



**International Union,
United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America,
UAW**

**International Executive Board
Oral Histories**



Carolyn Forrest

Interviewed by Irving Bluestone
July 28, December 12, 1997
January 28, 1998

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

BLUESTONE: Carolyn, to begin with, could you simply tell us when you were born, where you were born, something about family life, et cetera, your schooling? The early years, so to speak.

FORREST: I was born in a little town near Paris, Tennessee, by the name of Buchanan. And my mother lived there on the farm with the children. My father, at the time, was working in Michigan at Ford Motor Company. I was born July the 29th, 1932.

My father got into a disagreement about whether or not he should have to buy a car, a Ford car, because Henry Ford the First got very irate with people when they wouldn't buy cars from the company. And so my father quit, and came back home around, I would think, about 1934 or '35. I think I was almost three. And I always said he came back because he couldn't stay away from me. But I'm sure that was not the reason.

My mother and father had a large family, ten children. My older brother died when he was nine months old from a heart defect. In today's world he would still be alive. When a child is born with a tiny hole in their heart, within the year, it either closes or they have surgery. Then, if you had that happen to you, you just lived as long as you could live. If it didn't close, you died.

My mother was here for several years with my dad, in Michigan. She ran a boarding house and my dad worked. When she decided it was not a good place to raise the kids, she went back to her father's farm. My grandpa had died and left her a farm, and she went back to that farm, and she and my brothers and sisters worked the farm to some extent. My dad worked in Michigan and came home when he could.

That was the background. My mother never worked in a public job. I suppose with that many children, she had plenty to do at home.

And my dad never liked farming, but he liked the idea that he was his own boss. That's the only reason he stayed on the farm, rather than go into business for himself. He never trusted that. The idea of having people work for him and anything that even resembled what he had to do at Ford was more than he could handle. He thought the farm life was the ideal life, since he was his own boss.

BLUESTONE: What did he farm?

FORREST: He grew tobacco, as did all his ancestors. My uncle was a judge in Arkansas. He did the family tree some years ago. My father's ancestors came from England, landed in North Carolina and started growing tobacco. They had a tobacco factory and the Civil War wiped it out.

They just kept migrating farther west and my dad, my grandpa and all his brothers were all tobacco farmers. My dad, even though he didn't think he wanted to be a farmer, ended up being a tobacco farmer also. My brother, who recently retired from farming down South, also raised tobacco. But I suppose that's where the tobacco farming ends, because I don't think anyone will carry on from him.

It was a great life for me, because I enjoyed horseback riding, and I enjoyed working with my dad. And I didn't necessarily like the farm life, except I liked the freedom of farm life. My dad and I rode the horse every morning before I went to school. I played basketball in school. I loved basketball.

I graduated from high school, and took a job in a little factory in Paris, Tennessee, called Paris Manufacturing Company. It was, at that time, a division of Holly Carburetor

from Detroit. I worked there for a couple of years. And I got married. My oldest son, Lewis, was born there.

My husband wanted to come to Michigan, not me. I wanted to stay there, because I just enjoyed being near my parents and my friends and I saw no reason to leave. But he insisted we come here because of work. After we moved here, I had the other two children, Jeffrey and Barbara. I went back to work when Barbara was less than six months old, around June of 1957.

BLUESTONE: And where did you go to work then?

FORREST: At J. R. Winter. That was located at Ten Mile and Lahser. I suppose that's Southfield. It was a horrible, horrible place to work. Coming from Tennessee, I was not pro-union. I was not anti-union. I simply was skeptical about unions because, you know, everybody always told you the bad things, and you read the bad things in the newspapers about strikes and fights and all kinds of things. We had a rubber company in town, and they were always having confrontations with police and scabs trying to get in, and it was just total turmoil all the time.

I was not real excited about unions, except that we only made about a dollar and a quarter an hour, as I remember. This man who owned the plant was a tyrant, really. We were going to join the union because he cut our wages to a dollar an hour. We went in and talked to the owner. I always believed in giving people an opportunity to correct their mistakes. He said if we wanted to form a committee, we could come in and talk to him about anything we wanted to. I said, "Well, let's give it a try." We went into our first meeting and told him it was the wages, and we were in disagreement about the wage cut.

I was a member of that committee that went in, and he got so excited he started throwing those rocker arms (that's what we produced), so we left his office. The following week, I believe it was on a Tuesday evening, the organizer, Tom Cantor of Region 1A, talked to us about organizing. I said, "Well, I'm really not sure that that's the way to go." And he said, "Well, you don't know anything about the UAW. If you did, you'd know that we're not like some of the other unions." I had told him some horrifying tales that I'd read. So he said, "Walter Reuther is speaking at Local 174 tonight. Why don't you go over and listen to his speech."

BLUESTONE: What year would this have been?

FORREST: This was in 1957, the latter part of the year. And so I asked, "Who's Walter Reuther?" He said, "He's the president of the UAW. And you ought to listen to him make a speech. You listen to him make a speech, I'm sure he'll talk about the UAW." I didn't care about going and listening to somebody make a speech, but I had some questions I wanted to ask him.

I was so naive that the thought never occurred to me that it wasn't an open house where anyone could walk in and ask any question they wanted to of Walter Reuther. When I went to Local 174, people were going in the door and I just walked in with the crowd. I noticed people were stopping and I suppose now that I know what they were doing; it was a Region 1A conference, I'm sure, and they were stopping to register.

I looked up and saw Walter on the platform. (Because in the meantime, I'd checked a little and found out that Walter Reuther really was president of the UAW, and I knew what he looked like.) I walked up to the podium to talk to Walter. One of the Bommaritos was his bodyguard then.

BLUESTONE: Bommarito?

FORREST: Yes. So he immediately came over and said, "You can't come up here." And I said, "Why not? I want to talk to Mr. Reuther." And he said, "You can't come up, nobody can come up on the stage." He said, "Walter will be speaking in a few minutes." And Walter was sitting over behind the podium making some notes. And he looked up and saw me, and he said, "Let her come up."

So I went up, and he said, "Are you from 174?" I said, "No, Mr. Reuther, I'm not a member of your union. I just have some questions I'd like to ask you, because someone's trying to organize our plant. And I'm not sure about unions. I came from the South." And he said, "I could tell that."

And I said, "We were always taught and read about all the bad things about unions, so if I'm going to pay dues, and become a member of your union, I want to ask you some questions." He said, "You come over here and sit down, and you ask all the questions you would like to ask."

And I did, and I don't know how long it took. It seemed a long time to me. It was probably ten minutes in reality. But he was so patient. He answered every question I had, and then he started to tell me about the organization. And I thanked him, and when I left there, he had me committed.

I thought to myself, if he could just speak to every person — and I know it's not the reality, but I think about this often — we should have had a speech by him just talking about the UAW, period. Nothing else. What it's about. What we do. How effective we are because we're a union. He went through the whole thing.

And so when I went back the next day, I was ready to lead the organizing drive, which I did. J. R. Winter was such a horrible employer. He closed that plant and moved to Ohio in April or May 1959.

BLUESTONE: Well, did you organize it before he closed the plant?

FORREST: Oh, yes. We organized it and I became plant chair.

BLUESTONE: And you went through an NLRB election?

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: Do you remember what the results of the election were?

FORREST: We had only two people vote against it. It was a very small plant. We had, I think it was 30-some people working in the plant. And we only had two that voted against it. One was the daughter of his girlfriend, and the other one was an old tool and die person who had been in the business with his father.

BLUESTONE: All right. So then having organized the plant, was there an election and you were elected to be chair?

FORREST: I first started off as a steward. I didn't even know how to write a grievance. I didn't know what unions were really about, other than just that brief stint with Walter and the materials that had been passed out to us. I started out as steward and I learned how to write a grievance. I went through that period.

They were still in contract negotiations. And one of the members of the Bargaining Committee quit. He said it was just too time consuming and he didn't want to be bothered. So I ran for that position. It was a temporary Bargaining Committee. And when we finished negotiations and we had our elections, then I ran for bargaining chair.

BLUESTONE: Did you affiliate with Local 174 then?

FORREST: No, it was Local 408. And I ran for financial secretary of the local union. And I think most of my life has just been being in the right place at the right time and crazy circumstances happening.

The financial secretary of the local had been in office for probably 15 years. He had asked a person from GM to nominate him, a person by the name of Sam Canallis. Sam Canallis was the trustee of the local, and I attended all the meetings and got to know Sam. You know, we'd sit and talk about what we believed ought to happen with the union.

When the financial secretary asked Sam to nominate him, he said, "Sam, I've got you down as the person to nominate me." But he didn't ask him, would he do it. Everyone just assumed that Sam was going to or that he was going to be nominated by someone else. I didn't know anything about the conversation with Sam.

Sam nominated me. I was absolutely stunned. I'd only been in the local for two years. A little less than two years. And it irritated the financial secretary, and embarrassed him, because he had not asked anyone else to nominate him. He had too much pride to nominate himself. So I got in by acclamation. That's the only way in the world I could have won that position at that time.

The financial secretary came back and ran against me the following term, and at that time we had two-year terms. I only beat him by 39 votes. But you can believe after that, I really worked at my job. I realized that you can't just campaign before election. You have to work at it every day of the year, and so I did that. From then on, I had no opposition.

I was a part-time financial secretary for a while, and when the plant closed — J. R. Winter — I went to work at Whitmore Lake, at the Hoover plant, which was a unit of Local 408. And at that time it was called Reynolds Chemical.

I had decided I was not going to run for office, because the closing of the J. R. Winter plant just had devastated me. There were a lot of women who were around 50 years old who were single parents. And at that time — I was in my twenties — if people were 50 years old, that was ancient.

I remember how they talked about what was going to happen to them. Back then, they couldn't get a job. You know, there were no age discrimination laws. And so they were concerned about their future. Now, I had three children, and that was about the time my husband and I were getting a divorce. I didn't know from one day to the next whether we'd have food on the table. But that shows you the difference in the confidence you have in yourself at a younger age. There was just never a doubt in my mind that I would be able to provide for those children.

BLUESTONE: Would you give us the names of the children?

FORREST: Yes. Lewis is the oldest one. He was born in '53. Jeffrey Michael, who was the second son, born in '55. And Barbara, who was born in '57. Two years apart for each one of them.

BLUESTONE: Then at the point that the family problem came up, how did you manage to handle it? Because the children were still quite young.

FORREST: Yes. There was a woman living across the street from me who babysat for me. And at that time, I was working at the local part-time. My niece then came to live with me, and was there with the children.

I was working the third shift at Whitmore Lake, which was about 33 miles. I would come home from Whitmore Lake, and the kids were small, and they'd want to wake up and talk to me, and I would probably get to bed about ten o'clock. I'd sleep a few hours, and then I would go to the local and do my work at the local, and then go from there to the plant. We had 31 units at the local, and the bookkeeping was by hand. There were no computers and no secretaries. So it was pretty rough for a while.

I came on full-time at the local around 1962. The president was not too happy with me because the financial secretary who got defeated was his friend. And he always felt that I was an intruder by coming in and running for office. He stacked the meeting, and put me back to work part-time. I was just absolutely crushed. I thought, you know, what a horrible thing for him to do. And I think that was my first taste of hardball politics.

I had made some good contacts in the local union and I called all of the chairmen of the units, and at the next meeting, I not only stacked the meeting, but I had bylaws passed. And after that, I was full-time at the local union until April 1967.

BLUESTONE: Now, during the period, however, that you were actually working in the shop, what kind of job did you have?

FORREST: In J. R. Winter, I was a spot welder. And Whitmore Lake, at Reynolds Chemical (which later became Hoover Chemical, then Hoover Ball, then Johnson Control, and now Woodbridge owns it), I worked on the line.

BLUESTONE: Well, I remember Hoover Ball because I came out of a roller bearing plant originally, and I knew the name.

FORREST: That division made seats for automobiles, for GM, Ford, and Chrysler. At that time, we weren't making seats for imports, I'm sure, like they are now.

I was not going to run for office, because I'd been so heartbroken over the J. R. Winter plant closing.

One night on the midnight shift, the foreman called all of us into the lunchroom and he said, "I think some of you don't recognize who I am. And I'm going to tell you. When you come into this plant, I'm God." And I kept poking the steward in the side and telling him, "Tell this man he's not God." And he wouldn't do it. I found out later he was a good friend of the foreman.

When the meeting broke up, I waited until the foreman was alone and I said, "I want you to know you're not God. I tried to get the steward to tell you that, but he wouldn't." And he said, "One of these days I'll bring you to your knees."

We had a meeting on Sunday for nominations for steward and I ran. The guys knew that I was going to run and they thought they would fix me really good by staying home. I was elected by six votes. My friends showed up. The other candidate's friends didn't show up, because each one thought that the others were going to go. Later there was an opening on the Bargaining Committee and I ran for Bargaining Committee. And I came to the day shift.

BLUESTONE: That would have been about what year?

FORREST: That was in about '59, the latter part of '59. Because I went to work there in June of '59. In fact, when I filed my retirement papers the other day, I remembered it was June 12th of '59. I ran for Bargaining Committee and I served on the Bargaining Committee for a short time and then I went on full-time in the local union.

