The Foundation for the

History of Women in Medicine

The Renaissance Woman in Medicine Oral History Project

Florence Haseltine, PhD, MD

Interview Sessions 1 – 2: 9-10 April, 2016

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Florence Haseltine, MD, PhD

Interview Session One: 9 April 2016

Session One
Interview Identifier

[00:00:00]

Tacey Rosolowski: Okay, the counter is moving. Let me put the identifier on. I'm Tacey Ann Rosolowski, and this morning we will have a train sound in the background. This morning I am at the home of Dr. Florence Haseltine in Alexandria, Virginia, and we're having a conversation for The Renaissance Woman in Medicine Oral History Project run by The Foundation for the History of Women in Medicine. Today is April 9th, 2016, and it's about quarter of ten in the morning.

Also, I wanted to say present, because he may come into it, he may be named at a certain moment, is Sherlock, who is what kind of dog?

Florence Haseltine: Havanese, a two-year-old Havanese.

Tacey Rosolowski: A two-year-old Havanese. Okay.

Well, let me just do my basic summary, and then we can kind of start with questions. Dr. Haseltine is a molecular biologist and

obstetrician/gynecologist. From 1985 to 2012, she served as Director of the Center for Population Research of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development at the National Institutes of Health. She retired in 2012 and was named an emerita scientist. Dr. Haseltine has worked for almost forty years as an innovator in health technology and founded Haseltine Systems in 1995.

She has actively promoted the advancement of women, and in 1990 founded the Society for the Advancement of Women's Health Research. Dr. Haseltine served as Vice President of the Board of Trustees for the Foundation for the History of Women in Medicine, and those years were 1998 to 2003. The Foundation named her winner of the Alma Dea Morani Renaissance Woman in Medicine Award in 2013.

So thank you very much for participating in the project.

[00:01:51]

Florence Haseltine: Thank you.

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, I also wanted to mention that you were interviewed in 1976 for an oral history project in—

Florence Haseltine: I think it was '77.

Tacey Rosolowski: Seventy-seven, through Drexel University, and you talked a lot about your family background and some of the early inspirations for getting into medicine. So I wanted to, as we strategized earlier, wanted to kind of leave that interview as its own topic area and kind of focus, begin in a slightly different place.

Chapter One

Early Influences on Intellectual Interests and Leadership

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine reflects on early characteristics that influenced her later development. She first talks about her childhood talks about her struggles with dyslexia (undiagnosed at the time) and hyperactivity and her strengths in mathematics and science. She recalls her discovery as a very small child that she saw the world differently than other people. She tells an anecdote about her mother's bitterness and her decision not to be like her mother.

Dr. Haseltine next focuses on her college years. She recalls a course on Major Social Problems, which helped her "learn how to be a person." She talks about the influence of a final exam question, "If you're in administration and the students are picketing, how would you manage it." She connects this question to a later experience when she was Director at the National Institutes of Health and Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, asked her to manage a situation with picketers.

[00:01:51]+

Tacey Rosolowski: So I wanted to ask about your reflections on when you first knew, not that you wanted to be a scientist, but that you had gifts in this particular area, real abilities in this area.

Florence Haseltine: The phrasing is a little awkward for me, but—

Tacey Rosolowski: Okay. Well, change it however you would like.

[00:02:46]

Florence Haseltine: When I was younger, I couldn't read very well. I've had a lot of trouble with reading. I read well below grade level until probably eleven and then I never—and I still don't read very well and carefully.

Tacey Rosolowski: And this is because of the dyslexia?

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, that I discovered when I was in medical school. But—

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, really? That was not diagnosed as such?

Florence Haseltine: Well, they didn't diagnose those in those days.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, I see.

Florence Haseltine: So, in fact, I think the definition of dyslexic and things came into the American medical forefront in the late sixties, early seventies. So there was no reason to do it. They were describing hyperactive kids in my medical school class, and they described a whole series of things and labeled it with dyslexia and, I think, hyperactivity. I remember saying in the middle of class, "That's me!" And the whole class was laughing.

But since then, I've been tested several times, and I have participated with a woman named Dr. Fink, who's written on dyslexia, and the Schaywitzs, as an example of someone who's dyslexic.

And also, the first award I ever got was from the Lab School for having overcome it. I call it the "Dumb Kid Functional Adult Award." Actually, of all the things that have happened to me, that was my most—it's the only award I keep out.

[00:04:17]

Tacey Rosolowski: Really? Why is that?

Florence Haseltine: Because it has more meaning in terms of being able to get things done, function, really. When you're a kid and you can't read, people think you're stupid, and you know you know things that they don't know, but you don't know to get them out or have them pay attention.

Tacey Rosolowski: Can I ask you, are there certain advantages in terms of mental processing that come from—

[00:04:51]

Florence Haseltine: I think there are, but it doesn't appear until later and only if you survive it. I could do math, which is sort of where I knew that I could do things that other people couldn't, because I was better as

a student as a young person, and math has always been sort of a fallback. And now that I do a lot of computer work, my mathematical skills got regenerated, not to the level they were when I was younger, but certainly good enough to be able to do coding and learn coding and things like that. But the knowledge as a small child that you see things differently from what other people say is true—

Tacey Rosolowski: Can you give me an example?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I think one of the first realizations was watching my mother, when I was about five or six, talk about something, and I knew that something was odd because she was very bitter. And I looked at her and said, "I don't want to be like that, I don't want to be bitter, and I'm going to intentionally forget bad things." And I have done that. It's not that I can't recall them occasionally, but with the exception of a few horrendous things that happen to everybody in life, for the most part, I'm not very good at remembering them. So as a result, as an adult, I'm not considered vindictive, because you can't be vindictive if you don't remember [insults] very well.

So the ability to do mathematics while I was in an environment which encouraged it as well, because I was in a science community, but also the fact that it had answers, you could

ask questions, you could frame things. So I've always sort of—that's sort of been my rock.

Tacey Rosolowski: What type of mathematics did you gravitate towards?

[00:06:51]

Florence Haseltine: Well, just applied, for the most part. I never got into theoretical mathematics.

Tacey Rosolowski: What about the attraction to the biological sciences?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I first sort of drifted into them in the sense that human genetics at the time when I entered it was really rather mathematical in the sense that it was you had this two things happen and the third thing happened, etc. Of course, it's gotten more complicated and convoluted with time, but it was a mathematical biology field. And in fact, when I went to grad school, I went in biophysics, not just in biology, but biophysics in the sixties was sort of a term for what's now called molecular biology. Many people were physicists and they didn't want to admit they were biologists. I think that's what—I think it was a snob thing.

[00:07:53]

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, there was very much a hierarchy.

Florence Haseltine: Yeah.

Tacey Rosolowski: What were the kinds of problems that you found yourself—and when are we talking about here?

Florence Haseltine: We're talking about the fifties and sixties.

Tacey Rosolowski: Fifties and sixties, okay. What about earlier? With the difficulties in reading, what were the subjects that really excited you?

Florence Haseltine: Well, the only one I could do was math. I couldn't do anything else.

Tacey Rosolowski: Hmm, interesting. Interesting.

Florence Haseltine: In fact, the library at Drexel has all my report cards, which I'm horrified to look at.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, interesting.

[00:08:28]

Florence Haseltine: But the advantage of them being there was when I had kids, they could never see them.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, what is it that you think gave you the ability to move beyond that obstacle that you carried within yourself?

Florence Haseltine: Well, as a child, every year you have to move forward. You know, backwards isn't an option. So I don't think that there was any specific thing. I know the teachers probably didn't always think I should pass in the first few years, and I probably, as I said, was passed into each new grade as a social promotion, because they just didn't want to have me around again. But that's not uncommon, we now know, for kids who were hyperactive or had learning difficulties. And they would often get rid of me by sending me to Special Ed class or something like that, and that was good. Actually, I liked that. The teacher there was good.

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me about the college, move to college.

Florence Haseltine: Well, I went to Berkeley, and I had flunked Subject A, which was the English requirement. Berkeley was great because I could take all math and physics courses, and since I had failed English, I was not allowed to take English. So I didn't pass it, an ability to take English, until I was a junior, because I flunked Subject A so many times. And finally, the professor there told me that if I just wrote

eight-word sentences and didn't use anything other than subject, object, and verb, I would be okay. And the best thing about that was I write very brief, short sentences even today, and I never have gotten in trouble for a memo in the government. [Rosolowski laughs] If you do not use adjectives and adverbs, you state facts, not [opinions].

[00:10:28]

Tacey Rosolowski: That is really a lesson in there, isn't it? [laughs]

Florence Haseltine: And I used to tell my staff, I said, "Don't write—," and if I got a paragraph that was a sentence, you know, some of them do, I'd send it back and said, "I can't read this." And I often would hand things back and say, "I can't read it. You know I can't read." Now, that's, of course, ridiculous, but it was a statement that "I don't want to read this stuff."

I have been known for writing the shortest emails, and recently I wrote an email and sent it to Bob Gallo, who I've been interacting with, and we were dealing with a certain person, and the person was becoming very convoluted. And I wrote one word to him, and I said, "Is blank" and then I put "manic?"

And he thought it was hysterical, because it had only—it stated everything, you know. I thought it was a perfectly normal email, because I sort of feel the subject line is the bottom line and

the only line. So email's been fantastic, and now that we have speech recognition and everybody misspells everything, it's even wonderful because I don't look like such an oddball anymore. I think all these misspellings are terrific.

[00:11:41]

Tacey Rosolowski: Hiding in the forest. [laughs]

Florence Haseltine: And this rug that you're sitting on, I had gotten this rug and I wanted to show my brother, Eric. So I took a picture of it, and the email had the picture and one word in the subject line saying "rug." And he had to interpret the whole thing, but he knew how to interpret it. He said, "Oh, she sent me a picture of the rug she's going to get. What do you get? She wants to know what I think of it." [laughs] And I find that a lot of people don't read that much of emails. They read the subject line.

Tacey Rosolowski: Absolutely. So let's go back to that time at Berkeley. How did you feel your learning evolved? What was going on there in terms of physics, in terms of math?

[00:12:24]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I mean, the physics and math classes, I just enjoyed them and I did my best, I got my best grades in them, but I will say from a point of view of learning to be a person, those were not the most

important classes. To learning how to think, yes, they were the most important, but to learn how to—I took a course called "Major Social Problems" in my senior year. You had to take some electives, and I took that one. And it was a time when Berkeley was starting to ferment, and my memory of it is, is that we were sitting in Sproul Hall. I remember getting rained on in Sproul Hall. And then the final exam was literally the best final-exam question I've ever heard, considering the time, and it proved to be very important to me later on. The final-exam question was, "If you're in administration and the students are picketing or doing something else," I can't remember the whole context of the question, "how would you manage it?"

And it turned out, of course, then later Columbia had people sitting in the office, etc., and I remember thinking—is that snowing in April? [It was snowing and we could see it out the window of the apartment.]

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, my gosh! It *is* snowing. Oh, how wonderful!

[00:13:50]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I guess that's one way of looking at it.

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, I'm living in Houston now, and I miss snow. [laughs]

Florence Haseltine: Well, that is snow, huge flakes of it.

Tacey Rosolowski: That's so cool. Well, fun.

Florence Haseltine: Anyway. [laughs] Excuse me.

Tacey Rosolowski: That's all right.

Florence Haseltine: So the question became very, very important much later on.

Tacey Rosolowski: How did you answer the question?

Florence Haseltine: Oh, I can't remember, but it made me think about it.

Tacey Rosolowski: It certainly did. I mean, you remembered—

Florence Haseltine: And that's probably the only question I ever have remembered. I don't remember math or physics questions because you solve them and you're on to the next.

Tacey Rosolowski: Right, and just to kind of date things for the record—

[00:14:30]

Florence Haseltine: 1964. It would have been in the spring, I think, of 1964. It was my senior year, so I was a senior between ’63 and ’64.

And what happened after that, of course, was the Free Speech Movement in the fall. I was at MIT by that point. But many years later, our society had an awards dinner at the Four Seasons in Washington. Of course, now remember this is almost thirty—almost forty years later. Let’s see. Thirty-some years later. And we had invited Eli Lilly to come to the dinner, and Secretary Shalala was at the dinner, and I think it was in her first term or first President Clinton’s term.

So what happened was, is Eli Lilly was involved in a lawsuit of diethylstilbestrol and its effect on vaginas, and there was a young woman whose sister had died from it, who was actually an employee of the federal—of HHS, and I know her very well, Susan Woods, and I’ve always thought quite highly of her. But Susan decided to picket the dinner because it turned out because she worked in HHS office, there was an additional set of challenges that were—and excitement and hysteria over the event.

So my daughter was there, my older daughter, Anna, and she said, “Mommy, wouldn’t you want to be out on the picket line?”

And I said, “Anna, if we hadn’t formed this society, she wouldn’t have a place to picket.” So from the concept of that—and then I said, “I came early because, no, I didn’t want to cross

her line." I knew and I think her complaint's legitimate. Eli Lilly, unbeknownst to them, had a lawyer who was going out and when women would have a play—there was a play also at the same time—about how horrible this was, he would get up and harass the people in the audience and the theater. That had to stop. So Eli Lilly didn't know about it.

[00:16:47]

But the interesting part of that is I got a call from Secretary Shalala. Now, here I am at NIH, three levels down, and I get a call from the secretary. It's not an insignificant call. [laughs] She said, "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

I said, "Well, you know, free speech is important." I said, "If she pickets it and if you don't show up because as secretary you feel uncomfortable, I'll just say that this is a free speech event and let it go. I'm not going to make a big deal about it."

[00:17:17]

And she said, "No, I'm going to show up, and you call the president of Eli Lilly and tell him I want him to sit at my table."

I called that minute, got on the phone, and got the president of Eli Lilly in Japan, because, you know, the Secretary of Health tells you to do something, you don't argue, and, besides which, I had a lot of respect for her as well.

