. I'm never going to belong to any group again." And I can understand that. The most militant people that we have are executive secretaries that have been for years, holding down offices -and literally the first line of defense against the taxpayer and against the student and everything else. We are now in the midst of a job evaluation study on the campus. I don't know whether it's going to turn out to be anything. The questionnaire had to be re-done, because it was such a putdown for women that you couldn't believe it. For women, it asked age, it asked marital status, how many children are you responsible for; for men, of course, it just asked...well, not even age, as a matter of fact.

CORTINOVIS: It just asked the important things!

DEMPSEY: Right. But we'd like to see a lot of those jobs re-classified as administrative assistants, because these women are much more than executive secretaries; they are incredible people who have been loyal and professional and very good at what they do. It was strange. Last spring, I offered a community service course on women, and I pulled in from the community a psychologist, who has since left the area and who specialized in feminist problems, roles and shape. And then, I had a lawyer, Frank Susman, who has done a lot of women's right things...we couldn't, by the way, get a female lawyer in town to do it. The next person I had was Sally Schumacher, who was on the Masters and Johnson team, in terms of human sexuality and she, of course, drew the greatest crowd. I had a philosopher from SIU who was doing a lot of work on the feminist movement who was also a man, and then, finally, some people from women's liberation. We ran it in the month of March. I'm going to

do something like that this spring, but I am not going to work as much with outside speakers. I think the women are seeking identity. Now these are women from the community, and some of our staff members, and some of our students who come in. But women are almost at a crossroad's point now, and I think that really some women have a totally biased idea about what women's liberation is. They think, "Well, no one will ever put my coat on again; no one will ever light my cigarette; no one will ever open a door; and no one will ever take me out again. What man wants a woman who can't sew and cook and clean and get clean dishtowels out of the washing machine, and do I really want it? Could I really survive the draft if it happened?" All of these things are real stumbling blocks, but as more women come out of their isolation... and I do men isolation; suburbia is one of the most isolated places in the world...and as they talk to other women who share their feelings, I think some of this will change. I think the important thing for women's liberation in St. Louis is to convey the message that we are not interested in hauling women out of their homes, putting their children in day care centers, sending them off to work...but what we are interested in is giving them an alternative to being second-class citizens.

LEVER: If you had some kind of Utopian vision of what society ought to look like, what would it look like?

DEMPSEY: Oh, well, I think that other than the genetic problems, other than the class structure which I suppose almost always evolves in any Utopia, I think I'd go back to Plato's republic where even a woman, could be in class for king. I would start from there, and I would begin to make some changes. I'm not sure he was right about the education of children, but certainly it was non-sexist education. There was a little propaganda, but it was non-sexist childrearing. Now I would envision a society where every person has a choice. I would envision a society where the nuclear family is still a part of that society, but only by choice. I would envision a society where there were no contracts... renewable or non-negotiable...in terms of how the parties felt about it. I would envision a society where it was no put-down for a man to work part-time, or even for a man to stay in the home. I would envision a society where women share equally the responsibility of governing. And, by the way, a society which had more than eleven representatives in the United States Congress and one in the United States Senate! I would envision a society which paid women equally and which recognized their expertise. I would envision a society which would provide a good day care...I'm not talking about government propaganda...I'm talking about good day care centers which have an educational program, as well as a babysitting function, which were open and available to women who, perhaps, wanted to have children, but didn't want to marry, and if they feel that strong and confident, I think, like Sweden, we certainly ought to allow that. And I would again envision a great more...a great number...of women in the traditionally male professions such as law, and especially medicine and psychiatry. One of the problems I really have with today's society is that there are many women who truly need help, and they are not getting it from the Freudians and neo-Freudians, especially, in psychology and psychiatry. I would expect, perhaps, a better balanced society.

LEVER: What about the things we commonly identify as sex differences?

DEMPSEY: Are we [can't understand]...I don't know whether I have it here or not, but there's a marvelous thing done on human sexuality by the Society for Humanistic Psychology which is, by the way, a very, very radical group. It was talking about sexism, and there was a whole

series of things dealing with sexism. For instance, what would happen if you were in a world dominated by three letters "SHE" instead of "HE." What would happen if every time you looked at television, for instance, and at moments of import, it wasn't Frank McGee, but it was a woman...Barbara Walters...or whoever...

