Metro Detroit Skilled Tradeswomen Oral History Project

Interview with

J. W.
Metal Model Maker

August 15, 2005

Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs
Walter P. Reuther Library
Wayne State University

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Interview with J. W.

MARGARET RAUCHER: The Metro Detroit Skilled Tradeswomen Oral History Project is at the Reuther Library on August 15, 2005 interviewing J. W. And there was some discussion about whether you were a pattern maker or . . .

J. W.: I am a metal model maker, which is very similar to a pattern maker.

RAUCHER: But now you're a hundred percent involved in diversity training for UAW.

J. W.: UAW, yeah.

RAUCHER: Okay. At any rate, usually I start the questioning with asking you about your life before you got into the trades, when you were born, where you were born, your family life, that sort of thing.

J. W.: Okay. I was born in Flint, Michigan in the '50s, actually, 1955, which I think is a very good year. I was raised on the north end of town in Flint, which is pretty much where all blacks were living at that time. Indians had lived there first and when they moved out, we moved in. And I'm the second child of nine siblings.

For the most part, we were very, very poor — very poor, dirt poor, actually. But we didn't know it, because everybody was just about like us. There were a few that weren't, and we all wished that we were like them, but they didn't have as much fun. My stepfather was a janitor. He was handicapped. He barely made enough to feed us.

My grandparents lived next door to us. My family is originally from Georgia — Albany and Americus, Georgia. My grandfather was born in Americus and he quit, he

was taken out of school when he was in the first grade. He never, ever attended first grade. And he worked in a cotton field — that's what he did. And then he moved here when he was — oh, I can't remember how old he was — he was in his late twenties. And he met my grandmother on a train coming here. And so he was able to get in Buick Foundry, which was very, very hard work, but it was work. He had eight children when he married my grandma, and they had just one son. But my grandmother already had my mom — she was married previously. So there were ten kids there.

And so the reason I talk about my grandparents is because we lived next door to them, so they were part of who raised us. And then when my mom and my stepdad and my brothers and sisters moved to the other side of town, to the projects, I didn't. My grandparents kept me because I was full of energy, and it was a bit much with eight other kids — at that time, it was seven other kids. And so, I was a handful.

When I was growing up I saw lots of things. My grandparents taught me lots of things. My grandmother taught me how to be a girl, because she wanted me to be a girl — a real girl. And every Saturday I would get up and I would have to dust and clean. And then I'd have to dust and clean all of her friends' homes for a quarter, which was wonderful, because I had a pocketful of money. Way back then that was really good, when you're only nine or ten.

But my grandfather taught me other things. He taught me how to chew tobacco and spit. He taught me how to dip snuff, how to pour cement, how to change plumbing and do plaster, how to put coal in our furnace, how to chop wood. My grandmother didn't necessarily like that, because she felt like I was too much of a tomboy, for the most part. But they supported me in everything that I did.

I went to an all-black elementary school. The only white person I ever saw was the principal. She was a female and her name was Mrs. Atkins. I remember her because we got our paddlings from her. And then there was one white family in our neighborhood and they had a son that was in my grade — his name was Donald. Other than that, until I got in seventh grade, I never, ever saw white people, except like, if we went to the grocery store, which was very seldom, because we didn't have a car.

My grandparents supported me in everything that I did in school. I played basketball, volleyball. I was very active. And I was usually the first in my family to do certain things. I was the only African-American basketball player, the only African-American cheerleader. And the year that I went to McKinley School was like the second year that blacks ever went to that school.

I was accustomed to being the first. It was not an easy thing. In fact, when I was trying out for cheerleading, they sent the only black counselor in that school to talk to me in case I didn't make it, because they didn't think I had a chance. I was not afforded gymnastic classes, obviously. That was not a priority in our home.

So, in the projects, on the weekends when I would go to stay with my mom and my brothers and sisters and my family, I would turn cartwheels and aerials right on the ground. And so the ground is what caught me when I didn't do them right. But I was the only black cheerleader. There was a girl who made cheerleading the year before me, and she was black, so she kind of — it made me know that I could. And even after the counselor talked to me and he warned me, "Well, now, I don't want you to be upset if you don't make it," I said, "I will make it." And so that's how my life has been.

So I went to school and I did very well in school, actually. My grandparents never had to tell me to go to school, get up, none of that stuff. I loved school. I loved learning. I grew up thinking I wasn't good enough, and I don't know why that was. There's some reasons for it, but I always felt like I had to be better than everybody. I had to be smarter than everybody, because I wasn't the prettiest in my family. My sisters were drop-dead gorgeous. I knew that, because all the boys liked them and none of them liked me. Well, it could have probably been because I was the one that climbed the cherry trees and all the other things and never thought of the other part.

But in school I did well. I had all college preparatory courses. I took the math and the science, the algebra, the geometry, the trig, the physics, the chemistry. I did very well in those, and English courses. But I wanted to go to college. There had not been anyone in my family to have gotten a bachelor's degree, from my grandmother's siblings, ever. So I wanted to go to school. They could not afford to send me to school, but I still tried when I got out of high school.

I got married in my twelfth grade year, and I was still going to school. I started having kids. And two years after I graduated, I was working like, three jobs — working at the bank, working at the post office and working at Meijer's. And I still was not making enough money, to me. So I was cashing checks for people that I thought, "Man, these people, they're living large." So I asked a guy to help me get into the plant. And he took my application for salary. And it was in 1976.

And I called them every week. And finally this guy named Greg says, "Well, we've got so many people laid off, we're trying to get some people off of the unemployment roles." I said, "Hey, tell you what, why don't you give me that job and

then somebody can take this job?" And I said, "I'll work for you and you will never be sorry." And he hired me.

And so when I hired in the plant, I was on production for ten years. I had started having kids, I was married. And I would look at skilled trades, and I knew about skilled trades, because . . .

RAUCHER: Which plant are we talking about?

J. W.: It is now Delphi East, [UAW] Local 651. It used to be AC Sparkplug in Flint. So I worked production for ten years, because at first I said, "Oh, I don't want to go into skilled trades. They work too much, you know, overtime." And I had my kids. I was a Brownie troop leader and Girl Scout leader and I was really involved in the things that my kids were doing.

Well when I got to be twenty-eight, I now had three children and was divorced and all of a sudden, skilled trades looked very attractive to me. So I took the test. I think there were sixty-eight possible points. They have so many areas that they test you in. And I got sixty-seven. And I was able to pick the trade that I wanted.

And I wanted electrician at first, until I saw them climbing these catwalks and things. And I'm like, "Oh, no, you're not going to get me up that high in the air. That is a no." [laughter] So then I went over to the model shop and I saw them working on these dies and they were fairly small dies, you know, not anything big. And I thought, "I could do that." After all, it was the highest paid trade we had there.

And so when they hired, I was the only female that came in with that group. I think they hired six or seven of us, and I was the only female. There were other females on that trade, other African-American females on that trade, but there had never been a

female to retire off that trade. In our building, all the supervisors for model makers were from our trade, none of them were females.

And so I started nineteen years ago on that trade. I had opportunities before then, but I just — you know, other things — I was not pushed in the direction to know that that would have been something good. But I knew they made more money and I knew they worked a lot of overtime and that's what I needed to raise my kids, if I was going to be raising them by myself.

And so my very first day on the job, I shall always remember. There was a guy — and you'll remember this guy, because he's the same guy that I'll talk about towards the end of my apprenticeship. I started my apprenticeship — they assign someone to you. The first day we're going through on a tour, they're showing us around the building. This guy walks up to me and he said, "Don't you know you took a job from a man?" I said, "No, I scored higher than he did on the test." Now, first of all, I'm too mouthy, but I'm thirty years old, so I can be mouthy. By then I think I'm as much of an adult as the rest. I don't know anything about the culture of skilled trades, didn't care. I was there to make the money, learn the job.

He says, "Women ought to be at home having babies." I said, "Really? I've had my babies. Now I want to have a piece of this pie that you have." So, right away I'm certain that I probably got a reputation. Those were the first negative words that I heard, the very first day on the job.

So my apprenticeship was not anything unusual. All of the men — we were always assigned to men as journeymen. I was never assigned to a woman to teach me my job, though there were women of journey status. I was always assigned to a male. It was

pretty much routine. The women depended on the men a lot, a lot. And they only shared with you what they wanted to share with you. Many of them were old — real old, like should-have-retired-long-time-ago old.

CRAWFORD: The men or the women?

J. W.: The men. None of the women, no. We had never had a woman retire, when I came on. There wasn't any that had enough time to retire.

So what I found on my apprenticeship was that the older guys were not the worst, relative to how the women were treated. The younger ones were. My trade was considered like, the prima donnas, you know, the guys got it made, you don't do this, you don't do that.

Let me tell you what a model maker does. A model maker, you can bring me a print of a part, a sketch or the part and I actually design the die to make that part. And so our work was prototype. We were getting jobs in and if we were able to build a job and compete for the business, then that job would go to our die makers for production. So it was like the very first part of getting business in so the plants could keep going. And so I mean, it's very, very creative. It's one of the most creative trades there is, because you get to use your mind. There's no set way to build a die. There are some basics, obviously, but there's no set way to build a die. So you can use your mind and your imagination after you get all of the basics down. And so we did things for shows and stuff like that.

And so my apprenticeship was probably what I call pretty much routine for a woman. You dealt with a lot of things. You dealt with what I consider to be, oh, attitudes that clearly today the men would be fired for the things that they said and did. It was not uncommon for them to make very lewd verbal and nonverbal gestures. When I

came on my trade, they still had pornography all around, in their toolboxes, on their toolboxes, with naked women, and things like that.

