

Pat Youngdahl
First Person Plural Project
Tape Summary
14 March 2015

Intro – First Person Plural – Has been interviewed, mostly centered on desegregation, civil rights, early life

Will focus on professional career, work in other political and social activities

MN When start studying psychology?

PY Went to Stephens College for first two years, I was 17
Had dramatic psychology teacher
Liked content, started interest
Started that second year in college
Met husband-to-be, Jim [James] Youngdahl
He was at Missouri U [University]
Went to University of Chicago, on summer
Decided to go to Washington University in Saint Louis
He was living there
To people that age, that's very important
Went to Washington University in Saint Louis, graduated from there
Went to the graduate school, got master's in psychology
Summer it was awarded married Jim Youngdahl
First lived in Saint Louis
He was labor organizer for Amalgamated Clothing Workers [of America]
Interesting area at that time to be labor organizer, he was 21 or 22

5 min

PY I worked for group interested in social services in Saint Louis

MN What was name?

PY Have to think about that, hadn't thought about that for a while [Social Planning Circle]
Jim was assigned to labor organize, went to Paducah, Kentucky
Trying to organize clothing workers
Quite an experience
While there, about year, worked as a secretary for labor lawyer
Jim worked in plant
After campaign over, he was assigned to Saint Louis
Had my first child, Jay, wasn't employed
On board of YWCA, Y's [YWCA] at that time on forefront of racial issues
Was on the board, my first big board position

MN How get that position?

PY Interesting – Social Planning Council is the name
Assume chosen because knew staff, Jim's dad was dean of School of Social
Work at Washington U [University]
Probable thought I knew more than I did

First position at that time

MN How did you like?

PY I was overwhelmed, trying to raise several million [dollars], not ready

10 min

PY Have ability to get along with all kinds of people
Could get different groups together, helping raise money
Needed somebody else to work with very wealthy people
Wealthy people like other wealthy people
Start in volunteer as adult

Probably need to say, grew up at time of civil rights activities
Small town where I lived, born 1927
In Parma, [Missouri], two schools – white and black
Old books and desks from white school taken to black school
Parents were educated, father interested in public affairs, on school board
Had three meals together
He talked about what's going on, big fan of [Franklin D.] Roosevelt
Talked about how wrong it was how Blacks were treated
One of few that called blacks by "mister", gave some respect
Got information that way
Very active in Methodist church, had good literature
People in church didn't agree with racial attitudes, but would read material
Those influences very strong, this is the way things should be
Got interested in racial activities
Always been a whole part of my life in different way

MN Influenced different things you do

PY Yes

MN When first studying psychology, what were your expectations, career aspirations?

PY Don't think I thought about it a whole lot at that time
Quite young

15 min

PY Knew as woman going to have children, number one prerogative
Didn't know what area I would follow
Did master's thesis on white rats, researcher thought women given too much sedation when giving birth, had to go through training for rats, water maze
Would check how long it would take to swim to the goal, see if those deprived of oxygen fair better, got a small result

MN How did you enjoy that?

PY Interesting, being in basement with white rats was difficult
More interested in courses in social work school, children oriented, Freudian
Psychology at Washington U [University], all experimental
In social work, more interested, psychoanalytic
Didn't see I was going to be researcher

MN That influenced your later work?

PY Yes

MN Stephens [College] was all-women's college?

PY Yes

MN Washington University, recently co-ed?

PY Always

MN Always was?

PY Yes

MN Differences between Stephens [College] and Washington U [University]?

PY Certainly; a lot of difference in women's college
Washington [University] still high achieving, big Saint Louis population
Stephens [College] also large population from nationwide
From small town, enjoyed variety of people

20 min

MN Some work describes women involved in women's and civil rights issues,
overrepresentation of women who went to all-women's colleges

PY Interesting, had forgotten about this
Stephens [College] had interdenominational group – Burrall Class
Interested in different issues, I was chair
First thing, except being head of Methodist Youth Fellowship when younger, started into social
interest

MN They provided a space for you to be interested?

PY Was interested in that
Where I met Jim, husband
He went to University of Missouri, met through activities with Burrell Class
Had forgotten

MN How was courtship?