LEVER: Pauline Fredericks.

DEMPSEY: Pauline Fredericks..poor Pauline...with her voice. But it was a woman reporting the news of the day...it was a woman economist... it was a woman doctor that you saw. What would happen in a society where little boys had to be very careful about how they played because, you see, their genitalia was all exposed and it wasn't neat and compact and inside and protected like the woman's? What would happen in a society where the father stayed at home, and he had to ask mother about every decision that he made? What would happen if you turned the whole society around? And, of course, that's not what I'm suggesting, but I am suggesting that there are, of course, arguments for biological non-destiny, rather than biological destiny, and that women, whether or not they are superior to men as a machine, as a chemical and biological machine, is a point that it almost doesn't pay to argue anymore, because obviously since we all live in a society that has not taken care of its land and its resources, we are going to become increasingly, male and female, exposed to the dangers of air pollution and mercury poisoning and all sorts of garbage. But I think the one awful thing, and that's not really awful, I suppose, but an incredibly efficient kind of thing... the one thing that women are going to have to work really very hard to get over is the fact that they are the only ones in society that can have children, that can bear children, and that, of course, is what put them down in this society...in this new society... not in pioneer days and not anything else but now...and I think that as the pill or something safer is to be introduced which women can control their reproductive functions...either by abortion or by contraception...that this is going to become less and less a real problem. Did you know, by the way, that when the Suffragettes went to the males to try to get support for their movement, they said, "What would happen? You might have a child in a voting booth. It would be very dangerous for you to be outside the home." All this tremendous hang-up on maternity and, I suppose, we still act that way.

LEVER: The same way, would you want your president during her menstrual period making decisions about...

DEMPSEY: Well, you know, I'm not really sure that we've proved that those hormonal balances provide a bad situation. I think that it's an individual situation, certainly, and body chemistry certainly can be altered and controlled. I'm not sure that even on their good days, some of our presidents have made the very best decisions. I really object to this, and I object to Mr. Nixon's doctor and some of these people who say that women are emotionally unstable. There are days, yes, when I feel unstable, but I certainly...after I have a cup of tea in the morning...feel better able to face the world!

CORTINOVIS: Because you're a woman.

DEMPSEY: It just may be that just because I'm a human being.

LEVER: You talked about you would envision some sort of amelioration of sex differences until you got down to the ones that were simply biological.

DEMPSEY: Yes, yes, I'm not really sure. It, I think, depends on how you raise a child. I think that the reproductive functions are fine. Certainly someone should probably bear children. I'm not really fully convinced that the laboratory is going to be able to take over that job for us, and I'm not sure that I want it to, because I think that every child, at least for nine months, ought to have a little security. We bring him into a world that has no security but, certainly, the womb might give him some, or her some. Yes, I think so. One of the things, I think, of course, we can do is think of maternity as a non-work productive area for a number of weeks. I think we ought to pay women for sick leave, for maternity, just as we pay for our administrative ulcer attacks, or heart attacks, or gall bladder attacks. I think we ought to pay for abortions for single and married women. I think we ought to pay for vasectomies if that need be. I just think we ought to do all kinds of things.

CORTINOVIS: Ann, what I would like you to cover before we wind up is the women's lib scene in St. Louis; that is, the people you have met since you've been here and the groups that are active.

DEMPSEY: Let me tell you about the group that I belong to. I don't have much expertise in the other groups which have a tendency to come and go. There are, I might add, some radical women's groups around St. Louis, and they are centered around Washington University, St. Louis University...not St. Louis University, however, quite so much as Washington U. They began a women's center. Now, I understand that it closed its original location, and they are seeking a new location.

CORTINOVIS: Are you speaking of the "Y" downtown?