So as it goes, I think we either have six or eight periods — I can't remember how many periods — they're basically like, six-month spans. I'm not sure how many hours there are in each period. But in my very last period before I graduated . . . Now, during the course of my apprenticeship up to that point, I had had some training that most apprentices did not get — how to run injection mold machines. Because once I build a die, I've got to run a part out of some type of alloy, some plastic, polycarb or something like that, so it's hot, so it goes in an injection mold machine. The journeymen got that training.

Well, I had one supervisor prior to my last period who always thought that I could learn a lot of things, and so he sent me on this training. I was the only apprentice in that training. And so they ragged on me the whole time we were there at this Cincinnati Millacron training. But I took it, because I thought, you know what, I got to be able to do this job and do it well when I graduate. So I learned it. So I was then running journeymen's job for them. They said, "She's good at it."

So this one particular week, last period, the same guy who opened his mouth to me almost four years prior happened to be passing by my job. Now, I got to tell you about the most wonderful journeyman I ever had, his name is Bob Rose. Bob Rose was an old guy. All right? Old guy, smart, very good at what he did. He was the first journeyman who had to take on a female apprentice, and an African-American one at that. And they said he closed up his toolbox and he went home. And they called him at

home and told him, “If you don’t get back in here, you won’t have a job.” But he trained her.

So in my last period, I went to him and asked him if he would be my journeyman for my last period, if he would take me on, because I liked what I saw him do. He was very good. And his techniques, I wanted to learn them. And so he did. He was my journeyman.

So one of the other apprentices who was just a few months ahead of me, she had built a die. The die would not function properly to push the parts off in the injection mold machine. This particular journeyman, the very first one that mouthed off to me, happened to walk by. And he said — stuck his nose into something that wasn’t his business. And the supervisor was there — this was a different supervisor. He said, “The job would run if it wasn’t N-rigged.” Do you understand what I’m saying? He used the “N” word, rigged. I don’t know if I’m allowed to say it. Can I say it?

RAUCHER: You can say anything.

J. W.: He said the job was “nigger-rigged.” Now, let me tell you what that means in skilled trades terms, “It’s just a bunch of old something thrown together that don’t work right anyway, so it’s not worth anything.” So the supervisor, who was also a model maker, he laughed, and this guy laughed. I said, “It’s not funny. It’s not professional, nor is it technical. Don’t use it. I’m offended by it.” The other apprentice, she didn’t say anything, neither did my journeyman.

The very next day when I came in — I was walking in with the first black woman apprentice and journeyperson. She and I were walking in. And when I got to my work area, we had white paper underneath Plexiglas on our desks, and it had the word “nigger”

on it. And then one of our time cards was sitting there and it said, "What the "f" you trying to prove, nigger? You better quit while you're ahead." This was in 1988 or '89 — it was '89.

Well, she tore the paper off and I took the card up and showed it to the supervisor. Then I went and I showed it to the general supervisor. He says, "Why don't you give this to me?" I said, "Uh-uh. You guys lose things." I kept it. And from that day, I started documenting everything that happened to me. For forty-five days they put bluing ink on the handles of my toolbox, they hid my tool cart, they put Loctite glue in my locks. Forty-five days I was harassed. None of the guys would speak to me and most of the women barely would speak to me, because of this. I had done nothing.

I went to the supervisor numerous times, the general supervisor, the superintendent. I said, "I want the harassment to stop. Every day I'm looking for my toolbox. They're taking — just taking things. They put bluing ink so when you grab your handle, you don't even know it's there and you touch yourself and you got blue ink all over yourself.

So I then proceeded to go to Labor Relations, because it had not stopped. The only thing that made it stop was the Christmas break. And when I came back, it started all over again. Finally, after going to Labor Relations several times, I said, "We will play ball in a different arena. How do you want it?" Because I had documented things for a long time.

And so when I got back to my building from Personnel, which was in a separate building, my supervisor, general supervisor, plant manager were all at my job wanting to know what to do for me. I said, "I want this to stop." And my journeyman, he told them,

“I heard this man say this. I was standing there. " He stood up for me. And he had a good reputation. I was very hurt, because guys that knew my work, knew my work ethic, they stopped talking to me, because they sided with him, and they knew what kind of a person he was. They knew.

CRAWFORD: Could I interrupt you with a question?

J. W.: Yes.

CRAWFORD: I have two questions, actually. The first question is: You went to the foreman and the general foreman — you didn’t go to the steward?

J. W.: I called the committee. My committee never came out. My committeeman never came out, my shop committeeman never came out and my chairman never came out. And I know their names, as I sit here today.

CRAWFORD: So that was obviously a dead end.

J. W.: It was a dead end. Nobody was going to do anything about that.

CRAWFORD: Okay. The second question is: Obviously, after Christmas when you laid down the rules of engagement, that journeyman, the older journeyman, the guy named Rose, he did stand forward.

J. W.: It was after Labor Relations got involved. Because he didn’t know where things were at. He was still just being my journeyman, whatever. And I didn’t say what was going on with me, but everybody kind of knew.

CRAWFORD: But he didn’t know what was happening to you?

J. W.: He didn’t know — yeah, he — everybody knew. We’re all in one little building. There’s no one else there but model makers, all model makers. We didn’t have any other trades in our building unless our machines broke down and we’d have to call a

machine repair or electrician. Everyone knew. Everyone knew. Some of the girls said to me, "Why don't you just curse him out and forget it?" I said, "What would that solve?" I said, "No." I said, "That's not how I live my life. I'm going to make it stop."

MICHELLE F ECTEAU: So did you think that the reason why they treated you that way was because they thought you had gone outside of . . .?

J. W.: No. They treated me that way, because that's how it is. The guys stick together and the girls were scared.

CRAWFORD: And were the guys scared, too, of this guy?

J. W.: No, no. It's just the way they are. It's a club. It's like you're messing with one of the guys. I have no idea what he may have said, but it didn't matter. I actually went to a guy who was a tool grinder — his name was Gary — just about the time this was resolved — because he wouldn't even talk to me. And he was a person that I believe had integrity. And I went to him and said, "Gary, why would you stop talking to me? You and I talk all the time." He said to me, "J. I'm sorry. You know what? I should not have, because I know this person and I know what kind of person he is."

They had a mandatory meeting the day after I went down there. They told our whole group, "If the harassment does not stop, we will close up this model shop and we'll send all of your business to Rochester, New York." And so for the most part, it was a miserable place for a good while. They had the meeting with us.

At the same time, they started bothering another female. She was a white female. And she didn't take much from anybody. She was a little bit brassy. Some may even say she had maybe looked a little masculine. They would make those kinds of jokes about her. But they started bothering her, too. And she was a younger apprentice under me.

She came quite a ways behind me. They were taking her toolbox, but they weren't giving her the same kind of — mine was clearly an issue of racial harassment, though gender was right up there. It was because I was a woman and they could do it and they felt like — I mean, nothing for them to call us a "dumb fucking apprentice" — a "DFA," that's what we were known as.

RAUCHER: Would the guys have been called a DFA as well?

J. W.: Yeah, they called some of them — but mostly girls. Oh, it was nothing for them to say, "Go get us coffee." I would never do any of that.

FECTEAU: I'm just curious, were there black men?

J. W.: There were black men, yes.

FECTEAU: And how did they treat you?

J. W.: They didn't say much.

FECTEAU: Were they more like the women, were they afraid do you think?

J. W.: They didn't say much, because they had their own issues, too. The African-American men — you know, they liked this one because he was quiet, but there were a couple others that they didn't care for. And they were the kind that you just don't say anything to, because there's a respect between men. "Here it is: I'm an African-American man. You get in my face, it'll be death to you." And many of the African-American men had gone on the trade many years ago. So the African-American men, everybody was different. They were individuals.

And you don't get to be a journeyman that trains apprentices just because you're a journeyman. Those that are training apprentices have volunteered to train us.

RAUCHER: In many of the interviews we've done, it turns out that often the African-American men have been more supportive of not just black women, but women generally in those kinds of situations.

J. W.: Yeah. They were verbally, off to the side, but not up front. Everybody wants to be accepted. And then, we're over in a building away from everybody else, so a lot of things could hide and never, ever come out. Because of all the complaints I was making all the way up through the general foreman and superintendent, it never got to Personnel — but they told me it had — until I went to Personnel to see Labor Relations. And even that lady kept telling me that she had taken it to Jan Tannehill. Well, when I went over, I made sure that it got to Jan Tannehill (he died sometime later), who called a mandatory meeting.

FECTEAU: What was his position?

J. W.: He was over all of Delphi and his office was there at our plant. And he was a wonderful person. All the dirty pictures came down. My toolbox showed back up. But it was very difficult.

So I graduated. My journeyman was supposed to retire the year before I graduated. He worked thirty-one years. He stayed on one more year to see me graduate. And he took up for me. You know, he was not one that you would say much to, but he clearly stood up for me, when he realized what was going on.

After it had gotten out of hand and I had gone to Labor Relations, they asked me what I wanted. I said, "I want an apology." And that guy walked by me and said, "I'm sorry what I said offended you, but I still have the right to say what I want to say." I said, "You do. But you don't have the right to say it to whomever you want to say it to." And

that was the end of it. That person later transferred to a plant down in Indiana — no, Illinois. And when he wanted to come back, they wouldn't let him come back.

So now, as a journeyperson, my job was pretty much okay. It's like, "I've got journeyman status now, so you can think whatever you want to." There were a group of guys who really thought that I was sharp and that I did a good job. So I would get certain kinds of work.