I think one of the things that caused me to get elected to the Bargaining Committee is that I was reading through the contract one night at lunch time in the plant. And I said to some of the women, "Did you get a cost-of-living increase?" And they said, "No." I said, "Well, you were supposed to get one on the first pay period in June."

The reason I asked that question is because when I was hired in, no one mentioned anything about a COLA increase. So I said to them, "Well, I think I'd better raise that, and find out whether or not it was paid." I raised it with the foreman on the night shift, and he said, "Yes, I saw that in the contract. No, they didn't give it, but I'm sure there was a reason." So I said, "Well, I think what I'd better do is write a grievance."

What I really should have done, probably, is talk to the plant chairman. But I didn't. I filed a grievance, and everybody went crazy. The supervisors started coming to me, one by one, and telling me I shouldn't be writing this grievance, just to withdraw it and they'd handle it on the day shift. I thought I wouldn't be getting this much attention if there wasn't something wrong. So I think I'll just leave it in the procedure.

One of the members of the Bargaining Committee came to me and said, "If you were going to raise this, you should have come to us. This is something we should have been doing." And I said, "You're right. How come you didn't do it? You knew it was there. I had to sit and read the contract to find out. But you negotiated it, so you had to know it was there."

I won all that money for these people and all the back pay. And I think that's why I had no problem getting elected to the Bargaining Committee.

BLUESTONE: No doubt.

FORREST: But the midnight shift was the most super-militant group you ever saw in your life. If that supervisor even thought about doing something to somebody on the midnight shift, he had the entire group to worry about.

We were instrumental in getting plant-wide seniority. I'd convinced this foreman to let us just try it out. We tried it out for six months, and then he left and someone else came in, and they tried to send us home by department and I filed a grievance on the basis of past practice. And we won that. And then it went from that to the whole plant. We had two seniority lists that we got rid of and went to one.

There's just so many things in the early days that you could do for people whose treatment was so atrocious. You know, women couldn't get a job that was decent in that plant because of the two seniority lists, first, and, second, the weight restrictions and the hours, hours of work.

And then we had two jobs that were the highest paying jobs in the plant. One was crib attendant and the other was foam machine operator. All you had to do was sit there and punch buttons. You only had to learn which buttons to punch. I had said to the membership, "One of these days before I leave this plant, women are going to have the right to work as crib attendant and foam machine operator. And the third thing we are going to have here is a pension plan. Those are the three things that I'm going to accomplish." And I did. Today, there are women crib attendants and foam machine operators, and we have a pension plan.

Now, I was in the local at the time. As a matter of fact, I was on the staff. But I was still servicing that plant. We got the pension plan in 1970. And the reason I think

we were able to get it in 1970, we had an old African American. And I say old, because the man must have been 75 or 80 when he was going to retire.

He had been commuting back and forth between Arkansas and Michigan. His wife lived in Arkansas. The sweetest old guy you ever saw in your life. And he was going to retire the following year. One day when I was in the plant, he said, "Well, I'm going to retire next year. I've seen a lot of changes since I've been working here and I'm making good wages, getting good benefits. I was hoping we'd get a pension plan, but I just appreciate everything we've got." And I thought, "Well, that's just a tragedy that this man is going to spend all these years here and not get a pension."

I got about three or four of the people in the plant and started them talking to the others. And at our next membership meeting, we made a pact that we were going to get a pension plan. And we were going to make it retroactive so Perry could get his pension. We did that. It was sort of a hard sell, because the average age was 25. Now 48 is the average age in that plant.

BLUESTONE: Did you receive assistance from the national office, the Social Security Department, in working out the pension? Or was that done just locally?

FORREST: We negotiated the benefits that we thought we could get. And then we sent it to Social Security to write up the language and get it all approved. But no, we didn't have the help that I have now in this department or the national departments have.

BLUESTONE: Right.

FORREST: We never had a person from Social Security or Research. We had to do all the work ourselves. We had assistance by phone calls or coming down and meeting with them either before the fact or after the fact.

BLUESTONE: Was there a regional service representative who assisted?

FORREST: I was the servicing rep from the region.

BLUESTONE: Okay. That brings us, then, to when you were appointed to it, and how that came about.

FORREST: Well, Bard Young was the regional director, and that was in 1967. If you recall, 1966 is when Olga Madar was elected to board member-at-large. Walter told the board that year, after the convention, that he would give them an additional staff person, but that additional staff person had to be a woman. They resisted for some time, but then the directors started to appoint women, but it was usually in education or some other area. Bard told me Emil Mazey had called, and Ken Bannon had called. Emil offered me a job in auditing. And Ken Bannon offered me a job in the Ford Department on insurance benefits. I didn't want to do that. I wanted to service plants. So I told Bard that I wanted to service plants in the region. And if I couldn't do that, I'd stay in the local. This happened in February or March.

Then Bard said, "I'll appoint you to the servicing staff, maybe sometime in August." And I said, "No. In the local, our nominations are in May and our election is in June. And if I run for office, this local's been good to me, so I will serve out my term." So he said, "Well, they'd understand if you told them you were going to staff." And I said, "I have to understand it, and I don't. If I accept another term of office, I'll serve the term of office."

And that was the end of it, I assumed. But one day in April, he called and had lunch with Clarence Contratto and myself. Clarence was the president. Bard offered me a job to go on in April. And so I went on the staff. I believe it was the 28th of April.

BLUESTONE: In 1967?

FORREST: 1967.

BLUESTONE: Just as an aside, Carolyn, in the 60's, as you know, I was administrative assistant to Walter. And he assigned me the task of contacting each regional director about seeing to it that women were appointed to the regional staff. And I had to work it out with each director. Some were immediately responsive. Others were very, very difficult. But I do remember your particular appointment in that regard.

FORREST: Yes. I was excited. The staff were not too excited about me coming aboard, I think. Some of them were, in all fairness. I think even Prince Moon had a problem, but his was for a different reason. He thought I was from the South and that I was obviously prejudiced because I was from the South. John Burton was one of the few people who was nice to me. He and George Whitton. Shortly after I went on staff, Bill Moshimer came on. He was a delight.

But the first day I went in, Bard held a staff meeting and announced I was coming on the staff, and he was going to assign me to an office with Bill MacIntosh and George Whitton. When I came in, he took me in, showed me the office and left.

Bill MacIntosh came in and said, "We ought to get something straight up front. I was opposed to you coming on the staff, and I told Bard that. But he's the boss, and he made the decision you were going to come, in spite of my objections. I was also opposed to sharing an office with you, but again, Bard Young's the director, and he overruled me." And he continued, "But one thing I will tell you: I am not going to do your work. You're going to do it on your own. I think you're going to fall flat on your face, but nevertheless, whatever you do, it will be on your own. I'm not going to help you."

I said, "That's fine, Bill. And I respect you for telling me up front. And you stay on your side of the office, I'll stay on mine." I think Bill thought I'd just come on as a token and I was going to have everybody else doing the work.

Bard assigned me 12 locals. One plant was in negotiations. And I had an arbitration case. I was in the region, working at about eight o'clock one night, working on the arbitration case. And MacIntosh comes in. He was a brilliant man, and probably one of the best with the Ford umpire system that I ever saw. He said, "What are you working on?" I said, "An arbitration case." He said, "I have a pretty good reputation in arbitration." And I said, "I know."

And he said, "What's the case about?" And I said, "You know, Bill, I came back after dinner to work tonight because I thought you'd be gone and George would be gone and I'd have this place to myself. I don't want you doing my work. But I also would like to have some privacy. Now, if you don't have anything to do here, I'd appreciate it if you'd leave me alone. If you do have to work here, I'll gather up my things and take them home."

He gave me this little speech about, "We're supposed to be here to represent the members. And we ought not to be too proud to accept any assistance that might benefit them. So if you admit that I'm good in arbitration, then the least you ought to do is to think about that person that you're going to present the case for. If I could help that person by giving you some information, you certainly ought not to be too big to accept it." I said, "You're right, Bill. Pull up a chair."

He was an absolute delight from then on. I could not have asked for anyone to be better. He was always there if I needed him, and was always offering assistance.

BLUESTONE: My recollection is, Carolyn, that you were the very first female on the staff to be given a servicing assignment. I don't recall any other who had a servicing assignment at that time.

FORREST: Yes, I was the only one. I think that's probably why I met with such resistance from the staff. They considered that a threat to their future because I was sure they knew that there would be other women to follow, and it would no longer be a so-called reserved job for a male. Their world was being invaded, and I really think that's why they were so hostile.

BLUESTONE: Now, of the 12 units that you were assigned to service, could you describe some of them, so we have an idea there, and the variation?

FORREST: One was a heat treat plant. I was trying to think of them. I serviced the Whitmore Lake Hoover Ball plant, and I had the stamping plant in Saline. I had one in Chelsea, a manufacturing plant or parts plant. I had a plant that made computer chips, and it was in Local 157. It was located out at Ten Mile and I-96. It was an electronics plant. There was an electronics plant, Mallory Electric, located not too far from Carl's Chop House. The plant closed and moved to California. They made ignitions for boat engines. I also serviced Eastern Michigan University and the University of Michigan.

BLUESTONE: Well, in effect, then, the makeup of the plants was such that you had a variation of product that you had to get accustomed to, as well as operations?

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: What kind of reception did you get from the local unions and the committees of those locals when you were assigned to them to help them with their negotiations?

FORREST: They were a little skeptical about me being able to service their plants, because in most cases, there were no women on the committee. The companies used that in the beginning for an excuse to, I guess, help prove to the committee that I was not going to be able to do the job, because I was a female. Some made it as miserable for me as they could.

The first year that I was on staff was probably the most miserable of my life. But, you know, I just kept a steady course and I tried to make sure that I did everything based on facts, and never allowed them to know that they got under my skin. I kept telling them that my job was to service and represent the membership. And until they had some reason why I should not be there, they should give me the same opportunity that they would give a male rep that came on the staff. Most of them gave me a fair shake, finally.

BLUESTONE: Did the international union give you any special training?

FORREST: No.

BLUESTONE: With regard to that?

FORREST: No.

BLUESTONE: You had to learn?

FORREST: I did some on my own, but I must say, this international union, that's one of their weaknesses. It was a weakness then. It's a weakness even more now.

When I was in the local union, came out on full-time, as I said, we had 31 or 32 units. Clarence Contratto and I serviced those units. In the local union at that time, I had to be put on a six-month probation with the joint council to make sure that I could do the job. Women today just can't imagine going through that, but you know, I could have said absolutely not, I won't allow you to do that. But then I wouldn't have been servicing

plants. So I had to do it, in order to get the service assignment. It was a very, very difficult thing to go through. But you just had to make up your mind that you had to do everything yourself.

So I took some courses at Wayne State University, in labor studies. I took two courses in labor law. Gordon Gregory was teaching the class. At the time, I didn't even know that he was working for the international union. I took two courses in labor law. I took one in economics at Wayne, an eight-week course in economics. I took a couple of others in effective speaking, et cetera.

After I came on staff, Larry Carlstrom conducted a two-week seminar in the old Chrysler Building that was on the grounds here, in arbitration. I still have a picture. Staff came from all over the country. It was a two-week course. If you were to tell the region that you were going to have a two-week course here at the Dave Miller Building for arbitration, they'd probably tell you they couldn't let the staff go for that long. Bard was just the opposite. Any time you got the opportunity, he was always saying, "Go." I think George Whitton might have taken that. There were only a couple of us from Region 1E who took the course.

It was the most effective two weeks that I can recall, because Larry had arbitrators here. I remember Dallas Jones was there and Gabriel Alexander. There were about five or six of them. Larry took cases out of GM and had a mock arbitration case. The first week we spent talking about evidence, how to collect evidence, how to prepare witnesses. And we had arbitrators as panelists talking about what they considered to be effective evidence and that sort of thing.

The second week, we had mock arbitration hearings and divided up into company and unions and took the actual cases that had been presented to the umpire at GM by one of those arbitrators who was present. When we finished our case, he ruled based on what we presented. And in many cases, it was different than what his award had been in GM and he explained the difference and why he gave a different award, and it was absolutely the most educational two weeks I've ever spent in my life.

BLUESTONE: Well, Larry Carlstrom at that time was director of the Arbitration Department that we had established in the 60's. And by the way, Larry is now in his nineties.

FORREST: Yes. I saw him, and you know he had lung cancer and had a lung removed. And he came by here, I think, last year. And you wouldn't know it. I think he was getting around better than I do.

BLUESTONE: He and I have been longtime friends. We're in constant touch with each other. As a matter of fact, he visited us at home just two weeks ago before he went down to Florida for a brief period. He did a wonderful job with that department.

FORREST: Oh, he was fabulous. He was so good that in the region George and I, and then Angelewski when he came on the staff, the three of us did all the arbitration for the whole region.

BLUESTONE: I was unaware of that.

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: So that was over and above your assignment?

FORREST: Yes. We did them all. I think when I left to come to work for Doug Fraser, we had two staff who were on sick leave, and both of them were servicing parts

and supplier plants. I took part of them, and I forgot who took the others. I wound up with 28 units to service.

BLUESTONE: That's quite an assignment.

FORREST: Yes. It was always supposed to be temporary, but somebody was always off. And I didn't mind. I didn't mind keeping busy.

But I think the worst assignment I ever had, and we would still have that today if I could have gotten some help, was the University of Michigan.