DEMPSEY: Yes, that has closed, and they are looking for a new place for women to go who need help whether it's legal or discriminatory practices in jobs or whatever. Now, the next thing that I would like to talk very passionately about, I guess, is N.O.W. in St. Louis. We have a working membership of about '35. We come and go; we've had difficulty getting organized. We've been in existence about a year and a half. We do have work with a committee structure which is like a task force structure; in other words, we have political action, a media committee. I happen to chair the speakers bureau; then there's the abortion committee and the day care center committee. Now, one of the things that has hampered our development in St. Louis is our organization. As women, we have to learn to get along with one another. We have to learn to trust each other, and that's one of the things that has helped me to do—I like women—and I meet women now and I look at them as people. I suppose I always looked at some women as people, but I find that if you scratch a woman, you usually get a feminist in some area. So that we have been growing and finding ourselves in these areas. This year, one of our big pushes is going to be for the Women's Political Caucus in Washington and also in the State of Missouri. There are also a group of women here who, under some encouragement from Bella Abzug, are beginning a Women's Political Caucus in Missouri, and as soon as I get some information on it, I would be glad to pass it on to you. I'd be glad to, because I think those are people you should probably interview, too.

CORTINOVIS: Are these elected officials?

DEMPSEY: No, these are women who want to work within the existing political parties to attempt to have some kind of influence on platforms, and on candidates' attitudes at the state

and at the local level. They are attempting to get women very interested in going back to being precinct captains, not typists and envelope addressers, and telephone answerers, but actually being part of the grassroots political kinds of organization. This N.O.W. will support totally and fully. We are also attempting to support the Women's Political Caucus in Washington, D.C., which is the national group. We are trying to set up a lobbyist, by the way, which is very expensive, as you know.

CORTINOVIS: To support a lobbyist.

DEMPSEY: Yes, very expensive. Now, women supposedly hold all the money in the United States...at least 90%...which is nonsense. They may inherit the money, but it's managed by men in investment houses, and they don't really have access to it. As women, we don't really have access to a great deal of financial support. Financial support for N.O.W. is a problem, and that's another thing we're attempting to work on. We may wind up having bazaars, believe it or not. Raising money is a problem.

CORTINOVIS: It always is.

DEMPSEY: Yes, it's always with us. We know that better than anyone else here in the junior college. So we have to get some kind of financial support. I think that one of the areas that has opened up to us in St. Louis since last August has been the media. They're much nicer to us than they once were. KDNA has been great; KMOX has been fair; and KSD has been fair, too. In other words, the major networks have been very nice about giving us some time. The Post-Dispatch, as a representative newspaper, has been so-so. Actually, the Globe has been much nicer to us in terms of the city. Isn't that wild?

CORTINOVIS: Yes.

DEMPSEY: You just never would believe it. Of course, the other thing that N.O.W. is very anxious to get support for in this area is the Equal Rights Amendment from our own congressional delegation. And Leonor Sullivan, who is, I suppose, one of the most respected women in Congress has not supported that. So, you see, we have some real problems here that we are attempting, of course, to get into politics.

LEVER: How do you characterize the membership of N.O.W.? Varied?

DEMPSEY: Yes, it's varied. It has a predominance of white middle-class women between the ages of 25—40, and that isn't good, because any group such as a fight for women's equality is going to have to have broad-based support throughout the community. We don't have very many black women. And as we talked about before, women who have made it in the community, are not interested in our group even though there are some of us who are involved in the professions.

CORTINOVIS: You men, in terms of making it professionally?

DEMPSEY: Right. They are not interested in N.O.W. anymore because, you see, they've made it, and they don't really have much sympathy for the woman who is just finding herself...which is too bad...but we'll have to work with what we have and get some more broad-based support.

CORTINOVIS: Could you give us just a little sampling of what these people do?

DEMPSEY: Well, let's see. There's Phyllis Lafata who does public relations for the "YW", Marilyn Worseldine [?] who is one of the founding members of the group, is a graphic artist involved in advertising, and her job is offering her so much at this point... demanding so much of her...that she's really had to confine her activities strictly to that; we are hoping that she will gain many promotions quickly. We have one of our recent members...transferred here from Boston...is just getting her PhD. in sociology and, on the other hand, we have a young woman who is twenty-five, has been married three times, and got a GED on her own and has put it altogether by herself. In some ways, I have a lot more respect for Joanna than I do for myself, because I've had a lot more opportunity to get myself together than she has. She is a staunch member. Abby Doljin has a Master's in Counseling, but isn't working at the moment. She attempted to work at Beaumont High School this year but found that 30 students who couldn't read in English class was a little bit too much to handle.