So not very long after I graduated — gosh, it wasn't — I don't think I was a journeywoman a year — I'm certain I wasn't — I decided I wanted to get involved with the union. And you're not going to even believe this story. I decided the union hall is too white, too male, too pale, too stale. It's too white. We don't have any representation. Now, I'm upset anyways, because I didn't get any help — any — from the union, none. I had letters, I had all of that. I kept all of that documentation.

So now we have a new committee person who is now my shop committee person. And he is a nice guy, a wonderful person. I told him, "Smokey" — I don't mind mentioning his name — I said, "Smokey, I'm going to run for a union position," because I knew he was involved.

He said, "Well, what you need to do is decide what you want and run for it." I said, "Well, I've been looking. I think I could do that recording secretary's job." He said, "Well, next election, go for it." We were in the middle of a term. Lo and behold, I kid you not, two days later, she got an International appointment. And Smokey came to me and says, "What will you do?" I said, "I'll run for that job." And so my husband — at the time I was married — he says, "You cannot win that. You've not been involved in

the union. There are two big caucuses here. They've got a machine. They'll beat you." I said, "Anybody can be beat, anybody."

So I planned how I was going to run. I knew nothing about running, nothing about anything. I put me together some literature. But remember, I had worked production for ten years, and now I've been on the trades. I didn't know how the guys — even the ones that worked with me — how they would feel about me. There had never been an African-American woman to hold a full-time position in the history of my local. So I decided I would run.

I put together, if you will, my platform, what I was going to do, what I thought I could do. I put my credentials out there. I put together some good literature. I wrote all my own stuff. And I would have to beg people to stand on the gates for me — well, just my friends. The blacks in my plant were ready for an office. They were ready for somebody to hold office. We had had a black president in years past, but never a black female.

So all I did was very simple. I wrote my literature, I gave it out. I went to everybody in every one of our buildings. I went so many times I didn't know what day it was, none of that. So, I made the runoff, but I think I was a little bit ahead of the girl who was in the runoff with me. And so of course, the other caucus was going to throw their support to her.

And so the night before the runoff election, I get to the plant, and they've got all this trashy literature out that made the race look like it was a racial thing. They made it look somebody black wrote this handbill. "Now it's time for us to get one of our own in

there, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. We have an opportunity." They made it look that way. I didn't know it was in the plant.

I come in there on third shift to give out my literature. I went to the plant where there was a lot of trades. I would go in the trades area first. And this guy handed me this and said, "If this is what you stand for, then you're not going to get my vote." I read it, and I said, "Have I ever brought you literature through the hands of anybody else? The people who support me have not even given out my literature. I give you my literature myself and I sign it." I said, "This is someone playing games. This is not who I am. And I can't tell you anything else. You'll either have to believe that or not."

And the funny part about it was that there was a guy who would go through the plant with me to help, you know, he would just carry the stuff while I go in and talk to everybody. He calls home, he tells my girlfriend, "She's dead. She is dead. She's not going to win." But they don't tell me. I don't know it. So I'm still thinking I am going to win this.

And I go through all the plants and that. And that night we had the election and everything and they counted the votes and I had won. And I didn't just win, I won pretty big. And from then on out, everything that I ever ran for I would win by sometimes a 2,000-vote margin. Everybody that I ever endorsed won except for one guy, everybody.

And when I first got there, it was the same as being on trades. There were people there that were going to run me off my job. My president, Dale LeBeau, is a very good man, a very good man. And he said to me, "I thought when you got here, oh, she's just another pretty face."

I didn't know anything about the job, so I was able to set the job up the way I wanted. And I put myself in a position where everyone would need me. I learned the constitution. I learned about the appeals. I learned how to write up the appeals, so that when we had appeals for elections, or whatever, I was the person — I was the recording secretary anyway, so I had to put it together. But I learned how to do it very well to protect the local union when the local union was in the right.

I learned a lot about the bargaining end. The recording secretary before me, she used to go to the meetings and take the minutes. Well, I was able to take the minutes, but I also showed my skills in being able to write up the third-step briefs for the shop committee. So they let me write their briefs for them. That put me in the mix, so that when we had negotiations, I was able to be at the table with negotiations, knew what was going on.

And one chairman actually would let me have a committee with certain demands. They were like, miscellaneous, but they were okay, you know, like to get mobile units for breast cancer awareness. I was getting my stuff in there and negotiating my things. And I knew that the next person that would be recording secretary would be a female, because that's the position that they would allow us to have. But it was still an open door for her to get in and get in a little bit deeper.

And so in 1997, I was appointed to International staff for the UAW. And I am the first African-American woman in the history of the UAW to come out of my region to staff. And so I did a bunch of firsts. So everybody that comes after me that does what I do, you know, like if it looks like they cannot win, they say, "Oh, he did a J. W. on them." Because I mean I had the support from production.

But the one thing I want to tell you about my trade, my skilled trades guys — two things: My husband was a machine repairman and he had an impeccable reputation. So they figured if I was his wife, I was just like that. That helped me with the other trades. The second thing, in the model shop where I worked, all of the guys and all of the girls wore my button with my picture on it when I ran. These were the same ones that didn't do me right — many of them wouldn't talk to me.

And I asked this one guy, I said, "Why are you voting for me?" He said, "I wouldn't care if you were an asshole, you're ours." And then another guy told me, "If you do the job over there that you've done over here, you will be a good representative for us." And that's pretty much my story of trades.

I think many things have changed. Many things have changed on trades. I think, from what I know and what I see, from what I've read, and even with talking to one of the guys that handles skilled trades for General Motors and Delphi, it's better. It's subtle, but a lot of the old guys are gone.

See, the old guys have a way of passing on bad habits, whether it be safety habits . . . We've never had a female fatality in General Motors or Delphi on skilled trades. Eighty percent of our fatalities in General Motors and Delphi are from males in the skilled trades, when they only make up fifteen percent of the workforce. So they pass on bad safety habits. They pass on other bad habits. Many of the older guys are gone. And I won't say it was so much them. I think some of the younger ones were worse. They held onto those things. They didn't like having to work with us. But I don't think it's the same.

My journeyman told me before he left — I said, "Well, Bob, what do you think? Who's better, girls or boys?" He'd say, "All of you guys are dumb when you come in. But the girls can learn the jobs as good as the boys can." Now, this was the same journeyman who didn't want to work with a woman when they first gave him the woman. And for him so make that observation — it was not just an observation, he had worked with enough apprentices to know it's just a matter of you applying yourself and learn it.

And the women in times past have been disadvantaged in those areas, because they didn't have wood shop. I never had wood shop. They didn't allow it. But I had sewing. So I could look at a blueprint and understand the blueprint because I sewed. Okay, this is the yoke, this is backwards, I'm cutting it out. So I could see that. The math was okay. I would struggle somewhat with the mechanical reasoning, because I didn't understand gears and levers and pulleys and stuff like that. But you can learn anything.

And now, I think in our plants our biggest problem in trades is that inside — because in General Motors and Delphi we take two inside and one on the outside — the ages of our women or of our workforce is in the mid-forties, but nobody in the mid-forties wants to go on trades. So the pickings are a little slim.

And then from those that are on the outside, they're not conditioned to know, or encouraged, I guess, is the word, to know those are good jobs. Those are good jobs. They look in other areas for careers. They don't look at being an electrician or — because it's still associated — it's still too masculine. I don't think that we're doing enough to attract them, either. We're not doing enough to attract them.

You can have a perception about trades that you're all dirty and nasty and greasy — not me. I wear a nice little shop coat. I can wear dresses, wear my makeup, work and make good money and help raise my children. But I think some of the younger women — like my daughter, I was trying to get my daughter — she just took the skilled trades test.

There are some things, if you are a female and if you're a person of color, they target you in General Motors and Delphi. The UAW and General Motors and Delphi kept the policy to do pre-apprentice for the females and minorities, even after affirmative action was long gone. They kept that policy to attract. We also have programs that go into the schools to try to show what it is that we do, you know, to get women thinking in that direction. But it's still not nearly where it should be, not at all.

RAUCHER: And you said your daughter has just taken . . .

J. W.: She's just taken the test, so we'll see how she did. She should have done good in every area. She should have done good in mechanical reasoning, actually. She's probably the most mechanical one out of my other two children. I've got one, they're like, "Screwdriver? No, I don't think so." She's finishing up her MBA in December, and then she's going to law school. She's never been one — "Cut grass? Not going to happen." You know, "Build? No. I want it already that way." She just didn't have that.

And it's really funny, because my ex-husband is a machine repairman and he's very good at what he does. I have a grandson who's fifteen years old. He will be an excellent mechanic — he already is, because his grandfather is machine repair, his father is a mechanic, and when he comes to my house, that's all he does. He comes there to do those kinds of things. So I'm teaching him how to work with some power tools.

I build furniture in my spare time, and so I've had him working on a few things. His problem is he's way ahead of his thinking. He does not think things through — he doesn't reason things out, yet. When he's working on something, he's quick to start putting things together before he realizes A and B are going to have to — everything is relative at some point. So he doesn't think that far ahead.

But I mean, he's fifteen. He's good. I mean, I was working underneath my car putting a belt on and he says, "Granny, you're doing that wrong. In order to get down in here, you're going to have do this and that and that." And he was right. He's good. He's good with his hands, he's good with his mind.

This summer he's been working with a friend of mine in Flint on construction, a friend of mine who — we went through our apprenticeships together. He's learned how to hang drywall, how to mud it up. He's learned a ton of things. He will be very good. He will have his choice. He wants to be a mechanic. I want him to be a mechanic. But I want him to own the shop. "I want you to know how to do it all, but I want you to own the place. So I want you to be very good with money. I want you to be very good in school."