BLUESTONE: I recall it.

FORREST: It was the most heartbreaking thing I ever went through, toward the end. In fact, Bard took away some of my assignments and gave them to some of the other staff temporarily. I'd come in there at midnight to get the information I needed for the following day.

He put me in there in December, after certification was in June. They still had not gotten a checkoff. And the second day I was in negotiations, the U of M negotiator said, "Well, I'll tell you what. If you will go through a card-check for the number of members you have signed up, if you have a majority, we'll give it to you. We'll give you two weeks."

And I thought to myself, "Well, this is a snap. I'm sure they have everybody signed up." Well, naive me. And when the meeting adjourned for lunch, the committee said to me, "Boy, you just got yourself in a trap. Out of 3,300, we have 300 — no, we have less than 300 signed up."

And so for the next two weeks, we would adjourn the meeting about eleven o'clock, and we'd have a different building set up to go to, maybe four or five, between

eleven o'clock and two. We'd rush in, talk to them, get the cards signed, move on to another building. And two weeks later, we got Dave Tanzman to come in and do a card-check and we had 2,100 people signed up.

BLUESTONE: Is that right?

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: Before I forget, let's go back some years. During the period that you were in the local union, did you ever run for convention delegate?

FORREST: Oh, yes. I was elected convention delegate from 1959 until I came on the staff. I never missed a convention. And I remember the year Bard ran against Doug, I voted for Doug.

Doug and I used to fight like cats and dogs. You know, I was young and strong-willed. And he used to throw me out of his office without a blink of the eye. He says he can't remember it. He said to me, "That's because you never voted for me." When we were in a staff meeting one time in his office, he said, "Well, the reason I always have a problem with her, she never voted for me when I ran for director." I said, "Oh, yes, I did." He said, "Mary, bring that roll call in." And she went and got the roll call. And he looked at it and he said, "I'll be damned, you did. All these years I thought you voted against me."

But the year that Doug ran for board member-at-large, Bard had no opposition for director. I didn't trust Bard. I didn't trust him at all. Any time I saw him, he was sort of laid back, having a beer with the guys. He didn't seem to be serious and committed enough to me. And so I abstained in the caucus. Bard was devastated. He just couldn't

understand why anybody would do that. Not in the caucus. When we broke off from the convention to elect the director, I abstained.

BLUESTONE: Well, despite this, however, it was he who offered you the assignment.

FORREST: The assignment, yes.

BLUESTONE: Of being on staff.

FORREST: Well, he went out. I must say, I must give him credit. Bard, up until he had so many health problems with Maggie, his wife, and all that, Bard was one of the best directors you could find any place. He was very bright, very committed to education, very supportive to the staff. And even in the local union, and our local was small compared to the other locals, and that year he had no opposition. So if he wanted to be the kind of arrogant person that I thought he was, he would have just told me, okay, I'll make your life a little miserable. But he didn't do that. He said to me, "I'd like to talk to you."

And he took me next door in the bar and we sat down. And he said, "You have a right to do what you just did. There's no argument about that. That's the democracy that we have. But I want to ask you something. Why did you do it?" I said, "Because I don't think you'll be a good director. It's just that simple. I don't think you're serious enough, committed enough and I'm just concerned." And he said, "Well, let's make a deal. You give me six months and then I want you to come to my office and tell me if you were right or if you were wrong." And I said, "That's fair enough." And I left.

He forgot all about it, I'm sure. I wrote it down in my little book. Six months later I'm over there. I said, "You and I have an appointment." And he turned to his

secretary, Grace and said, "I don't remember having an appointment with her." And she said, "I didn't either, but she says she has one." And I said, "I made a commitment to you at the convention that I would come back and see you six months later. Today is the day." And he laughed and said, "All right, come in, we have an appointment." And I said, "Well, I was wrong. You've done very well. I've watched you very closely, and you've done a good job." And I got up and we shook hands and that was it.

BLUESTONE: Very interesting.

FORREST: But he was a good director.

BLUESTONE: So how many years, then, did you serve on the regional staff?

FORREST: For ten years.

BLUESTONE: From '67 to '77?

FORREST: '77, yes.

BLUESTONE: And during that period is when you performed your servicing assignment. Were you involved at all in the political life . . .

FORREST: Oh, yes.

BLUESTONE: . . . of the community. I'm not talking about the political life of the union. I assumed that.

FORREST: I was active, very active in the Democratic Party. I served on State Central. I served on the board of the 15th congressional district. And I ran for convention delegate. I'm trying to think of the first time. I can't remember the first Democratic convention I went to. But I was very active.

Harold Julian was the UAW coordinator for the Wayne 19th and Oakland 19th, and at that time I lived in Livonia. That was part of the Wayne 19th — we didn't have

enough Democrats in Livonia to call a membership meeting in a phone booth. What we had in Livonia was just a little handful of Democrats and an awful lot of independents and quite a number of Republicans.

Harold decided he was going to set up an organization out there and we were going to really get something done. So he called me. I didn't know him from anyone. I'd never heard of Harold Julian.

He called me — and this was when I was in the local — and wanted me to serve on C.O.P.E. We were part of the AFL-CIO then. He wanted me to be secretary-treasurer and he wanted Bob Walker to be chairman. I knew Bob vaguely. He was the president of Local 735. I just knew him from our region functions. I told Harold, "I don't have time. I've got kids. I've got the joint council. I service plants. I do my own work as a financial secretary and I just don't have time to take on another job."

And so he said, "Well, just stop by our meeting at the Local 174 Annex on Plymouth Road Sunday afternoon." And I said, "That's our joint council date, Harold." "Well," he said, "stop by anyway. You can leave there and stop by on the way home." And I said, "All right, I'll stop by. But it will just be to tell you I can't serve. I don't have the time." When I stopped by, people were gone. Harold was coming out to go home. He introduced himself and he said, "I want you to know you were just elected secretary-treasurer, even though you weren't here. Bob accepted for you, and you were elected unanimously."

I was so angry at Harold that I just turned on my heel and left. I didn't say any more. Later, Bob gave me a call and said, "Look, I think we ought to give Harold a chance. He's out here trying to do a job and maybe we ought to try to work with him."

And I said, "All right." From then on, I worked in the Livonia office. And after I went on the staff, I was assigned to the Livonia office at every election.

We built up an organization there and that's the year that McNamara ran for mayor. I tell you, it was absolutely unbelievable. There were not ten people in the city, I don't think, who thought he could win against Mayor Molke, who was a staunch Republican and had a real estate company and had money. But Harold coordinated that campaign with Mac and all of the candidates who were on the slate. Mac won that election. I think that's one of the proudest moments I had working in the Democratic Party.

BLUESTONE: And Mac is still there.

FORREST: And Mac is still there as Wayne County Executive. He's been a good administrator.

BLUESTONE: When you were servicing the local unions, obviously there was contract bargaining, grievance procedure, arbitration. Did you undertake specific educational classes for committee people in the locals concerning the contracts that they had, so that they would have some better notions as to how to handle grievances and that kind of thing?

FORREST: Absolutely. We had educational classes for committees and stewards. And I always went to the membership meetings of the units I serviced, regular membership meetings. If there was a conflict with meetings on the same day and they couldn't change it, I would ask another staff person to fill in for me, because I always believed a staff person should be present.

The first thing we would do following contract negotiations is set up a series of meetings to acquaint the members with the terms of the agreement. I think the members in the plants that I serviced were very aware of their rights and their benefits. We never had a problem getting people to run for office, and they were always prepared to run, because we tried to keep them updated.

Prince Moon was the education director. When I was in the region, we helped out with everything. We helped out with organizing. We helped out with education. I can't name the number of times that I used to either go to Black Lake and teach collective bargaining or be the mock arbitrator in one of Prince Moon's arbitration classes.

We helped organize plants: went to the membership meetings and spoke to the people that we were trying to organize, made house calls, handed out leaflets at five o'clock in the morning. You know, we did all of those things.

BLUESTONE: It was a total job?

FORREST: It was a total job. You were not an expert in anything. You were just a jack-of-all-trades.

BLUESTONE: Now, this was during a period as well in which Olga Madar was executive board member at large, and subsequently vice president?

FORREST: Right.

BLUESTONE: And her assignments primarily were non-servicing assignments, in terms of contract bargaining. But the Women's Department was one of the major operations that she worked with. What, if anything, was the relationship between Olga Madar and her operation and your assignment within the region?

FORREST: Well, Olga had the Recreation Department and the Women's Department. And she was always calling about some activities, either in politics that affected the parks or something that affected the women.

And she was one of the strongest leaders in women's rights that I think I ever met. She was a fighter. If you didn't agree with Olga, you could fight with her until hell froze over. She might call you 17 times. She might have a martini in the evening and decide to call you at home. She was the most persistent person I ever saw when she got her arms around an issue and wanted to convince people.

I got to know her even better when she ran for president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. And I remember one of the first arguments. I was there at the founding conference and it was one of the most chaotic situations I ever saw, because the women were from all over the country, all walks of life. Most of them had absolutely no understanding of parliamentary procedure. We were trying to put together some resolutions and it was amazing. But it was challenging and you knew it was a part of history being made. It was wonderful.

But the second meeting was in Washington, when we were going to put the constitution together. Olga was determined to have an open convention. I would argue with her. I would say, "Olga, it would be total chaos. It would be like the founding conference meeting. You have to elect delegates. Now that's the democratic way. Now let them elect delegates or you'll have the people in the city where you hold the convention taking over. They can all come at no expense and women from around the country, who are coming in one or two at a time, will have no voice. It makes absolutely no sense."

Olga and I argued until about two o'clock in the morning. I remember Ceil Kerrigan coming in and saying, "Do you know how long you guys have been at this? We had a sandwich sent in here about twelve o'clock because you hadn't had any dinner. And here you are at two o'clock in the morning. Where are you?" I said, "The same place we were when we started. I'm over here, Olga's over there."

But the next morning, we had the UAW caucus and she got up and gave her position and I got up and gave mine. I won, not because of me, but simply because the position I took made sense. Olga looked at me and said, "Well, I gave it hell and I lost. No hard feelings. We accept it. That's the democratic way and that's the way we go with it."

She was like that about everything. She would argue, she'd rant and rave and carry on and then when it was all over, she'd say, "I gave it my best shot." Unless it was an issue of principle; then she would carry on until she got her way.

BLUESTONE: That's very typical of Olga.

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: During that period of time, did you develop a relationship with any of the other officers of the union: Walter, Emil, Woodcock or any of the others?

FORREST: Well, yes, there was some relationship. I guess Emil and I probably had a pretty good relationship early on, because of my years as financial secretary.

Leonard and Walter — Walter never forgot a name. He never forgot a face. I don't think he ever forgot mine probably from Local 174. I don't know. But he always called me by name and recognized me wherever I saw him.

Our union was so different then. As a staff person, two weeks before we went to the convention in Atlantic City, I was in negotiations. We finished at some ungodly hour of the morning. Walter had a press conference in Lansing. And I got up and drove to Lansing. I can tell you, there were a lot of Detroit staff there. Now, can you see that happening now?

BLUESTONE: Hardly.

FORREST: Hardly, unless it was an earthshaking issue. It was just the fact that Walter was having a press conference. And everybody turned out to be there to show their support for Walter.

BLUESTONE: Now, in that period in your relationship with Olga and her directorship of the Women's Department, was there any special work or assignments that you had relative to the development of the feminist movement within the union and the recognition of women within the union?

FORREST: Well, we used to have meetings that she set up. She established the women's councils, the region committees, women's committees. And Olga's dream was to have a national women's caucus of the UAW, International Women's Caucus of the UAW. She never quite achieved that, but she certainly made some inroads in women's committees and women's council meetings, urging them to run for office and get involved in their union, get involved in politics and educating them on women's issues.

In 1974, I believe it was when Olga retired, she supported me to take her place. Leonard was president at the time. I was in Black Lake with my kids. I think I was teaching a class up there, probably our summer school. The executive board was meeting up there when Olga announced that she was retiring.

Leonard sent Bill Beckham over to my table in the cafeteria to ask me to get in the race. And I said, "Okay, I will." But then he cut a deal with George Merrelli somewhere along the way for Odessa, and of course as president, he had all the votes.

But Olga supported me very vehemently during that time to run for office. She later ran for vice president of CLUW in Michigan. I would say that she did more for the women's movement in the state, and probably in this union, than any other individual I know.

BLUESTONE: And nationally, I would say, too.

FORREST: And nationally, yes.

BLUESTONE: Well, just as an aside, I can tell you that I supported your candidacy.

FORREST: I know. I know.

BLUESTONE: Okay, now is there anything particular that comes to mind concerning the period before you went up to the president's office?

FORREST: Well, the University of Michigan assignment was probably the one that stood out in my mind. And then Eastern Michigan University came along.

BLUESTONE: What happened at U of M?

FORREST: Well, U of M was just politically torn apart in the beginning. Flint and Dearborn were so far removed from the main campus, and had such different problems. Location-wise, it was just crazy to have all of them in one unit. But that's what they did, so when you'd have a membership meeting, you'd try to have it centralized. But it was so difficult to get a representative group at the meeting. You had

the main campus at the University of Michigan and the north campus, which is like a different university. You had the hospital, with totally different problems.

