

SWE STORYCORPS INTERVIEWS

Gail Mattson and Peggy Layne Interview

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Society Of Women Engineers National Conference

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Gail Mattson and Peggy Layne

Gail Mattson is currently Assistant Laboratory Director in the Environmental Protection, Safety, and Health Divisions of Brookhaven National Laboratory. She received a B.S. in Biology and Chemistry from Baker University, and a M.S.E. in Environmental Engineering from the University of Washington. She received a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from Baker University, and a master's degree in environmental engineering from the University of Washington. Mattson serves on the International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists (INWES) board of directors , and is a Fellow of the Society of Women Engineers, for which she served as national president from 2000 to 2001.

Margaret "Peggy" Layne has been the director of AdvanceVT and Faculty Projects at Virginia Tech since 2003. Layne received a bachelor's and master's degree in environmental engineering from Vanderbilt University the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, respectively. She spent nearly two decades as a consulting engineer on waste treatment and regulatory support projects. In 1998 and 1999 Layne served as an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Congressional Fellow, consulting on waste policy issues in the office of U.S. Senator Bob Graham. A Fellow life member

of the Society of Women Engineers, Layne served as national president from 1996 to 1997. She is also an active member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and author of *Women in Engineering: Pioneers and Trailblazers* and *Women in Engineering: Professional Life*, both published by ASCE Press in 2009.

In their 2007 SWE StoryCorps interview, Mattson and Layne talked about why they pursued engineering; their involvement in SWE and serving as national presidents; and their favorite aspects of being involved with SWE, including working with younger, older, and international women engineers.

- July 2016

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Peggy Layne: I'm Peggy Layne. I'm forty-nine years old.

Today's date is October 26, 2007. We're in Nashville, Tennessee, at the Society of Women Engineers [SWE] annual conference. And I'm speaking with Gail Mattson, who is a friend and long-time colleague in SWE.

Gail Mattson: My name's Gail Mattson, and I'm fifty-six.

Today's date is October 26, 2007, in Nashville, Tennessee. And as Peggy said, we're good friends and colleagues from SWE for many years.

PL: So, I don't remember when we first met.

GM: It's got to be SWE, a long time ago. (laughs)

PL: I was thinking it would have been at a regional conference, but you were in different regions at different times, so we both moved around a lot. So I don't remember, either.

GM: Yeah. And you were [SWE] president before I was.

PL: Yes. And you were region director—

GM: For the Region D.

PL: In Region D. Well, no, you were—okay, I'm remembering [the annual conference in] Boston, and you made me wear a hat.

GM: Okay. (laughs)

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PL: Because you were chair of the membership committee?

GM: Yes, yes.

PL: And we were doing a membership drive. And I was incoming vice president for member services.

GM: That was it, member services.

PL: And so I had to wear a green baseball cap that said, "You, Me, and SWE."

GM: SWE. (laughs) That's right. That was my idea. So Boston, that was—I can't even remember when that is. That was a long time ago.

PL: Well, it would have been '94 or '95—'95 probably.

GM: Yeah. Okay.

PL: So, when did you join SWE?

GM: I joined SWE when I was in graduate school. And I had thought about being a member of SWE for many years. My undergraduate degree is in chemistry and biology, because originally I was pre-med. But then during the summer—

PL: Then you saw the light.

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GM: Yeah, well during the summers I worked for Bechtel because my father worked for Bechtel. And I found out about the Society of Women Engineers from women at Bechtel.

PL: Oh.

GM: But when I went to go try to join, they wouldn't let me join because I wasn't an engineer. So that just sort of got me. Okay, I'm going to fix this problem. (laughs) Because I worked for Bechtel for a number of years, and then I got to the point where the engineers that were reporting to me made more money than I did because they had an engineering degree and mine was just chemistry and biology, because I had originally been pre-med. So I went back to graduate school and got a master's degree in environmental engineering. It used my undergraduate chemistry and biology, but it also—the new field was environmental engineering. And so I used both, and got the master's degree in environmental.

PL: And did you go back to Bechtel after you got your master's degree?