LEVER: Do you have any black women?

DEMPSEY: I'm sorry to say that there are none. Hopefully, though, we may be able to detach some members of the black community as we get better organized...as the group begins to define itself better. Also in this job discrimination committee, I think, may involve some black women. With EOC office open here, we have much better access to information than we have had. Where, by the way, we are running right now a media monitoring program...a TV program...a monitoring kit in terms of ads and things like that. And one of the things that that committee did while it was waiting for all the information on how to monitor your TV set, was to go through medical journals for the ads about women. One I'd like to describe to you showed the bride, you know, in full regalia, looking pained, and it said, "You can't really change her life, but perhaps you can help her live it." It was an ad for tranquilizers. This is what the doctors are getting in terms of tranquilizing women into accepting their own rage and their own hostility and this, of course, is one of the things that we're anxious to change. So we will have a full report on what medical journals do to us. They're awful...just awful.

CORTINOVIS: Where does your group meet?

DEMPSEY: We meet currently at the "YW" in Clay ton...in Brentwood... on Sunday nights on the second and usually fourth Sunday nights we meet.

CORTINOVIS: Well, 35 members does not seem like a lot, but I know from my experience that 35 people who are really interested can do a lot.

DEMPSEY: Yes, it's very interesting. The other night, Sunday night, we had 25 people at our orientation meeting. 25 new women who were awfully difficult to find, because if you don't have money, you can't afford a telephone. People can't find you. A post office box has proved to be very inadequate, but we are beginning to draw more and more people to these orientation meetings...which are the first meetings of the month...and, hopefully, we will continue to do so. But we have to have a place for them to work and accomplish things, and that's precisely what we are attempting to do with our media committees and job discrimination.

LEVER: Do you have any older women who were active in the Twenties around?

DEMPSEY: I have met several, but those women in St. Louis who were active in the twenties have done fine things, although I'm not sure Alberta Meyers was active in the Twenties, she supported women's rights certainly. And there is a Commission on the Status of Women in the State of Missouri which Alberta Meyers and some other women in the state have literally financed themselves. They have no state support at all and, in order to get federal support, you have to have state funding. The state, thus far, has not funded it at all.

CORTINOVIS: They set up the committee and the mechanism and then say, "So long, girls!"

DEMPSEY: That's right, that's right. "Pay for your own." It really is so that Missouri is really behind. I don't know if you realize it—how behind they are! It wasn't until 1945 that you as a woman could serve on a jury in the State of Missouri.

LEVER: In South Carolina, it was two years ago!

DEMPSEY: Yes, but, you know, some wild laws still exist. One of the books says that a woman can't really be held responsible for any crime that she commits if her husband is present because, obviously, it was his idea! Women, of course, get longer prison terms for any kind of assault than men do, because it's considered very dangerous in terms of... But these, of course, are some of the things we are working on by trying to take a legislative tack.

CORTINOVIS: So, besides your group which is a legislative group, you don't think there are any other groups that meet regularly?

DEMPSEY: Oh, yes, there are. There are several very informal groups in the city which are strictly consciousness-raising sessions for women who have first of all have not found psychoanalysts or psychiatry to be .helping them very much. I forgot what the national statistic is but, for instance, women stay in psychoanalysis much longer than men do, and there is a growing concern that, perhaps, it's the way therapy is handled, rather than the women themselves. And these consciousness raising groups do exist. There's one in Kirkwood, two in Webster, I think, and they do exist around the city on an informal basis.

CORTINOVIS: How would one find those?

DEMPSEY: Word of mouth. One woman who has been active in disseminating this kind of information is called Bernice Wehrmeyer who works at the Peace Center. I think it's spelled W-E-H-R-M-E-Y-E-R. And even such groups as the AEW have gone into study groups and have taken women's liberation as a project. But that is the organization as it is now. Now it's a much more active group in Boston and a much more active group on both the East and West coasts than we have been able to do here. But as I say, hopefully, they're much older than we are.

LEVER: Is there a radical lesbians or...