He was on honor roll this year, but it's been work. But if you got anything going on, he just grabs it. When I have things to assemble, that's who I go get. I don't want to do that. And I have to tell him — he has some bad habits. And this is a generalization — skilled tradesmen are a little different than men that don't have that background. Men, generally, will not read instructions. They won't. They just won't do it. They'll pull stuff apart and they'll just open a box and start doing things. I'm talking about men that don't have the background. This has been my observation. Right?

So my grandson is that same way. He'll pull things out and he'll start. I said, "Put down the wrench. Did you read the instructions? Because there are some things that you have do before other things or you're going to have go back. There are no extra parts, generally." And so he hates me to do that. But in that, he's learning.

And even the guy that's had him working on the drywall, he says, "I let him do some things wrong, tell him what he's done wrong, make him tear it apart and do it over." That's a good journeyman. That's a good journeyman. And so you teach the apprentice that way. He's going to be sharp.

And even my granddaughter, I mean, she just don't have the dusting thing going on. So I thought, "Okay, let's see how she'll handle a wrench. We're going to see how she handles wrenches this year. Yeah, let's see if she can do this. I think she can."

RAUCHER: What are your — you have eight siblings?

J. W.: Eight siblings.

RAUCHER: Yeah, what do they do?

J. W.: My one brother is a mechanic, and he just became one. But in the Air Force, some years ago, he was a plumber, pipefitter, long after I was. Now, I can tell you that the boys in my family — there are four living boys and four girls. One of my brothers died. None of the boys really believe that I'm a real tradesperson — none of them. And all of the girls are like, "She got it going on."

My brothers came to my house. I built a multi-level deck. I sunk a hot tub in it, wired it. On my back porch I tore off the aluminum siding, put up vinyl siding. A friend of mine came. He helped me put in a header for my windows, showed me how to do one

window. I framed in all the other windows — had never done this — two years ago. I showed them to my brothers, they don't even think I'm that way.

But the women in my family, they think I'm like, "Tool J., "Bring your toolbox when you come, I got some stuff for you to do." When I go to Flint, my sister says, "Hey, I can't do this or that." Or my grandma will say, "Hey, I can't get my fence here or there." Or my mom might say, "The water is not wringing out of my washer." I go, turn it over. Those are the kinds of things I do. I love them.

Being a tradesperson is not the easiest of things when you're dealing with men.

RAUCHER: You're a very self-confident person. Are you any different in that respect from the kids who were not raised by your grandparents?

J. W.: Oh, I'm certain of it. My thinking is probably very old thinking. I probably think just like an old person. A lot of the things that people got into, I never got into. I never had a desire to do drugs or any of that, because just the taste of tobacco when my grandfather let me chew it that one day or to dip snuff was like, "Man, none of this stuff is fun. I don't even like it." My grandmother was like, "Don't let her . . ." But I'm like, "I'm going to take a bite off that," because I wanted to see what it was about. But I never was ever enticed to do any drugs or anything like that.

The other thing, too, my grandparents were old. My grandfather died in 1994 — he was ninety-eight. My grandfather would say, "Bay-bay, get an education. Get an education. Go to church and get an education. Be able to take care of yourself. And if you can't take care of yourself, be able to pay somebody to do what you cannot do yourself."

My grandfather taught me how to grow the best grass you ever want to see. The guys in my neighborhood now say — when I moved there my grass was not good — "We wish you wouldn't come outside, because you put all kind of pressure on us. Our wives are giving us pressure." I can grow grass, grow gardens, all of that. My grandparents taught me all of those kinds of things.

My grandmother is a very phenomenal woman. They were building a store during the Depression. They had to convert it to a home. And my grandmother did all the plumbing and all the wiring — my granny did it while my grandfather went to work. Yet, she didn't want me to do that.

The thing that I found very interesting is that when my grandfather married my grandmother, he did not want her to work. She was doing day work. He did not want her to work. She says, "Well, then you're going to have to give me my own allowance and I got to have my bank account, because I will not ask you for money." And he did better than that. He brought his paycheck home and she divvied it up the way she wanted to.

But my grandfather, he changed his mind about women not working. And I think it was because so many of his daughters had ended up alone with children, having to raise them. And he would always tell me, "Bay-bay, get a good job. Get a good education. Save your money. And don't let a man mess your job up." And my one sister — she's a therapist and a social worker — she said, "I wish Granddad had told me those things." I was advantaged, clearly.

Now, my mom — my mother is a wonderful person. My mom taught us how to cook. All of us had to learn how to cook. The boys had to learn how to cook, just like the girls. The girls had to take out the garbage, just like the boys. You know, there was

no girl jobs—boy jobs in our house, not at all. There was no distinction. The boys had to wash dishes. They had their weeks to wash dishes, clean toilets and the whole bit. My mother said, "Work is work. If you're going to live by yourself or get married, you're going to have do this, so you need to know how." And so there was no distinction made.

But my grandmother would make a distinction, because she saw that I needed to be a little bit more feminine. She told me, "I thought you'd never ever be a woman. I thought you'd never ever be a girl." I was the one that — "Make her wear a bra." I don't know why. Why do I need one? I'm not that big. I don't like them. They choke me." [laughs] And so it was just that way.

I played ball with the boys when I was coming up. I thought I was as good as any of them. I could climb the — we had a cherry tree — I could climb the cherry tree as good as any of those boys. And the lady down the street had a Chinese cherry tree with the dark cherries, but we would have to jump her fence. And I was the one that they would send. And they would be the lookout, because I could beat the boys climbing the tree. You know, I was just that way. It was just what I enjoyed.

And I'm going to go back to a point that I was making about being a tradesperson: As a single woman, I have found it to be a disadvantage in some ways when you are dating. I kid you not, I absolutely kid you not. Men are so intimidated, it's unreal. It is unreal. I don't care if they're black, I don't care if they're white, because I've dated both. And they both had a problem with it. You know, I am not kidding you.

I mean, I cook, I'm a nice cook. I'm not a nice housekeeper, a good housekeeper. And when I open my garage and show them my tools, that's like — I mean, I had one guy say, "Oh, shit." [laughter] Because I told him, "You know, I build a little stuff in

my spare time." He goes, "Oh yeah, yeah, honey. That's good." And when I let that garage up, that was the end of that. And I could tell he saw me in a whole different light.

One guy came over. My neighbor said, "I got somebody, I got somebody for you. I'm going to introduce you to him." He come over. I said, "I'm not going to say anything about the tools." But I didn't tell her. So she tells him. He goes back over there — he's a police officer — and said, "She don't need a man. She don't need nobody. I can't do nothing for her." [laughter]

You know, this is bad. This is really bad. So it has its disadvantages. Let me tell you, skilled tradesmen, they respect me. For five years I was going to Cleveland Woodworking Academy in Taylor, using their equipment and learning how to build things out of wood. You know, I've built tables, I've built grandmother clocks — they're like grandfather clocks, but a little smaller. I've turned beautiful bowls out of exotic woods and built a wine rack and just anything. I can build anything.

And I had never worked with wood, but it's no different. I was a metal model maker and I ran lathes and mills, like that. So when you're dealing with wood, the machines are called something different, like planers, joiners, but they do the same kinds of things. And I remember the day that I walked in his wood shop and he wanted me to take this basic class and I said, "I got a journeyman's card. You know what that says? I went through the journeyman's program. And it wasn't just the journeyman's, it was the white man journeyman's program. That's a difference. There's a difference there." And I said, "Here's my card. I don't know what you call these machines. You can walk around here and tell me what they're called, so I can call them by the proper names. Tell me what they do." And I got it. And so for five years I was going there building things.

And one winter I built a guy that I was working with — it looks like an entertainment center, but it's a golf center. It holds everything that you could imagine for golf, including his bag and clubs and all of that. I designed it. I am a far better designer — because that's what I did — because I can see it. I can see things and I can make whatever I see and think up. And so I built that. He said to me — and he's done this thirty-five years — "You know, I often wondered if I had taught you anything, or what you knew. You proved to me that you know what you're doing."

Now, women are very different in how we approach things. I go to the wood shop class. Many of the guys there are journeymen in other trades, but they're there building things for their wives, you know, as a hobby. They work on one thing and they run it to the ground and get it done.

I would have three or four things going at once, because I could not stand that. I could not stand working on this one thing. I'm tired of looking at boxes. You know, when you're making entertainment centers, they're boxes, and then you put all the nice little detail on them, but you're still making boxes.

So I would still get done with my three things and they would get done with three things, but they would have done them one at a time. And that was the difference. And they would go, "What is she making now? She makes the biggest stuff." And I love it. Of all the things that I've ever done, I love being a tradesperson. And that's hard for, I think, some people to swallow, especially men. The women think I'm wonderful. All my friends, my girlfriends, they're like, "I wish I could do that." I say, "But you can, you can if you want to. The thing is, you don't want to do that."

Now, there's some areas that I don't ever delve in. I don't care anything about electronics. Don't ask me anything about how this TV is hooked up, which button works this and that. I could care less. I don't want to get in there, because I know that once I start, I'm going to have to learn it and it's very intriguing and I'm going to spend time and I don't want to do that. All I want to do is hit that button and make it work. I hate it when I have to hook up speakers. I hate all of that. And I play dumb purposely, so that I don't have to do that. But when it comes to the other part, I love that. I love the other part of building. My mind likes to build and see things, you know, and design things and have things that nobody else has.

FECTEAU: I was curious — I wanted to go way back to your grandfather. I just had a couple more questions about your grandfather. He came up from Georgia when?

J. W.: In his twenties.

FECTEAU: So what time — what year was that, or about?