GM: Well, I went back and interviewed, but they at the time were not really hiring environmental engineers. They were still trying to decide what to do. So I went back to the

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University of Washington where I got my graduate degree and interviewed at a couple of different companies, and that's how I ended up with Envirosphere, or the environmental engineering firm.

But while I was at the University of Washington, the SWE section that was there was very, very active and they were looking for speakers, so I turned up one day and—because they were looking for people to come in and talk about career opportunities. And so I saw the announcement on the bulletin board of the student union and I turned up for a SWE meeting. They weren't quite sure what to do with me because obviously I was a lot older than everybody else. (laughs) But I wasn't a professional, either, because I was a graduate student. So I joined the SWE student section. I was the first graduate student to join the student section at the University of Washington. But I actually got involved. We had a joint meeting with the professionals, and that's where I met the professionals, so then I started going to the professional meetings. So it was sort of like between two different worlds, between the students and the professionals.

PL: So did you start doing things with the SWE, with the professional section?

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GM: Yes.

PL: What kind of things did you do?

GM: I got involved in—we had a big—the first thing I did was they had sort of a, my guess, a city-wide activity where they would get all the different women's organizations—like women in science, women in medicine, women that were teaching—would get together once a year and have sort of a women's celebration of women in professional careers or underrepresented careers. And so they asked me my first year that I was in SWE if I would chair that, because they were looking for someone to do it.

PL: Just jump right in.

GM: Yeah. Just jump right in. I think I told them I used to organize events like that, and so they got me involved. And it was a lot of fun, because I met these outstanding women in law and medicine and so forth, and put together this big event. It was just one evening, but it was a lot of fun organizing it.

And then I got involved as the alternate representative, the council section representative for the Pacific Northwest Section [of SWE] there in Seattle. And also was a

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liaison. I was also very active with the American Society of Civil Engineers, and so I planned one of the big joint meetings between ASCE and SWE there in Seattle with them.

But I worked my way up. I guess committee chair, and then different activities, a council section rep. And there was a national conference in Seattle, so that's really—I think I got the SWE bug. I went to the national conference in Seattle and met a lot of women from across the country and I just said, "This is what I want to do. This is a lot of fun."

PL: And what year was that?

GM: Well, let's see. It's got to be back in the eighties. '84? No, it was '86, '87? Somewhere in there.

PL: Earlier than that.

GM: It's got to be earlier than that?

PL: Yeah, because my first conference was in '84 in [Washington] D.C. and I've never been to a conference in Seattle. Seattle was before then.

GM: Okay, so it must have been before then. It must have been in '82. Oh that must have been '82, yeah, '82 or '83. Yeah,

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one of those two years. I can't remember. I'm terrible with dates. (laughs)

PL: So, is this your twenty-fifth SWE conference?

GM: I think I counted twenty-three. I missed a couple. (laughs)

PL: You missed a couple. Yeah, it's my twenty-third because I have come every year since 1984.

GM: Oh, okay, well then we've got something in common. Twenty-three years. We should have little signs we put on our tags. How many conferences we've gone to. (laughs)

PL: That's a scary thought. (laughs)

GM: So how did you get into engineering?

PL: Oh, I was interested in cleaning up the environment from an early age. I went to a nature study summer camp when I was in high school, which I found out later Jill Tietjen and all her brothers and sisters went to the same summer camp in Virginia. That's a story in itself.

So I was interested in environmental protection and pollution control when I was in high school. And this was of course in the early 1970s when environmental activity was at a very high level and most of the major

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environmental protection legislation in the U.S. was just being passed. And so when I came to try to decide where to go to college I didn't know anything about engineering and I didn't really apply to engineering schools. I wanted to do something that would get me into environmental protection, so I was thinking about a science field, probably biology or chemistry like you had done, or forestry.

I went to tour Duke University and talked to people in the forestry program there, and they were not—they didn't sell their program very well. (laughs) Totally turned my parents off of forestry as a career. There was like no career future or career opportunities in forestry, so we wrote that one off. But then I found out that Vanderbilt right here in Nashville had an undergraduate major called environmental engineering. And so I thought that learning how to actually design systems that cleaned up the environment would be a good way to go, rather than, you know, becoming an environmental activist, or a lawyer and arguing cases in court, or advocating for public policy changes. I could be actually hands-on, actually doing something to clean up the environment. And I had some family here in Nashville. My grandfather grew up in

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Murfreesboro [Tennessee] and I had some aunts and uncles here in Nashville.