DEMPSEY; There is a group of lesbians in St. Louis who have not come to our meetings. At least they have not come as a group. We would like them to come. We do, I believe, have one member of our group who is a lesbian, but not a member of this particular group of gay

liberation and that sort of thing. Lesbians in town are very frightened, in terms of their jobs, and I don't blame them a bit. So they do exist, however.

LEVER: Do you have any names that we could contact?

DEMPSEY: No, I don't. I will try to get you one, however. I do have a name, but I prefer not to give it to you unless I had some permission, if you don't mind.

CORTINOVIS: Of course.

DEMPSEY: Because they have protected themselves very well, and I don't want to see them suffer in any way. Because this is an alternative life-style which, I think, is very valid. It's a shame, but if I say it publicly, they have to be very, very careful, and I have all the sympathy in the world for them.

CORTINOVIS: The other thing that I want to be sure to ask you about is what you are planning for next year.

DEMPSEY: Well, I'm applying for a sabbatical, but the selection committee is the College Council, upon which I happen to be sitting this year.

CORTINOVIS: Of the junior college?

DEMPSEY: Yes, of this particular college at Florissant Valley.

CORTINOVIS: Just at Florissant Valley.

DEMPSEY: Yes, which is mostly male. There's one other woman on it which is very interesting. What I've asked to be able to do is to enfranchise women humanistically on this campus, because they are not now. We have totally ignored intellectual contributions of women in the classroom. Our textbooks, I think, they are standard freshman English textbooks, which have absolutely nothing which is representative of women's intellectual contribution in this country, so that I think that is a pressing need. Our career curricula here also have been geared toward men and, occasionally, women get into it. The only one that isn't geared strictly for men is our child care program which, I think, there is going to be a great need for. We have a two-year curriculum now for women who want to go into day care centers and do very well in it. It's a good, good program. So, what I want to do is go around to as many colleges and universities as I can afford to go to, who now have programs for women both in continuing education, which I think is something we are going to have to be much more aware of especially in this area, and in the actual fully accredited undergraduate programs. I want to see what they are doing, and beg, borrow, and steal what materials they have developed. I suppose that's the first part of my program. The second thing I want to do is go to Washington and learn how to do grantsmanship, because I'm convinced that unless you know exactly how to write an application with the official ease that is insisted upon, you're not going to get much funding. HEW has ten billion dollars this year, and women, they say, are high on their priority list. I'd like to see them prove it, you understand. But I think that there are areas in which we will need funding for if we want to open new programs in this district. We need to have someone who has some expertise on how to do it. Okay, then, thirdly, I want to come back and write up a bibliographic essay in in terms of how the

materials I have collected can be used in as many courses as I can. I envision including humanities, philosophy courses, and perhaps even art history, sociology certainly, psychology, American history. Western Civilization, some perhaps of notable contributions women have made in science and, certainly, writers in English, speech and drama areas. So, I would write that up in the form of a bibliographic essay. Our library, whose division dean is a woman, has been delighted to say that she will collect and catalogue these for me. So, I envision myself going all over the country just sending piles of stuff to Betty which will, by the time I get back, be catalogued so we can go to work on them. Then I want to present the district with a plan of how we can get rid of this lack in the colleges. I think it's necessary, because we must increase our student credit hours to survive, and one of the large groups of people who we haven't tapped are the adult women in this community who have other responsibilities who yet want to come back to school, whether it's just for stimulation, or whether it's to prepare for a second career. It's very important, because by the age of- forty in this country, most of a woman's child-bearing years are certainly over, her family is raised, and they are out of the home. And so for the next thirty years, what does she do? What in the world does she do?

CORTINOVIS: She goes back to school and gets a full-time job.

DEMPSEY: Like you did! Right! But we have to find these jobs, and we have to find the programs to help these women.

LEVER: You have to provide half of the motivation, too.

DEMPSEY: Yes, I have to agree with you, and there are many other younger adult women who, because of home responsibilities, can't come, and that's why I want to expand our day care, but all of this is going to take a lot of time. But I want to write this program up for the district...things we could do with funding if we got it, and things we could do without funding.

CORTINOVIS: Oh, I hope you can get it!

DEMPSEY: I do, too. I've also applied to the National Foundation for the Humanities for further financial assistance. I don't know, one again we have to decide on the topicality of the issue.

CORTINOVIS: Do you have anyone helping you to write this?