PY He was most interesting person I met
One memory, we went for pizza, he had one dollar, which was typical
Was most interesting fellow I'd met

MN How long together before married?

PY Dated there

He started with Amalgamated Clothing Workers [of America] before

He would hitchhike to Chicago to come see me, didn't have car

He was one of the reasons went to Washington University, as opposed to staying at University of Chicago

At University of Chicago, lived at International House, real experience

Learned Viennese waltzing there, a lot of students there, was fun

MN How did you end up in International House?

PY Not sure, didn't have many dorms

Parents wouldn't have let me go to apartment

Guess that was good housing place

MN People from all over?

PY Yes, quite an experience

Finished summer, first time I took statistics

25 min

PY Came to Saint Louis, lived in a home

At Washington U, limited dorms, first stayed in room with couple

They were extremely interesting, became friends

Got dorm room at Washington U until married

MN Summer after master's program ended?

PY Yes

MN First job that started career as psychologist?

PY Lived in Saint Louis, had two children

Not employed at time

Jim still organizing for Amalgamated Clothing Workers, plants in Arkansas

Law firm here, Woods and McMath [McMath Woods P.A.]

Henry Woods was Sidney McMath's strongest partner

Jim was organizer, Henry attorney for workers on strike

Lived in Saint Louis, Jim worked in Arkansas in plants trying to organize

Met Henry that way, Henry convinced Jim to go to law school

Moved to Fayetteville, plan Jim would join McMath law firm

Had third child, Lincoln

Worked part-time in Department of Psychology

Supervision, that kind of thing, real professional start in psychology

Lived in Fayetteville, great place to live, nice friends

30 min

PY Jim took to law school

Lived there in 1957
What happens in '57? Little Rock Nine, all lives affected by '57
Every year in Little Rock, some issue in our schools
Never been a year, since 1957, there is not something

MN Right now a whole lot going on

PY Right, Little Rock, the racial activities change year to year, but always there
Either celebrating Little Rock Nine, or that
Part of our mentality
Started in Arkansas, lived in Fayetteville in '57
Henry Woods became federal judge
Henry was the brains of the Women's Emergency Committee, very influential
From our coming in Arkansas, always part of that
Came through Henry, when came, became active right away

MN One of the reasons you came, because of him

PY Yes

MN What brought you to Little Rock?

PY When Jim graduated from law school, joined McMath Law firm
Represented labor organizations all his life

MN Went back and got your doctorate

PY Told best place to work here would be UAMS [University of Arkansas
for Medical Sciences], active department of Psychiatry and psychologist
Master's level internship at Department of Psychiatry at UAMS, Child Study [Center], children
and adolescents who presented psychological problems, did psychological testing, started
therapeutic groups

35 min

PY Original research on ADHD [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder] done there

MN Were you a part?

PY Part of my history

MN When decide to do coursework for doctorate?

PY Early forties, had four children
Worked part time several years, fortunate I could do that
Decided to work on PhD, early eighties

MN What interested you in PhD?

PY That's the professional degree
Whatever profession you're in, want professional degree

Don't know why you're considering getting a PhD now?
Have some reasons, capable to do more things you can't do now

MN Yes, open up opportunities

PY That's why I wanted to do that

MN Congratulations. Why decide to work part time?

PY I had four children, that's why
Gave me time to do volunteer things

MN What was typical day?

[Break – interruption]

PY I could do more volunteer things because I worked part time

MN Were going to describe a typical day

PY Older two children went to school
Lincoln I would take to the Anthony School, didn't have public kindergarten
Half a day at UAMS, some years different, fairly flexible

40 min

MN Lot of changes in access for women, credit card in your name or husband's?

PY First thing I joined was League of Women Voters
I had been a member in Fayetteville, always active in that way
In my life, always been women's movement and civil rights
Civil rights is a portion in some way of my life, when I grew up, coming to Little Rock in 1957
Women's movement, been active in that
Threads in my life
When talk to students, wonder what they have, what are the movements?

MN What would I say?

PY Women's things? Racial things?

MN Racial issues in forefront, women's issues, environment – global climate change, income inequality
A lot of issues back then, different manifestations now
How did you become involved in women's movement?