They had the New Labor Party group, who were just there to create dissension. They didn't care whether anything got accomplished or not. They just wanted to create problems. But we still made inroads. We finally got a contract. We won every arbitration case we had. I think we must have won five or six arbitration cases.

Then they started the decertification move before the next agreement. I must say that, by that time, Bard was so tired of that place. We never got any assistance. And I begged for assistance. I think it was Olga that had the TOP Department then, and Lloyd Mahaffey came out and helped me later in the contract negotiations. When the decertification drive started, I had absolutely no help at all. And I spent an awful lot of time out there.

The committee and the local union officers and I were spending every day into the evening talking to people. We thought we had the thing licked. Bard Young sent a letter out saying it was up to them, you know, he really didn't care. If they wanted it, they could vote for it; if they didn't, they could vote against it. We were devastated. That hit about two days before the election. To this day, I don't know what possessed Bard to do that. We only lost by some small amount of votes, 60, or . . .

BLUESTONE: It was close.

FORREST: Either 60 or 68 votes.

BLUESTONE: What year was that?

FORREST: It was while Leonard was president, so it seems to me it was about '75. I think it was about '75, because when they lost the election, Sue Golding, who was

Sue Susselman at that time and an officer of the local, went to work at Ford in Rawsonville, the first factory job she ever had in her life. And she went to work there because she couldn't stand the thought of being in an unorganized facility. She was appointed as a temporary to the organizing staff when Doug was president, and then to the permanent staff. So I think it was around '75.

BLUESTONE: Okay. In '77 then, Doug became president of the union. And can you describe how it happened that you went up to the president's office from the regional office?

FORREST: Yes. He was interviewed by a reporter, and he made the statement that he was going to appoint a woman as administrative assistant to the president. And Olga Madar immediately got on the phone and called me and said, "You call Doug and tell him you're interested." I said, "Olga, Doug Fraser knows me as well as anybody knows me in this union, and he knows I work for Bard, and if he wants to offer me the job, I'm sure he will. If he doesn't . . ." And she said, "That's nonsense. Doug is the kind of person, if you don't ask him, he will not give you consideration, because he figures you don't want it." So I said, "All right" and I hung up.

And I didn't do anything about it. And the following week, I'm in a ratification meeting at the local union, my local union, 408. I got this call. They came up and said, "You've got an urgent call." I thought it was one of the kids, I always thought urgent calls were my kids. I rushed to the phone. It's Olga. I said, "Olga! I am in the middle . . ." "I know what you're in the middle of, but you have not talked to Doug Fraser. I checked." And I said, "All right, when I get done here." She said, "He's in his office; call him right now." And I said, "All right. When I hang up, I'll call him."

So I hung up and I called his office. And I was in a hurry anyway. And I said, "Is Doug in?" "Yes." "I'd like to speak to him," and told the secretary who it was. So he got on the phone and I said, "Doug I read in the paper that you were going to appoint a woman as an administrative assistant and I'd like to throw my hat in the ring." He said, "Your hat's in the ring." I said, "Okay, thank you very much," and I hung up. I related that to Olga Madar and she went crazy.

But then, about, I guess, a couple of months later, I got a call, and Doug was saying, "Has Bard said anything to you yet?" And I said, "No."

And it was so funny, because Doug had been out there to meet with the staff. That's when you and Emil were opposed to the re-affiliation with the AF of L. And I was opposed to it because I had read every administrative letter that Walter put out, and I had them on file in my office. We were arguing about it in the region. Bill Moshimer and I were the only two staff persons that told Bard that our delegates would not vote for it. And he'd scream, rant and rave and carry on, because everybody was telling him everything's fine, you're going to get the votes.

Doug came out to talk to the staff, and I had my little administrative letters lined up in front of me, and I would come to the first question and I'd say, "Is it any different now, Doug?" And he would say, "No." Walter had made a comment that no matter how persuasive your argument, the deck was stacked against you and you never won an issue because you only had X number of votes. And so I read that to him and I said, "Is it going to be any different with you?" And he said, "Probably not." I said, "Well, that's why I can't support it."

And Bard went crazy. He said, "You work for me and by God, everybody on this staff's going to support this or I'm going to fire them." And I was just getting ready to answer him when Doug said, "Now wait a minute, Bard. We have board members who are opposing this re-affiliation. And sure as hell, we can't fire a staff member for opposing when we've got the example of the board opposing each other."

So Bard drove him to the airport and Doug asked him that day for me to go on his staff. Later, he told me Bard said, "Why in the hell would you want to put her on the staff? You saw what happened." But Bard didn't tell me. And by the way, the re-affiliation vote went down the tube by 80-some percent in Region 1E.

So when Doug called me, I told him that Bard had not mentioned it to me. He said, "Well, I'm going to his golf outing and I'll raise it with him again." At the golf outing he and Winnie drove up on the golf cart to grab something to drink and Winnie said, "Did Bard say anything to you yet?" I said, "Nope, he has not said one word." And Doug said, "Well, I'll talk to him today."

Finally, Doug called me again. He said, "Did Bard talk to you?" I said, "No." He said, "Jesus Christ, we're going to China in the next couple of weeks." He said, "I'd like to get this resolved before I go." And I think this was the end of September. They were going in October, as I recall.

BLUESTONE: Was this '77?

FORREST: '77, yes. I know it was either the end of August or the end of September. One or the other. I can't remember.

And so I said, "Well, I'm going to confront Bard with it." So I went down and I told Grace I wanted to see Bard. Well, Doug had called him, so he knew what it was

about. And he told her he was not available until the next Thursday at one o'clock. And I said, "Fine, I'll be here next Thursday at one o'clock."

I went back to meet him at one o'clock the following Thursday and Grace said, "He's gone for the afternoon." I said, "Where is he?" She said, "He went over to the hospital to see Maggie." So I got in the car and went over to the hospital. And when he came out, I was sitting on the bench. I said, "You've been avoiding me. And I have to talk to you." And so he says, "Well, I know you're upset, but I told Doug you wouldn't want to go, because you like servicing in the region." And I said, "Well, you don't have a right to speak for me. And I do want to go."

He couldn't understand it. He took it personally. And I said, "No, it has nothing to do with that and I appreciate everything you've done for me, including appointing me to the staff, which if you had not, I would never have had the opportunity to get this position. But I want to learn something more about our union than just what you see in the region. I want to know what happens all over our union. And I think the only way I can do that is to see it from the international level. I can't find that out in the region. Everywhere I go, it seems to be each region is almost like a different union." And he didn't speak to me for a long, long time. He was absolutely furious that I left.

BLUESTONE: I knew about that. And so having made that decision, how did it come about, then, to join the president's staff?

FORREST: Well, I called Doug and told him that I had talked to Bard and that I wanted to take a shot at it. So I came down for the interview. I told him that if I had not wanted to see this union from a larger perspective than I had in the region, I would have

never left Bard. And I asked him what my assignment would be. He said, "I don't know, just anything that comes up that needs to be done in the president's office."

Well, I had no idea what had to be done in the president's office. Now, Doug just assumed that I had some idea, I suppose, of what had to be done. And I said, "Doug, I don't know anything about the president's office. I know very little about the constitution, except that which affected my life as a secretary-treasurer or occasionally, elections from plants that I serviced."

"Oh," he said, "you'll be fine." He said, "We do a little bit of everything from this office. We handle constitution problems. We handle conventions. I'm sure you'll fit in just fine." And so I thought the interview was just going absolutely nowhere. So I said, "Okay, fine." I think I told him to let me think about it for a couple of days. And things were so miserable back in the region that, frankly, at that point, I thought I've already made my commitment here, I've got to go. So I came down.

I was so disappointed in the first month or two that I almost went back to the region. No one came to me and said, "Here's what we do up here, here's what this is about." And that's why I said earlier that staff that come on are just given absolutely no direction, no training, no help at all. So I tried to become the person in the president's office to sit down with a new person and tell them what we did, what their assignment would probably be if they took over for that person, what they did, and gave them some idea. Because I was totally lost for two, three months. I had no idea what was expected of me or what there was to do. Bill Beckham probably gave me more help than any other individual; he's the one that started helping me with the constitution.

BLUESTONE: Why don't we begin talking, then, about the specifics of the assignment you had in the president's office, leading up to running for vice president. At the point you entered the president's office to work as an administrative assistant to Doug Fraser, what kind of assignments, particularly, were you given? And did these assignments change with time?

FORREST: Up front, I was given appeals and constitution interpretations.

BLUESTONE: This would be appeals by members on matters which they were contesting within the union?

FORREST: Yes. The internal appeals from local union actions. And I remember well the first constitutional interpretation I gave — the Jordan Simms case. I had no idea about the politics involved with it. You know, in our union, we don't get too much orientation when you come to work.

Jordan Simms was fired and he did not keep up his good standing status in the local, because he had gone to work someplace else. So not being on check-off, he was required to pay his dues directly each month. And so the financial secretary — I think it's Local 961 — took note of his delinquency. I didn't know Jordan Simms, except from just having seen him get up and speak at a convention or something. I had no idea what the political fallout was. It was assigned to me, and I sent back a letter saying that he had lost his good standing status.

I remember Doug came down to my office and he was furious. He said, "I have this letter here." And of course, his name was on it. And he said, "This is Jordan Simms." I said, "Well, it makes no difference to me who it is. The constitution is clear." And he said, "That's not the point. And I'm not asking you to change your position. I'm

simply saying that this is a delicate situation. Ken Morris called me and he's furious. He didn't know about it. There are ways to handle this."

Later on, Doug wanted to make sure that I didn't think he was asking me to change a position that was right. So he explained to me that the president's office has some very delicate politics and I have to sometimes walk on eggs with these things and make sure I make the right contacts. So that was a rude awakening for my opening act in the president's office.

BLUESTONE: In that regard, when I was assistant to Walter, all of the appeals would cross my desk and then I'd see that they were handed out. And up until 1970, when I was in that position as his top administrative assistant, I think on average, we received perhaps between five and ten appeals a month. What was it like when you took over that job?

FORREST: You know, Irv, I don't know the numbers. But I can tell you that it seemed to me it steadily increased. There were four or five of us that were working on appeals. And I know every day I got a stack of mail that had anywhere from 15 to 20 appeals. And I know all the others were doing the same thing. And as I understand from speaking with Gary Bryner in the president's office, they've continued to increase.

I think it's a wonderful thing, because while most of them are not — I shouldn't say most of them — I would say at least half of them are not really legitimate appeals, some of them had questions from members who just didn't know what else to do.

And Bill Beckham was a wonderful guy. I liked Bill and he became a good friend. And he taught me so much. He had this pompous little, I called it a front, because I think Bill hid behind it. It was his security blanket. But he had this rigid

procedure that he had established for himself and he really wanted it applied to the president's office. He didn't want us answering calls, taking calls, I should say. And he did not think we should be writing letters back to people who didn't have appropriate appeals. He thought we should just say it's an improper appeal, period. Or refer them back.

But I thought we should take a more responsible position with this sort of thing. And I know, from being in the local union, and am much more convinced after having the opportunity to visit other locals around the country, that there are many of our members who have absolutely no contact, and don't have the opportunity, unfortunately, to have the contact with anyone from the international union. And many times, the bargaining committee doesn't take the time with them.

When I was in the plant, I thought my job was to listen to every complaint they had, and try to ease their mind or get them information or whatever it was. Whether it's a contract or a mortgage, you know, it was my job to help them. Many of our committees don't take that position. If it's not a contract violation, don't bother me with it. That's not my job. And so I thought we ought to be answering the letters and if it was just a personal problem they were writing about or no one would help them with the fact that they had a problem with their mortgage or a problem with something else, I'd try to find the right people to refer them to so they could get some help.

And I remember Bill used to call this a social service. He called my office a social service office. So we were talking about that in a staff meeting, and that's one of the things that Doug was a great teacher in. Not only daily, when you had a problem that came up, but Doug used the staff meetings, really, as a teaching session. We didn't

realize it at the time, but he would encourage the staff to bring up controversial matters or he'd throw something out himself and get the staff talking about it. And it was a real learning process.

But I brought this up one day. I said, "You know, I really think that we ought to be taking these calls that come in." I know that by then I understood that you don't step on the director's toes or the staffs' toes. But I said, "I think we should be talking to the person and referring them, giving them the phone number and the name of the person they should be calling. And then we could let the staff person know that this person called and we'd referred them to them." And Bill went crazy. He said, "I don't have time for all of that." And Doug said, "We'll take time. No call should come into this office that's not answered by an administrative assistant."

BLUESTONE: It's the whole question of sainthood that every member is properly serviced.

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: That raises a question off onto the side, in a way. These staff meetings that Doug called and convened while he was president, I assume that during these meetings, all of the staff who were present would get a broader view of what was happening within the union, not just their particular piece of the union to which they were assigned, and that this became a method of education for them. Is that true?

FORREST: That's true. He updated us on what was going on from his position, his office. And then he encouraged us to give information about what was going on around the union, because we traveled a lot. And then we talked about politics, we

discussed all the current events. And it was an absolute delight to go to those meetings. Every one of the administrative assistants looked forward to it.

BLUESTONE: So this was really being updated on what was going on so that everybody had a feel for what was within the union, totally?

FORREST: That's right.