J. W.: Oh, he was born in 1896, I believe.

FECTEAU: So it was in the first great migration in the twenties, from the South.

J. W.: Uh-huh. And when he came up, of course, you know, he married my grandmother. But he brought all of his brothers and sisters up one at a time and helped them get into the factories.

FECTEAU: Get jobs after World War I.

J. W.: Yes.

FECTEAU: And how did he learn all the things that he knew and passed onto you?

J. W.: I have no idea. I have no idea, except you know, in the South, they learn how to do everything, they just do everything. Somebody always shows you how to do it — it was nothing for him to lay cement and fix a fence. I've never known a repair person to ever have come to their home until they got old. I don't know how he knew how to do everything that he did.

CRAWFORD: And then it was you who he came to.

J. W.: Yeah. Not one of his sons — gosh, there was ten altogether, yeah, five sons and five daughters — not one of them is a mechanic. And I was always just around, learning stuff, how to even put in windows. I would watch him do lots of things. I was not afraid of anything — nothing. I was not afraid of anything, machinery, nothing.

FECTEAU: I believe that. [laughter]

J. W.: I don't even know where that fearlessness came from.

FECTEAU: Well, you had said something earlier in the interview about how you always felt like you had to prove yourself that seems to be driving you.

J. W.: Uh-huh. I always wanted my grandparents to be proud of me. My grandfather, I used to read him the questions on the driving test to get his driver's license, because he could not read them. He would know the shapes of the signs, and so you would read him the questions. And so I learned how to drive — I could drive when I was thirteen — I was driving when I was thirteen, other people's cars, but not theirs. And my family, we didn't have a car until I was almost out of high school. But my grandfather drove.

But I always wanted him to be proud of me. My grandfather and my grandmother had a good name. And he would tell me things, like, "Bay-bay, you need to make sure

you keep a good name. You got a good name." And he would talk to me about when you give somebody your word, your word is all you got.

Now, he was actually my step-grandfather, because my grandmother had been married before. But he's the only grandfather I knew, because he raised my mommy when she was little. So that's all I knew. He was not an affectionate man. He took care of my grandmother. I knew he loved her, because of how he treated her like the lady that she is. He called her "Miss Ruby" and she called him "Daddy."

But we found out that my grandmother had high blood pressure in 1979, because she had fainted at the store. And so I had just had a baby, my last girl, my youngest daughter. And I would go over every day and cook for them and clean and things like that. And one day my grandfather, when I was leaving, he grabbed me by my arm and he said, "Bay-bay, I loves you. I won't ever forget what you done for me." And to this day, my grandmother, she doesn't have anybody's name on any of her things but me. I mean, her own son lives with her. She trusts me. She said, "You are the only one that ever went to the store and brought me back my change." [laughter] And she knows I wouldn't take anything from her.

And my grandmother, she's brilliant. I mean, she has a fifth-grade education, but she can read anything and understand. She can look at things, her eyes are better than mine. She's ninety. My grandmother was twenty years younger than my grandfather when they got married. And so when I was born, he was sixty and she was forty. And they weren't old to me. Now I look and know, yeah, they were old.

They were my first babysitters. When I got married, I moved right down the street from them. They were my babysitters for years, you know. And they just taught

me a lot of things. They taught me a lot about morals. They taught me a lot about morals. You know, he wanted me to be the best.

And my grandmother, we kid now sometimes with all my other brothers and sisters. She told my sisters not long ago, "You all think that I love J. more than I love you all. I love all of you the same. But now, Daddy" — talking about my granddaddy — "he loved J." [laughter]

He was a kind man. He was a very firm man about some things. It was going to be that way. He would not say it twice. Everybody knew the rules. Even his children who had gone to the — several of the sons had been in the Armed Forces. You still couldn't come in at midnight in his home. He didn't care what war you fought. He was that way. And every Sunday he was going to be in church, he and my grandma, yeah.

CRAWFORD: He worked in the foundry?

J. W.: Yeah, he worked in the foundry, forty-one years. And every day my grandmother would take him a hot lunch, drive up there and take him a hot lunch. So I learned a lot from them.

CRAWFORD: Was your grandfather a storyteller, or not?

J. W.: Oh, they were. They would tell us little stories.

CRAWFORD: I mean, was he much of a storyteller?

J. W.: No, my grandmother is. My grandmother was. He would tell us about how things worked. He wouldn't know an "A" if it was big as a house. And he would tell me that. He could write his name and that's all. But he could count his money.

I made the terrible mistake of — I don't remember what I did, but I think it was a matter of fifty cents or something ridiculous out of a big bill that he gave me. I made the

awesome mistake to think that he would not catch it, and he did. And that was the only time he wanted to hit me, he wanted to whip me. And I knew that he was God, right? And I said, "Grandma, save me please, save me please!" And the only thing that stopped him was she was in between us. And that day I thought I would never — I think it was over a strawberry pop, I may have bought a pop out of his money when I went to the store. But he was very good to me, very good. And he said that I made him proud.

And when I turned eighteen — let's see, was it when I turned eighteen? I think, yeah, it was the same day — he said, "Did you go register to vote?" That was a biggie: you vote.

And then when I hired in the plant in 1976, there was a lady who was fussing about she didn't want the fan blowing on her hair, and we were hot, we were the ones on the sweaty jobs. So I would turn the fan on. And so I'd come home just whining about how hot it is. He said, "You know what? You got it good. You got it real good." And then he'd begin to tell me how bad they had it.

FECTEAU: In the foundry?

J. W.: Yup. So we never complained. He missed two days in forty-one years. The day that my uncle was born he worked a half day — I mean, he missed that day. And one other day, he hit a man with a two-by-four and they sent him home for the balance of the shift. Those were the only two days he ever missed in forty-one years. They forced him to retire when he was sixty-eight — he had forty-one years, he started at the plant when he was twenty-seven — forced him to. Then he drew pension, a good UAW pension for thirty years until he was ninety-eight.

And now my grandmother has been living eleven years since he died off that spousal pension. I cannot believe how he was able to squeeze a nickel and get a dime. He left her more money than I have in the bank right now, with raising all of those kids. I can't figure it out. She wants for nothing. But their lives were simple, very simplistic, very simple. My grandmother, to me, had better food than my mom. We were really poor.

And some of what we had was partly on welfare, because my stepfather, he worked at a nursing home as a janitor. He had one eye and one arm. He had polio when he was a child. But yet I saw him go to work every day, to do the best he could. He was the best example to us. You know, there was no reason, no excuse for any of my brothers and sisters not to have achieved — none whatsoever.

The girls in my family have all done well, all of us have a formal education. I am the first to get a master's degree in my family, which is a big deal. Now, my daughter and my one sister's daughter, they will be the first grandchildren, or great-grandchildren to get theirs in December.

RAUCHER: What is your master's in?

J. W.: Human Resource Administration from Central [Michigan University]. So I told my grandmother, "Now I got a master's." She said, "Yeah, you're pretty smart right about now, huh?" [laughter] She doesn't know what it is, you know. And my mom will say, "Well, how many of these degrees you need?" [laughter] Whatever. Yeah, they're like, "Don't you make enough money now?" "Well, yeah." But the education was a big thing. But we couldn't afford it. There were no scholarships when I — I'm fifty years old. It wasn't like it is now — if you have good grades, you could get

the scholarships or at least compete for them. And my grades were very good, but it just wasn't there.

And the women — my mother and my grandmother — they pushed you more towards getting married. You know, "Get married and have kids, get married and have kids." My grandfather was not like that, which is very surprising.

RAUCHER: Yeah, you got married — your first marriage, you were only eighteen, right?

J. W.: Uh-huh, yeah.

RAUCHER: And how old were you when you had your first child?

J. W.: My first child I had when I was sixteen.

RAUCHER: Sixteen.

J. W.: Uh-huh. I had had a child already when I was sixteen. And you can put this on the tape — you don't have to — but it was not a thing that I willfully did. And so back then, they — my family is from the South — "You say nothing, you go ahead, and you still make the best of things." And that's how it was. It was nothing that I submitted to. And today he would have — well, today he is in prison, actually. But you overcome all of those things. You have to, because if you don't, you're a statistic. Everybody around us was on welfare. I never liked what I saw. I'm like, "I don't want that." You know?

My grandmother had started me out cleaning homes for the elderly ladies in my neighborhood. Then she sent me down the street. I was working, paying income taxes when I was twelve, at Freeman School in Flint. They gave me a job because I was rambunctious. I had a lot of energy. So all I was supposed to do was answer the phone.

And there was a little lady that was the secretary there. And she was a little old lady. And I know I probably drove her nuts. And I asked her, “Well, can’t you teach me how to type on that typewriter or something?” She looked at me like, “How did these deprived kids get up here?” It was a look. So I would have on James Brown, “I Feel Good” — (singing) "I feel good" — I could type 102 words a minute — 110 words a minute with two mistakes when she got done. I always had a job.

And an executive for General Motors, high up, when I came down to the Center for Human Resources, he saw me, because he gave me my job. He said, “I’m so proud of you. He said, “I am so proud of you.” He gave me my first real, real job when I was twelve.

And I’ve always had a job. I was a hustler. And my girls are just like me. They are hustlers. They can have more than one job at a time. You’ve got to, until you get to where you want to be. And it never bothered me. That’s the way I thought life was. So when I see some of the others that make excuses, some of the brothers that . . . I don’t want to hear it. You had much more than I did, you had a greater advantage than I did. I had a child and I still was on honor roll. I never — I had her on a Thursday and I was back to school on that Monday. I went to school the whole time. And I went through all of that humiliation and all of that. It didn’t matter. I thought, "I just got one more that I have to work for. " And I love my baby.