We came down. I got some information from Vanderbilt and they actually brought me down to Nashville as a finalist for a scholarship. So I came down and spent a weekend on campus, and toured the campus and they showed me around, and I stayed in the dorms. And I didn't get the big scholarship, that was the interview weekend for the scholarship. But I got a smaller scholarship so that of course made my parents happy.

So I came to Vanderbilt for four years. Enjoyed it very much and it was a very, similar to you, sort of a nontraditional way to get into engineering because Vanderbilt—the engineering college is not a big, not a very big engineering program compared to the big land grant schools. You know, the University of Tennessee, Virginia Tech. So I had a small department. I think there were twelve graduates in my major. I was able to major in environmental engineering, so I didn't—I never took a structures [course], or a transportation, or the other kinds of traditional civil engineering—you know, steel and concrete courses. I took courses in the old traditional sanitary engineering, water and wastewater treatment, with

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a little bit of solid waste management, design of landfills, and some air pollution control. So, part of the chemical engineering curriculum, as well as part of the civil engineering curriculum, and then some classes in environmental law, and some biology, microbiology labs. So I got to do, you know, plate cultures of staphylococcus and streptococcus (laughs) and all that kind of stuff. And I got a very close relationship with my professors so it was a really nice experience. Very different from going to a big engineering school, where you have, you know, classes with hundreds of people.

GM: Now is that when you joined SWE? When you were at Vanderbilt?

PL: I actually did join SWE as a student in the late seventies. I think that was the period when SWE was starting student sections all over the country. There was this huge growth spurt of student sections. And somebody, not me, organized a student section of SWE at Vanderbilt when I was already a junior or a senior. And so I joined because I wanted to support the organization because I thought it was important to advocate for women in engineering.

Even at that time I was certainly very aware that women were a very small minority in engineering. And in fact

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Vanderbilt had about double the percentage of female students that most other engineering schools had at that time. When I got my bachelor's degree in 1980 about ten percent of engineering students were female, but Vanderbilt had about twenty-five percent women. So Vanderbilt was kind of proactive in that way, in recruiting and supporting women in engineering.

So I joined SWE as a student, but I don't remember going to meetings or becoming active in it, because I was already a senior and I was involved in other things. So I sent them a check and that was about it. And then when I graduated I moved to San Francisco to work for Bechtel—another thing that we have in common—and I went to some meetings there where they had a very large and very active SWE section, and I kind of sat in the back of the room and didn't meet anybody and didn't get involved. Unlike you, I was not made in charge of anything my first year as a member. And I moved to Houston where they also had a very big and very active SWE section, and I went to a couple of meetings and I sat in the back and didn't talk to anybody.

And then I moved to North Carolina to go to graduate school and I got a message from the local SWE section inviting me to come to a meeting. And I went and I called them up to

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RSVP to tell them I was coming to the meeting and they sounded so excited. And I was really impressed that, you know, here I was in North Carolina, everybody's really friendly. I'm looking forward to going to a SWE meeting, and I got to the meeting and there were about six other people there, so (laughs) it took moving to an area where there was a small section and I couldn't hide in the back of the room and not talk to anybody. And as soon as I walked in the door they put me to work, so that was how I got started being active in SWE. But you also moved around to several different parts of the country.

GM: Well, that's one of the fun things about SWE, because you can move and join the SWE section and have an instant group of friends. That's one thing we sort of advocate. Because I started at the University of Washington Seattle but then I got—the company that I started working for after I graduated transferred me to Chicago. And I got involved in the Chicago section. And that's when they were rebuilding the Chicago Section. They had really had some problems and loss of membership and they were going through a rebuilding spurt, and that was under Kathy Cunningham's leadership. And so I got involved with that. And it was a lot of fun. And that's where I started getting involved, doing

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professional development. And we really built the professional development conference there in Chicago. We became known for that and every year it grew and grew, and SWE had several hundred people coming in for the professional development conference in Chicago.