So the dinner went off, everything was okay. I mean, there was some feelings of unpleasantness by one of the other individuals that was trying to use this to stir things up for their own political gain, but this is Washington. What do you expect?

Well, the end of it was Eli Lilly settled with the group, or at least with Susan. She donated her money to a wildlife preserve or something like that, and the harassment of the people stopped.

But, see, Eli Lilly had inherited this drug through several acquisitions. It was probably not all that—it was not on their radar screen until she did the picket. So, to me, the fact that the picket happened was worth it, the fact that I think things went rather well, but they would not have gone well if I had gotten emotionally triggered. But I wasn't, and it was because of that class. I mean, it was a direct line from that, and there have been other events along that line, other movements and things that I've been involved with. But, to me, that was, if nothing else, that whole semester was valuable for that one event.

Tacey Rosolowski: That's huge—

Florence Haseltine: It was huge.

Tacey Rosolowski: —leadership training. Huge.

[00:19:06]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, it was. I mean, I went to business school to get some of that training, but how to behave in that type of crisis, which it was becoming a crisis because of some people putting their fingers in and stirring the pot. But it came out very well in the end.

Tacey Rosolowski: I'm reminded, too, of the comment you made a little bit earlier, how you don't remember negative things and so you don't get vindictive, and that ability to kind of keep a cool head, not let those negative emotions come up. It sounds like that might be a piece of it too. Very interesting.

So that was the piece, as you said, being a human being and also the genesis of learning how to handle these sorts of crisis situations.

Chapter Two

A Love of Mathematics and Gadgets; Experiences in Graduate School and Medical School

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine talks about her graduate program at MIT, her decision to go Einstein College of Medicine, the atmosphere for women in these contexts, and lessons that she learned.

She begins by talking about her love of gadgetry and how it influenced her choice of dissertation topic during her graduate program at MIT. She reflects on her thinking and working styles, noting that she thinks in formulas and mathematics and uses a tactile memory for surgical processes.

Next Dr. Haseltine talks about applying to medical school and the attitudes that fellow students, faculty, and patients had about women medical students. She notes that she elected to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology because it would allow her to do genetics. Finally she describes the moment when she felt she made a transition from student to doctor. This experience also alerted her to the fact that she tended to assume that comments made to her were motivated by gender bias when they were not.

[00:20:10]-

Tacey Rosolowski: What about your thinking in mathematics and the sciences? How did your interests start to coalesce during college?

[00:20:10]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I don't think it—I mean, it was just that was just my major in college. I don't think there was any particular coalescing. I was just trying to get through the classes. But when I went to graduate school and worked on my PhD thesis, I have a habit then when I get bored, I wanted to tinker with a new toy. And in the lab at that time, there was an ultracentrifuge, and I wanted to use it. So I literally designed a project that I would have to use the machine.

So I did, and it turned out it worked, and that was the basis of my PhD thesis, that separated two types of cells.

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me what the title of your dissertation was.

Florence Haseltine: Well, I have it right over here, I think, but something transformation [unclear]. Remembering titles is almost as bad as remembering names. I know I had *a* copy somewhere, but God only knows where. [Title: "Heterogeneity of Competent Cultures of Bacillus Subtilis."

Anyway, the thing that was valuable about it was that these two cell types that I separated, one of them would take up DNA and one of them wouldn't. And the one that would take up DNA did it with a certain frequency or certain what are now called kinetics, or it was called kinetics then too. And most of my thesis on was on the kinetics of this DNA uptake incorporation.

[00:21:48]

Why that's important is that basically Michaelis-Menten Kinetics were just coming out, and my whole thesis was on what are called Michaelis-Menten Kinetics, and two-thirds of my thesis is mathematical formulas. So I used a biological thing, found something I could derive mathematically, and the professors who examined it understood what I did, but they didn't understand the

math. It was hysterical. But I had a lot of fun with it because once I got into the mathematical part, I could get totally absorbed.

Then when I went into OB/GYN, instead of being involved in mathematics, I became much more involved in gadgetry, which, to me, remember, it's applied math, it's not theoretical, and so it's applied sort of gadgetry. And I designed some—I took the first camera at Yale into the operating room, videocamera, and I actually gave the video [recording] to the young woman I did the procedure on.

And then I developed some camera techniques for videoing laparoscopy. Well, today, I mean, of course, that's routine. I had a very bad habit of being a little bit ahead of your time, and as in this great movie *The Big Short*, being ahead of your time is as bad as not doing it at all. So I think it merged into that.

Tacey Rosolowski: Mm-hmm. When I was looking over your previous interview, you were talking about some innovative surgical techniques that you were creating, and I wanted to ask you certainly about that, but also about the visual-thinking piece. Are you a visual thinker? Do you see things in pictures in your mind or in arrays? How does that all work?

[00:23:44]

Florence Haseltine: Somewhat between words and mathematics, and I outline problems in segments and try to find the relationships with them. So oftentimes they're formulas that I think in. It's kind of hard to know how one thinks, because what comes out is text.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting.

Florence Haseltine: So you have to have an interpreter along the line.

Tacey Rosolowski: But you don't sketch or draw pictures of things?

Florence Haseltine: I can't draw very well.

Tacey Rosolowski: So that's not a piece of it.

Florence Haseltine: Although I will say that having Photoshop and Illustrator does help.

Tacey Rosolowski: It is a great tool. But what about the surgical piece? I mean, obviously, you need to have a sense of the arrangement of the body, things you can't visually see, but see in your mind.

[00:24:29]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, but that becomes—I mean, you can interpret what other people are visually drawing. Like I used to do my own sewing, and so you can look at it and see how it fit. But, to me, that memory is in your hands of how things feel. Does it feel right? Does what your eye and your hand do seem to be—and that's part of the brain that I don't have good access to. I don't really know how I do it.

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me more about, well, first of all, the decision to go to medical school. Why was that?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I don't know if I reinterpret decisions. I was talking to one of my—I've recently reconnected with people I haven't seen in forty years. But I decided to go get a PhD, and then I think what the problem was, is I didn't know what the next step really should be, and nobody was helping me. It was during the Vietnam War, and the men, they were trying to keep all of them out of the war, and so once a guy finished his PhD, their PhD was done. "Let's get them a job in a place where they don't have to get drafted." That, I think, was part of it.

[00:25:54]

Part of it was also that I had gotten my PhD, so why bother getting anything else? I mean, I was told when I could have gotten

my PhD in four years, which was unusual at that time because the men were being kept as long as they could, that I didn't really have to finish up, I could stay working there, but not being offered a postdoc, but stay working on my PhD, because my [former] husband was going to stay longer. And, in fact, he stayed eight years, and I just got fed up and left and got out after five, ,which was actually pretty good in that time period. But I could have, with the work I'd done—I didn't do anything that was really that much more original in the fifth year. I just cleaned it all up and got the hell out.

So I wasn't—nobody approached me. My thesis advisor was on sabbatical. Nobody approached me and said, "This is what you do. This is how you do it. This is how you write a letter." I mean, so I didn't—I was sort of left—and I didn't have enough sense to ask for help. I didn't know that I could have gone to another professor and said, "Well, mine's gone. What should I do now? Where should I apply? What do you think I should do?"

Tacey Rosolowski: Were the men getting help?

[00:27:05]

Florence Haseltine: I don't know. I think that that was more part of the culture, but they all got jobs or all got postdocs, and some of the other women did too. I mean, it wasn't that—I think that I was just in a bad

situation with my thesis advisor gone and all the things. So I wasn't the type—I was more the type of person who, if I saw a block, would just say, "Okay, how do I get around the block?"

So I had also thought that maybe I'd go to medical school, because my girlfriend from when I was younger had made sure that I took organic chemistry, and when I applied to medical school, I got right in. I didn't have any trouble getting into medical school. So I didn't apply to that many.

So I went to Einstein, which was really one of the best decisions. I really loved that place. And I liked medicine. The reason I think I liked it so much, or at least when I went into the field, was it was active. You actually did things. And then I got—over the years, my lab was the third lab in the United States to have an IVF baby. So, I mean, I ended up getting involved in some of the really heavy-duty stuff of the eighties, early eighties.

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me about medical school. One theme we haven't picked up so far is the whole issue of discrimination against women. I mean, we can go back in time, too, but why don't we talk about what the atmosphere was like in medical school, both scientifically and for a student who was also a woman.

[00:28:46]

Florence Haseltine: Well, in the early medical training of medical school and early residency, the things that stood out as just you always had to justify why you were doing something. Once you got into medical school, it was assumed you'd go into family medicine or pediatrics or something like that. I wanted to go into OB/GYN, and the comment was really interesting is, "Why is somebody as smart as you," because, quote, I had a PhD from MIT, "want to go into a field as dumb as that?"

Why was the field thought of as dumb? Well, it turned out—so my answer was my usual flip answer, "Well, then I'll rise to the top of it fast." It turned out I did, but that was for a different—it may have been for that reason, but I don't think that was it. Because I learned quite quickly that the people in there were mainly men, in OB/GYN, were actually very, very smart. They were just not your internist type, for the most part. They were more—well, it's a surgical subspecialty, so it was sort of a cross between surgeons and internists. So they thought a lot about the problems of the women they took care of, but they also tried to do something. So that was one thing.

I remember my first delivery that I viewed. The young resident said, "Oh, maybe your daughter," who he delivered a girl, "will grow up and be a doctor like her."

And she said, "No, I want her to be a lady." [laughs] So that was sort of the attitude of the patients.

The medical school, I mean, it was my classmates that were more discouraging than the medical school. Einstein was—I was told there were only seven women in my class. Harriett McGurk, who is one of my classmates I see, and I just stayed with her when I was [and am] in New York, she's a developmental pediatrician, really wonderful person too. But the prejudices at the time were mainly to get what you were going to do, and the assumption, which is sort of to just put the women over there in those specialties. However, as you well know, OB/GYN is now 80 percent women, so women chose to go into it, and it was during a period of feminism. But I went into it because I thought it was an interesting field and that you could do genetics, the genetics of OB/GYN, and have turned out to be really fascinating.

[interruption]

Tacey Rosolowski: So when did you begin thinking in terms of the genetic dimension of OB/GYN?

Florence Haseltine: Oh, that was right there from the beginning.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, it was?

[00:31:48]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah. I mean, that was why I chose OB/GYN instead of pediatrics or internal medicine. It was a pretty easy decision.

Tacey Rosolowski: And what were the kinds of questions you were interested in looking at?

Florence Haseltine: Nothing specific, just genetics in general, and I don't think any specific—I didn't have a question like, "My mother died of cancer, so therefore I'm going into it." I know that I decided not to go into psychiatry, which also has a lot of interesting genetics, but is still much further from elucidation, but, of course, it wasn't clear at that time that it was going to be so hard. But I didn't want to go into something where I knew I'd focus only on manic-depressive illness, so I just avoided it. But that was the only other field that was somewhat interesting. Also, I can't sit still. I would have been a terrible psychiatrist.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, you said that your time at Einstein was just great. Tell me why.

[00:32:41]

Florence Haseltine: Because they treated you like you're an adult. They did not treat you like a child. I mean, I went in, I told them I didn't have any money for medical school. The guy said, "Well, isn't your father willing to contribute?"

I said, "He's not a Jew."

They said, "We understand," and they got me scholarships and got me a job. I got a job. Well, actually, I got my own job, but it was in a lab of somebody who wanted me to separate the bacteria so they could do the experiment, based on my PhD work. So I was earning $4,000 a year for the first year and a half or so, and then I went on to the clinical service.

But I was treated well. I mean, you're treated with a good amount of respect at Einstein. At least I certainly was, and most of the kids in my class were, I think.

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me about the big lessons learned during that time. What were some big ways in which you evolved as an adult there?

Florence Haseltine: This is going to sound silly, but it was a transformation from a student or into the indoctrination as a physician, and it happened the following way. I was a medical student. I used to go over to the Jacobi Hospital Emergency Room, and there was a wonderful intern there named Arnie Abramson. He later became dean at the

University of Toronto. But one day I was with him and I was just tailing him like a little puppy dog, and he said, "Oh, we've got to get the urine on this person. Ask the nurse to do it." And I went in and I was going to do it, and he said, "I told you to ask the nurse."

[00:34:26]

And I said, "Well, I can do it."

And he said, "No, that's her job." And he just said, "Ask the nurse." And I did, and that was the indoctrination in that—and my feeling was, is I didn't want to ask another—he didn't know what was going on with me. What was going on with me is I didn't want to ask another woman to do something like that. But, in fact, what he was telling me was I was now a doctor and that was not my role. And that was a tipping point, so to speak, that you learned how to delegate, even if you could do it. If there was somebody else who was responsible for it, let them do it. Don't take their job away from them. It was not a sexist—it was not a statement that she's inferior or you're inferior. It was a statement that there are different roles that under normal conditions you don't cross, and that was actually extraordinarily important and always has been.

[00:35:29]

So that, to me, was the—his stating it that way, not as a fact both of you are females, but you're a [different] female, that I was

a doctor. I was not being considered—I was considering it a female issue. And there were times in my residency when I would get—somebody would say something that was outrageous, and I would assume it was because I was a woman, and I would let them have it. I mean, I used to say I didn't have a chip on my shoulder; I had a log. And that happened during my residency when sometimes people would say, "Well, do this," or do that, and I would assume they were saying it because it was a woman, when, in fact, they were saying it because I was the junior intern or something, or resident. But nevertheless, his statement to me, you know, converted me to being a doctor. I know that sounds crazy, but that's what it was. It's very simple.