PY More actively, in the 1980's
When [George] McGovern running for president
New regulations for women in Democratic Party
Several women went to Nashville, Bella Abzug was there, and National Political Women's Caucus
We formed Arkansas Women's Political Caucus, president of that eight years
Jim was not that interested in partisan politics

I was interested in Democratic Party, active as a woman in the party

45 min

PY Had good friend, Brownie Ledbetter [Mary Brown Williams Ledbetter]
Lots of activities going on, credit card thing – one of the things we rose that was important, women couldn't get credit in their own name

One of things Hillary [Clinton] did, when she and Bill [Clinton] first came to town, she and [Carolyn Armbrust] Witherspoon, and somebody else, researched laws that affected women

MN For Arkansas?

PY Yes, when first knew Hillary, still Hillary Rodham

MN What made you interested in politics?

PY I think my dad, always interested in politics, talked about politics
Seemed doable
When came here, mentioned Henry [Woods}, Sid McMath had been governor
When moved here, part of political group, women's activities, got interested, active in Democratic politics

MN Women's Political Caucus related to national?

PY We were chapter here

MN Activities?

PY Did all of the things you should do, a lot of interest, active at that time
How should women run for office, group now doing the same thing

MN Women Lead Arkansas

PY Right, that's what we did then

[issue with microphone]

How to run for office, how do you raise money, all those things
Different chapters, in Jonesboro, really viable organization

MN Did women begin participating more?

PY Right
One of the activities called Barefoot and Pregnant Awards

50 min

PY Legislator from Perry County, [Paul] Van Dalsem, we spent a lot of energy on trying to get ERA [Equal Rights Amendment] passed, Van Dalsem made statement that they didn't have any trouble in Perry County, just kept women barefoot and pregnant

MN What was the reaction?

PY You can imagine
Each year we'd have Barefoot and Pregnant Awards
Different legislatures, people in public, get one of the awards, one of money raisers

MN Awards for positive things?

PY Either, both
A lot of fun, one of our money raisers
Programs and that kind of thing, in research at Butler Center
One artistic and clever members, Carol Gady Graywing gave papers to Butler Center, and
Brownie Ledbetter gave too

MN In the archive

PY Spent a lot of volunteer time with Women's Caucus

MN What strategies for ERA?

PY Women from each of their districts to work, influence about ERA
Worked hard to get somebody from their district, not easy, to work on different representatives

MN One-on-one work with legislators?

PY Yes, was difficult to get women from all areas

MN How find women?

PY One way was group called Business and Professional Women['s Club]
In small communities, would be the women that worked in bank, managed insurance

55 min

PY Usually they would run office, do it all, would have to train man who would be their boss, they
did woman's thing, wouldn't be main person
They were eager, weren't political women
Then there was the group – I forget what they're called now - University Women [American
Association of University Women], worked very hard

MN Would work with these groups to find women who would speak with their legislators?

PY Yes

MN How effective? What held it back?

PY Who knew?
Don't think it's that effective, still this day they haven't voted on it
Whatever women groups have done, still haven't passed it in Arkansas

MN Why do you think that is?

PY I don't think you need to ask when you look at legislature we have, the white men we have
Your answer is as good as mine
They would say, "I want things for my daughters," but
Why haven't, I don't know, I can't answer
You would ask some of the women, "Are you for ERA?"
Most would say, "Oh no, I don't need that"
We don't have any women in legislature strong for the ERA
Now people probably don't think it's needed, you can answer as well as I can

MN Do you think it's still needed?

PY Certainly, we want women in the constitution, don't we?
If you ever are at a bar, with legislator, just find out

MN I'll keep in mind
Over the years, things get better and worse, what kept you going? Idea of just doing the work?

PY There were important issues
No reason not to want to be working on racial issue, takes different forms
Who knew we'd be in this year, this issue with Little Rock schools

MN Always been work to do

PY Much work to do
You mentioned income inequality, we have very weak labor union
When Jim was labor attorney, good labor leadership

60 min

PY Don't have that now, could certainly use it
Granddaughter Colleen [Youngdahl] first or second case representing McDonald's workers

MN 15 Dollar? Seen demonstrations on Broadway

PY Was able to work part time, do other activities

MN Reached an hour, anything I didn't ask about? Second interview?