I was there for several years and then I got transferred in '92 from Chicago down to Oakridge [Tennessee], and then I got involved with the Smoky Mountain Section of SWE in Oakridge. And it was while down there that I got involved more in the regional activities and started doing regional things with membership. And the next thing I know, they wanted someone for the national membership committee and they wanted someone from Region D, and in a weak moment I think I raised my hand, and so I got involved on the national membership committee. And then I went to the national conference down in Orlando and they were looking for a new head of the membership committee. And they looked to me and go, Gail you're pretty good at organizing things. Would you take this over? And I had no idea what I was getting myself involved with, (laughs) being on the national membership committee and taking that over. But it was a real challenge, and it was interesting.

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And the fun thing about it is, wherever you go you can find SWE members. Especially when I moved to Oakridge, because the company I was working for at the time in Oakridge, I was the only woman engineer in the whole company. So it's nice to have a SWE section you can go to and meet other women engineers. You don't feel so isolated.

PL: So I was region director for Region D in '91 and '92, and so the Orlando conference was, must have been '92?

GM: I can't remember. We need to have a list of conferences in front of us.

PL: Yeah. You know I used to be able to reel them off, but no more. (laughs)

GM: (laughs) No more. It goes with age, Peggy. (laughs) But I did it sort of backwards, because usually you get involved in the national level coming in as a regional director. And then from being a regional director you're asked to be a vice president or run for vice president, and then from vice president you go from there. In my case I was on the national membership committee and then I got elected as vice president for member services. Then I was asked to become Region D director, because they needed a new director. The one that had been doing the directorship had

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stepped down for health problems, and they really wanted someone. So I stepped back from being a vice president on the national board to being Region D director. And so I did that for several years, and then was elected back to president-elect for SWE and got into the presidency. So different way of doing it. (laughs)

PL: That was a lot of fun. And you came in through the committees, through the national committee structure as well.

GM: Through the committee structure. Yeah. And I think that's one thing we need to encourage a lot more. We need to get more SWE members from across the country involved in national committees. It's almost like they have to sit and wait to be asked, and you can't. You can volunteer, because we need representation on the national committees.

PL: Well that's how I got started, too. When I was in North Carolina and started to get involved in the local section activities there, one of my fellow graduate students actually, when I was working on my master's degree, came from California where she had been very active in SWE in the Bay area. And she was on the national student activities committee and she recruited me to join the student activities committee. And she was the one,

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actually, who dragged me to the national conference in 1984 in Washington, D.C. and took me around and introduced me to people. Monica Oakley.

GM: Okay.

PL: Who has not been active in SWE for many years, but she is responsible for my getting active on a national level by recruiting me to be the student regional coordinator. Which at that time, in the pre-email days—if you can remember what dark ages those were, before we could instantly communicate with people all over the world—we had to actually write letters to people to get information and make phone calls before cell phones. I didn't realize when I got involved in the national student activities committee that, because SWE at that time was such a small organization with such a small national staff, we the volunteers were actually doing the level of work that bigger organizations have full-time staff members to do. So serving as regional coordinator for two years and then chairing the national student activities committee and having to keep track of ten regional coordinators and 300 student sections across the country with very little support from staff at headquarters—after that, serving on the Board of Directors was easy. (laughs)

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GM: (laughs)

PL: I didn't realize at that time that, you know, that was like the second or third biggest job in the entire organization. And from there, after chairing the student activities committee, and then I chaired the scholarship committee for a year, sorting through—I don't know, two or three hundred at that time—applications for a dozen scholarships. Both of those were pretty big jobs, and going from there to being region director was very good preparation for serving on the board.

And you had that experience from working in a big section, organizing those professional development conferences in Chicago, and then doing the national membership committee, which gave you a really strong background for serving on the board.

GM: Yeah, because I know the membership committee, that whole activity has changed a lot because that's done by headquarters staff now—

PL: Right, both of those functions.

GM: —at the same time it was a volunteer [activity]. We would get all those applications coming in for membership. And

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they were processing them through headquarters, but if there was any question or any vote or anything that had to be deliberated, that was all sent to the membership committee.

PL: That's right, you had to make judgments on whether or not people could be members.

GM: We did. And then what classification—

PL: What grades of membership.