BLUESTONE: And that's what was so important about it.

FORREST: And he read every piece of mail that came into the president's office or went out. I wrote a letter one time and he sent me back a suggestion that I might wish to include. He read all the copies of the letters that all the administrative assistants sent out and he read all of the mail that came in. And I thought, how in the world does he do this, when he's out of the office four days, sometimes five days a week?

And one day I was going up for a cup of coffee, and Joe Loesche was in there. And there was a huge box, Irv. This thing had to be four feet long, and a couple or three feet high. And it was loaded with mail. And Joe was taking that when he picked Doug up from the airport. And Doug was going to go through it at home that weekend. And then Joe would bring it back on Monday if Doug was going out of town; he'd have all these little notes written on it in pencil for people to do. And I'd thought, up to that point, that Frank James went through all the mail and assigned it. But not true.

BLUESTONE: Even today, by the way, Doug makes certain that he reads everything that crosses his desk.

FORREST: That's amazing.

BLUESTONE: He keeps doing that. Getting back to the assignment with regard to appeals. When I retired, I was asked to serve on a two-person committee who would

receive appeals, go out to the area where the appeal arose, hold a hearing and then come back with all of the facts and the recommendations. Larry Carlstrom and I were a team at that point, as I recall. Now, was that done at the point that you took over the assignment?

FORREST: Yes. That was done then. But the administrative assistants handle all the election appeals and charges that are filed in the local. Now, the other appeals, we would collect the information, prepare it for a hearing to be held by either a board member (or they assigned ex-board members) or staff. And sometimes one of the administrative assistants would go with one if we couldn't get a complement of hearing officers. I never had to do that. But then they would go out and conduct a hearing, and they would come back to the appeals team, which would listen to it and make a decision. But we had so many election protests and charges and that's what kept us out of town, those kinds of hearings.

BLUESTONE: So anything that had to do directly with the interpretation of the constitution was directly handled by staff such as yourself?

FORREST: Right. Or disputes between locals in a region. Doug might send us out on one of those.

I remember when I came to work for Doug, the first day I came in I said to him, "Can you describe to me what my job will be?" He said, "No, I can't. I have no idea. It will be anything that comes up that you need to be assigned to." And he said, "We cover a multitude of sins here and there's no way I can describe to you what your job will be." And then he and Winnie went off to China, so I had all that time to mull over what I didn't know was going to happen with my job.

But along with the constitution interpretations and the appeals, I got the Department of Labor assignment, and I enjoyed that very much. When anyone appealed on an election or on fraud or whatever they wanted to appeal under the constitution, it went to the Department of Labor. When they went there, it was my job to make sure that the appeal was timely, to work with the Department of Labor on getting the information and to be present to make sure that I still represented our members, too, so that the department didn't step over its bounds.

BLUESTONE: Are there any examples that come to mind just by way of describing what that would entail?

FORREST: Region 5 is a good example.

BLUESTONE: Okay. Why don't you describe that?

FORREST: Normally, it's local union protests. We had a big one in Local 148 in California — aerospace. But Region 5 was a case of where someone protested the election of the regional director. And they appealed it to the Department of Labor. And I had to go all over the region with the Department of Labor. First, I had to go get the information, and I accumulated all the information. And then when they went out and conducted hearings, I had to go out there. And then when they called for a new election, I had to be present for all the delegate elections in Region 5 and then for the special Region 5 convention we had to call.

BLUESTONE: So that took you out of town considerably?

FORREST: Most of the time, for over a year.

BLUESTONE: So working closely with the Department of Labor, in terms of getting the facts straight, as I understand it, is what, essentially, was the assignment that you had in those kinds of situations?

FORREST: Yes. And many times, Irv, you know, there was a question, should we have the Legal Department handling these? And Doug said, "Absolutely not." This was not something he thought they should be involved in, because he felt that someone who knew our constitution could better serve the membership.

And I remember one particular case that came up. Just working with these people, you get a working relationship with the local people. And sometimes you can work out problems. There was a question of the timeliness of an appeal to the Department of Labor. And their position up to that point had been a member could appeal any time after the election was held.

And I told them that they were trying to subvert our constitution, because we have a procedure that members have to go through under the constitution to protest an election. And they were taking the opportunity away from the local union to make this protest and correct it. As a taxpayer, I'm paying them to make sure that these people have their rights upheld. And they don't want to give the local union an opportunity to uphold those rights. They want to go in and do it themselves. And I think that's wrong.

So we worked out a procedure giving, I believe, 90 days from the date the member — no, it was 30 days — from the date that action was taken by the local union.

BLUESTONE: So he had to make his appeal within that 30-day period?

FORREST: After the local union had acted. So that meant if it was an election protest, he would follow the constitution in time limits to appeal to the local. And then

the local union would take the time they had to respond. And then from the time that they responded to him, he had 30 days to appeal to the Department of Labor.

In the meantime, that gave us an opportunity to make sure we kept on top of it. And normally, any protest of an election, local union election, especially of any sizable local union, we were aware of it. And if an error was made, we would encourage the locals to correct it and expedite the return.

BLUESTONE: Now, this meant, of course, that you were involved on a nationwide basis? What about Canada?

FORREST: Yes, I was involved in Canada, too. In fact, there was an appeal that practically made history in Canada.

Bob White was director, and there was a GM plant in Toronto, I believe. They had no women in this plant and they had won a class action suit to get women into the GM plant. They brought 125 women into the paint department. And these fellows were just absolutely furious. They were a bunch of macho types who felt that women coming into the plant was a total threat to their existence on this earth, I guess.

But the rep didn't say that. When I got the appeal and reviewed it, it simply said that a committeeman had been removed by the regional director and upheld by the local union. So I called the rep and said, "The procedure in the constitution for removing a committeeman has to be a recall by the members. There's no such procedure for a director to remove him. And I don't care who approves it."

He said, "Look, I just want to give the guy his opportunity for an appeal and I think we should have a hearing." He never mentioned anything about the merits. So I said, "Well, will I need to stay overnight? You know, it's just such a cut-and-dried thing,

I think probably what I'll do is just fly in early in the morning and fly back." And he said, "All right."

And it was so funny, because when I went through customs, I had this old guy who was so technical about everything and nosey, obviously, and he said, "Where's your luggage?" And I said, "You can see by my ticket I'm flying back tonight, so I didn't need any luggage." And he looked at me like I was a prostitute or something. That's the way he made me feel.

The rep picks me up, and he starts telling me about this case. He said this woman was one of the 125 who were placed in this paint department. And he said these fellows were so adamant that they were going to run these women out of there, cause them to quit, and they just harassed the hell out of them. He said they put naked pictures on their machines. They would get on the sound system and talk about whom they slept with the night before. And, of course, the company was letting them get away with it, because they were just as ticked off that the women were in there.

This one woman, who made this appeal, it was so bad that she had been on sick leave two or three times. Almost had a nervous breakdown. The working conditions were so bad that when these women had to go to the bathroom, they'd go in pairs. Or when they had to leave their machine, they would go in pairs, because of the intimidation.

Once, two women were walking to the clock and they were about a minute or two early. The committeeman was sitting on one of those flatbeds there by the clock. And he said to this woman, "You look awfully tired." She said, "I am. This is ten hours, and I'm exhausted." And he said, "Well, why don't you sit down here on the flatbed and wait for the clock." And she says, "Oh, thank you." As she started to sit down, he reached his

hand up under her dress and grabbed her. It flipped her out. She just absolutely flipped out.

Bob White was in the plant to meet with the bargaining committee for negotiations, to get their demands together. And they told him about this. He said, "Find that committeeman." He was afternoon shift or something. So they called the committeeman and told him that Bob White wanted to see him in the office. He wouldn't come in. Bob says, "Well, he's out of office. Right now, he's out of office." And so they had had the appeals.

The day I arrived, the women had convened a meeting in Canada, a media affair that brought women from six countries. And the star case of the day was this GM case. I said to the rep, "Don't you think you should have tipped me off about this? This is a very, very serious matter." "Well," he said, "I was afraid if I did, you wouldn't come." I said, "Well, I would have come, but I would at least have packed a toothbrush."

So we go in and I called her and talked to her on the phone, and asked her if she would meet with me. And she wouldn't do it. She was just so scared of union representation at this point. She thought I wanted to meet with her to condone this committeeman. And she refused to meet with me.

We conducted the hearing that day, and that man was the most disgusting person I ever saw in my life. He had a sweater on that had a V-neck that came below his, almost to his bellybutton. Very tight pants. I suppose he thought that he was just so irresistible that I would just not be able to get through that day.

We had a board meeting coming up the next day. And I called Bob White, and I said, "You know, I have to really give this a lot of thought. We've got to find a way to

uphold your action, because it was the right thing to do." And obviously, the local union would have done it, because they've upheld it to this point. Odessa had this film, "Would You Let This Happen to Your Sister?" I asked her to show that to the board at the board meeting. And then I told Bob White that as soon as she does that, he should raise this case and discuss it. Because Gary Bryner was violently opposed to me writing up anything other than that we've got to follow the constitution and put him back in office. So we went through this, and the board unanimously said Bob White ought to be upheld on this action. It's terrible.

So I came back and wrote the decision. And I knew I was going to have a run-in with Gary. So I used the administrative letter that was written in '81 by Judy Scott on the issue of sexual harassment. And in this administrative letter, it says it's the obligation of the local union, and if they don't act, it's the obligation of the board. And it doesn't say "may." It just says, they are responsible for doing this. So I wrote it up based on the administrative letter. And I said, the law supersedes the constitution and this person's rights were violated under the law. And I wrote it up in such a way that I thought the Public Review Board will at least have a dilemma if they attempted to overturn this.

Owen was so concerned. Gary had pressured him so hard on this that it laid on his desk for two weeks. He came back to me and he said, "I think you're going to have to rewrite that. The Legal Department and Gary and everybody tells me that it violates the constitution." I said, "Owen, I just can't do that. It's against my principles to do it. And I just can't do it. Now, if you want to take this back and have Gary rewrite it and send it out, you do that. You've got a right to do that. You're the president. But I have to tell

you, I cannot rewrite that decision." So he just looked at me very disgusted and didn't say any more. And it laid on his desk for two more weeks. And he finally sent it out.

The Canadian appellant called me up and said, "I hope you have a lot of money because I'm going to sue you for every dime you've got." He said, "In Canada, the laws are a little different than they are in the United States." And he said, "I just wanted to tip you off." I said, "That's fine. Just make sure that the day we go to court, your wife is there and in the front seats." I never heard another word from him. But that was the most complicated thing I ever went through in my life.

BLUESTONE: Now, this would have happened in the early 80's?

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: You mentioned the Public Review Board. You had to work closely with the Public Review Board, I imagine, on appeals that went to them?

FORREST: Yes. I didn't handle the appeals. Beckham did. And I worked with him. But on cases, even after he left, that Jay Whitman and Gary handled — the Public Review Board cases — every one that I had that went to the Public Review Board, I had to go there and be a witness.

And quite frankly, I had wanted that assignment when Bill retired. But Frank had already asked Doug for it for Gary. And I had enough work anyway. But I was fascinated by the Public Review Board. I just thought it was the most wonderful thing, to even have the Public Review Board. No other union had it. And it was the fairest thing. And I loved to sit and listen to them talk about the cases, because each one of them gave a contribution totally different. Some would zero in on the constitution. Others would be talking about the law. Others would be talking about the rules of society. And of course,

in the constitution, there was the whole mixture, they could use just about anything they wanted, because they had the Ethical Practices Code. So those sessions were some of the most interesting things to sit and listen to.

BLUESTONE: Who was the chair of that panel? Was it Monsignor Higgins?

FORREST: Monsignor Higgins.

BLUESTONE: Now, time went on. And the opportunity came for moving into the vice presidency, the vice presidential spot.

FORREST: But before that, Doug kept adding things. I had Chrysler, the Legal Department, Unemployment Office, OPEIU and Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

BLUESTONE: So that your assignment was broadened over a period of time?

FORREST: Right.

BLUESTONE: When you say you had Chrysler, in what respect?

FORREST: I was the person assigned to Chrysler. Not only the Chrysler appeals, but Chrysler negotiations, any problems that came up with Chrysler, I was Doug's representative.

BLUESTONE: That would be working with the Chrysler Department?

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: And the VP in charge of the Chrysler Department?

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: So in effect, you were the liaison between the president's office and the department?

FORREST: Yes, right.

BLUESTONE: As well as these other departments which you mentioned?

FORREST: Right.

BLUESTONE: So that broadened your assignment and the views and the vision that you had to undertake as administrative assistant to the president?

FORREST: Right.

BLUESTONE: All right. Now, the time came when there was an opening for the vice presidency. And perhaps you can describe in some detail what happened then and how it came about, your involvement in running for that office?

FORREST: Well, Odessa Komer was going to retire. And I had said earlier that when she retired, I was going to run. In fact, she had indicated she was going to leave earlier, but she changed her mind. And so when the time came, I think it was about a year before, I said I'm going to be a candidate. And I told that to Owen. And he said, "It's too early to talk about candidates."