DEMPSEY: No, I don't.

CORTINOVIS: Because we have bur whole office that does that...research, administration. I just wondered whether the junior college district has anything.

DEMPSEY: Oh, we do, yeah.

CORTINOVIS: They just pull it together and put it in official form.

DEMPSEY: It's all in official form. It went in on October 24th. The most difficult thing I had to write was an essay about myself, in terms of my own experience. You know, we're taught

to be modest and unassuming, but I wasn't modest and I wasn't unassuming. So, at any rate, we'll see what happens. I'll be anxious to see what reaction our sabbatical selection committee has.

CORTINOVIS: Ann, you asked Ann Lever before...did she feel secure in her job? You, obviously, do!

DEMPSEY: Oh, yes. There's some days when I feel a lot more secure than other days, but don't we all feel that? Yes, it's a strange thing. I told you I had majored in Latin, and here you find me in the English Department. Foreign languages, as perhaps you both realize, in this country have suffered a great decline, and among the first to disappear was Latin...which I think is a shame... because of the training it gives a student in all kinds of areas in terms of appreciation of another culture, vocabulary building, writing, all these things. But during my other teaching years, of course, I didn't teach only Latin, I developed a certain expertise in developmental English. I'm very fond of, and I worked very hard on the program here with several other people...mostly women, by the way...very few men have been interested in helping the developing student. They haven't been interested, I think, because they don't really have much patience with the student who has had no writing training in college. So we are now shaking down our program. It's taken six years, and we've had pretty good support from the administration financially to do these things. That's basically why I was hired here, because of the...what I thought was expertise and what I since found was incredible ignorance, so that's why you find me here. And then for a little release, I teach humanities...which is what we used to call a "flat river course," you know, because it's wide and it doesn't go into things very deeply. But I think it serves an acculturation process for students who don't really have any idea what went on. I enjoy teaching it, and my students seem to enjoy taking it.

CO&TINOVIS: I'm all for that, of course, but I can't think of anything more important than the developmental English program.

DEMPSEY: Oh, I agree, especially with young men and young women.

CORTINOVIS: They're just crippled without it.

DEMPSEY: Yes, they are. So we have gone back to a totally skills oriented thing, and it's mean and it's nasty.

CORTINOVIS: It's a shame to do it at this level, at this age.

DEMPSEY: But we must.

CORTINOVIS: Yes, this is their last chance.

DEMPSEY: Yes, but as I say, I have found, as my own ideas have kind of crystallized in terms of what works best for me in the classroom, I have begun to be much more objective. I never grade themes subjectively any more. I make a student sit while I grade the theme and if then he thinks that I'm putting him down or her down, I say, "Now, wait a minute." I say, "You've got this whole list of things. I grade strictly on a point system, in terms of rhetorical and mechanical kinds of devices. I think that a lot of us who are English teachers and who

teach composition fall into the trap of thinking that only our ideas are right. I keep assuring my students that even if I don't like their argument, even if it's against women's liberation, if the argument is well taken and well documented, I certainly grade it as an argument paper and not on content as such, rather whether or not I agree with it\*. But, no, it's been a fascinating six years, but I want a change, and quite frankly, I'm tired of pushing Eleanor of Aquitaine! I love Eleanor, but in the whole Middle Ages, other than Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim, she's the only lady I can point to with pride. And I want to find out if someone else has found other people. I tried of destroying the myths that I found. The history books are incredible. They're just incredible. You know that Pericles, the Greek...Pericles saw that the only thing that a woman should be know for...her name should only be mentioned in public at her birth, marriage and death; otherwise, if it was mentioned at any other time, it was a terrible scandal. She was no good. Then he turned around and married a lady of very ill-repute and had her made a citizen on top of it all!

CORTINOVIS: Didn't publicize her name, though.

DEMPSEY: Oh, yes, her name was published in Athens. But I have great respect for that woman because she, obviously, turned him away from male chauvinism.

CORTINOVIS: She showed him.

DEMPSEY: Yes.

CORTINOVIS: Well, I can't thank you enough. I've enjoyed myself thoroughly, and I hope you did, too. That's one of the purposes of the thing. I think we got a really, really great tape. Thank you, lots.