GM: What grades of membership they were. We had to vote on it. It was all done by paper and mail. And the same thing. All the membership rosters all had to be generated and mailed out and we had to—I had spent hours on my calculator doing all the trending for membership, because it wasn't computerized yet, and keep track of the ages of our members, their involvement, whether they were in academic or business or self-employed. All that was done with my calculator at night at home. (laughs)

PL: Oh my. A lot of changes there.

GM: Sure have. But that's helped—I think computer-age and email has definitely helped SWE grow and helped SWE with networking, which is one of the purposes of SWE. Now, when

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you had gotten on the national board, had you ever thought about being president?

PL: I had not. It never occurred to me. I didn't know that much about, of course, how the organization worked at the national level. And I can remember sitting in my first couple of board meetings, trying to figure out what all these people were talking about, got to learn all the acronyms. SWE's like the military and most other organizations. It has it's own set of shorthand acronyms to reference different committees and activities.

And I can remember sitting in board meetings, pulling out my copy of the bylaws and reading through the bylaws of the organization, and then raising my hand and asking about or pointing out when people were arguing about something that we should or shouldn't do, and then pointing out to where in the bylaws it said, you know, this is what we've got to do. So I got the reputation my first couple years on the board as being the person who sits there and listens to the discussion and pulls out the bylaws and figures out what the bylaws says about whatever the issue was that we were discussing. And I was also the one who spoke up for the students. Having served as student activities committee

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chair I felt that I had to represent the interests of the students on the board.

GM: Now did someone approach you about running for president-elect, or—?

PL: Jill Tietjen. At the Orlando conference, where we had just discovered that we attended the same summer camp as children. Jill was the outgoing president at that time and I was the incoming national secretary. And she was the one who encouraged me to consider running for president-elect.

GM: And did you enjoy it?

PL: Well, I of course ran for president-elect the first time and lost. And we had a contested election. The nominating committee put me and Jaclyn Spear on the slate for president-elect, and I was at the WEPAN [Women in Engineering Program Advocates Network] conference in Washington, D.C. with Anna Salguero, who was president, and Kathy Cunningham who was president-elect, and I was national secretary. We were all at the WEPAN conference when the votes were counted. And we were waiting to hear from the tellers committee what the results of the election were. And Anna got the call and had to come tell me that I had lost the election. And it was kind of a surprise,

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actually, and I immediately got on the phone and called Jaclyn and congratulated her and offered my services.

And Kathy Cunningham, who was president-elect, was in the process—had already decided who was going to be all of her committee chairs, almost all of her committee chairs for the next year. What you do if you have a volunteer who you want to keep involved in the organization, if they don't win an election you want to keep them as a committee chair so that you don't lose track of them and you can get them back, keep them involved. And she only had, like, two committees left that didn't have chairs for the following year. And so she asked me if I would chair the statistics committee. And this was when the *National Survey of Women and Men Engineers* had just taken place. Patricia Eng had started this national survey when she was in Chicago. Were you involved in that when you were in Chicago?

GM: Yeah. Oh yeah. (laughs)

PL: She did the pilot survey and then we did the national survey. And the statistics committee chair reported to the [national] secretary, so I knew, as secretary I knew a little bit about what was going on with this survey, and that it was sort of in the final stages. So the year that I

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served as chair of the statistics committee was the year after the survey results were released and I spent virtually the entire year going around the country, many times with Patricia Eng, giving talks about the national survey. I put together a presentation. This was before [Microsoft] Powerpoint, back in the old days.

GM: Yeah, old days. (laughs)

PL: You had to actually make graphs by hand and put them on overhead transparencies, because we didn't have laptop computers to carry all over the country. So I must have given a dozen presentations to different SWE regional conferences, SWE sections, student sections, to a symposium organized by CPST [Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology] in Washington. So I got a lot of visibility and a lot of practice doing presentations to a wide variety of audiences, which was actually very good for me, developmentally. And so then the next year I ran again for the board as a vice president, and that was when we met, apparently.

GM: Yeah.

PL: So what do you remember about the survey from when you were in Chicago?

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GM: We did the pilot there, so part of it was coming up with the right way to ask the questions.

PL: Oh, you were involved with the questions?