Tacey Rosolowski: No, no, I think that's a great story, a very revealing story. Now, you said that became important later. What are some ways in which that—

Florence Haseltine: Well, it taught me how to delegate. But, one know, you thing you learned how to delegate—

[interruption]

[00:36:44]

Florence Haseltine: Because one of the most important thing you have to do as a boss is delegate. But if you delegate, you should never then second-guess how the person's going to do it. If you did not instruct them in the first place, and you just assumed they could do it and you told them to do it, and they did it, but they didn't do it the way you wanted, you know, tough. If you went and told them specifically how you wanted them to do it, and then they did it differently, you can correct them. But one of the things about delegation that I learned is most people don't know how. They try to micromanage, and you just simply can't do that all the time.

So I often have asked somebody to do something that was in their job description, and they did it very differently from the way I did it, but I don't complain. And oftentimes, and many times, it's almost always adequate, and many times it's better than I would have done. But when I spot a micromanager, it's very hard to work in environment—my boss at NIH was a micromanager, and he couldn't keep his hands off things. After he and I would have a talk, I'd go back and talk to my staff, which is what line of command is. And he would then call them and change the orders. So what I did was I went to my good old psychiatrist and said, "This is driving me crazy."

[00:38:11]

He said, “Well, why don’t you try taking them with you.” And I always did after that. I took my branch chiefs to meetings with him, and they would be so excited they’re meeting the boss, which they only got to do two or three times a year. [ ] They would tell him everything they were doing, and I would pretend I wasn’t paying attention, but I would also learn what my staff was doing, because they were going to be much more revealing to him about details that I might not know. Then he would tell them, but he could never second-guess it after that. And I learned to just feign indifference, and it worked very well for many years. In all the other centers, they were upset. Their branch chiefs were upset because they never got to go see the boss. But it would have solved a lot of problems if everybody had done that.

Tacey Rosolowski: That’s very creative problem-solving, for sure.

Florence Haseltine: Well, I mean, my boss was not a malignant guy. He just was a micromanager.

Tacey Rosolowski: Do you want to name this person?

Florence Haseltine: Well, it wouldn't be hard. His name is Duane Alexander. He was the director of the Institute for twenty-five years. It would be kind of hard not to know who he is.

Tacey Rosolowski: Sure. Other lessons learned during that time at Einstein?

[00:39:21]

Florence Haseltine: Probably, but, you know, they all merge into your whole medical experience, so, I mean, I really—I just know that I was very happy there.

Tacey Rosolowski: I was interested in your comment that when people made comments to you, that you tended to interpret them as being based on gender, when they may very well not have been, and that's not to say, obviously, that there wasn't a sexist climate.

[interruption]

Tacey Rosolowski: Okay. Why don't I pause the recorder real quick.

Chapter Three

An Experience with 1970s Feminism and Medical Care for Women

After talking about the problems associated with being a token woman on job interviews during the late 80s and early 90s, Dr. Haseltine discusses her connection with feminism and the Women's Movement in the 1970s and talks about an important experience working with feminists at the Boston Women's Health Collective (1973 – 1975). She worked at the Collective each week, helping set up better care for women. (She was paid $25/week.) She talks about challenges of working with non-medical feminists. After noting that women who invent equipment were/are not taken seriously, she talks about the impact of this experience. Notably, she learned about the aims of feminism in working with medicine.

[Begin File 2]

Tacey Rosolowski: All right. We're back after about a couple-minute break.

[00:00:03]

Florence Haseltine: But oftentimes also the problem with statements is sometimes I won't realize that they're being effective because I'm female or a gender assumption is being made. So you're stuck both ways. I think that later there were a lot of things that were happening because I was female. I mean, during the period of the late eighties, early nineties, when they wanted to have women interviewed for everything, I was a token on many, many job interviews, and finally that sort of stopped in the mid-nineties. And you know you're a token and all kinds of things show it, but you figure you might as well go through with it, because if not, that maybe it'll help people in the future.

And one of the things is, is that about ten years after I started doing it, women that I knew well but were just about ten to fifteen years younger, started getting those positions. And since I know what women did ahead of me influenced what I could do, you can only hope that what you did helped some of them. It's only rewarding in that sense. In the sense that you missed opportunities and things you didn't get, it's not rewarding at all. I mean, it's painful. But there are a couple women who've gotten good positions that I knew that just were somewhat younger, and I've always written them and said, "Congratulations. This makes me feel better."

Tacey Rosolowski: How many women were in your medical school?

[00:01:40]

Florence Haseltine: I've been told seven.

Tacey Rosolowski: And did you have friendships with them? Were they easy to work with?

Florence Haseltine: Well, no, not too much. I mean, I did have friendships with about—there were probably two men and one woman. The one woman, Harriet, I'm now still friends still with. The two men I've lost pretty much track of.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, did you and Harriet kind of compare notes about being women and—

Florence Haseltine: Not really. I think we became friends much later.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting.

Florence Haseltine: I mean, I always respected her. She was one woman in—she was actually the one person in class that everybody trusted, and she was quite trustworthy, a very good person.

Tacey Rosolowski: So did you have any kind of support system at the time about issues about being a woman or—

[00:02:18]

Florence Haseltine: Oh, yes. There was Women's Liberation Movement then, and I had a group of women. We would meet. None of them were medical students. Most of them were wives of the doctors. And, you know, one of the things that was very interesting to me and has always been interesting is that when I grew up, went to undergraduate, then went to graduate school and medical schools, most of the women I dealt with were very smart. And if you realize that many of those women in ten or fifteen years after that

would have gone into professions, but they were smart women, they were married to fairly smart men. I didn't know there were dumb people until I actually was in an environment where the people were hired from the community to work. My whole thing was I thought everybody in the world was—you know, that you could have conversations with anybody. So the word "smart" wasn't really even part of the vernacular.

When I gave my fiftieth high school reunion speech, I said, "You know, you guys were all smart, and I didn't even appreciate it." I mean, none of us did. We just thought—you know, we all had working families, we all could read, we could all—you know. Our families, where I grew up, and then college and everything else, education was considered important. So you were dealing with a group of people—and maybe "smart" isn't even the right word, but "articulate" and "educated" is probably better. But, in fact, I didn't know that there were people who couldn't do things until much later in life, and that was a big eye-opener.

[00:04:00]

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me about this support group of women during the Women's Movement.

Florence Haseltine: Well, we just talked about the things you talked about then, how you're expected to cook and how you're expected to clean and do

things. I don't think the topics have probably changed that much. But it was a group of people I could meet with. I don't specifically remember anything dramatic happening during that. It was just a nice group of people.

And then I worked with people in the lab, so there was a lab group of people, and then I had a few friends left over from grad school who were in the area, and so I spent time with them. But I don't remember spending study time with really any of the medical students.

Tacey Rosolowski: What was your relationship with the Women's Movement and with feminism at the time?

[00:04:42]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I thought it was a great idea. [laughs] I mean, people had thought they accused me of being a feminist, and I could hardly object to that label, sort of badge of honor, if you ask me.

During that period, I remember once my mother sent me a book on how to be assertive and not aggressive. I said, "Mom, I passed assertive a long time ago." It was just I had bought into the American idea that things should be equitable, and it's a very powerful idea in this country. It's not true in other countries. But later in life, getting women included in clinical trials was based on

an equitable argument, not on—I mean, we could base it on science as well, but it was equity that won the day.

So the fact that things weren't fair and that there was a way of getting through the system anyway was very powerful, and I think that I've always been interested in getting—I guess over time it's morphed into using everybody's brain power and things like that, but that wasn't it at the beginning. That was just I wanted the same chance to—my feeling was I wanted the same chance to do something that they did, so therefore everybody else would want the same chance I had. It was an equitable, equitable argument, and so that's why I think mathematically, you know.

[00:06:16]

So I think that it was more a focus on opportunity, and I was right, there weren't the same opportunities and they weren't handled the same way, but in many ways, I was probably blind to some of those blocks. I just knew I wasn't getting help, but I didn't know other people weren't getting help as well.

But the whole Feminist Movement of the early seventies, late sixties, was really a group of people trying to get control, and the classic example, of course, is *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. My sister-in-law, Pat Gercik, wrote—was in the first edition, was part of the first edition. She was still in Boston. And I was in, I think, the third edition, but they kicked me out of the editorial board because

I approved of the birth control pill. And for some reason, the Boston collective thought that that was a male plot and not realizing that it was a woman who started the whole pill thing in the first place, it was a very strange time and assumptions about what had happened in contraception.

Tacey Rosolowski: That's very odd. Why would they think that the pill was a male plot?

Florence Haseltine: I don't know all the reasons. I at one time paid more attention to it. But it was to control women's fertility. It doesn't have to make sense all the time. I mean, I'm sure there's a whole literature on it somewhere. It just was nonsense to me. But that's the difference. Once you become a physician, there's a whole medical folklore that you have.

And I was selected as the first doctor for the Boston Women's Health Collective Healthcare Clinic, I think it was on Hampshire Avenue in [ ] Cambridge, and I remember having an argument with forty women and me, arguing about how you do a pap smear. They didn't want it done the way it was done. They thought it was, I don't know, outrageous or something. They just didn't like it. And I said, "If we're going to do a pap smear and it's going to be legitimate, we have to do it the way it's described." And I

remember having to defend the pathological—I mean pathology criteria for how a pap smear was done, against forty-five other women. I mean, it was really an interesting evening.

[00:09:05]

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, were these other—but these weren't other doctors?

Florence Haseltine: These were all feminists from the Boston Women's Health Collective.

Tacey Rosolowski: But they weren't doctors?

Florence Haseltine: No. They just didn't like it. So that was, again, where you realize you're a physician, you're not just a female. You may be a female physician, but you're professionally a physician. And I had a lot of arguments like that. It was a pretty interesting time.

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me what did you learn from that? What was the takeaway from that experience?

[00:09:36]

Florence Haseltine: Well, the takeaway was because I was a female and a feminist, I was expected to have certain ideas, and I didn't. For one thing, I became a doctor, in part, to get my hands on the technology, not to

get my hands—I did not become a doctor express my feminism. So it was a different goal.

So, for example, when I finally had children, I wanted elective C-sections, because I evaluated the situation and said, "Once they're cooked, get them out." I preferred surgery to having labor and delivery, which I found problematic. And just having had a daughter who went through a forty-eight-hour labor and postpartum hemorrhage because they left stuff in, I think I was justified. She was the one with the C-section. Well, both mine were.

And I caused a scandal at Yale at the time, because I was the first person to ever request it there, that was known. I'm sure maybe people had requested it in the past.

[00:10:33]

But mainly I was a physician and I was a technologist. I was not a physician who was promoting feminism. I was a feminist physician, but that's not the same as a physician feminist or however you want to phrase it. In fact, I had wanted—I thought the most important thing about being a physician was you get your hands on all the technology. You can make decisions about things that you can't make if you don't have that information. You can't design new equipment. You can't do all kinds of stuff.

Now, the problem with being a woman designing equipment is nobody paid too much attention. I was always classified, if you talk to my other fellow physicians, as a person who was very technological and geeky, and by making me geeky, they could ignore me. When I was at Yale in the eighties and the Mac came out, I wrote a program for filing electronic medical records, and I had my patients fill things out, and I had it so it generated automatic letters. But Yale wouldn't take me seriously, because I was, as we say, a "goyle."

So there were ramifications from that. Now, again, you know, we're thirty years from then. They still don't have good electronic medical records, so it's, again, being too far ahead of your time.

[00:11:56]

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, you had mentioned a couple of times—well, actually, let me reserve this question, because we haven't really talked about that theme in depth of you designing equipment, and that's obviously going to become important later. But let's continue with the feminism, then we can go back to that and kind of deal with it all at once. So when were you working with this Boston Women's Health Collective?

Florence Haseltine: That would have been probably—well, when I was a resident, they wanted to get a woman physician, and there clearly weren't very many then. So that would have been probably '71, '70—no, no, '73, '74, '75, in those years, probably '74, '75.

I mean, it was a great experience. I highlight some of those conflicts because they were conflicts within the community of women themselves. There was nothing—they're examples, but they're not unique. I mean, I learned a tremendous amount from those women. And, in fact, our first exams, we examined the women who were working there, and I was doing a physical exam on a woman, and I couldn't hear good breath sounds in her lungs. And I said, "There's something going on here. We need to get an x-ray." It turned out she had metastatic sarcoma from a lesion on the foot and died shortly later.

[00:13:23]

Then one of the next times I was doing it, I listened to one of the women's hearts, and then I realized I didn't even need a stethoscope; I could hear it from across the room. She had a growth in the ventricle of her heart, and we sent her—and she had open heart surgery and she was okay. So, I mean, those were things that just a regular clinic in the middle of Hampshire with young, quote, "healthy" women turned up stuff.

And then I remember an older woman came in, and her uterus was falling out and prolapsed, and I said she needed a hysterectomy. And she said, "Oh, thank God somebody said that." And all the women were *horrified* that I would recommend a hysterectomy. That was considered the worst thing in the world. But to me, it was also a good introduction for them that medicine wasn't just—we want it to be one way, but it isn't always that way.

Tacey Rosolowski: So I understand, was the kind of party line of feminism at the time is that the medical profession was basically designed by men, for the convenience of men and against—was that the attitude, was that the suspicion?

[00:14:31]

Florence Haseltine: It may have been part of it. I was not analyzing it that way. I understood the fact that they wanted to get—I understood *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. I still think that's one of the great books. I consider that really the beginning of the Women's Health Movement. I mean, it's more complicated than that, but that was the crystallization of it.

I think that they just wanted so much for everything to be what they would consider normal or okay or something, but not realizing that medicine really was there for a reason. So it was an eye-opener for everybody. I don't know what particular

philosophy—I'm not much into—I don't know a lot about feminist theory. I know that since that period, books and courses in women's history and things—I used to lecture in women's history courses, but I haven't done that in so long, I have no idea what a lot of the current thinking is. I would be extrapolating too far.

Tacey Rosolowski: So you worked with the Collective for a couple years, and what was your schedule? Did you go in—

Florence Haseltine: There was one night a week or every other week or something. Depended on my on-call schedule. I tried to keep—I think it was Tuesday night I tried to keep free.