PY Haven't even gotten to my professional life, have thirty minutes?

Break

PY Time I was most active, racial and women's issues within the party

MN Within the Democratic party?

PY Yes, I was active in that way

MN What roles did you take?

PY Was active in Pulaski County, state

Was only Southern delegate for Democratic Party for Morris Udall
Probably don't know Morris Udall, ran for president in '76, had enough votes or one delegate, I was it, most interested, would have made great president
In '80 was head of Ted Kennedy faction, delegates from each congressional, district, had five, I was chair

MN How chosen to be delegate?

PY Each four years different system
Find out from Democratic Party where delegate selection day is

65 min

PY If strong Obama person, find out where to put your information
Rules printed in paper, on a Saturday that's set come to Convention Center, from all areas people vote, can be elected delegate for convention
If interested, just watch for the proceedings

MN Oh, ok

PY Different every time
For both Udall and Ted Kennedy, weren't many people interested
I actually on convention floor in New York City voted for Ted Kennedy, had one vote

MN How was experience?

PY Exciting, if interested in politics you ought to do it
I voted for Ted, big shots didn't fight for it, Ted wasn't going to be elected
Every time David Pryor sees me, will tease me about my vote
I felt since I was there to represent Ted Kennedy people in Arkansas I needed to vote or them, but smart thing to do is everybody gets together at end [unclear]
Was [Walter] Mondale delegate, interesting because had nominated woman vice president [Geraldine Ferraro]
Was delegate, but not supporter much of [Michael] Dukakis
And then the Clintons twice
Recently tried to think of the years

MN Involved in Clinton campaign? Connection?

PY Moderately, was an Arkansas Traveler, if you know what that is

MN Describe it?

PY Different citizens who know Bill Clinton
First time he ran, people didn't know who he was, supporters went to different states
I went to Kansas and Louisiana, work two-day, weekend thing for the Clintons, also in New Hampshire, different places, some Travelers start early
There will be Travelers group probably for Hillary [Clinton]

MN Were you acquaintances? Known them?

PY When people ask that I say unless you lived in a cave the whole time, you would have
Can't say they are my best friends, I worked with Hillary early on, having been in politics

70 min

MN How was being Arkansas Traveler? Enjoy?

PY Oh yes
A lot of things you do in politics, can't quantify, maybe they can now
Do things for your candidate, do what you can

MN Set speech?

PY No, different groups did different things, hand out literature, try to talk to people about who Bill Clinton was

MN How was night he was elected?

PY I'm trying to think
Think that was expected at time, was a big time, everybody there on floor when Clintons came through, was a special time

MN Involved in campaigning for Hillary Clinton?

PY Yes, although it has changed now, because of computer
Had a small office for Hillary, didn't do the hands-on campaigning
A lot of the information came from national office, mailings
Went to travelers trip to Stuttgart, went door to door

MN How was that?

PY Do all of that on faith, large percentage of people don't, but if you like politics, some people will talk to you, most won't
You're a presence, do what you think you can

75 min

PY Obama had good people figure out how to get politics to voters, the science
Still do have retail politics, but different system

MN Changed a lot over time. What do you think about changes in politics?

PY Have so many different ways to communicate, don't need to go to the door
Can do shout out, share on Facebook, all that social media

MN Easier or harder?

PY I think easier, not sure that's good, can tailor message in negative ways

MN Pretty active in WAND, talk about what that is

PY Before I do that, done quite a few professional things

One interest was kids who needed Alternative Ed [education]
On Governor's Commission for Alternative Education
Last years of career director of Psychology internship program, worked with young people, enjoyed that very much, at UAMS [University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences]
Worked at Child Study Center at Department of Psychiatry, enjoyable career, working with young people, patients
Worked early on with children of divorce through the courts, divorce explosion, increased divorce, new needs for children and families, one of my specialty areas

MN What did you do with that?

PY Workshops, work with parents to work together for best interest of child

MN Worked with courts?

PY Once a month workshop, "How to Have a Good Divorce", did some speaking

80 min

PY Worked with children and families in divorce process

MN How get involved with that?