GM: Yeah, so we were involved with developing the questions and we would try them out on each other and how different people would answer them. And then sending the information, sending it out, trying it out, and then tallying it, and how it was easy to tally, and how many write-ins we got. So we were involved in sort of fine-tuning it to come up with the right questions to get the right information we were looking for. So that was the involvement I had at that time. There again, getting the old calculator out and adding things up. (laughs)

PL: Do you remember examples of some of the questions and how you worked on those?

GM: No, because I was more at the end of trying to keep track of it. Because they had hired someone else, I think, also to help with questions. Someone with a different background in psychology, that were used to doing surveys. We were just the guinea pigs. They were just trying it out on us.

PL: Because we used virtually the same survey instrument for the retention study that we just did a couple years ago,

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that Lisa Frehill's now doing some of the analysis on. She's doing, she's now able to some comparison between the '93 data and the 2006, '05 —I don't know, it was a year or two ago when we did the retention study.

GM: Are they continuing with that? Because I know they were going to do that longitudinal, in terms of tracking what was going on.

PL: I don't think so, and I'm actually kind of disappointed because we did the retention study—the original survey surveyed members of engineering societies, so we lost people who had dropped out of engineering. The intent for the more recent study was to track people who had earned engineering degrees and compare what they were doing five, ten, fifteen years out and see if more women were leaving engineering than men. And the schools that we were able to get to participate in that, we got good numbers of responses but I personally don't think that the distribution is very representative of the national population. So there's some weaknesses in the data there. But Lisa's doing more analysis of the data and her background as a sociologist, you know, gives her more insight into that. So it's still a great project.

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GM: Yeah. Now that you've finally made it as president of SWE, what are your highlights of your presidency, when you think back from now?

PL: Well, that's a good question. I was fortunate, I think, to have a relatively uneventful year as president. I didn't have major budget cuts to deal with or other crises. But what I—certainly what I enjoyed most was going around the country to, mostly to region conferences because I didn't have enough funding to go to many local section meetings, but I did go to five or six region conferences. I went to one at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana, and I went to the University of North Dakota, which were both really fun. And I went to Maine, I went to a region conference in Maine. So traveling around the country and meeting members and student members.

The woman who came up right as we were coming up the elevator and gave you the ticket to the banquet? She was a student section president at the University of Montana—or Montana State, in Bozeman—when I was national president, so that was—she's a person that I remember meeting when she was a student and I was president. And you said that you had a similar experience this afternoon.

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GM: Yes. I mean, when you're president you're dealing a lot with the business issues. You know, the funding and business of running the organization. But what [inaudible] back, and really warms your heart is when you meet a student, that they said that they remember meeting you. And when I was down at the exhibits [hall], and talking to one of the girls at—I still call them girls, I guess they're not anymore. She's a professional engineer now—working at the GE booth, and she recognized me, and of course I didn't recognize her. And she says, "Well, I remember meeting you when you were national president. You came and visited the university and I was so impressed." And she said, "And I just remember that."

And so it's just fun when you meet women that are now in the engineering profession and they talk about many years ago when they were a student and met you. And that's the sort of real reward, if you're in a leadership position, that you found that you did have an impact, that someone remembers you, and follow up on suggestions and so forth.

My year as president, see, was one of the controversial years. And I got a lot of interesting emails and so forth. It was the year that we moved headquarters and we changed the way that the Society was organized. And we talked

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earlier, so much of the work of the Society was done by volunteers, like the student activities and membership. So much of it was done all by volunteers with very little headquarters staff. And we realized that for the Society to grow we had to make a change. We had to get professional staff doing professional work, and let the SWE members come up with the ideas, the passion, the inspiration. But get someone doing the paperwork.

So I was, as president-elect, it was my goal, was to look at what we had to do to change the Society. And so that's when we made—went out for bids, and got companies to bid, outsourcing all the paperwork and technical support for the Society. And part of that ended up moving the headquarters, because the company that won the bid to manage headquarters was located in Chicago. So we had to let go of the staff that we had in New York and we moved headquarters to Chicago. And now we have professionals doing the accounting, the paperwork, establishing the databases, maintaining membership, supporting the student sections, it's all done by professionals now out of an office in Chicago.