Tacey Rosolowski: So what did you feel you'd accomplished at the end of your time working there?

[00:15:59]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I think I did what they wanted, which was get the clinic going. What I accomplished for myself was it was a huge learning experience outside of an academic center where people really came to get care. I didn't get that again until I worked at the—when I was at Yale, they assigned me to the Connecticut Healthcare something, CHCP, practice or—and that was an HMO. And I *loved* working at the HMO. You had other doctors there. If

something came up, you could take the issue over there. It was great.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, it sounds like a pretty amazing experience.

Florence Haseltine: I remember they paid me $25 a night. I mean, it was an exceedingly valuable experience for me. And I liked the women. I mean, some of the people I stayed in contact with for many, many years. One of them became a psychiatrist. Barbara Orrak became a psychiatrist, and my daughter Elizabeth went to see her when she wanted to go see a psychiatrist because [Barbara] was practicing in New Haven.

Chapter Four

Residency, Fellowship, and Leaving the Yale University Faculty

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine summarizes professional obstacles she encountered after medical school. She first talks about how male students in her residency program at Boston Hospital for Women (1973-l976) hazed female students and shares her strategies for dealing with this. She talks about working with surgeon Raymond Reilly (a role model) and speaks notes that Ken Ryan was also supportive of her during these years.

Next she discusses her fellowship period working the laboratory of Dr. Leon Rosenberg in the Department of Human Genetics at the Yale University School of Medicine (1980-1981); she was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Pediatrics at Yale (1976-1982). Dr. Haseltine notes that she did "unwise things" that she "paid for later," most importantly by being denied tenure (which led to her leaving academia for a position with the National Institutes of Health). She then tells anecdotes to demonstrate the importance of respect in the workplace and the importance of credentials to promotion and reputation in a field. She explains how she was able to get the support of men she was leading at the NIH.

Tacey Rosolowski: I'm just looking at dates here. So you were a resident at Boston Hospital for Women—

[00:17:23]

Florence Haseltine: It's now called the Brigham and Women's.

Tacey Rosolowski: Brigham and Women's, okay. Why did you choose to go there for your residency?

Florence Haseltine: I didn't. I was a resident at Penn, and my husband got a job at MIT. So one of the people at Penn, Celso-Ramón Garcia, said, "Go to Harvard. Ken Ryan is just coming as the new chief. He

will watch out for you, and you'll be his first resident that he selects." I may have been his first or his second, but he didn't have many.

And Ken interviewed me and he said, "I've had trouble with women residents in the past."

And I said, "You're guaranteed to have trouble with me."

But he thought enough of me that later on he and a guy named Sam Yen put me up for the Institute of Medicine, and I got in on the first year.

Tacey Rosolowski: Wow.

[00:18:20]

Florence Haseltine: And he was a very powerful man. I did not appreciate that he—basically, I later learned he had told the male residents that if they gave me trouble, they would have to answer to him. So he did the one thing that was important but not intrusive, and that was he set down the laws with the males. Because the women before me, one of them had not finished and another went to another place and then committed suicide. In fact, she's in the Archives. Now, she didn't commit suicide at that point. She committed it a few years later. But she's in the Archives, and that's Valentine Donahue.

Tacey Rosolowski: So what did the men do that made life intolerable?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I'm sure there were all the usual sexist comments, but by that time I was sort of inured to them, and I handled them by being just more obscene than they were. There was one resident who finally said, "Florence, just don't say anything in the OR," because I could be pretty gross. I was pretty good at it, and I'm very fast at one-liners, so it was hard to put me down.

Also I had a philosophy that if men or somebody said something outrageous to me that was sexist and I didn't know how to answer it, I would think of the answer later, I would hold that, and the next time somebody said it—because there was always a next time—I would flip that answer up. The classic example is in that period we were called "castrating women," and I would say, "Yes," and bare my teeth. So that stopped them. I mean, I would never say I wasn't. I would agree and take it to the next step, and I used to embarrass the hell out of them.

[00:19:59]

When I went to Yale—well, when I was at Harvard, one of the attendings, I was talking to him in his on-call room, he had called me in or something, and he dropped his towel, exposing himself, and I didn't know what to say, but I thought about what I should have said. When I was at Yale, the first night I was on call as an attending—now, remember, I'm the first woman they've had

as an attending. I'm the first person on call. I'm on call, and I'm sitting in the on-call room, which is the male room, only for males. There was only one great big [bedroom]. We had to sleep there. So I'm sitting in the doctors' lounge watching TV, and this one guy comes through, drops his towel, and I looked at him and I said, "I see you're male. Does it work?"

[00:20:46]

And the next day at the station with all the nurses, I said, "Oh, hi, Harry."

And the nurse said, "Why'd you call him Harry?"

I said, "Well, he took all his clothes off and he was all hairy," and it went through the place *[snaps fingers]* like that. And they did never mess with me again.

I mean, that was how I would handle it. I would just take it to the next step, and because I'm not easily embarrassed—not that I can't be, but I'm not easily, so that they couldn't get past it. And the main trick was—and I always told the young women this, I said, "If you hear something that you can't answer, think of the answer, because somebody's going to do it to you again. You may be new to them, but they're not new to you." And that was sort of the way I handled it. People—I think that there was a certain fear level when I walked in a room, that you didn't know what I was

going to do, and that worked quite well in my favor. It worked against me at other times, but it worked okay in that situation.

Tacey Rosolowski: What were the high points for you of that fellowship or with your residency? That was from 1973 to 1976.

Florence Haseltine: Actually, the highest point—this is another one of those strange stories about your initiation. I used to operate with a guy named Raymond Reilly every time I got a chance. He was a young doc then. He later become the most popular doc for people to operate with. But he was from Ireland, he was a little bit of an outsider, but he was a phenomenal surgeon. So I'd tail him around like a puppy dog, which is what you should do if you want to get something from somebody. So I would be in the operating room, operating with him every chance I got.

[00:22:28]

In fact, one day Ken Ryan called me in and said, "Florence, you've done forty-two vaginal hysterectomies."

I said, "No, sir, I've done sixty-some." [laughs] It was that kind of thing.

But I did most of them with Ray. And one day he said to me, he said, "You can operate today. You couldn't operate yesterday."

I thought I was operating just fine, but with me, I can't do things until I can totally do them, and that's a dyslexic trait. It takes me sometimes longer to physically get to do something, but once I do it, it [ ] flows. And that was the key moment then when Ray said to me, "You're a surgeon."

Tacey Rosolowski: Wow.

[00:23:12]

Florence Haseltine: So, I mean, those are the high points. And also Ray always thought I would be chairman of a department. I emailed him recently and said, "Well, I never did become that."

He said, "No, but you turned them down," and things like that.

And I laughed and I said, "Well, that's true."

But basically, it was nice to have someone who had faith in you. And his group gave me great big silver bracelet when I left, and I still have it. It was very important that there was someone who would do it.

Now, what I didn't know was that Ryan was so much behind me the whole time. I mean, for whatever reason, he stuck with me. I mean, I would go with him to—he would often ask me to do things for the residency, like go to public meetings and say how much we needed to combine the two hospitals. So I'd always put

on my little white skirt, you know, my little white jacket, and off I'd go, and then afterwards I'd ask him if we could all have a raise, and things like that.

But if I think about it, he did ask me to do it, and I always had assumed it was because he wanted to take a woman with him, but, in fact, he may have asked me because he thought I could do it. It was probably both, because [later] there were other women. After me, a few other women did join the program, and they weren't treated that way.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting. And he wasn't asking a man to come along. [00:24:35]

Florence Haseltine: No man, no.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, interesting. Well, it may have been, too, that he saw you had a capacity for administrative work.

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, I mean, I won't know, because he died before I could be properly grateful to him.

Tacey Rosolowski: What were the two hospitals that were merging?

Florence Haseltine: It was Brigham's and the Lying-in were merging to one. They would probably have gotten rid of the name "Women's" except that Women's had all the money.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, after you did your residency, you, from 1976 to 1978, were a fellow in the Department of Human Genetics at Yale. So tell me about that.

Florence Haseltine: Well, that was complicated. I was both assistant professor in OB, but I had time to do fellowship, and I worked out of two different labs. First, I worked out of a lab of Leon Rosenberg, and this becomes very important to my life story. The second was I worked in Frank Ruddles' lab for a while, making mosaic mice, and that was a different experience. There it was a very technical one where I learned how to fuse mouse embryos and inject mouse embryos and things like that. So the two are sort of separate, but when I worked in Rosenberg's lab, it turned out I did some very unwise things, which I paid a deep price for later. Because of my sharp mouth, I would criticize him. If he said something that was wrong or didn't say something right, I would correct him, and I probably did it in public.

[00:26:33]

I remember one day we were all on an elevator, and I was with another friend and we were being obnoxious, and Dr. Rosenberg was on it. And I said, "Lee—." Early on he says, "Yes, call me Lee or Dr. Rosenberg." And I made the crack, "Leon's a four-letter word." [laughs] I mean, really dumb stuff.

Then in clinic when we would see a patient, there was a fifty-year-old woman that was having trouble sleeping and was sweating a lot, and he wanted to order all these fancy tests because she had a metabolic disease. I said, "Order an FSH. She's going through menopause." And those were sort of public affronts to him.

[00:27:13]

He became dean, and I later realized he and my chairman together—my chairman didn't support me—denied me tenure. And I later interviewed him and asked why we didn't get along, because he couldn't stand me, and he said it was because I would correct him and I was right. But that was after he had made his suicide attempt and I'd written him a long letter and things like that.

I later interviewed people who I called my mentors and my tormentors. I had a list of questions. I had to write a chapter for a book on mentoring, and I didn't want to write another one and get a mentor. So I asked—I just wanted to know why people do it. So

I interviewed people I knew had helped people, and he and settled the battle, but long after, you know.

So my ability to be flip kept me out of some trouble, but got me into other trouble, big trouble, because that was why I had to leave Yale and come to NIH. I was told I could go on the clinical track. And my chairman was such a weak, miserable, nasty, shitty human being—excuse it—we will leave his name out. He didn't support people. He would put his name on every paper. He was horrible. Didn't support me, even though I had a renewal grant and all these standard things you're supposed to have for tenure. But it was Leon who told me that he was the one who had said no. I'd always thought it was the other guy, but the other guy, I later realized, just didn't have the guts to go to the mat for his faculty.

[00:28:51]

Tacey Rosolowski: So that's such a complicated situation. If you were to say on the basis of this situation you're going to give advice to a junior faculty member, what would you say?

Florence Haseltine: I don't know what you can say in that situation. I think the one thing is that there's something I also learned a little later that could be applied, and that's the idea of respect. I never understood why all the women I worked with weren't at the same level I was, you know, level playing field, other than the doctor, the role play. But

one day after I got the job at NIH, I was at a meeting—I think we were in Chicago—and I go to the bar with one of my younger colleagues. He's from the South, a very fine man named Bert Peterson, and Bert and I are having a drink at the bar. And I said, "You know, Bert, I really don't want to take the Reproductive Endocrine Boards." I said, "I've already got this job at NIH. I don't need it for anything."

And he said, "Yes, you have to take it because you have to show respect for the field."

I was going to be up in November. I said, "What do you mean?"

[00:30:05]

And he said, "Well, you know, men rank each other by status. Men will get together and they'll automatically rank each other. It's almost a given, this person at this status, this person at this status, this status. If you don't take the boards, you will be being disrespectful to them. Take the boards, and whether you pass or fail, you will at least have shown that you accept the system. It's a matter of respect." And he said, "We have different levels of respect." That was another critical piece for me for the rest of what happened since then, is understanding that there's a hierarchy of respect, and it can be done in many ways, but if there's something to be measured, you have to go for it.

Now, I took the exam, I passed it, and my chairman, who had been such a jerk, flunked it and went through the whole profession, 'She passed and I flunked'. So it was not only that I passed that I gained—I didn't lose respect. I would have lost—I did not gain respect by doing it; I would have lost respect by not doing it.

And I will tell you that when I took over the job—and this is a very, very common story—when I took over the job at NIH, I was only forty-two, and I had been to a lot of meetings, and a lot of the men there had sort of propositioned me or possibly propositioned me. It was common. I mean, there weren't that many women, they were all men, we're all gynecologists. It wasn't offensive; it would just happen. But when I got power, it looked like I was going to control their budget, I noticed they were all avoiding me at the next meeting. So I said, "This is really dangerous."

[00:32:00]

So what I did was I invited all of them to breakfast one morning. Now, I don't think any of these men know why that they were invited. They were invited for two reasons. One is I had to get their buy-in, but, two, they had all avoided me during the meeting for whatever reason, but, I mean, part of it was, you know, the female-male power thing. And none of them propositioned me at this meeting. I will tell you that the day I got that job, that stopped. And that's how, incidentally, women should know they

have power. I don't know if it's true today, but men, once you get power—unlike men, which is an aphrodisiac—with women it's a terrifying thing.

So what happened was, is I had breakfast with them and I said, "I asked you to come to breakfast because I'm going to need your help. In this new job, I'm not very experienced in administration and at NIH," and I said, "but our fields have got some problems, and I'm going to want to call upon you to help me get through them." And I said, "I just had you to breakfast so that I will ask you that if I call you, please answer the phone." And that was it. Paid for breakfast. Most valuable thing.

[00:33:11]

I don't know if that turned out to be how everything worked, but I will tell you that my profession was behind me the entire time I was at NIH. If I had trouble, I called them. They called their congresspeople, they called my boss, they called the head of the NIH. They were a wonderful group of people. They were all men at that time, all of them. But I won't say that—I don't know if that breakfast turned the table, was important, anything, but it defined that I asked for help and they gave it. I'll say most of the things I was able to accomplish in getting OB/GYN at NIH, OB/GYN considered a lot stronger, more money for it, was all because of their support.