PY Saw need, worked in Child Study Center, was divorced after 25 years
At, time fairly new, was interested

MN Saw people needed support?

PY Ask for different things, but yeah
You'd be amazed at what people can do

MN Good or bad?

PY Both

MN Alternative education?

PY Jim Guy Tucker appointed me to commission
Alternative programs starting up, people from different professions to work on standards
Each school did what they thought best
Looked at programs, made new rules
Enjoyed working with population, children and programs
Kids I would see in clinic, need different program than getting

MN Put together interest in policy and politics with professional work as psychologist

PY Right

MN Worked at UAMS Children Study Clinic how many years?

PY Forty years

MN Enjoyed?
PY Very much
MN Children and parents
PY And schools
MN What would you do with schools?
PY Had some programs
Had a grant when schools getting desegregated, worked with faculty and some kids, how to have two populations
Popular program called Transactional analysis

85 min

PY Used for mental health issues, faculty in school-age population
Relationship primarily with North Little Rock, Little Rock also
Large program in North Little Rock schools, mental health professional at each of schools half a day
Directed that program, continues now, supported differently, child can be referred and seen by mental health professional in school

MN Interesting work, what did you like most about that work?

PY I liked work with little children, apart from the adults
Dissertation was “Self-referral of school-aged children”
Worked at two schools, saw children referred by faculty
Let children self-refer, twelve and under, wrote dissertation on that
Usually children come to clinic for reasons the adult come
This was different, came as referred themselves

MN Did you find differences?

PY Children that came, first were family issues, bullied, couldn't get along, a few had really psychological issues
Family came first
It was fun, I liked the children

Break – phone call

MN You have been chair of WAND for a while, explain

PY Retired, felt it was time

90 min

PY Sometimes need to retire before people think you need to
Enjoyed career
At time not same need for women's movement

Interesting some of the things we did weren't in place, still have to do them
Workshop on how to run for office, still need that
Don't know number of women in legislature, but when I look at the pictures, should know how many, not a significant number of women in leadership, in legislature
Some wonderful examples, [Senator] Joyce Elliot, need more like Joyce to be in politics, politics is hard
Last ten years of career very busy, not doing many outside activities
Respected WAND, wasn't active member,
Retired, saw WAND women on corner waiving signs to get out of Iraq, I'd like to do that
Women's Action for New Directions, peace activities
Reduce national budget, fifty-something percentage goes to defense
WAND works in bringing issues into public awareness, bring speakers, peace issues to community

MN Been involved with peace activism?

PY No, had work cut out for us with women and children, member, not active

MN Enjoyed being part of WAND?

PY Frustrating, seem to go from bad to worse
Have such difficult political time here in community, country
In my history, had some good public servants

95 min

PY Good governors, [Dale] Bumpers, David Pryor, Bill Clinton
Message hard to get out now, state senator wants more money in defense
Difficult time, legislature hard to work with than several years

MN What has changed?

PY Issues important to me are not to current elected officials

MN What tactics effective for political change? Steps, ingredients?

PY See now the influence of money, always been money in politics, not to extent
Harder to communicate message, money going in we can't match
Social media made big difference
Tactics used in last election were not effective
Qualified candidates for Constitutional officers, none close to winning, 27 percent of population voted
People voted by Republican, didn't look at candidates same way
Thought there would be new voters, didn't turn out effective
Trust that national labor level people looking at those issues, ways to make change

MN What about idea that politics is in local elections?

100 min

PY Now have social media, people get news from same places

Door to door, phone, don't know how effective, TV with millions of ads
Like to hope still human-to-human, certain didn't seem in last election
Have to see

MN A lot of times when join something, end up chairing it. Why?

PY Get along with people pretty well, keep different groups together
Fair and even, good in that position
Need people who are strong, something they want to get, that's one skill
But I do hear sides, keep people working together

MN And you like to do that?

PY I do, I know how
But you need people going for whatever issue, don't hear the other

MN I think that's great, appreciate it
Anything else to include?

PY Feel very fortunate, very rewarding career
Life is marvelous opportunity
Much needs to be done, rather depressing having school crisis facing now

115 min

PY Human error on all sides

MN Thank you