So then time goes on, and I thought, I'm not waiting for these guys, because they always wait, you always wait, and then everything gets put in place, and you're left hanging out. So I started campaigning with the board members. And one of them got a little uptight, because he was supporting someone else. And Dick Shoemaker called me in and said, "A couple of the board members called Owen and said you're making phone calls." I said, "I'm not only making phone calls, when I see them someplace, I talk to them about my candidacy." And I said, "I've sent each one of them a letter telling them that I am a candidate. And I sent Owen Bieber one to his house. So it's no news to him. I would like to meet with Owen."

So he came back and said Owen didn't want to meet with me. Owen never did meet with me. He met with Joan Patterson. Dick says, "Owen doesn't think it would be

proper for him to meet with you, because you work for him." And I thought to myself, "I hope that doesn't mean that he doesn't feel it's proper to support me for office." He never did say anything to me. When the board members would ask me whether the president was supporting me, I said, "Well, he hasn't told me he is not. So I have to assume either he is or he hasn't made up his mind."

So the day before the board meeting is the first time Owen talked to me about it. And he didn't really talk to me about it then, other than to call me in and say, "Can you tell me who you think your votes are? I'm going to poll the board after the board meeting was over." And I said to him, "I have commitments from all the board members, with the exception of you, of course, except for Ernie Lofton, who said he's going to support Joan Patterson. Ruben Burks and Stan Marshall said they were not going to come out now and commit, but when and if it came down to a vote, I would have their vote."

Owen said, "Are you sure?" I said, "I'm simply telling you, Owen, what I was told." And he said, "Well, that would mean, if it came to a vote, you'd have all but one vote." I said, "That's right." So he said, "Okay. I just wanted to know where you thought you stood." I said, "Well, where do you stand?" He smiled at me and said, "That wasn't what I called you in here for." And so I left.

And of course, I was at the board meeting. And when it was over, he said to the board, "Remember, I want to meet with the board tonight, individually." And they all said, "Yeah, we know, we'll be around." The next morning when I came into the board meeting, Owen came up to me and said, "You were right on the mark. So that tells you I must not have voted against you. As a matter of fact, I didn't even have to vote."

So when people asked me whether Owen supported me, I'd say, "Well, obviously, he didn't go out and work against me. So he must have supported me."

BLUESTONE: Now, what year was this?

FORREST: This was in 1992. And when I got elected, Owen left me with the same assignments. He assigned me the Aerospace Department, Independents, Parts and Suppliers, Women's Department, Conservation, Recreation. I kept Jim Ellis as my administrative assistant. And then later on, I appointed Clarence as assistant director. We didn't have any assistant director when I came up. And I appointed Lou Ellen (Lea) Casstevens as the administrative assistant and gave her the assignment of the Women's Department and the Conservation, Recreation, Environment and anything else that came along. I was sort of like Doug was when I came on.

And then of course, when Jim Ellis retired, I appointed Earl Begley as administrative assistant. And when Clarence retired, I promoted Ken Koeppenin his place. I moved Dick Lein up to assistant director, because when Steve was elected, he gave the Aerospace Department to Roy Weyes, the secretary-treasurer.

He gave me Competitive Shop organizing, a department which only has four staff people in it. And I think it could be effective if we had more staff organizers. But the whole idea was that they were to organize and then negotiate the first agreement. We had one such agreement that happened, one such organizing drive that happened, Alcoa in Norwood, Ohio. And one of the organizers, Joel Voy, who was a former president of Alcoa Local 1050, went in and negotiated a contract, along with the regional rep.

And quite frankly, I think it worked out well, because the leaders of that drive in the plant were familiar with Joel as the organizer, and they had a lot of trust in him. And

so the first agreement, when he was working, the staff member was there and worked with him. But they knew him and trusted him, and so it made it a lot easier, I think, to get through that.

BLUESTONE: What it boiled down to, then, was that as vice president, you had a very broad gauged assignment involving many, many departments, both collective bargaining as well as other kinds of departments, such as the Women's Department, for instance. I don't recall now, but was there any other officer of the union who was given as many departments to administer as was put into your assignment?

FORREST: Not until this last term. I think Jack Laskowsky now probably has more. Dick Shoemaker has a lot, too. But I think Jack probably has more than any officer now. He has the transmission plants, the truck plants and Chrysler. That's quite an assignment.

BLUESTONE: Now, you were given the Women's Department. As administrative assistant to both Doug and Owen, you were the liaison person between the president's office and the Women's Department?

FORREST: Correct.

BLUESTONE: So that when you became vice president, you took over the Women's Department. I wonder if you could describe the nature of the work that was being done, the effort of the feminist movement, et cetera, within the union, and the leadership that you gave to it?

FORREST: Well, I think it's hard to describe. In our union, there was a segment of women who had assumed a leadership role and had worked hard to push for women's rights, and had worked with outside organizations. I'm convinced today, Irv, if it had not

been for the women's movement, I wouldn't be here, and most of the women leaders in this union wouldn't be here. But somehow, we had sort of separated ourselves from the other organizations.

Odessa served as an officer on the Coalition of Labor Union Women, but our membership was very low. So I attempted to increase our participation. We have increased our membership tremendously. We work with the AFL-CIO Women's Department that was recently established. And we've worked with other organizations.

Another thing that has happened is that I've tried to expand the activities of the women. For example, the Women's Committees in the local unions, they were just sort of let go, and their activities many times were just to make coffee for the meetings. You know, you'd have some chauvinistic president who would have them doing the cooking and making the coffee, and that sort of thing. So I told the staff that we have to start letting these women know that the purpose of the Women's Committee is not to mend socks and make coffee. They have to engage in constructive union activities.

So we started trying to develop literature and ideas and dialogue in conferences and meetings that would encourage them to do things that not only would be beneficial to the members, but would encourage women's participation in the learning process, the educational process. And so as many as we could, we got them involved in educational classes, working in conjunction with the local union education chairman, setting up classes for women and anyone else who wanted to attend.

So I think they have gained more confidence and caused women to look at the union and say, hey, this is something more than a tea party here. We can really do some good things. They have used that as a stepping stone to get involved, to learn how to

speaking to groups, and learn how to research the contract, get to understand the politics and then run for office.

BLUESTONE: And there's been a very sizable increase in the number of women who are holding office at the local level as well as joining the international union staff over these many years.

FORREST: That's right. I talked to a woman just the other night in the hospitality room at Region 1D. I'm sorry I can't remember her name, but she's the president of her local union.

She was talking about how she got started. She said she was at Black Lake, at a women's conference and I was speaking to them about their involvement and how they had to take that initial step to get out there and get involved and how they needed to prepare themselves, that they needed to understand the contract, to know something about the background of our union and to participate in the meetings. After that they needed to step in there and work with the local, but the first available opening there was, they ought to go for it. And she said, "I thought to myself, I think I'd like to give that a try. So I started getting involved and going to meetings and the first available opening, I said I want that."

And she said that Terry Lint helped her an awful lot because she told him about Black Lake and what she'd learned there and he said, "Go for it. Get in there and get involved and get active." And she said, "Now I thought you might be interested to know I'm president of my local."

Now, that's when I was an administrative assistant to Owen that I had spoken at Black Lake. But that's the kind of thing I tried to get them to do and to be supportive of

each other. We spent an awful lot of time at every women's conference talking to women about how to be supportive of women and to encourage other women in the plant to be supportive. And I think that helped a great deal, too.

BLUESTONE: While serving on the executive board of the union as vice president, and in charge of the Women's Department, I would assume that issues concerning the women's movement came up at board meetings as well. And what kind of support were you able to get there?

FORREST: Well, it's funny. I tell you, Irv, even today, men sometimes seem almost embarrassed to talk about women's issues. Or not embarrassed. Hesitant. I don't know whether they feel unequipped to do it, whether they feel it's not something that will be popular to their leadership. Because I must tell you that I always say to the board members, one of the biggest problems we have in this union is supporting, blindly, a bargaining committee or local union officers without looking at what they're doing, and being afraid to say, politically afraid to say, "Hey, sit down here, Charlie, you're on the wrong track."

And so it was difficult at first. And sexual harassment — I kept telling this board that we've got a real problem out there. You guys don't understand that, but we've got a real problem out there. Because that's one of the things that the women in this department do. They go out and work with the regional directors on women's conferences and teach class or come out and instruct a group on some issue, such as sexual harassment or violence against women. And now we've been conducting joint workshops with management, which is great. But when that happens, it's usually because

the company tells the local president that we need to do something about this because we've got a problem. They contact us.

Audrey Terrell on this staff is marvelous. This woman does such a terrific job with sexual harassment. I call her the firm diplomat. She can be very firm about the responsibilities of people to prevent it or to correct it, but at the same time, she does it in such a smooth way that I said it's almost like cutting somebody's head off, and they don't know it until they turn their head. That's how good she is.

And when the Mitsubishi thing came up, we had a board meeting in Washington at the CAP conference, an update. I was never even told about this. The Civil Rights Department was working with this case. I didn't even know about it. The way I knew about it is I got a call from one of the women's organizations asking what the hell was going on in the UAW and Mitsubishi.

And some of the men still think if you ignore it, it's going to go away. And so I kept hearing all these horrible, horrible things about it. And by the time we had our board meeting, the EEOC had gotten involved and Lynn Martin had been hired by the company, which is a total damn disaster. This woman is about as insensitive as I don't know what. You remember Lynn Martin? She was the Labor secretary.

And they had just had this incident where the company had rented this bus and taken all of the workers that wanted to go to picket the EEOC. They even threw in a box lunch. And the local union leadership was involved — the committeemen and all of them were in the bus. And so when this was brought up at the board meeting, these guys were sort of making a joke out of it. And we had this little half-page press release that we were going to give. And I came absolutely unglued. I said, "You know, it's a disgrace. Don't

tell me that we didn't have some knowledge of this. You guys think this is a joke. It's not a joke."

And then I told them a story about this woman who worked in that plant and had a 12-year-old daughter. This guy in the shipping and receiving area — and this was back some time ago — he kept bugging her to go out with him. And she told him no, that she had to go home in the afternoon, because she had a 12-year-old daughter at home. One day she was working overtime and he went to her house and raped her daughter and strangled her — he's in prison today. And I described some of the things I had heard that were going on there. And I said, "This act of renting this bus to picket the EEOC for an atrocious mess that's going on in this plant is unforgivable."

Steve [Yokich] called in Paul Korman, director of Region 4. And I must admit, Paul said, "Listen, I agree that a lot of it I didn't know about. And you wonder how I couldn't. But they believed in keeping things in-house, because the company had convinced them that if they didn't keep their problems in-house and correct them in-house, it could affect their jobs and nobody would have a job."

And so then I started on the press release. I said, "This says an awful lot to me about this board, about these officers. If that's the kind of release we give, I don't want my name on it." Steve tore the press release up and said, "We're going to take a recess." When they came back, he threw one out on the table that was two pages long. And it was a wonderful press release. It said the things that should have been said.

But what concerns me is that I don't know whether we're ready for the majority in the work force to be women. I don't know that we're prepared to handle that. I think

they're sensitive people on our board, but I think they're concerned about their ability to handle those kinds of problems. They're not quite sure what they should be doing.

When I had a women's advisory committee meeting in Las Vegas and a women's staff meeting, I asked them to send women from all segments of our union. And I asked this woman to come in. Her name is Teressa Hoffman. She's a professor in one of the universities in Ohio. And she worked in our Jeep plant in Toledo and went to school at night and now she has her doctorate degree in psychology. She teaches psychology at the university and she does a wonderful job about gender relations.

And so I said to her, "I'm going to ask Steve Yokich to have you come and do this for the board. I think they need it." And she said she would love to do it, because she understands the work place enough that she can tailor her presentation to fit the particular audience. And I tell you, the staff and the women from the regions were absolutely fascinated with that program. They thought it was wonderful. So I'm still going to ask Steve to have her come to the next board meeting and make a presentation.

BLUESTONE: With all of that, if you look back 20, 25 years, as compared with today, obviously, progress has been made. Do you find that generally there is still a sense of reluctance on the part of the men who are in office at the local level or the international union level? Or do you find now that there is keener interest in seeing to it that the administrative letter concerning sexual harassment, which you mentioned, is enforced?

FORREST: I think there's an urgency to have it enforced, simply because they realize that's the law and that they can get in trouble by not doing it.

But what troubles me, Irv, is whether there's that commitment to change and to encouraging a change of attitudes. That's what concerns me. And I'm not sure that there is. I think officers, whether it's local union or international union, can have that fear of women taking over and not even recognize it. Or maybe it's the idea of keeping the status quo, because it's something that they understand and can deal with. Maybe it's the change, the big change that they fear. But it's there. And that's why affirmative action is just as important today as it was 20 years ago. And it's absolutely imperative that we have it.

BLUESTONE: So in effect, the pressures have to continue?

FORREST: Absolutely. Have you noticed the young men? I've said to older people and younger women, have you noticed the attitudes of the young men? And that's from their parents.

BLUESTONE: Carolyn, the last session that we had, we ended by discussing the whole feminist movement and the questions and problems that had grown over the years and what the union has been doing about it to get leadership at the local level, in terms of women taking office, as well as the national level and , of course, we talked about the vice presidency. Based on your experience within the union and the effort that you've undertaken in this area, could you give us some general feel about it, about what's been happening out there and whether and how progress is being made?