Tacey Rosolowski: Wow. Wow.

Florence Haseltine: And there were people who I called. There was one guy who was chairman at Duke, I used to call him and say, "I've got to get you up here. We have to have another gynecologist on this committee." He would fly up on a moment's notice. I barely even knew him. I don't even know if he *was* at the breakfast. But one of the things I know is that because I had that breakfast, I felt comfortable calling everybody, you know.

Tacey Rosolowski: Works both ways.

Florence Haseltine: Yeah.

[00:34:28]

Tacey Rosolowski: Absolutely. Well, obviously we're at the point of you going to the NIH, but I wanted to make sure that we had covered everything before then okay. Was there anything else from your residency, internship, any of that kind of professional development portion of your career that you wanted to add at this point?

Florence Haseltine: Well, probably things will come up, but I can't think of anything right now.

Chapter Five

The Value of Business School Experience

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine summarizes the experience she gained by taking courses at the Yale School of Organization and Management (1983-1984). She first talks about jobs she applied for during her tenure process and explains how the NIH position came to her attention: Director, Center for Population Research, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health (1985-2012). This position involved managing the pool of grants available in reproductive biology.

[00:34:28]+

Tacey Rosolowski: Okay. All right. Well, tell me, then, how this NIH job came about for you.

Florence Haseltine: What happened was I was at the point where I was up for tenure, but you have to apply for other jobs when you're doing that. Now, what had happened is I'd had a sabbatical year, and I took it by going to business school, because I knew that I wanted to move ahead in the profession and I knew that I had to have administrative experience, but running a lab was not going to do it, and I wasn't going to get to be head of any of the divisions. So by going to business school, I stated—I went for a year in, I think, '82, '83. I didn't get a degree or anything; I just audited.

Tacey Rosolowski: And which school was this?

[00:35:45]

Florence Haseltine: School of Organization and Management at Yale. It was wonderful. I had a great time there too. I also learned some lessons there that helped me later on.

So I'd taken a year of business school on my sabbatical, so I had something on my record, and I don't put it on my CV because I didn't get a degree. I mean, I may have if there was a year of something. Again, I was ahead of my time, because later doctors went en masse.

So I started looking for other jobs, and I was being seriously considered for chairman at, I think, Davis and possibly Minnesota, although I think Minnesota may have come a little later. And I did get offered the job at Davis, which I eventually turned down because I got the job at NIH.

Tacey Rosolowski: And when you say "Davis," this is—

Florence Haseltine: University of California, Davis.

[00:36:46]

Tacey Rosolowski: And this would be the Department of—

Florence Haseltine: OB/GYN. So I thought going to work for the government for a few years was—and it turned out more than a few, but that's what I

thought would be valuable. And also it was doing something that I knew I really would like to do, which is be in the middle of all the research, etc.

So I was applying for things, and across my desk came an envelope from NIH. Now, one thing is everybody opens envelopes from NIH. It's like if I want somebody to get their attention, I email from government. I may not do anything else, but you get attention. People don't delete that email.

So I got this letter, and it said apply, and I applied. And the application said it wants someone who's—this was in, I guess, '84 or something. They wanted someone who was associate professor or above, had NIH experience, meaning you sat on study sections—I'd done a few study sections—who had NIH grants—I had NIH grants—who had an interest and proven interest in women's health—I had written the book *Woman Doctor* and I was the only one who'd written any papers on women—[but did not have] administrative experience. Well, I'd gone to business school.

It turned out there were only two women in the country who fit that, myself and a woman named Gloria Sarto. Gloria is now retired at the University of Wisconsin and setting up a Woman's Center, and that woman is tough as nails. She is fantastic. She

was very important for many of us in the field, and she's been important for me at many times.

[00:38:36]

So I applied and I interviewed, and I was offered the job, and that's basically what happened. I got the job. I was offered the job the day after I was told I was denied tenure. So all of a sudden, all the people who said they recommended me for tenure, which I didn't believe, but I later think they probably did, because now I know the later dynamics of it, so now I've got rethink who I'm pissed at, basically. [Rosolowski laughs.] Actually, I think there was only one person I thought was lying, but he probably wasn't. Poor guy's now dead.

So everybody all of a sudden knew that I went from not having tenure to having—they thought I controlled all their money. It was hysterical. But what I did when I went to NIH is I didn't want people to think that I had a vendetta against any particular person. So you're allowed to state, for conflict of interest, grants that you will not manage. Well, for two years I think I was probably excluded from managing Yale anyway, but I gave a list of my friends and my enemies because you couldn't tell who was who. I mean, NIH didn't care. So I never managed any of their applications, and that was hard on my friends at times but it was

never—but my enemies couldn't—you know, they just were in the pool, and there were a few.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, let me ask you two questions. I mean, just so I'm clear, when you got that letter from the NIH, I mean, they had chosen you. They had specifically wanted you to apply.

[00:40:15]

Florence Haseltine: No, no. The letter that I got was just a generic letter, "This job is available."

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, okay, okay.

Florence Haseltine: I applied and then I was interviewed, and then I got the call saying that they were offering me the job.

Tacey Rosolowski: Okay, okay. And the second one was, when you got the job, what was the job?

Florence Haseltine: The job was the Director for the Center for Population Research, and it was supposed to be managing and doing all the things that were in there, the grant portfolio and making policy decisions and, you know, just being a manager and guardian of the pool of grants that came to that Center, in reproductive biology. It was trying to

also figure out what needed to be funded, what type areas needed to be improved, things like that.

Tacey Rosolowski: Were you excited about this job?

[00:41:11]

Florence Haseltine: Very.

Tacey Rosolowski: Why?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I'd grown up in the government service, so to me, that was a dignified service. It was also because of the timing. You get kicked in the ass one day, and the next day you get a good offer, it's kind of nice.

Tacey Rosolowski: Doesn't happen all that often. [laughter]

Florence Haseltine: No, it doesn't. Once in your life, but it's enough. And since it was really heavily research and I would have an influence on the profession, it was important to me because the profession of OB/GYN has always been very important. I thought it's a good profession.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, you said that when you were in your business school year, there were some real important lessons you learned.

[00:41:51]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, very, very important.

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me about that.

Florence Haseltine: Number one, this was a period of time where something called Tavistock was big, which was sort of a brutal psychological group dynamic training, I guess, is one way of looking at it. I don't know the overwhelming details, but I some of the philosophy was used at Yale. And then there was courses that were just rock solid, like accounting, which I loved, because, of course—and I was the first person to ever turn in homework from a computer.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, really?

Florence Haseltine: This was the eighties, and IBM was stocking the computer lab, but I was the only one to print out my homework. Anyway, and when I was taking accounting, one day all the students were complaining about how badly they did on the exam, and the professor, Bernie or Barney, his name was, said, "You're all complaining about the exam. You think you're so smart because you came to Yale or you

were good in the outside world. But I want you to know that a gynecologist in the class got a B-plus on the paper." Yay! [laughter]

[00:42:59]

Of course, what they didn't know was my favorite mathematical class, and the only question I'd missed was conversion of some European currency to American currency back, and I'd flipped it. That was what I'd done wrong.

Anyway, so you remember certain little things. I'll never forget the professor saying, "And a *gynecologist* in the class," as though we despicable human beings. Anyway, he used to live down the street from me. He was a good guy.

And then I took a course on corporate structure, which was very good because I learned how people think about corporations, and I can read org charts pretty quickly now and understand a lot more about them, and that's important if you're going to go into management.

But the third course that affected me quite a bit, again, like the course in sociology, was a course on group dynamics and how you behave in a group, and I learned—none of it would have been surprising if you'd been told in advance, but learning yourself is a really good way of doing it. And I learned in that class that I'm often used in a group to bring up unpleasant subjects. So what it

taught me was how to avoid being used by the group if it wasn't what I wanted. Because I don't have as much trouble as other people talking about the elephant in the middle of the table, but sometimes I don't want to talk about the elephant in the middle of the table. It's not my elephant.

[00:44:28]

So I learned to pull my seat back, and once I pulled my seat back, and finally I got to the point at staff meetings at NIH that I would even sit in the back of the room, because there was so much crap going on by that point that I just didn't want to be involved with it anymore. And I got the reputation, which happens, is that I'm going to say something unpleasant. So you just have to back off, and that course taught me how to do it, maybe not always in time, but taught me a lot about it, taught me how people are chosen, how people interrupt people, how—you know, but just a tremendous amount of awareness.

Tacey Rosolowski: Awareness, yeah, I mean, simply being able to recognize that a dynamic is taking shape, I mean, that's step one to being able to manage it better, or manage yourself in it better.

[00:45:15]

Florence Haseltine: Well, one of the things that also—although it wasn't a direct output of that course because it wasn't taught there, but it was implied, is

that you always have to have some deadwood in an organization because they absorb the pain of the organization. People will come to them and complain and bitch, but yet they're not going to do anything, but they're an outlet.

Tacey Rosolowski: They're the venting system, yeah. Interesting. Now, I was intrigued by the fact that you said during that—when you were anticipating your sabbatical year, you said you wanted to go to business school because you knew you were going to want to move in these different directions. And a question I'd wanted to ask you was about really how and when you began to really think about your own career as something that you developed actively, because there are a lot of women who say they go for years with never thinking about that in any intentional way.

Florence Haseltine: Well, that's right. Most people think you're not going to think about it. I mean, I remember that no one in medical school asked me what I was going to do with it or where I was going to go. There was a meeting in the seventies in Arizona that Dr. Whitte [phonetic]—I can't remember her first name—helped, and I went to that meeting, and we all had to articulate what we wanted to do in ten years or fifteen. I said I wanted to be a dean. And other

women—so I think it was more that it was put upon you that you had to think about what you wanted to do.

Tacey Rosolowski: And what was this meeting exactly?

[00:46:46]

Florence Haseltine: It was one of the first women's meetings. It evolved over time into ELAM.

Tacey Rosolowski: Executive Leaders in Academic Medicine.

Florence Haseltine: It was first held in Arizona, and, in fact, a lot of the documents from that meeting I think are in my archives.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting. What year was this?

Florence Haseltine: I met Queta Bond there. Oh, this was in the seventies. It was probably after '77. I became known because of my book.

Tacey Rosolowski: So, I'm sorry, I interrupted you with those details. She asked what you wanted to be doing in ten years and you said dean.

[00:47:22]

Florence Haseltine: Well, it was sort of asked as a question more. Gloria Sarto was at the meeting. Queta Bond was at the meeting. Pat Sante was at the

meeting. She later became the psychiatric astronaut for NASA. There were others. I can't remember everybody else at the meeting.

Tacey Rosolowski: And so that kind of got you thinking in those directions?

Florence Haseltine: I don't know. I think I was always ambitious, so I don't think that—that may have gelled it. I mean, I do know that we discussed it there, made a declaration of sorts, but I probably had done it before. In fact, I think when I was looking back through my autobiography or the interview, that, in fact, I said it then. So I don't know when I became aware that that's what I wanted to do.

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, there is a difference between kind of ambition as some sort of boiling energy and actually being able to direct that into stage one, stage two, here is a set of goals that I'm going to start reaching. So when did you start thinking about how to put that ambition in—

Florence Haseltine: Oh, there's no way I'd be able to know that. But, clearly, I had thought about it before '77.

Tacey Rosolowski: Very interesting. I wouldn't mind taking a little bit of a break right now.

Afternoon Session, 9 April 2016

Chapter Six

Women's Inclusion in Clinical Trials and the Office of Women's Health

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine gives an example of how her position at the NIH enabled her to have an impact on women's health. She first lays out the realities of working in a government system characterized by inertia; she also notes that in the 1980s, obstetrics and gynecology was "not considered a real field," there were few ob-gyns at the NIH, and clinical trials were conducted on men. She talks about events that made it possible to secure government requirements that women be included in clinical trials and establishing an independent Office of Women's Health (including a chance meeting with Congresswoman, Pat Schroeder).

[Begin File 3]

[00:00:00]

Tacey Rosolowski: All right, and our counter is moving again. Let me just say for the record that we took about an hour-and-fifteen-minute break and got something to eat, and it is now about quarter of one, and so we're resuming our conversation for the day.

We were at the NIH. You were starting—

Florence Haseltine: Great place.

Tacey Rosolowski: Great place. You were starting to talk about the scope of your work. And also I didn't want to lose touch with something we haven't mentioned, which is that you were very interested in having an impact on policy and the whole issue of women being

included in clinical trials. So I was wondering how this provided you with an opportunity to have an impact on women's health in all kinds of ways.

[00:00:47]

Florence Haseltine: Well, one of the things that is particularly hard for a lot of people to understand is you can be at NIH and desperately want to make a change, but because the system has so much inertia that unless you can get more monies, new monies, you're not going to make the change, because you're certainly not going to take away from anyone. How can you say one person's research in pediatric child development is more or less important than women with endometriosis? You cannot compare them.

So Dr. Alexander was very, very supportive of more work on women, but there was no way he could really implement it, and there were too many things that—and also it wasn't particularly his idea. They wanted me there because they wanted to have more of an impact, but unless you can go to Congress and get more money, you can't get anything changed. Now, he could have probably done it if he'd wanted to allocate it, but he's a pediatrician. He wasn't going to do that. And so at least he was sympathetic. There was no disagreement in philosophy.

But when I got there, what I didn't realize was that OB/GYN just was not considered a real field. Well, you have to go back in

the history of clinical trials at NIH, which only dated from the sixties, and it was during the Vietnam War, and a lot of men came to NIH, not all willfully, but they didn't want to go to Vietnam, so they were smart, they got lab positions. And if they were going to do clinical trials, they were going to do it on things they were interested in. And what were they interested in? Well, you can tell what they were interested in by the studies that came out during that period, and one of the big studies that came out during that period was studying men and heart disease. That was sort of a sentinel study. They kept looking at men to see if they would live longer if they did this and that, and part of it was where aspirin became part of our normal daily intake.