So my year [as SWE president] I spent a lot of time flying to Chicago, doing the interviews, flying to New York,

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dealing with the staff, letting people go, changing executive directors, and getting a new office set up in Chicago. And I had no idea when I had originally accepted the idea of being president-elect that I was going to have to spend so much time dealing with a major change in the Society.

PL: And that was such a huge contribution to the organization because we've been able to grow so tremendously since then. I just think that's something that the—most people don't even know about that anymore. People don't appreciate how different it is now from it was just ten years ago, and what a great asset the staff in Chicago has been to us and access to the additional expertise that we have.

GM: It was good. It was a good job. (laughs)

PL: (laughs) More than you anticipated when you agreed to do it.

GM: Yes, yeah. So I think part of it is I'm not afraid to make decisions. But what I remember more is the personal, the one-on-one. And like the comment from the girl at the GE booth. That's what gives you heart pangs.

PL: Yeah.

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GM: You know. When people come up and remembered you and thank you for doing those things. And that's the fun part. I think both you and I got involved with SWE because we have a passion for it. And I still, I think my favorite thing is to talk to girls and whether it's mentoring them over the internet via email, or talking to them on the phone, or talking to them at the high school or at Girl Scouts, and trying to get them inspired that, yeah, there's other opportunities. That's what I still enjoy the most, that talking one-on-one with girls. That's the fun part.

PL: That makes it worth all of the hassles and challenges of dealing with all of the opinionated people that we have in the organization. (laughs)

GM: (laughs) Yeah. And that's it. I mean, organizations always have their archaic things of doing things and people are reluctant to change. But sometimes change is what you have to do if you want to be able to meet your mission. And that's what's exciting about seeing the SWE conference. That we have 5,000 [attendees], and all the people that are here looking for jobs and learning more about SWE and opportunities. That's the purpose.

PL: Well, one of the things that I enjoy the most is interacting with the older women, and I think that the

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intergenerational aspect of SWE has meant a lot to me. Not only meeting the younger girls, but meeting the women who started the organization fifty-seven years ago and are still involved, and those who have been involved through the fifties and sixties, and having the opportunity to just talk to them and work with them and learn from them, and appreciate how much things have changed.

GM: Yeah, that's the fun of going to the Over-The-Suite, Over-The-Hill Suite, excuse me.

PL: We're approaching "over-the-hill" ourselves. (laughs)

GM: Yeah. (laughs) Some of us are faster than the others, here, approaching it. (laughs) But it is. It's fun to talk to the pioneers. Any other fond memories?

PL: Just knowing that I have a network of friends across the country, and being able to catch up with them every year at the conference and occasionally being able to stop in with them as I travel. It was really fun when I was living in Washington because lots of people come to Washington for other—Washington, D.C. —come to Washington for other reasons. And so I was able to keep up with a lot of people, and they'd be coming in for meetings and I could go meet them for dinner. I remember meeting you and Shelley for

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dinner in Alexandria, and you telling me about looking to outsource the headquarters operation, and how exciting that was.

GM: That was good.

PL: So what else can you think of to add?

GM: I don't know. We could probably keep on talking for a couple more hours here if we really want to get going. (laughs) I think the fun thing now for me, and sort of rekindle the passion, is what we were talking about this afternoon. Going international and working with the International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists, now, and helping women in other countries start their own association. And it's like a time warp because they're just getting started, just like SWE started in the 1950s. And these women are isolated, the only ones in their companies, and they're trying to find other women engineers to support each other. So it's fun trying to take the model here from SWE and help them start their own association in their own country. And so that's what's fun about bringing them here to see what can be done, that there is a possibility for network, and it is positive, and it can help them.

PL: That's really exciting.

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GM: It's fun to see that again, that excitement. And we keep thinking we've accomplished a lot, but when you talk to women from other countries and where they're coming from you go, "Oh my gosh, we have to start all over again."
(laughs)

PL: A lot of work yet to be done.

GM: Lot to be done. Yeah. So I think we can keep on doing SWE until the day we (laughs) can no longer talk about it.

PL: (laughs) Looking forward to being over-the-hill.

GM: Yeah. Let's see, anything else we can start?

PL: No, I think we can wrap it up.

GM: Wrap it up, okay.

END OF INTERVIEW