FORREST: Women are being appointed to positions at the national level. I think that was an encouragement to women at the local level. And so there've been a lot more women elected at the local union level — including presidents, secretary-treasurers — the top offices. I'm not sure, but I believe maybe even the GM council, at least one of

the sub-councils, has a woman. And I always said that would be a real breakthrough because the only council that had a woman was Chrysler. I think women need that encouragement. When they see other women out there, I think they will follow their lead. And that's what it takes.

BLUESTONE: In terms of the national departments now, we know currently a woman is head of the Education Department, Research Department Library. But in terms of the collective bargaining department staffs, what's been going on out there?

FORREST: Well, I'm not absolutely sure, other than the fact that when women get elected to local offices, they are exposed to the collective bargaining arena. I do know that in Region 9 we have an assistant director who will, if the caucus upholds it, be director when Tom Fricano retires. So that will be a first, to have two women on the board, Geri Ochocinska from Region 9 and Elizabeth Bunn from Steve Yokich's office.

We have two women now who are administrative assistants to the president. If those two get elected at the convention, which I'm sure they will, that will be the first time there will be two women on the board. It will be the first time there will be a woman regional director. So I think it's improved.

BLUESTONE: Well, that's progress. No doubt about it. In terms of the white-collar groups — Local 6000 State of Michigan Employees, for instance, has a female president.

FORREST: Yes. Most of the officers are women, too.

BLUESTONE: Is this in part because a majority of the membership of that local is female?

FORREST: I would think so. And you have some very strong, strong women there. You know, it still takes, I think, a woman with a tough skin to step into that arena and not take anything personal. To know that if the men give her a rough way to go, it's purely a turf fight, rather than personalities. It's still difficult to do that because women are just, by nature, not fighters, until they get riled up enough to, and then they have perseverance once they get started.

I think women are great negotiators. They have that intuition that I think helps them tremendously. They study people all the time.

BLUESTONE: In terms of your own assignment, let's say in the parts division of the union, as you go to the bargaining table, have you found women on the negotiating committees from various plants where the negotiations are taking place or is it still a real serious problem?

FORREST: I've found more women holding office. The one that has been sort of an enigma to me is Dana Corporation. They have, I think, only the Weatherhead Division that has women on the committee. Most of the others are male-dominated. But most of the other corporations have women on the committee. There are still some holdouts, like Rockwell, which is now Meritor; they don't have any. Some of the larger ones still do not. But most of the others do.

BLUESTONE: Well, as compared with 25 years ago, that indicates considerable progress.

FORREST: Oh, it's great progress from 25 years ago. I think I mentioned the last time we talked, Olga thought that women had to form a caucus. And I think they do. If you look at the African Americans, I think the reason that they got the attention that

they got is because of the united front they put forth. Look at Hispanics, the numbers that they have, but they don't put forth that united front. You know, in this union, we say that the squeaky wheel gets the grease. You've got to be visible, and you have to be forceful at times, within the system.

BLUESTONE: Well, that leads, then, to a discussion of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, CLUW. I've been a member, by the way, since it was first organized, paying my dues annually. I can't remember when it got started. Do you remember?

FORREST: 1972.

BLUESTONE: So it's close to 30 years?

FORREST: Yeah. I think we had our 25th anniversary last year.

BLUESTONE: Let's get some background on that, how it operates, and what effect it has had on unions generally as well as the UAW.

FORREST: Well, you pay dues from within your own union, you're allocated delegates on a per capita basis similar to our constitutional convention. I guess the one drawback is some local unions won't support the women to go to the meetings.

But we still have a great turnout. In the UAW we have a great turnout. And that's one of the good things about having women officers at the local unions. I think they're getting to understand the political system better. I think they're getting more serious about issues, about representation from women. They recognize they're in the majority now. Many of them didn't know that before. And they're making a tremendous inroad into public politics. They are really active in the political arena. I think it's probably been a launcher for many of them to get involved in their local unions.

BLUESTONE: Well, I would imagine, at least from what I know, that CLUW also acts as a stimulus for women to get involved in their unions where they work.

FORREST: Yes, it does. And it gives that basic support that they need. It gives that encouragement and they get an opportunity to talk to women from other unions who hold office. And so I think it really is a starter for them. Many of them have never done anything else or been involved in anything else in their union. And to come there and see all these women, and to find out that a lot of them are officeholders, and to find out what they do, it's real encouragement for them.

BLUESTONE: And obviously, it represents change within the labor movement as a whole, as a result of their efforts.

FORREST: Right.

BLUESTONE: Let me ask you this: In your assignment as vice president, you've been in charge of the Independents, Parts and Suppliers Department, which at least in the past, and I'm sure this is even more so today, is a very, very difficult assignment, especially with what's going on in the economy. So my question is, in terms of your experience as chief negotiator with these parts and supplier companies, can you give us some examples, some incidents of the experiences you've had and how they've come out?

FORREST: Well, you mean as far as . . .

BLUESTONE: . . . negotiations are concerned.

FORREST: Well, it's very difficult in parts and I sometimes get frustrated because at the board level, I keep trying to convince the officers on the board that we

have to have the support of the other departments — Chrysler, Ford and GM — because we live or die by their rules.

And it's been more difficult, I think, with some of the larger corporate groups like Rockwell and Dana and some of those, especially Rockwell. I think Rockwell and Budd probably have the best wages and the best benefits of any of the suppliers. They, in their heyday, used to sort of pattern after the Big Three. And then comes Lopez of GM and things change. So now everybody's fighting for survival.

It's been difficult for me, because I feel sometimes like I'm fighting both sides. It's hard to convince a committee that there is a line. You have to be competitive. You can have the greatest contract in the world, but if you don't have a job, it's meaningless. And so it's been that kind of frustration.

And then with some of the others, most of the others I would say, it's a matter of trying to get the companies to give them a decent wage, to give them health care. You know, most of our retirees from parts and suppliers companies do not have health care.

We're in negotiations with Cooper Champion Spark Plug. They want to maintain a two-tier system. When I came into this department, there was one contract that had negotiated a two-tier wage system. And I have been fighting that for six years. And I said to them, this is the year that we get rid of the two-tier wage system.

They wanted to go into negotiations early, so we opened up and the first thing they threw at me was the Deere agreement. Deere now has a two-tier. Their insurance, their pensions, everything supposedly has changed. I have not seen the Deere contract. But supposedly, everything has changed for future new hires. And so we broke off

negotiations and we're going back. I think the contract expires in March. But that's the big fight with them. They want to reduce health care. They want to reduce wages.

I went to a meeting the other day. We had formed what we call the VEBA accounts for some of these contracts, the voluntary employee benefit account, where the company puts money in it and uses that for the retiree health care benefits. And there's a cap and we try and set those caps high enough that the account will pay the premium. Social Security usually determines that about seven years down the road, if nothing was added, they might get to the point where the retiree would have to pay.

Well, in Barnes we had a VEBA account for retirees, and the health care increased so much that we're at a crisis now where the retirees are going to have to pay if we can't do something about it. So we're going to see if we can find HMO's that will give them health care with the same benefits that they currently have for lower premiums, so that they don't have to pay.

It's that kind of thing, day after day after day. And, you know, the Big Three don't have to worry about that. And it's hard to make people understand the difference, unless they've been involved.

BLUESTONE: This is why the IPS negotiations are so much more difficult, obviously.

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: And I imagine it's not only in health care, but in other issues as well.

FORREST: Oh, yes.

BLUESTONE: Nevertheless, as far as I know, you've been coming through these negotiations and getting settlements and getting them ratified, difficult as they are. And I notice it hasn't grayed your hair very much.

FORREST: You can't tell that, Irv. I don't let you see that.

BLUESTONE: On another note, on the board leading into your office suite, you have photographs that I love to look at with the president, with Hillary Clinton, with other people of note around the country. Obviously, outside the union you are involved in activities, meeting with people and having an influence. There's that, plus the fact that you serve on the AFL-CIO Executive Council. If you'd give some background on this. For instance, I noticed that there are three or four photographs out there taken at different times when you're shaking hands with the president of the United States. What kind of events bring this about?

FORREST: One of them, the earlier one, was when I had the assignment of the Aerospace Department. We had called on the president and Ron Brown for some help, because McDonnell Douglas and Boeing were trying to get orders from the Saudis. And Ron Brown was making a trip over there and we were trying to make sure that they push for the U. S. to get the orders rather than Airbus.

Owen intervened and made some phone calls and did a wonderful job. And we got some orders. To announce those orders, the president called a press conference. That day Owen was ill and could not go. So he called me. And I wasn't glad he was ill, but I was delighted for the opportunity of going.

And we, each of us — George Korpus from the Machinists, and myself, the CEO's from Boeing and McDonnell Douglas — made a statement. I think the president

and Ron Brown and other cabinet members were there and the prince was there from Saudi Arabia. I thanked all of them for the orders and made a commitment for the McDonnell Douglas workers regarding quality and efficiency and expressed their appreciation.

And then when the press conference was over, Alan Reuther and some representatives from the local and I were walking out of the place, and the press secretary came out and said the president wanted to see me. I went back in and he thanked me for that statement and we talked briefly about labor-management policies; that's what he was promoting. And then the photograph was taken. Two or three members of the cabinet, Ron Brown and some others, were there.

One of the photos was taken at our CAP conference. And there was another one with the Commission of White House Fellows, to which the president appointed me.

BLUESTONE: And what about with Hillary Clinton?

FORREST: Hillary Clinton — one of those was when they were trying to have a fund-raiser for her to come to Cobo Hall and I had worked hard in selling about \$34,000 worth of tickets. And then she took pictures with five or six of us in a little back room of Cobo Hall, a little waiting room.

One of them was the CAP conference. Two others were when she came into Michigan. I can't remember why. One was something to do with children's education that I went to.

BLUESTONE: Now, with regard to the AFL-CIO Executive Council, you attend those meetings. You're not the only woman on the Executive Council anymore, are you?

FORREST: Oh, no. I'm so proud of John Sweeney. There are a number of women. I have not counted how many there are. But I would say there are at least seven or eight, maybe ten. It's wonderful.

BLUESTONE: Well, I can tell you that, let's see, back in the 70's I guess it was, when we returned to the AFL-CIO, I can't remember the exact year . . .

FORREST: Yes, the 70's — it's while Doug was still president.

BLUESTONE: Yes. And the first woman was put on the Executive Council at the time. And, by God, that was a revolution.

FORREST: Yes, I remember that.

BLUESTONE: So it's been changing.

FORREST: They have a Women's Department in the AFL-CIO now that they never did before, too.

BLUESTONE: Yes.

FORREST: I just wanted to mention that. Karen Nussbaum is the director.

BLUESTONE: Okay. Now, you hold women's conferences at Black Lake, for instance. Could you describe the nature of those conferences, the number of delegates, the kinds of subject matter that's discussed, and so on.

FORREST: We have usually around 300 women. And they represent almost every local union around the country. We alternate. We always try to have at least one collective bargaining subject that's taught. I think one year I devoted the entire conference just to collective bargaining matters.

We have effective speaking. We have parliamentary procedures, how to form women's committees, because we get a lot of women that have never attended anything.

And those are classes for the afternoons. In the mornings, we have speakers. In fact, we had the secretary of labor.

BLUESTONE: Bob Reich?

FORREST: No.

BLUESTONE: The current secretary?

FORREST: The current secretary of labor.

BLUESTONE: Oh, Alexis Herman.

FORREST: Yes, Alexis Herman. We had her the year that she was the liaison to the president, the year before she got appointed secretary of labor. And we've had some very prestigious women there. It's impressive to the women who attend, because they think, well, I could do that if I work at it. And women are so eager to learn. They're like sponges. They just absorb everything that you have there.

And then we have voluntary classes in the evenings. And we have always had those classes filled. You know, I think it's almost abusive to sit in a classroom all afternoon, and then go back in the evening after you've had dinner. But they're all filled.

BLUESTONE: And the interest, obviously, is intense.

FORREST: Oh, absolutely.

BLUESTONE: Well, that raises the question on the female end of this whole operation, of sexual harassment. The international union took a strong position against sexual harassment many, many years ago. And as director of the Women's Department, I'm assuming that you have to deal with this problem almost on a daily basis.

FORREST: Yes. Now, when it comes into the president's office from one of our locals, he usually gives it to the Civil Rights Department. I think it should all be from the Women's Department.

We are the ones who deal with it, after all. We get letters all the time about sexual harassment. But the thing that pleases me is that we have a woman on the staff, Audrey Terrell. She's an excellent instructor. Very bright. Very caring. And she does such a superb job with the classes on sexual harassment that now the companies and the locals are having joint requests for Audrey to come teach. And she does. And it's been received very well.

I think that's the most effective way you can do it, to have joint classes. I had a little difficulty getting that started, but I guess it made it more acceptable to the guys in the local union if the management was there, because they were always saying they're the guys who did it, not us. But I think it's easier if both sides get into the room. And then once they get into the room, Audrey tells me within five minutes they're relaxed and really getting into the issues without putting up a resistance to just the subject itself that they don't want to talk about.

You know, there are a lot of men that don't even want to talk about it. It's embarrassing to them to even talk about it. Or maybe they feel as though someone thinks they're guilty of it if they're involved in a discussion of it. But it's working out very well. And we've had more requests in the last year than we've had since I've been vice president.