[00:02:58]

But they were studying things they were interested in, and you don't want people studying things they're not interested in. And they said, "Well, we'll do it on men doctors." Not only were they interested in men, they were interested in male doctors. That's how that study started. So they said, "Well, there aren't enough women doctors to make it worthwhile. They don't die as fast as the men do anyway."

So what happened was a tradition sort of developed of only including men in clinical trials, because there was—one, you could build on it. To go back and do the women would have required a

change of thinking. Unfortunately, that led to the studies being done only on men for drugs. But women—and the excuse was women could get pregnant, the Thalidomide thing was still hanging over our head, and they had menstrual cycles so their hormones are going—

[interruption]

[00:04:07]

Florence Haseltine: That the menstrual cycles were going to foul everything up. Why people think the menstrual cycles foul everything up has always been—to a gynecologist, that's rather strange, although we did admit that there was PMS, and until they found out that Prozac could treat it, it wasn't a disease. Once Prozac could treat it, then it was something [called] dysphoria. Okay. But it made no sense, because most women take most of their medications after they're fifty, and if they're younger than fifty, you should really know its effect on them. So there was a break in analytical thinking at this point. That was embedded in our system.

So by the time I got there, they were starting to do some studies on progesterone and estrogen replacement. There was a wonderful woman—let me get her name—Irma Mebane-Sims, who was running that study, and then they decided to expand it. It

was called the PEPI study at that time, and they decided later to expand it.

[00:05:13]

But what happened in the meantime was they wanted to do an additional part on it, and I kept going to their meetings and saying, "Women don't want endometrial biopsies every month. It's like being hit in the belly with a hammer." So here I was advocating for women and as a gynecologist, and all these guys were internists. They didn't have a clue as to what—you don't do an endometrial biopsy every month. You don't need to. Even at that point, [unclear] was probably good enough to tell you you didn't.

But I just couldn't—I also had learned in business school that if you're the only one saying something, after a while, even if you're right, nobody wants to hear it. So I would call up some of these gynecologists that I knew and have them come, and that was when the chairman at Duke would get on a plane and fly up here. He was fantastic for that. He and I wrote the first book NIH put out on menopause, which I think is—I mean, of course, it was too far ahead of our time, again, so it didn't go anywhere.

Tacey Rosolowski: And his name?

Florence Haseltine: Chuck Hammond. Charles Hammond, H-a-m-m-o-n-d, I think, or maybe it's a-n-d. But he was one of the many people who were extraordinarily supportive of me.

[00:06:26]

But then I realized that we needed to get more gynecologic research. Here it was being done in the Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, because they thought it affected the heart. This is the thing that I don't know where, but somewhere in the eighties it got that you should take estrogen for your heart. The internist confused the heart and the vagina, I mean, and lot of bad sequela have come out of that misunderstanding. I don't know where in the world—I mean, I can tell you all of the literature that's cited and that women live longer and all that, but that's bullshit. It was clearly bullshit then.

And a side issue is that the Institute of Medicine did a study saying the Women's Health Initiative, which was looking at this issue, was unethical because it didn't give women estrogen, and everyone knew women should take estrogen. And in fact, the outcome of it was that estrogen was not good for the heart, and, of course, the internist, since it wasn't good for the heart, said it wasn't good for anything, and threw estrogen out with the bathwater, which has caused us a lot of other problems. But that's a medical issue. There's no point in going much further with that.

But what happened then—and this was in the late eighties—was that I realized that something had to give, and about that time, a little before that, the AIDS activists had gotten active and got money for their work, and I figured, "Well—." And my brother kept bragging about how many millions of dollars he got for AIDS research by going to Congress. I said, "If he can go to Congress, so can I."

[00:08:02]

What was going on then was I wasn't allowed to go to Congress and ask for money, but I could go to a lobbying group and ask them to ask Congress, and that's what I did. I went to a group called Bass & Howes, and they helped form a group of people to investigate should there be—and this was not Women's Health; this was Gynecologic and Obstetrical Care. Should there be more gynecologists at NIH and should there be a division? So the whole thing started as OB/GYN. It did not start as what it became very quickly.

So the first meeting that was held was held in the boardroom of the American College of OB/GYN around their uterus-shaped table. I kid you not. I've been told that doesn't exist anymore, but that's too bad, because it was a nice-looking table. But it was funny, it was in this shape like this, more pear, I guess, but the image was there, specifically, since where it was.

Bass & Howes got a lot of advocate groups of that time period. Now, remember, patient advocacy and things didn't really take off till the Internet, the nineties and the Internet, but it was starting. And they got together and said, "Well, why restrict it to OB/GYN? Why not make it for everybody, all the women?" So that was sort of how that changed, so it changed rather quickly.

[00:09:29]

And then I was riding on a plane back from a meeting in, I think in '88, from the International Embryo Transfer Meeting in Denver, Colorado, and we were coming back, and I noticed that Pat Schroeder was in first-class with a seat open next to her, and I had a first-class upgrade. And I just sat next to her, and the gentleman who was supposed to—I asked if he'd take my other seat. I mean, there were four seats or eight seats. He was fine with it.

And Pat and I talked the whole way back about NIH, how women weren't there. And women were calling us, me particularly, and asking about gynecologic care, the staffers, you know, for their congresspeople, because NIH is sort of the go-to place for congressional information about medicine. So I kept getting these calls, and I'd say, "Well, we don't have any research on it. We need to—," you know. So I was priming the pump constantly, but not directly.

So after we had the meeting, after Pat and I were coming back, I said, "I just had a meeting of veterinarians, and, you know, NIH has more veterinarians than obstetrician/gynecologists."

And she says, "Oh, how many?"

[00:10:49]

Well, I didn't know. So I went to NIH. I found out we have thirty-nine veterinarians. So I got it to her office that we have thirty-nine veterinarians and three gynecologists, and that became her tagline. She was so powerful with taglines. I mean, that woman just couldn't be beat when it came to summing up an issue.

And then there was a Woman's Caucus on the Hill, and we were working with them, and I had to literally one day take a slide projector up and show them—and this was where corporate structure came in—show them how NIH worked, how the money flowed, how we got money, how it was allocated, just concrete things.

And I'll never forget—this was in the slide-projector days—dragging it one of these things where you hook everything on with bungee cords. You remember? Pulling it up into the Rayburn Building, getting it up the steps, going into the Caucus for Women's office, and I was sitting cross-legged on their couch in a blue denim dress that I had, with the projector projecting on their wall the structure and function of NIH.

There was a great woman there running it, Leslie Primmer, and that book that I have of public policy, *Women's Health and Public Policy*, I have descriptions by each of the women who were involved in the work at the beginning. And she listened and she realized that in 1985 a woman named Ruth Kirschstein had issued a document on women not being included in clinical trials—that was the summary of it—at NIH and that was a problem. But it was a government document, so they weren't doing anything. But using that one thing, she was able to get a Government Accounting Office audit of NIH to see if they had improved the status. And that was Leslie Primmer.

[00:12:43]

Our group was involved because we were just forming, and that was 1990. We'd gotten our tax status because somebody had offered to give me $70,000 if I had a 501(c)(3). So I went to Marie Bass and Joanne Howes, and they sent a letter in, and there are three of us that are signatures on the application: myself and them. And by return mail, we got our 501(c)(3). That *never* happens, so we figure there was some woman who got it, said, "Bingo," and off it went. Because we had a 501(c)(3) status as early as 1990, we were able to then get donations from corporations. At one point we were accused of being in the pocket of the industry, and I said, "Not deeply enough."

Tacey Rosolowski: You were pretty good with your one-liners too. [laughs]

[00:13:32]

Florence Haseltine: Oh, yeah. As I said, I can come back quickly.

But the importance of all of that was that Leslie used this as a leverage, and then Waxman's committee took it up, and in June of that year, Waxman's committee held a hearing, and we made headlines saying women weren't included in clinical trials.

And then what is not as well known is there was a hearing again in August by Congresswoman Oakar from Ohio on osteoporosis, and they really got after NIH, which only had an acting director, and HHS for not doing something about it. And at that point, Sullivan, who was then head of HHS, asked Bernadine Healy to be the director. So there was a direct consequence of that, and the Office of Women's Health was set up in September.

My boss had said that I was getting in a bit too much hot water, would I not appear at the hearing, so I didn't. "And it might not be a bad idea if you disappeared."

Tacey Rosolowski: So what was happening that he would recommend that?

Florence Haseltine: Well, Congress was hitting on NIH, and they knew I had been involved in the cause of it. What they didn't know was I'd written

a lot of the stuff. A lot of the stuff we couldn't even say when I published the book, my involvement, because it was getting really too close to the chalk line. I mean, I would write what I wanted in legislation, but I'd have somebody else fax it in, things like that.

Tacey Rosolowski: What was the issue? Why couldn't you fax it in yourself? [00:15:08]

Florence Haseltine: I was not allowed. It was not allowed to talk to Congress.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, gotcha. Okay. So that was that regulation.

Florence Haseltine: Yeah. But I became very good friends with one of the congresswomen about that time, because she got elected, Rosa DeLauro. She had had ovarian cancer, and her doctor was a Yale doctor. So we would be on the plane, I'd say, "Rosa, you didn't go to your last appointment. Peter asked me to call you."

Rosa is terrific. I mean, some of the women in Congress have been terrific and they still are. I was talking to our legislative liaison and she was telling me which women were really being helpful in a next-step process.

Chapter Seven

Women Working in Government

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine talks about the challenges of working in a very visible government position and sketches challenges for women in government.

She first talks about the difficulty of being in the crosshairs, as she was during the period when the Office of Women's Health was being established. She talks about the challenges of dealing with political infighting and obstacles that come with strict government rules of operation.

Next she notes that manyh women work at the NIH, but few make it up the ladder to visible positions and they make less money than their male counterparts. (She says she knew she made less than she should have.) Dr. Haseltine explains why she was a "thorn in the side" of the NIH prior to her retirement. She notes that her isolation gave her freedom to think and to take on projects that let her learn new skills.

Tacey Rosolowski: Let me just ask you, before you go on, with situations like that where you were kind of in the crosshairs, how did you deal with that?

[00:15:54]

Florence Haseltine: Well, not always so well. I got a little paranoid, but I also knew that I was fairly well protected. For one thing, when we went to Congress, the congresspeople would say, "How are you doing, Florence?" So they didn't know how deep or shallow my connections were. And I started being credit for things I never did for many years afterwards, because after probably '91, '92, I never bothered talking to Congress again. I got what I wanted. Why?

Or ’93 when Clinton came in. Why? You know. Most people don’t realize that when I’m done with a topic, I’m done with it. I don’t—you know. I’ve stuck with this women’s health at the Society because I helped found it, and basically you’re stuck with it. I actually wrote bylaws saying I was going to be off the board, and one year I was off they wrote me in permanently. But I don’t deal in day-to-day management. I just run the RAISE Project, that’s it.

But the importance was, there was a very intense few years, and my boss said, “Lay low,” and I did. I went back to New Haven, had a—well, I went to Boston to have a hysterectomy and stayed out until the November election that year in ’90, because I was working, helping the governor run the governor’s race. And the governor was not running as a Republican or Democrat, and that’s critical, because a federal employer is forbidden to work for a national committee election. You can work for a local election. Weiker was running for governor as an independent, and Connecticut is local, it’s not federal. But I didn’t tell people; I just did it.

Tacey Rosolowski: What is the candidate’s name?

[00:17:47]

Florence Haseltine: Lowell Weiker. And he won, he became governor of Connecticut, so the day he got elected, I came back to NIH. But by that time, I'd been gone by three months. The Office of Women's Health had already been established. I did not apply for running that office. Number one, I didn't want to, but, number two, even if I had, they would have been delighted not to give it to me.

Tacey Rosolowski: Why?

Florence Haseltine: Because Ruth Kirschstein was not happy with the way I had done things directly without probably involving her. I don't know. I mean, Ruth, I ticked Ruth off because I didn't show up on time, I wasn't properly deferential to her, and things like that. I mean, she helped a lot of people and did a lot of things, but I was not one of her favorites.

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, what was the next step? So did you have involvement or collaborate with the Office of Women's Health in your—

[00:18:44]

Florence Haseltine: Well, no. I had staff that did, but I didn't directly. They appointed Vivian Pinn, and I'd known Vivian for a long time, but Vivian is—I think she won one of these awards, didn't she, the ALMA—

Tacey Rosolowski: I don't recognize her name.

Florence Haseltine: I wouldn't be surprised if she did. Vivian likes to control things, so in public she would be very nice to me, but in private, if I was named, asked to be on a committee, she'd nix me. I mean, I was told that. You know, that's just the way it was. It meant I didn't have to serve on a lot of committees, not something I—I didn't have very strong feelings about it. It was just the way it was. But I often went to her meetings. I thought they were interesting.

But one of things is, is that while the Women's Health Movement at the beginning in health was exploding, there were a lot of people—and this was good. This was what you wanted. There were a lot of people who wanted in and wanted credit, which meant there would be some infighting. So my feeling was, is that if—I would just wait, and that turned out to be the right thing, sort of the last-one-standing type of thing. But mainly, there are so many good people in it now, and pushing, that it doesn't need my input, and so it's a complicated scenario of if you start something, how much do you have to be linked to it forever? I mean, I'm linked to women's health forever, but I don't have to make it my only priority, because, you know, Vivian did a phenomenal job of representing NIH to the outside community. Inside, there was friction. But it was more important, when you get things

established, to have, with NIH anyway, to have the outside view you as power.