And those are the things that I did, and I think all of those things make you a certain way. They make you a certain way. They make you have to do okay, because everything around you says that you can’t. You know, I like it when somebody thinks

that I can't do something, because then I got a point to prove. I'm fifty now, and I don't prove too many points now. I'm like, "Whatever."

FECTEAU: Do you think that's part of your drive, to prove something to people, to succeed and to do well?

J. W.: I think so. Last year, when I got sick, I did like, eight of my courses for my master's from January to August and I was still doing everything else. And I was sick. I was ill. I passed out in a class. I had Lyme Disease, and didn't know it. Passed out, went to Beaumont and came back to school the next week. Figure that. And they hadn't figured out what was going on.

But I wanted — I thought, "Well, I'm going to get done with this, take the LSAT test and I'm going to be in law school next year." Lyme Disease slowed me down and gave me a different perspective about things. And I started thinking, "Well, why are you going anyway?" Because I wanted to prove to everybody that I have some expertise in an area, because they don't take my word for it. But it all pays the same, whether you take my word for it or not. I've come to that. In my job, it all pays the same.

RAUCHER: You didn't talk much about your experiences as an international rep and what exactly it is that you do.

J. W.: Now, that is interesting. When I first came on in '97, I was in Health and Safety. I supervised all of the occupational health activities. All of the studies that were conducted at General Motors and Delphi plants, I supervised all of that activity for the UAW side. We hired five scientists in various disciplines, epidemiologists, toxicologists, like that. And so, they are the liaison between the institution that conducts the study, whether it's at a university or whatever, and us.

And my job was to put in layman's terms the results of those studies, so that we could protect our people, you know, to implement guidelines, whether it's using machine fluids, what the levels and things have to be. So that's what I did. And I also audited the plants. I had plants that I was responsible for auditing. I did that from '97 until 2000.

RAUCHER: I know that GM — I don't know if they still do, but I know they used to have a joint committee with the UAW on health and safety issues. Do they still have that?

J. W.: Uh-huh. I work out of the joint center, so I have a management counterpart.

RAUCHER: Since we've gotten onto this topic and since I just worked with these records recently [UAW Health and Safety Department], I'd be interested in hearing whether you thought that was a good approach and whether that worked well. I noticed that Ford didn't have a setup like that.

J. W.: The jointness, or what?

RAUCHER: Yeah.

J. W.: They do have it. Ford and Chrysler both have it.

RAUCHER: Yeah, Chrysler I've seen a little bit.

J. W.: Ford does, too.

RAUCHER: Does it work well?

J. W.: Well, it works well at General Motors and Delphi. Obviously, General Motors and Delphi are a lot larger. We have more monies to give towards studies than Ford and Chrysler. We have tried to do some tripartite kinds of agreements with Ford and Chrysler so we're not duplicating our efforts and kind of can pull together our

resources. I'm not sure how successful that has been. We had just put that together before I left, because I'm in the Diversity Department now.

I will talk a little bit about being on staff. The men and women that are on staff come from plants. They didn't change who they were in the plants. Some of that's good, some of that's not so good. The good ol' boys that were elected at the local level are now appointed at the international level. I would be lying if I said that everything is just wonderful, because it is not. Your point of view is from where you see things.

Now, is it too male? Yes. Is it too pale? Absolutely. Is it too stale? Yes. Still. Not just in my department, but within the whole UAW. We've never had an African-American woman to be vice president of the UAW. Why? Aren't we capable? Absolutely. Don't have one. In the General Motors Department right now, the highest ranking African-American woman is a coordinator. She makes about $3,500 more annually than I do. Why? All of us are very well qualified.

It used it be when you came on staff you had to have held the position of chairman or president [of the local]. But now they bring on females that they believe are qualified. Now, understand when I say "qualified," it's usually they lost a woman and they need a woman, for what that's worth. The more education you have, the more of a threat you are to them. They could care less about education. I say "they." I'm not speaking for all of them, but the majority. Your former education means nothing except to say that "she's capable of getting this work done."

For promotions, in the scheme of things, it's very political. That's the truth of the matter. It's what your last name is, what region you came from, who you sleep with, who you play golf and drink beer with.

RAUCHER: Do you feel that there has been much encouragement — because now you have, what, you have a female secretary-treasurer of the UAW and you have a former regional director who's a VP, as well.

J. W.: She's not a VP. She's a regional director. Geri Ochocinska.

RAUCHER: An executive board member, then. So who is the VP who took Carolyn Forrest's position?

J. W.: Instead of us having a VP in that position, we have a secretary-treasurer. There is only one woman.

RAUCHER: Okay. So it's only Elizabeth Bunn who's sort of the token woman.

J. W.: And you said it exactly right.

RAUCHER: Okay, okay. And it's been that way since . . .

J. W.: Forever. But she did not come out of a UAW plant. She didn't come out of manufacturing or anything like that. She does not have that background. I believe she has a law degree. There are mixed emotions and feelings about all of that. But I still say, where is your African-American woman? Make that board look like your membership.

PAT NUZNOV: A novel concept, huh?

J. W.: Yes. Your local unions, okay, they're elected. Still, somebody needs to say, "Hey, we have African Americans. We have Hispanics. We need to have them represented here. You got a caucus, then you need to be soliciting those people." Demographics are changing way too much for us to keep doing business the way we're doing it.

If you speak out, you are penalized and you never know where it's coming from. It's very subtle. I will say this about my vice president, Richard Shoemaker: Any issues

that I've ever taken to him, he has taken care of for me, my own personal issues with somebody not treating me right. I will say that he has done that. I cannot deny that. But as an institution, we have a long way to go, because the very things that we fight against, they are the greatest abusers of.

And I'll give you a "for instance": There are those in positions that think that they can talk to you in any manner, that they do not have to respect you, that the laws that are to protect us from discrimination and harassment do not apply to them. They abuse them.

CRAWFORD: You can speak ill of the dead if you want to. [laughter]

J. W.: All of them are not dead — that's the problem. [laughter] There are some that are still alive, you know. It's our organization from the top to the bottom, from the bottom to the top, and everything in between. Many of the women don't say anything, just "Whatever. What is it you want me to do?" I'm not that way. My brain did not get checked in at the door. I'm going to respect you and I expect the same thing. Now, you can give it to me or you can make me take it from you, but you're going to respect me. And that's just the way I roll.

I work in a department that enforces equal treatment, fair treatment, yet I've had to deal with unfair treatment. If they think you like to work, they take the work from you. If they think that you don't want to work, they pile it on. They won't speak to you and they fix it so that everybody else won't talk to you. This has been my experience. These are my experiences and the experiences of others that have confided in me.

I was told recently, "You're the only female we got that will even speak up." I said, "I pick my fights. I've gotten to be fifty years old. I ain't fighting them all." But my granddaddy used to tell me this: "If you're going to pick a fight, pick one you can

win. Don't go out there and get beat up." So I pick the ones that I believe have long-ranging effects, that will reach way down the road somewhere else, because somebody else is going to come behind me. I don't want them to be fighting the same battle.

I generally try to find other ways of doing things, instead of going right through the mountain. But if you leave me no choice, that's the route I'll take. I don't take the path of least resistance. I don't think I've ever taken that one. That's just not the path that — I always know that something is going to cost somebody something. And I'm not looking for anything.

Look at my credentials. If you don't think that I have anything else, that's fine, because I'm going to get what I need, somewhere. If I cannot get the stimulation here, you know, whether it's conversation, whether it's growth, I will get it somewhere else, because I know how to do that. But it's a shame I can't get it in places where I should be able to or where I the playing field should be level, where I have the same opportunity as anyone else. It's not that way. And to me, it's gotten worse, in our structure, in our organization.

FECTEAU: I was going to ask: if you were in a position where you got to implement policy at the union, you know, to try to encourage or make the union more inclusive, especially with regard to more women coming into the trades, what would you do if you were given that power to come up with a plan? Or, asked another way: What do you think the union should be doing to get more women into the skilled trades?

J. W.: Women, on a local level, they need to have, obviously, a lot more awareness, a lot more training for the membership, for their children and their children's children, to say, "Hey, these are good union jobs. They are very attractive to women.

You can make a good living. Let's look at what the incomes are," you know, and make it attractive.

But then too, I think a lot of it goes back to the schools: the curriculum does not encourage those kinds of careers. They don't. They look at careers in business and careers in the medical field and careers in, if you will, the law. There's nothing in our everyday curriculum that encourages even the males to go in that direction.

Recently someone was telling me that in the school system she's in — well, she home-schools all her children — they can't even find home economics. They did me a favor by not letting me have wood shop, because home economics taught me a whole lot. But still, the same thing should be offered for the females as well as the males. We're not doing a good job in the schools, we're not doing a good job in the homes.

Many of the women that are my age or within my age group, or even younger, they're not attracted to the trades, so they will probably never push their children in that direction. You know, I've got three girls. I said, "Hey, this is a good job." But my girls said, "Oh, no. I'm not going to do this. No." But now the one is like, "You know, Mom, I'm interested in that." Because she got in the plant as a temporary a couple times, saw what these tradespeople were making, saw that it was not the way she perceived and now she's interested. She's twenty-five. My middle girl was in an electrical engineering program, an advanced program in, but she left high school, "I don't want to do that."

My niece went four years for engineering in Albany, Georgia. She came back, did one year at the University of Michigan and changed everything. I think she did political science or something. And when I ask her to this day, "Sylvia, why did you change your mind? You love this." Any time I was doing anything, she'd be like,

"Auntie, when you're doing that, call me, because I want to . . ." See, she has it. She has the brain. She has the mathematical brain and she likes it. She allowed somebody to talk her out of what she wanted to do.