BLUESTONE: That's very interesting. It means progress is being made and people are becoming increasingly aware of the need.

FORREST: That's right. And they have recognized that there is a liability there. Of course, I've always said, Irv, it's the same with collective bargaining. The same with the grievance procedure, strikes, anything else. If the companies or our union representatives think there's a liability there and it might take money out of their pockets, they're a little more alert and take it a little more seriously than they would otherwise.

BLUESTONE: Understandably. Just by way of an anecdote, every once in a while, I think of this that occurred when I was administrative assistant to Walter. I received a telephone call from one of our locals in Wisconsin, the president of the local. He was saying that one of their male members had had a sex change operation and the membership now took the position that he, now she, comes in as a new employee and loses all seniority.

And of course I told him, "Uh-uh. Seniority is retained and that's how it is." A couple of weeks later he called me and said, "I have another problem. That one worked out fine and I appreciate it." I said, "What's your problem now?" He said, "The men won't admit her into the men's room and the women won't permit her into the ladies' room. What do I do when she has to go to the bathroom?" I said, "Well, let me think about that."

I thought about it and I called the owner of the plant. It was a small outfit. I told him what the problem was, and I asked if he had an executive bathroom that required a key. He said he did. "How about making an extra key for this particular employee?" And that's how we got it settled.

FORREST: Oh, my God. You know, sexual harassment has been a problem in our plants. But another type of harassment is that subtle, stressful kind that people don't

pay that much attention to. That's usually at higher levels, where it's just a constant challenge of everything you do, every plan you make, and making sure that there's difficulty carrying it out. That kind of thing is probably going to be the last to surface.

BLUESTONE: Now, what about skilled trades, entry of women into the skilled trades?

FORREST: There have been a greater number of women coming into the skilled trades, but there's still a problem and I think it will take a long time to stop that. I think it will take recognizing it's happening first. Some of the officers don't believe that it's still going on, but it is. I don't think women have the same opportunities to get into the skilled trades as they did when you were there.

I've heard several women talk about it from the Big Three and I'm just simply repeating what they said, because I have no way of knowing. I didn't check it out, because I don't get involved with the Big Three. But I did raise it with the officers and say I think we ought to be a little more conscious of what's going on. There are still horrible things happening in the plants which cause women to be more hesitant to even get involved in it. And I think it's going to take the officers being courageous enough to tell these politicians and the leadership that they can't do that anymore and there will be serious repercussions if we find out you're doing it.

We still have problems with discrimination against gays. And it's tragic. I remember when one of the organizations wanted someone from the UAW to speak on tape about discrimination against gays. Couldn't get anybody to do it. I said, "Well, I'll do it. And some of the staff — not my staff, but some of the other staff — were saying,

“Geez, I don't know if you ought to do that. Somebody's going to think you're gay. You're not married.” I said, “This is so ridiculous. Absolutely ridiculous.”

So when they came in and took film of me talking about discrimination, I simply told them the year that we changed the constitution and said that we believed that discrimination was discrimination and we were opposed to all forms. That's what the policy of this union was. That's what I believed. And that's what I hoped every officer believed.

They were very grateful for me having done it. And I said that I felt obligated to do it. There's no difference between prejudice against gays and prejudice on the basis of race or gender. You know, the people who discriminate against gays, probably those same people have a gender problem and a race problem.

BLUESTONE: And it's part of society's problem, which is changing only very, very gradually.

FORREST: Absolutely.

BLUESTONE: Now, in all the years that you've put in in the UAW and the labor movement, if someone were to ask you, as you look back upon your achievements and your history, what would you consider to be the more outstanding achievements and accomplishments in the course of your activities within the union, all the way from the local level up to now, a vice presidential position?

FORREST: When I went on the servicing staff, I think that was probably the greatest help that I could have given the women in our union. I think that was one area that had to be tested. And I must say at the time, Irv, in all fairness, I didn't do it thinking

I was helping the women in the union. I did it for a very selfish reason, I'm sorry to say. I did it because I loved collective bargaining.

BLUESTONE: And you were, to my recollection, the very first woman to be given a collective bargaining assignment in the union.

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: At the staff level.

FORREST: Right. And we talked about what a difficult period that was. It was probably the most difficult period in my life in the beginning, but it was the most rewarding or one of the most.

I think the other was when I went to work for Doug. I wanted to see how the total union worked. You know, in the region you're isolated to some degree. You don't think about it. You think the whole world operates just like you do. But it was such an education for me to be able to travel from region to region. I got involved in different kinds of things. And I was a liaison person to Chrysler about the time Chrysler was about to go down the tubes. And I saw all of the hard work that went on to try to save that corporation.

I think probably those two periods in my life were the ones that produced the most dramatic changes in the way I thought about the union, the way I thought about the membership, the way I thought about the system.

BLUESTONE: And the impact that these activities had, in terms of the union as a whole. You've been influential within the union for many, many years. And if you think of it in terms of what you have achieved in that regard, aside from the satisfaction that you've just expressed, what would you say about what you've been able to

accomplish for the union as a whole? You've been in negotiations, administration, you've been in any number of activities.

FORREST: Well, I think one of the things that I've tried to do for the Independents, Parts and Suppliers and for Aerospace, when I had them, was to change the attitudes and the way negotiations were conducted away from giving demands as threats. I tried to educate the committees and the managements to change their attitudes, and tried to get them working together.

We were able to accomplish this, I think, when I look back at Rockwell. I think they would not have been in the position to interest Boeing in buying them had we not gotten involved. Bruce Lee and I were talking about this not long ago. They were almost at the point of no return. When we went into negotiations, they had over 600 classifications and only about 4,000 workers. And we worked very hard at doing that. And I must say, the management, Frank Chabre, who was corporate vice president, he worked very hard. And I think we made some inroads and were able to save a lot of jobs.

When I was working for Doug, when I would go to a hearing, I would sit and talk to the officers or the rank and file if they had any questions they wanted to ask. Any people, any of the members that wanted to come into the hearings, I just had a rule that you had to be quiet. If you want to take a seat and listen, I have no problem with that.

And I sort of tried to open up the union to make them buy into it as their own and make them understand what we did. I think that many of our local unions are operating today the same way we operated when I was coming through. And that's just learn what you can learn, form your own opinions and grab your best hold and go with it. I think there are local unions out there today that still don't understand what we're about.

BLUESTONE: Which requires an educational process.

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: Continuing.

FORREST: And I think leaders ought to take a few minutes of their time and try to help them. I remember one time I went to Philadelphia, to the Boeing plant, to a hearing. And the officers had just gotten elected. And I could just sense that all of them were absolutely paranoid. They weren't sure what they were supposed to do, how they were supposed to act.

So when the hearing was over, I had about three hours, I think, before plane time. And the president said to me, "Would you mind coming in and just sitting down to talk? We don't want to talk about the case, but we just got elected. All of us are new and we'd like to just talk to you about what the union is about." And we spent — I almost missed that plane — all that time just talking, them asking questions and getting to know what their responsibilities were from our point of view.

And it was the same practically everywhere I went. And I see people today, who at that time were rank-and-filers, and today they're presidents of local unions. And so I think we don't spend enough time and effort to look beyond that facade, and just say here's what we're all about. How can we help you? Because these people have to be ambassadors to their membership. And there's a lot of cynical attitudes out there, I think because they feel isolated. They feel like they're not a part of the union.

BLUESTONE: It is a continuing process of education and re-education about what the union stands for, and what its objectives are and how to see to it that the

membership understands, appreciates and accepts that. This is what, in effect, you're saying?

FORREST: And understand they're the key to making it work or not work.

BLUESTONE: Obviously.

FORREST: So they don't feel as though . . . They think of us as the international union, a little group over here. And then there's all the rest. We run it and we tell them what they're going to do. And it really bugs me that they don't recognize the responsibility they have and the power they have, as members, to change it.

BLUESTONE: Which is the democratic process.

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: Time will tell.

FORREST: Yes.

BLUESTONE: It's a continuing process. In terms of your own history, your own life's work, is there anything you'd like to add to this account that would be of interest to scholars or to anybody who just wants to know who Carolyn is and what Carolyn Forrest has achieved? Is there anything you'd like to add?

FORREST: Well, I'd like to add that I hope this continues on, that women have the kind of meaningful assignments, the kind of opportunities to meet the challenges. I think that within the next, probably, five- or ten-year period, maybe even longer, with new technology the way it is, the change is going to be tremendous. And that's one of the reasons that I try to lay the groundwork with every committee, to tell them that what you see today is not what you're going to see tomorrow. And change is going to be coming so rapidly that they're just going to be in a continuous changing mode.

And I just hope that women are in a leadership role so that they can help these people, the leadership, the local leadership, and help sensitize the international leaders also. Because they get carried away with, "We've got a problem here," and turn everything off, rather than try to figure out what caused the problem and help make some changes so that you don't incur that same problem.

And I just hope that women are given that kind of assignment to do that. And it concerns me, because women can be a nuisance. I can be a nuisance. I'm sure I have been. Steve's probably counting the days until I retire. But what they don't understand is that when women are persistently and consistently raising issues, it's not because they have a personal ax to grind. It's because I think they're looking at a bigger picture and saying, "We've got to do some things different."

BLUESTONE: Which is part and parcel of how members and leaders ought to be looking at the future. Let me ask you this now: Under the rules of the union, you'll be retiring at the convention in June of this year.

FORREST: That's right.

BLUESTONE: Do you have any plans for what you want to do after that?

FORREST: No, I don't. Everyone asks me that and they're all shocked that I don't have any plans for what I'm going to do. I'm going to take a few months and just try to learn how to relax, and read books that I haven't had time to read. And reintroduce myself to my grandchildren. And then, I'm sure by that time, I'll be bored to death and want to get involved in something. I don't think it will take that long.

BLUESTONE: But whatever your plans are, you don't plan just to retire and sit around and do nothing?

FORREST: No. I really would like to, if I had an opportunity, to continue to try to convince management and unions that they need to change their attitudes, change their ways of doing things, you know. But I don't know that I'll get that opportunity, because it's a little difficult when you've been in the position I've been in and then you retire. Every attempt you would make to do something, somebody would think I was stepping on their toes. But I just think it's so important. I think that education in our union has got to be a priority. And I think before you can teach other people, you have to understand it and feel it yourself.

And if you remember, there was an article in Ward's or Crain's, I don't remember. I think it was Ward's Automotive, that said the tier-one suppliers would be reduced from 2,000 to 1,000 by the year 2000. They're already down to 1,000 and we're only in 1998. So not only did that prediction come true, it came true much earlier than they predicted.

Right now, many of those tier-one suppliers are outsourcing to two different groups. So they're tier one, tier two and tier three, all wound up in one. And Ford, GM and Chrysler are moving their work out to these magnas and unorganized, low-wage groups at an enormous rate, even though we, in the last contract, got an opportunity to watch over the sourcing.

I just saw a note on my desk Friday that I've got to check out today, that Ford's taking some work out of the parts plant in Pennsylvania, the Doehler Jarvis plant. I didn't even know that. One of the committeemen stumbled upon it and sent me a note. And you know, there has to be more attention paid to that kind of thing. So 50 people are laid off for that work leaving. And I think people need to understand how they have to watch

over that work, how they have to raise objections and how they have to compete to keep it.

And so something in that line of work, maybe. I'm just not sure. I'm not sure what's out there. But like I said, I'm sure I'll get involved in something.

BLUESTONE: And that, in fact, is what the world is all about in the years ahead, and it's evident in industry after industry, this is a serious problem that has to be addressed.

FORREST: You know, Irv, you started this. You're the very first person that I ever heard talk about quality of work life. And I thought, God, he must be talking about a different world. I just couldn't see that happening. I really could not see that happening.

And then Don Ephlin continued on from where you left off, and I started to see it working in Ford. And then I got interested and kept talking to Don about it. And I saw plants like Ford Monroe, that was ready to go out of business practically, you know. They couldn't get their product out on time. Their quality was lousy. But when they bought into this — they called it "employee involvement" at Ford — it changed the whole work force. It not only changed the way they did their work, but it gave them an opportunity to have some voice in the workplace.

And so to me, common sense tells me that if I was working in the plant right now, there is no way that I'm just going to stand there and be a robot. And I'm surprised it hadn't changed faster. We have people in plants with master's degrees, bachelor of science degrees in many of them. And the reason they're still in the plant is because they

make more money than they can make in a job outside. And that's tragic in this country, that a teacher gets paid less than a blue-collar worker.

But the fact is they're there. They're bright as can be. They're capable of doing just almost anything there is to do. And their minds are not being put to work. And they don't even understand that it's possible to do that, because you can't get through that committee. You can't get past that fear of losing their control.

BLUESTONE: And of course, you've got the management resistance also.

FORREST: Sure, they're feeding them.

BLUESTONE: They don't want to give up any of their authority.

FORREST: They think if they let it happen, then they're gone, they can't rule the roost.

BLUESTONE: Well, progress is being made around the country.

FORREST: Yes, it is.

BLUESTONE: In industry after industry. And we'll wait and see what develops with it, because it is moving. And some research now that's coming out is very interesting in this regard.

Well, I think that's about it.

FORREST: Very good. Thank you.

BLUESTONE: Thank you.