[00:20:50]

Now we've got a new director there, and she's quieter on the outside, but I think she's getting a lot more done on the inside. Her name is Janine Clayton. They issued a statement saying now you had to list the providence of the cell types that you were working on. So most people didn't know if they were working with male or female cells. So we had to get to that level, and I'm more interested in the science of it now. It's not that I'm *not* interested in the clinical aspects, but much more interested in the basic science of sex differences.

Tacey Rosolowski: So how did the establishment of that office have an effect on the climate, and did it change things for your work in your division?

[00:21:31]

Florence Haseltine: Well, fortunately, we got a lot more money, because they would give money to the Office of Women's Health, and then who was doing the funding of research in women's health? It was NICHD. So we did get some more monies, and particularly we were able to get monies for reproductive things that we needed, like fibroids, endometriosis, your gynecology problems. All of those came in after I took over and also after the Office of Women's Health.

I mean, there were resources you could go to, so we could expand our program, and we didn't do it at the expense of anybody else. And that's the key. NIH very rarely initiates things. For the most part, it's a reactive body. It reacts to grants coming in. It reacts to what Congress wants. It's very hard for NIH to initiate new programs all on its own, so it's reactive. Now, there are parts of it that are a bit more successful at it than others, and that often depends on who the director is at the time. I mean, look—let me just give you an example.

Tacey Rosolowski: Sure.

Florence Haseltine: Right now they're putting more money into cancer, but that was Biden deciding to do it. That's from the top down. I mean, every director there has probably asked for more, but unless you can get the outside to push—the information will come from the inside of NIH, but it has to go out and then push back and that.

[00:23:08]

So my group was giving information to Congress, Congress acted on it, and pushed back. Then NIH could do it. And you can't stop one program and start another unless you're ordered to by higher-ups, because the way the rules are written, it's so that you protect the investigator. I mean, the rules are pretty good. It

can't rapidly change. I don't have any major objection to those things. I mean, people complain a lot, but they've all come down from decent reasons. I mean, NIH has a really hard job on some things, so, you know, after years of watching it, I'm not saying it's the best method, but we have supported an awful lot of good work.

Tacey Rosolowski: Can you give me an example of one of these difficult situations that you were involved with?

Florence Haseltine: Well, let me talk about fibroids. Fibroids are very common. Everybody knew they were common. They cause a lot of bleeding, a lot of hysterectomies, a lot of surgery. There were a lot of pushes to do something about fibroids. But one of the women in the Inspector's Office on the Hill, Eartha Isaacs [phonetic], had fibroids and called, and she was now undergoing her third operation. And I said, "We have no research in fibroids. Can we do something about that?" And she helped write legislation to get some of that done. And that's what I mean by that you had to actually had to have specific examples.

[00:24:42]

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, one of the questions I'd wanted to ask you was the differences between working in an academic setting and working

in a government setting, and this is certainly one of them, is this framework of rules.

Florence Haseltine: Well, there are different sets of rules. But academics, you have to get money from NIH. Now, the part of NIH I was in, you had to figure out how the best way of spending it is, and do it under very prescribed—very—you know, all kinds of setups there so there was no conflicts of interest, there were no—you know, you couldn't fund exactly who you wanted. You had some flexibility, but, for the most part, almost none in who got funded. Once in a while, you could help *a* person every few years.

So it was mainly just managing the flow of funds and making sure all the i's were dotted and t's crossed. But you had access to a lot of information, and you could often tell applicants how to focus things, or you could work with them. But you, yourself, couldn't make a decision of who got funded. And most people don't believe that, but, in fact, that was—they think you have more power than you have.

[00:25:55]

But there are kinks in that system, like much of a decision of what gets funded is done in study section, and there is cronyism there, and everyone knows it. I can't tell you how many times I heard it said, "Well, this isn't his best grant, but he's always done

good work." And then a young person will come up, and they'll say, "We don't know if she can really do it." It's that kind of thing. Or, "This is too ambitious for a person at this age."

Tacey Rosolowski: What are some other examples of academia versus—

Florence Haseltine: Well, I should mention there's a whole other part of NIH that gets 10 percent of the budget. I want you to think about what 10 percent of the NIH budget is. That's like taking all the medical schools in the Northeast and putting them on the NIH campus.

Tacey Rosolowski: Wow.

Florence Haseltine: You know, all the biology. So it's a huge amount of the budget, and those people do not have to apply for grants, but they are periodically reviewed. So I'm not as knowledgeable about that part of it. I do know that the people inside think that they do the greatest work and that they can't do it in the outside because they would spend time writing grants, and that's so bad, it would take away from their work, and they can do long-range projects.

And the people on the outside say, "What are these guys? They do half-assed work and they're not even reviewed." So there's this dynamic.

[00:27:24]

Then extramural part of NIH is considered inferior to intramural on the status of who's the greatest scientist, but that's typical of any place. The outside views the extramural part as its part, and the intramural part is sort of, "Come on." Whereas the intramural views the—so it depends where you sit.

Tacey Rosolowski: What about the working climate there for you as a woman?

Florence Haseltine: Well, it was so different. As a woman?

Tacey Rosolowski: Mm-hmm.

Florence Haseltine: Well, there were a lot of women at NIH. They weren't making it up the ladder quite as much, but many of the institutes had women deputy directors. Our institute always did. Duane did do that. When I was there, he had three different women who were deputy directors.

Tacey Rosolowski: Did you find any commonalities among the women who ended up working at the NIH?

[00:28:15]

Florence Haseltine: They were all smart.

Tacey Rosolowski: I was just wondering if there were commonalities in the way they had gotten there or—

Florence Haseltine: No, but Washington has a huge number of very smart women, and most of the government at a certain level is run by women. There are a lot of women administrators. In some ways, they're called We Be's". We be here before you, we be here after you. Because a lot of the senior posts traditionally went to the men, but they rotated out with the administration. But the women were the history.

And women came here initially because they could get jobs, they could get basically equitable pay. The fact that they couldn't get bonuses or something else was secondary, but the retirement and everything else was based on what they got. And it was just a more inviting environment than academia or any of the things.

[00:29:11]

So this town, if you don't like women, you're in trouble. I told my husband when he moved down from New Haven that his world was going to go from all male to all female, and that's pretty much true. We'll have dinner parties here in which it is rare that the number of men and the number of women is the same, and maybe only once in eleven years has there been more men than

women. There are almost always more women, because many of them are divorced, widowed, or single or never—you know, whatever. It's the norm here.

I'm thinking of the group of us that meet at Ralph's to take care of the dogs. Ralph is our eighty-eight-year-old friend, and I think almost everybody who comes over there, there's a large group of people who live in the building that come over, and they're all women. There's this set of young men who come over, and one of the women made friends with them in the dog park, but they don't live in the building. They'll come over for dinner or something. So your community gets quickly all women in this town, or a majority of women.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting, interesting. Did that mute sexism or—

Florence Haseltine: Well, you know, you can't say when you're talking particularly in an environment that I was in, but what I would say was that all the studies at NIH showed the men were making more money than the women again, so it was clearly there. That never surprises me. It's like a bad penny that keeps coming back. So I may not have enough distance yet to be able to reflect properly on that.

[00:30:53]

I know that I became a thorn in the side of NIH, and that was interesting. I became a thorn in their side until I retired, and actually my retirement was very good. We got a new director, Dr. Guttmacher, Carola Eisenberg's son, and he became our director after Duane was retired out. When I went in to him right away and I said, "Look, you're the new boss. I've been here a long time. I'm happy to step aside and do something else. This is what I want to do," and I gave him a job description. It was all IT because that's what I liked doing.

Because, you know, you need your own people or if you want to reorganize things or whatever, and they did eventually reorganize them, but it took them so long that by that time I was almost seventy. And I had made a promise with myself I would be retired before I was seventy. I barely made it. But I had no friction with him over that, and, in fact, the retirement was quite nice. It was pleasant. We left on good terms. I still have my emeritus status and things like that. So I was treated very well.

Tacey Rosolowski: Why were you a thorn in their side?

[00:32:07]

Florence Haseltine: Well, because they were afraid I'd go to Congress. They started to fear me because I had done this one thing, and also because I couldn't keep my mouth shut. As I said, I talk about the elephant

[in the middle of the room]. I can't help myself, and that has been a limitation on what I can do. But also I wasn't in a field that was of primary interest to Dr. Alexander. I was in OB/GYN. He was sympathetic, but it wasn't something that made him feel good. It wasn't the type of science that—he was more into the science that made him feel—I always called it feel-good science, but that's deprecating it a little bit too much.

So if you could make him happy by saying, "Oh, we're doing this and that, and kiddies are going to get better," he would like it. And if you'd say, "We do this and this, and we don't know the outcome on the kids, it might be bad," he would get—you know. So it was one of those things, different interests.

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me, before we get to your retirement—and also there are a number of things you did while you were at the NIH [unclear].

[00:33:16]

Florence Haseltine: Now, that's one of the great things about NIH. This is why I loved being there. I might have—well, I'll give you just one more story about how I didn't understand the system. I was put on a search committee for one of the branch—a position one of the other center directors. Okay. So we have a set of criteria you have to look at, and I wrote them all on the blackboard, and we called in all these people to review applicants. I said, "Okay, this is what

someone who's task oriented does." I said, "Let's go through all the candidates and see which ones fit which criteria, and then we can rank them."

So we did that, and we ranked them. I said, "Okay, we're done." That's not—the committee wanted to gossip about everybody. I didn't get that. I didn't understand that at all. I thought we were just supposed to rank the applicants. I was doing what I guess a lot of women do. Say you set a set of criteria, they have to match it. That wasn't what was going on.

Tacey Rosolowski: So it was the men that wanted to gossip.

Florence Haseltine: It was the men. Oh, men always gossip about work, I mean. My favorite way of getting attention in a bar was always to say, "Women don't gossip enough," on top of my lungs. Anyway.

Tacey Rosolowski: So did the gossip process change the outcome of who got—

[00:34:39]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I don't know. We didn't gossip, but they complained to Duane about it and [he] would never let me sit on another committee. And I didn't know what happened, and then I realized later what had happened. The whole purpose was they flew in and we only met for an hour and a half, and it left them feeling

incomplete. So that was another big mistake I made. I made a couple of them like that.

But the one thing is, is because I was somewhat isolated, number one, he micromanaged, I had basically done what I'd wanted to get done, which was OB/GYN included, and I was not invited to be on committees. So in a sense, I was given free rein to think, and that has turned out to be one of the most wonderful gifts anybody can have. That's what I like to do anyway. And so I could talk to a lot of people. I could think a lot. I started a project looking at how our trainees, how they followed through and got degrees, what they did in OB/GYN versus pediatrics, and I found a lot of differences between the way pediatricians have careers and OB/GYN. But I couldn't have done it if I hadn't been left to mentally have free time to think.

And also during that time, I was able to do a lot of work with the Society, thinking, because I had a full staff at the Society. At one point we had thirty-two people.

Tacey Rosolowski: I mean, we haven't talked about the Society on record. So—

[00:36:17]

Florence Haseltine: Right. But the connection was, is that my scientific field of interest has always been sex differentiation, not necessarily sexual dimorphism at a later age, but sexual differentiation very early:

what genes get turned on to make you male, what genes get turned on to make you female, what genes interact with what genes, etc.

So that was something I was always interested in, and using the Society, because I could use the Society for flexibility where I could not use the government. So we started the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences, which spun out from the Society, and that is my scientific home. But I was able to do it for several reasons. Number one, I knew who was doing the research because I sat on top of all the research data, and by this time, I knew how to search the databases for what I needed, and I'd built a huge database of all of our scientists who we funded over the years, and whether they'd been trainees, whether they went to one of our programs, where they ended up in their career, how many grants they had, things like that. And I learned how to code to do that, which is now what I do all the time. The reason the RAISE database is because I know how to code and sort data and, you know, dig it out and stuff like that. So I used the Society in a way that many people might think somebody at NIH would use NIH. But you can't do it at NIH. So I basically had a full-time second staff.

Chapter Eight

Founding the Society for Women's Health Research, Part I

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine focuses on an organizations she founded in 1990, The Society for Women's Health Research.

She begins by talking about her interest in sex differentiation. She also notes that she used her freedom at the NIH to build a database of all the scientists they funded so she could use the data for her own purposes. She also talks about the NIH loan repayment program she instituted –a legacy she is proud to leave.

She notes that she created the Society to accomplish things she couldn't do through the NIH, telling the story of how the Society started and summarizing the RAISE project it hosts, a database of awards given to men and women scientists between 1981 and 2006. She talks about other Society activities: creating networks, providing information on how to do studies of gender differences and inequities. She explains why she pulled back from the Society in 1993.

Dr. Haseltine then discusses her work on the Women's Health Research Primer *[Haseltine FP, Jacobson BG (eds):* Women's Health Research: A Medical and Policy Primer. *Washington, D.C./London, England: Health Press International, 1997; 364 pages].*

Tacey Rosolowski: And this is, just for the record, the Society for the Advancement of Women's Health Research.

[00:38:02]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah. It was titled that, and then I went off the board one year and they shortened it to the Society for Women's Health Research.

Tacey Rosolowski: And you founded that in 1990.

Florence Haseltine: I founded that in 1990 with Bass and Howes.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, tell me about that process. You know, what gave you the idea, what was [unclear]?

Florence Haseltine: Well, as I said, I got the idea because I saw what the AIDS guys had done, and I wanted to get more OB/GYNs at NIH, and I wanted legislation passed saying there had to be a Department of OB/GYN and more funds for it. So we did. Also incidental to that is I wrote into that an eight-word sentence saying people who did research in reproductive biology would get their loan repaid, and that started the big loan repayment program at NIH, which I'm very proud of. That can go on my tombstone, the loan repayment program. I am proud of that, because I really hated the fact that people were in debt. And that's helped a lot of young researchers, biomedical researchers get their loans paid, so they *do* stay in the lab. Because as long as you're in the lab, it's paid. Now two thousand or more people a year get it, not in my field but everything else. So that was part of the legislation, incidentally.