FECTEAU: Are there things that the union can do too?

J. W.: I think, yeah. I think the union needs to implement some awareness classes for the membership, through the schools. When I was in the twelfth grade, we were able to come in the plant and work on a pre-apprentice program. They don't have that anymore. When you're in twelfth grade, you do it as an intern. My ex-husband got hired when he was seventeen, in the twelfth grade, because he had that program.

And what they did was, they were looking for females and minorities that had the math and the science, you know, and said, "Hey, why don't you try this as your intern job in the summer?" I forget what they call it — co-op job, it was co-op. And so you'd go to school half a day and you'd work a half day. We don't have that anymore, but they need to.

CRAWFORD: Do you think that the Big Three plan on keeping their skilled tradesmen?

J. W.: Well . . .

CRAWFORD: I sincerely doubt it.

J. W.: They have combined so many trades. And now what used to be one trade is a number of trades. General Motors and Delphi have been better than the others at holding onto certain trades and not combining. But a lot of our trades have died off because of technology.

RAUCHER: Model makers, right?

J. W.: Model makers, yeah.

RAUCHER: I mean, isn't it all computerized now?

J. W.: A whole lot of it was engineered out. We've lost a ton. When I was a model maker, we had 300 of us. There were 300 of us in just my plant. God, I don't think they have 100 now, not at all. I think maybe seventy or eighty, really. And it's a wonderful trade. You wouldn't think you could learn anything from that, but I can build anything. I can build anything.

CATHY DAWSON: It sounds like you can.

RAUCHER: She's a machinist.

CRAWFORD: But I do think that the Big Three will get rid of their skilled trades.

J. W.: They will skim down to what they have to have, and that's it.

RAUCHER: And they can still operate the plants without . . .

CRAWFORD: They can contract it out. Maybe not evenly across the board. It could be this plant or that region, or something.

RAUCHER: They'll have to negotiate that, though, won't they?

J. W.: Yeah. We would not allow contractors in to do work that we do. We have what we call historical work and traditional work. We don't have any contractors in now doing any skilled trades work for us. Sometimes they try to get in under some other things. But we're pretty tight on that. We're pretty tight.

What I do see is us not having as many, because now the lines of demarcation have been crossed, you know, so a couple trades are doing a couple different things. Just like I'm a metal model maker, but I can flow through the machinist group, machine

repair, tool maker, die maker. It's always been that way, because I have all of their training and then some. They could not flow up, but I could flow down. And if I got bumped down there or something, I already knew that trade, because all of that was in my apprenticeship. But the lines of demarcation have really crossed to where this trade can do some of this work and this trade can do some of this work. So then you don't need as many. But then you don't need as many, too, because look at our regular membership, our non-skilled membership has dwindled, and it's dwindling. And I don't see anything in sight that says it's going to change.

FECTEAU: It seems to have a significant effect on women coming in.

J. W.: Right. But I would like to see more women even become involved in outside trades, in the construction trades. When you see them out there, they're just waving a flag, mostly. I don't see them up on the high beams, or whatever. They're not doing that. Why not? Or running a machine. Because they can do it. And they do it more safely. They do it more safely. And it's a fact. It's a documented fact. It's a statistical fact.

RAUCHER: And you learned that from your time in UAW Health and Safety?

J. W.: In Health and Safety. Because I initiated a cultural change initiative just before I left, because of the fatalities that we have. We don't have nearly as many as Ford and Chrysler, but we still — if you have one, that's too many.

RAUCHER: I think some of the women we've interviewed have pointed that out, that in their particular trades, they felt that women were a little more safety-conscious and neater about the way they did things.

J. W .: Yes, yes. Being safer comes from a kid. He falls down, "Get up, you're a man." She falls down, "Oh, she got a boo-boo." Now, when I came on my trade, they said, "You tie your hair back, you do not wear rings, all of this." They brought us a guy who had a ring on, it pulled the tendon out of his finger. They showed us, and it is not cool for a woman to walk around like that. I can take a one-inch cutter, I can bury it in aluminum, I can pull it down in aluminum and I can cut an inch with that. But why would I? So we can do that.

Guys are like, "Hog it out. Let's just hog it out." That's their mentality. When I was working on making these bowls — they have a beginners class for turning bowls and they have an advanced class, at the wood shop. Sean said, "You need to take a beginners." I said, "I will not take a beginners class." So I took the advanced class. It was just over a weekend, a Saturday and a Sunday, you make a bowl. I took it with two guys that are journeymen, been journeymen for years, and they're very good at what they do.

Instructor — all right — it's very different when you're working with wood and turning, because everything is controlled by your own hands, it's all feel. There's not a machine that does it. The machine spins it, but all the cutting is done by hand. I kid you not, both those guys threw their wood out of their machines, past my head, trying to take off — hog the stock out. I told the instructor, "They are dangerous. Get them away from me." [laughter]

Now, I turn my bowl, and the second day, when I finished, the instructor said, "Look at hers." Women naturally have a better feel for something. We have a better feel. Some guys — I'm not saying we're just better at it. Initially we're going to be,

because I'm going to approach it very cautiously, because I know that thing is spinning way too fast for me and I can't get out of the way, you know.

Now, one time I did something that was stupid.

FECTEAU: Just once?

J. W.: Oh, just once. Just once — one that I remember. And I'll tell you why I remember it. I'm cutting quarter-inch plywood on a table saw. You have what is called a splitter behind it. The splitter does this: as the board splits, you got part of it on this side of the saw, part of it on this side. The splitter holds this piece on there so it doesn't fly back at you. Well, the guy before me was cutting a thick piece, so he didn't need the splitter, because it was not going to fly. And I knew he didn't put it back on there. And I was preoccupied.

I'm cutting quarter-inch. As I started, I get about halfway through, and I know I'm in trouble, because I can't back down. I can't hit the stop button unless I could get my knee up there. And when it started to grab, I'm doing this — the saw is right in front of me — it pulls your hand in, and it swings this piece out at 150 miles an hour. And it makes a sound like none other. Everybody stopped.

And when it started to pull me in, I let go and tried to get out of the way. It caught me right in the belly, the wood did, and it knocked me back. And I am not kidding you. So all the guys were, "Are you all right? You all right?" And my instructor ran over — Sean, he's the owner — he ran over. He said, "I knew I should have been watching." I'd been doing this quite a while, and I knew better, because when I'm working, I don't talk to you. I don't talk to you. I don't want you talking to me. I stop what I'm doing to hear what you're saying, because I know I got to keep my eyes

open, I got to keep my ears open, and I got to keep hands and my body parts out of the way.

So I'm standing there and I'm the only woman there and I'm like, "Lord, help me. Okay, how am I going to handle this?" And they're all coming to my rescue, because now all of a sudden I'm a girl. I said, "Excuse me, let me run to the restroom." I went in, I had a big bruise. I thought, "Dang, I got this bruise on my belly." But it's not like I'm going to wear a short top or something and it's going to be seen. I come back out, but now I'm afraid. First time — this happened in 2003 — I'm afraid. But I'm not going to tell them I'm afraid.

And all the guys are like, "Are you all right?" One guy walked up to me, he said, "Finish cutting that wood. You can cut you that wood. Leave her alone." And that's what gave me the confidence to go right back at it. I put that splitter in and I thought, "No, I control this."

But I shall never forget it. And every time now when I get ready to cut quarter-inch, that memory is burned in my brain and in my tummy [laughs], so I remember. But it's very dangerous. And that's what you have to remember. And I make the guys wear their masks. Sawdust is very toxic. "Wear your mask. Get your mask on. Get that on. You got a wife at home. She wants you to come home every day. Put your glasses on." Because I'm going to do that. I worked in Health and Safety. We're just — by nature, women just are more cautious.

My ex-husband, we had a big tractor, we lived on five acres, right. So we bought this big Wheelhorse tractor. It says, "Do not go up an incline more than fifteen degrees."

I can't figure out what fifteen degrees is, anyway, so I'm not going to go up any incline. That's my thinking. He's a big guy, six-foot-four, a big guy.

One day I come home, I knew something had happened. I just — you know how you sense something. I get there, he's all cut up. He went down that thing — we had a slope in the front of my house — he went down that slope on that tractor. When he came up that slope — and he did it a hundred times before then, a hundred times — this time it got him. It flipped over on him. He was trying to roll out of the way. Energy builds up inertia. It has a switch on it that once you're off of it, it stops. But inertia, the energy that's in there keeps it moving, so the blades were cutting him up.

Me? I would have been doing the slope by hand anyway. I never would have thought to do that. It would never have crossed — but guys are very different. They approach things very differently. It's like, "I've done this a hundred times, it's safe." Even though we can show them this is not a safe practice, this is not a safe work practice, they still do it. They still do it. Women don't. It's like, "Oh, that looks kind of dangerous to me." Not only do we ease up on it, we start it real slow to see how it's looking, we make sure it looks right, we take all those steps.

I have a friend who is a pilot for thirty-two years. And he said, "By far, the best pilots are women, because they go through every single checkpoint, when they have to, when they're supposed to." He said, "The guys don't. They skip steps all the time. When something gets to going on," he said, "They skip steps." He trained pilots. He said, "By far, the women are better." It's an attitude.

RAUCHER: The head of NASA said the woman who just piloted the Shuttle should take over from him because she's a better pilot than he is and she's also a better manager than he is. [laughs]

J. W.: And did you know she's scared of roller coasters?

RAUCHER: Is she? [laughs] Oh, no.

J. W.: She's scared of roller coasters, and will go up that far? Seriously, I can't understand that one.

So that's pretty much been my experience. The UAW is a good job. I have a very, very good job. We're not perfect. We got a long ways to go. We have a long way to go. And I would be lying to you if I told you everything is just wonderful. Everything is not wonderful at any place.

RAUCHER: You didn't talk much about what it's like going out and doing the diversity training in the locals or in the plants, or wherever you do it.

J. W.: Well, I don't do as much training as I do investigations. That's primarily my responsibility.

RAUCHER: I mean, how is the union doing at that level, in terms of the local?

J. W.: How are they doing? Some are doing good and some are not doing good. It's just a mixed bag. You go to some areas that are predominantly white, they're not going to do well. You go to some areas that are more progressive, they do it real good. They put on their training. They have a good relationship. A lot of it depends on the relationship between the union and management on the local levels. Some of those relationships are very strained, especially now because of all of the downsizing and all of

the outsourcing, the relationships are bad. And the union is trying to hold onto our people. So diversity is not high on the list.

I will still say this: Overall, most local unions do not have a clear understanding of discrimination and harassment from the bargaining unit's perspective. Some do very good because they allow the civil rights people to do what they have been trained to do. They're not threatened by it. Others who are threatened by the fact that, "I might not get elected," they tend to cover up, if you will, things that may be going on. And there are still people that are very foolish, that do some foolish things at our plants. And some of them are elected and some of them are not. We allowed a certain behavior to go on for many, many years. To put an end to that now is difficult at best. All we're doing is slapping a band-aid on to stop the bleeding. We never get to the root. Nobody wants to do the real thing to take care of the real problems.

FECTEAU: What do you see as necessary?

J. W.: Necessary? One thing that is necessary is that all of our bargaining people who are elected, it should be mandatory that they go through training on discrimination and harassment, so they know and understand what it is. You don't have to agree with it, but you still should have a good understanding of what it is. So every four years when they're elected, whoever is elected, if they've not been through it, they should go through it and if you went through it, you should have a refresher and understand the policies and the procedures of the union and General Motors, and understand how civil rights fit into that whole process.

If the chairman or chairperson and the president and all of them don't believe that there's a problem, then how would anybody else? They feel like they don't have to,

either. And who is not represented? The person that you are elected to represent — you're not protecting them, not by a long shot.

The international union, when you're appointed there, they should go through it, too. They should know and understand. It is very common for elected people who are in the position in the bargaining unit, if they have a problem, to just talk to management about reducing somebody out of that department to another department, you know, so that that problem goes away over there. But that person went somewhere else and that person still has the problem, so it's just going to be a problem someplace else. And they never fix the problem.

And diversity training — let me say this about diversity: Everybody is scared of the civil rights training, because that says it's a black thing, that's the perception. Diversity and civil rights are very different. Everybody is okay with diversity, though, because it seems like it's including everybody and not excluding everybody. It's just a facade. It's just to be able to say that we have a diversity program. It does not function, or function well, not at all. But to the outside, it looks like we're doing okay, because General Motors pays off people, Delphi pays off people, Ford pays off a lot of people and keeps it to a minimum, instead of dealing with the real issues and making it mandatory for all of our membership to go through, say, one training a year.

They're supposed to, but in our national agreement, it doesn't make it mandatory. It says, "A diversity department will develop programs, blah, blah, blah, blah," but they don't have to roll them out. There's no mandate, and there's no way to enforce it.

It's not like Health and Safety. Health and Safety is different. There are mandates for training, backed up by OSHA, that your people, your affected employees

will be trained and that, you know, different groups of people have to have this training. But it's not that way . . .

FECTEAU: And there's also OSHA grants, too.

J. W.: Uh-huh.

FECTEAU: It would be interesting if we had an EEOC who actually made very clear regulation around training, you know, as OSHA does around training, and then funded it. I wonder what would happen with that.

CRAWFORD: I don't think we'll see that for some time, Michelle.

NUZNOV: What EEOC?

J. W.: Yeah. And you know, there's so many differences, there's so many differences. There's so many people who are just trying to do their time and get out, so they're not going to say anything and they're not going to complain, you know, because they're tired, they put up with things that they don't have to.

CRAWFORD: When you started in diversity, did you think you would have a greater effect, or that it was possible to have a greater effect then?

J. W.: When I started at the international union, I thought I was going to save the world. I found out I don't make any decisions, I just follow them. I found out that my input is not wanted unless it's asked for. And most of the time it's a formality. And when I went to diversity, I thought surely I could make a difference here. You make a difference, but it's very, very, very, very small. Very small. So small, in fact, that it doesn't hardly get out of your building and filter into your plants. And that's just the truth of it.

I get calls and complaints all the time. It's just because so much of the authority is with the local unions and with the people that are elected. I don't have any way to force them to do something. We just put together — and I will say this — we put together in this last national agreement a critical intervention process that says that if your plant has become what we would consider to be a hostile work environment, if it has all of the ingredients for a hostile work environment, if we have or if we suspect there's a reason to come in, we can come in without you asking. We ask you to request us to come in, but even if you don't . . .

Now, the plants don't want us in their business, so they need to take care of their business. I've got one potential plant like that right how.

RAUCHER: And why do you think that was negotiated in the last agreement?

J. W.: That was the agreement — that was a demand that I put in there. And here's why we put it in there: We had a plant here in Michigan that a chairman was accused of bringing a black doll to work and hanging a noose around its neck. So when we went in, myself and my GM counterpart, we did a scientific study that Wayne State was involved in to some degree. And from that study, we developed the process for intervention. We had a methodology, you know. So that's why it was necessary, because before then all we could do was once it got real big, we'd go in there and just try to put band-aids on it. And in all of my investigations that I've ever gone out on — and there's not been a ton of them, because people don't want you in their business, but there's been enough of them — in each one of them, management and union both have been at fault. Both have been liable.

NUZNOV: And the international can get roped into some of this.

J. W.: Yeah. The only way the international gets roped into it is if somebody files an EEO complaint and the international knew about it, had been asked to come in or to intervene, and hadn't done it. Usually it falls right back on the local union, you know. Or if it's a national program, like the apprentice program that's administered on the national level, then the international union can be sued. But if it's a situation or incident that pretty much stays at the local, then the corporation would get sued, the local union would get sued, not the international. But when it's a national program like the apprentice program, like the issue over at Ford, then the international union can be sued.

NUZNOV: Are you familiar with the Ford settlement?

J. W.: Yes, and I can talk about the case, because the case is over. The case went to the umpire. He was off work a long time. They reinstated him, but with no back pay. And in that settlement, it said to me that that umpire held him accountable because he should have known better.

Now, he brought the doll, but he wasn't the one that hung the noose around its neck. And there were lots of other people elected that took part in all of that, aggravating it and perpetuating the situation. And management played sides in it. Management saw this person with the doll, management saw this person taking other people in there to see the doll. All of these people were accountable. A member from management did not take the thing away. The civil rights person took pictures of it, gave pictures out to people. This should not happen. So all of it didn't fall on him, but the biggest of it fell on him, because he knew better.

FECTEAU: The civil rights person.

J. W.: No, the chairman. So he was reinstated, but without any back pay. There were a lot of people who were getting fired back and forth. There were people that were having fistfights. And management, clearly, were firing people from one particular caucus and not the other. And so when we went in, we gave them all the things that they were supposed to do. Whether they've done them or not, we don't know, because at that time, we didn't have any way of enforcing that. That was before the national agreement. And so, everyone that was elected at that time, they cleaned that whole slate this time. None of them got elected. The people were just that sick of it. Is there still an issue there? I'm certain of that. It's just smoldering, like they always do. It just smolders.

And sometimes I have complaints that are just against the union. When I have complaints that are just against union officials, I go in, and not my counterpart. When it's union against a member, say like the local union not doing what they're supposed to do, they're discriminating against me, they've been involved in this, sometimes my vice president has asked me to go in. And I go in and get what I think is going on. I get a good investigation. And I don't go in — I go in pretty rough, really.

CRAWFORD: How well are you able to deal with, you know, member-on-member stuff? Do you think that that can always be stopped with good responsible leadership, either on the union's part or the supervision's part?

J. W.: Well, even the management personnel, because they have so many contract supervisors and that, the same training that should be provided for the committee people and the bargaining unit should be provided for management — people in supervision, especially contract. Now, they're supposed to, because they're the ones that are responsible, initially, because when we file a grievance, we file against the company.

But we don't always fairly represent them. We don't represent them like we should. Member against member — you got more members there than you do supervision of members, so you're going to have more of it that way. Very little is going to be a supervisor favoring this person over you, because seniority has taken a lot of that play out of it. You know, whether I get this job or not depends on seniority, you see.

You know, it's hard to prove when they're messing with you. But they mess with you sometimes. Sometimes they'll post a job or a job is open and they already want this person to go in, so they reduce out of this area so this person can go in. Those are hard to prove, you know. But usually it's member against member. And it's still the company's responsibility, the company's policy, their responsibility to make sure that it doesn't happen and it doesn't go on. And you're not going to get rid of them, because they were allowed to do it. "I was allowed to call you names and talk this way to you for this long, now you say no." Yeah.

RAUCHER: I think we are at the end of our tape. You have about one minute left, if there's any last final statement you'd like to make, please do.

J. W.: I just appreciate you all asking me to come and do this interview. I've been as honest and as straightforward as I know how to be, from my own personal experiences. And I appreciate Wayne State asking me to do this.

RAUCHER: Well, thank you. We appreciate your willingness do it.

FECTEAU: Forthright and straightforward can kind of sum you up.