[00:39:21]

So I would use the Society when I had an idea. We could host meetings. We could get money from pharmaceutical companies, things like that, to host meetings. Once the meetings were held, then the people could go push at NIH to get the programs going. So in some ways, not obviously, but as an

undercurrent, the Society could push for a lot of work on sex differences, and that's what it's done. And then I've now worked with the Society on the RAISE Project, which, you know, it's a great idea, but, you know, who's going to implement it? That's why I was willing to spend time with this guy from Texas who's just going to scrape the data, put it in for his thesis.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, tell me about the RAISE Project. And RAISE, is that an acronym or a person's name?

[00:40:17]

Florence Haseltine: No, it's an acronym, R-A-I-S-E, Recognizing Achievements in Science and Engineering for women or something like that.

Tacey Rosolowski: And how did that start?

Florence Haseltine: It started, Stephanie Pincus had an idea that she would encourage women to get more awards and recognition. She went to the Sloan Foundation and got $40,000 and decided to house the project in the Society. So, originally we wanted to give advice to universities and things on how to get women included, but to do that, first we had to get the data. And as with many projects, data will take over the whole project. So I said, "Well, I know how to file all this information." And we would hire people. Right now I have a

woman who works two days a week entering data, and she's so good, Mary Anderson. She corrects my spelling, my typos, when I put the wrong person in in the wrong year, I mean, she's just terrific.

[00:41:23]

So what we do is we decided we would start looking at awards for twenty-five years. Well, this was 2006, so that meant going back to 1981. So from 1981 on, we started collecting [and entering] the awards and categorizing them --men versus women. It is hard if you get a new award and you go back to '81 sometimes to get the sex of a person if they just use initials or an ambiguous name, but new awardees, it's very easy because you just do a Google, and I have it automated and their pictures pops up, because you put their name, the award, what university it might be at. So it's very easy now, or easier. And sometimes you have to—we used to have to call universities, we'd have to look at student records, stuff like that. But we were, for the most part, able to categorize almost everybody. Not everybody, but most of them. It was a lot of hard work at the beginning, and now it's routinized.

But what we found was several surprises. It wasn't surprising that women got fewer awards even than the percentage of women in the field. What was surprising was that we found things that we now spot in other things. There is an indication that there's a

buddy system; that is, two men will pair up. One will get the award one year, and one will get it the next year, and they rotate.

Now, the buddy system is an underground system in academia as well that people will often recommend people for other jobs, give them letters saying they get this other job offer so they can get more money, okay, retention. So the buddy system exists in people working together for grants, etc. So the buddy system is alive and well. In fact, there's a pair of people—and because this is recorded, I'll just use his initial, R.S., and J.E.—and you'll see R.S. getting it one year, J.E. getting it another, J.E. gets it, then R.S., and a whole series of awards.

[00:43:44]

J.E. got into the National Academy of Sciences, and I was talking with one of the people on the nominating committee. I said, "Oh, did R.S. get nominated by J.E.?"

And he said, "How did you know?"

Now, I happen to know these two people. They're good people. And that's why I was able to pick that up.

The other thing we found was that if an award has always been given to a man, the year they give it to a woman, they give it to a man and a woman, and then they go back to single awardees.

So those are little things that pop out. I mean, when I see awards like that, I just know what happened and often—

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me what happened.

Florence Haseltine: Well, clearly, they felt uncomfortable about giving it to a woman, so they had to find an equal man. There's one award in physics that they gave that way, but the man refused to accept it, saying he never accepted an award with another person and that she wasn't qualified. And they said, "Well, if you won't accept it with another person, what happens if you win the Nobel Prize?" And he never answered. He did win the Nobel Prize. In fact, my husband, who was on that committee, got a call from a German newspaper wanting to know more about it, but you don't—you know. That was ridiculous. But those are the kinds of things, and that was a recent happening. That was in the last ten years or so.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, wow. That's amazing. So what are some of the ways that this information is put to work?

[00:45:18]

Florence Haseltine: It's basically a database for people to use. It's not really put to work the way we would like. Number one, I don't have the personnel to do it, so I just stick with managing the data and trying to figure out better ways to graph it and show people. But like I

got this call from a guy who wants to use it for something, and that's right now about as good as it gets.

Tacey Rosolowski: That sounds like it's a pretty skeleton operation.

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, it is. I spend a huge amount of time with it, so it's really two of us running it now, because Stephanie, after ten years, bailed. I didn't blame her.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, what are some of the other activities that the Society supports?

[00:46:05]

Florence Haseltine: Well, it has networks, and the networks have been scientifically very valuable. You'll pick a topic where there's a question, and the first network, which set the tone, was the network for neurophysiology in sex differences. And that one, they got together and worked on how to do sex-difference studies in the brain, and that's one that started, really was [unclear] for forming the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences. The people from that group found homes, found scientific homes. They wrote a book on how to do a sex-difference study. You can't get any more successful than that. And now they're able to push, and now we get people writing letters saying, "No, that's not true. We

know that women and men are the same." So it's great. Big argument.

Tacey Rosolowski: So is this common that the networking systems that are set up through the Society often take on these cutting-edge projects?

Florence Haseltine: Oh, yes, they take a project. We pick people who don't know each other and throw them together.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, interesting.

Florence Haseltine: It's not done by the usual peer-group thing. They're doing one now on sleep. They've done one on metabolism. There's a whole list of them. I don't pay attention to all of them. The one I really want done is immunology.

Tacey Rosolowski: So was that originally the mission of these networks?

[00:47:34]

Florence Haseltine: My idea was to have grants that put things together. Oh, they called it the ISIS Fund for a while. Needless to say, that went out the door.

I wanted to call them mortar grants, because I wanted to do—there's a model out there from the MacArthur Foundation that

suggests that you take people from all different kinds of groups, you bring them together for a period of time, you fund projects within the group, coordinated projects. You focus on a couple topics that you all agree on, do it, and then disband. But it's sticking different groups together, so I call it mortar because the bricks are the different groups. But that name didn't take off either. However, the networks have taken off. I could get the series of networks we have, but I don't have it all off the top of my head.

Tacey Rosolowski: When did the networks start?

[00:48:32]

Florence Haseltine: Oh, in the early 2000s.

Tacey Rosolowski: In the early 2000s, okay, and they're still being formed. How interesting.

Florence Haseltine: They introduce people who've never met, and they often then report later. We've done one on cardiovascular, I think. Yeah, that one. So there've been pretty good ones.

Tacey Rosolowski: So about how much money do these groups get?

Florence Haseltine: A million. We try to raise a million dollars and spend it out over five years.

Tacey Rosolowski: Wow. Wow. Very neat.

Florence Haseltine: And we converse with people so they meet fairly frequently.

Tacey Rosolowski: So the arch of your involvement, it was founded in 1990, and how long were you super active and when did you—

[00:49:10]

Florence Haseltine: Until ’93. It was basically a hit squad till ’93. In ’93 we hired Phyllis Greenberger to manage it.

Tacey Rosolowski: And is that when you started to pull back a little bit or—

Florence Haseltine: Yeah.

Tacey Rosolowski: Just because you didn’t want to be quite so involved with day-to-day or—

Florence Haseltine: Well, that was her job now, not mine.

Tacey Rosolowski: So what’s your connection now?

Florence Haseltine: I now, well, I'm on the board, but mainly I go in and I work on the RAISE Project and listen to complaints. Don't do anything about them; just listen. I'm the deadwood.

Tacey Rosolowski: [laughs] The institutional memory, organizational memory. That's cool.

So what are some of the other things that you were doing during that time? Let's see. I have your work on this comprehensive report. You were going to say something else? [00:50:07]

Florence Haseltine: No. Which comprehensive?

Tacey Rosolowski: Let's see. I have you edited the comprehensive report, and it's entitled "Women's Health Research: a Medical and Policy Primer."

Florence Haseltine: Oh, that's the book I told you about.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, okay. So that was published in 1997. So tell me about your work on that book.

Florence Haseltine: Well, what happened was, is that I knew somebody at J & J, and I thought it was very important to get this historically written down at the beginning, because our memories change over time, and that if it was written down, then how the Society started and what were the issues that had to be tackled, that at least there would be an authoritative start. So I proposed it to the gentleman [Robert Gussin]—I have his name in the book; let me get it—at J & J. He said, "Fine." He gave me $40,000.

[00:51:03]

And I hired Bev Jacobson, and we got a bunch of people to write chapters, including a couple people who were supposed to write chapters and didn't get them done on time, and I didn't include them because I—and I think one of them was Vivian Pinn, and the other one was—let's see. Who was it? I mean, there's some very prominent women who were involved in it.

So my job was just sort of pushing to get the thing out. I wrote a foreword and an afterwards and all that. His name starts with a *G*. I'm just trying to think. Oh, it's probably right here in the foreword. In fact, this afterwards answers a lot of the questions that you've brought up about how the whole Society got started and everything.

Tacey Rosolowski: So what did you want the book to accomplish?

Florence Haseltine: I basically wanted it as a documentation of what happened. I wanted it there for if somebody was interested in what things looked like during that period. That was the goal. I didn't really have a strong feeling about whether I wanted it to be a—oh, his name was Dr. Gussins, G-u-s-s-i-n-s. I didn't think it was going to be a bestseller or anything like that. I just wanted it as a documentation. I often don't think about what's going to happen after I do something. I figure I've done it, other people can sort of decide. But I'm very glad we got it done.

Tacey Rosolowski: And how did you select the people to contribute chapters? [00:53:30]

Florence Haseltine: Everyone I knew who had been involved, I just asked them. We gave them all $500, nothing—

Tacey Rosolowski: Right, right, honoraria.

Florence Haseltine: But there were a couple people who just couldn't get their act together to do it, and I said, "If you don't have it in by *x* date, it goes." And it went, and they were horrified. They thought they were too big not to be in the book. Well, you know, I'm sorry. That's not the way it works.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, editing deadlines are editing deadlines.

Florence Haseltine: Well, I've learned—I had written about ten edited volumes before, so I knew that. I knew the scoop by then.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely.

Chapter Nine

Contributions to Women's Health via the NIH

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine summarizes additional contributions she made to women's health issues through her work at the NIH. She first discusses fellowship training programs for ob-gyns designed to increase the number of practitioners experienced in molecular biology and laboratory research. She notes that these programs have trained over 90 individuals and she summarizes some of their accomplishments.

She also talks about starting a network of gynecologists studying infertility and studies of women's health centers in order to train younger physicians in women's reproductive health. Dr. Haseltine again underscores that she pushed the focus on sex differences in women's health such that the field now had research underpinnings.

[Begin File 4]

[00:00:00]

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, tell me about how your time at the NIH kind of came to a close. Were there some kind of policy high points you were able to reach?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I think the thing is that there are several programs I'm really proud of, and they're all in OB/GYN. One is when I started at NIH, we didn't have any training programs for obstetricians and gynecologists. There were only about six or seven of us at my age level in the whole country that had PhDs. Now, that shouldn't be too surprising, because the MD/PhD programs didn't really start

until the late sixties or around in there. And I already had a PhD when I got an MD, and that was the same for Dr. Polan; she had an MD and a PhD but separate degrees. But there weren't many of us. Many more came along later.

And there was no molecular biology in OB/GYN. It was all estrogen receptors and receptor this and receptor that. And my father had once told me, "If you're ever in a science where you count the angels on the head of a pin, get out," and this was an angels-on-the-head-of-a-pin nonsense, and I wanted nothing to do with it. I mean, number one, it was terribly boring. It wasn't genetics.

[00:01:22]

So my thing at NIH was, "For God's sakes, let's get people trained in the molecular biology, because that's where the future is going." So Duane was agreeable to this. The pediatricians had a training program. We decided to have one similar to it, but the focus was going to be different. We were only going to train obstetrician/gynecologists who were already fully-trained practitioners. We would send them to a lab outside of their department for three years, and then their department would take them back for two years. They had to be guaranteed a position. Well, you know, people would moan and groan over that because, of course, you couldn't guarantee positions with, quote,

"affirmative action," which they never used anyway. You know, bit of hypocrisy there.

But basically we gave money, and we didn't administer it at NIH. The money was given to a university or ACOG, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, to manage the money, and so the people—but we would watch over it to make sure that the fellows were properly qualified, etc., etc., and part of the process. So the money would come from us, but not necessarily be directly managed. More the profession would do it. But I put in there that they had to leave the department. They got rid of that, of course, as soon as they could, but for the first few years, everybody was kicked out of the departments, and that was critical because we couldn't have OB departments that had nothing in them train people with nothing.

[00:03:04]

And I remember walking with Larry Longo, who just died this year. What a wonderful, sweet man. He and I were walking along at NIH, and he had me read this grant, and he said, "What do you think of it?"

And I said, "It's a piece of shit," because it was all the old stuff. I said, "Just change all the words, you know, endocrine receptor," or whatever it was, "to genetics or cell biology."

And he did it, and I have to hand it to him. And he ran with another guy named Jaffe, who was also a great person in our profession, but much more insular and secretive, so it was harder to connect with Jaffe. But he did a lot of good things for the profession, and he's now had some neurologic degeneration, so he's sort of like Mary Ellen Avery, out of it.

[00:03:53]

But those two guys together ran the program for a lot of years. You know, there were some shenanigans with it, but for the most part, they got people trained, and now there are over ninety people that have been trained, and some of those people are heads of department. I think one of them's dean of a medical school. A couple are now in the National Academy of Sciences. There were a lot of women in departments like the University of Pennsylvania, stuff like that, Iowa, etc., I mean really good places.

So we have a body, and I didn't even care if they stayed in research, just I wanted them to understand it, and, to me, that's one of my other great accomplishments. To me, that's a great accomplishment that we got a training program for OB/GYNs, and that's RSDP, so that can go on my tombstone too. So those two things are really huge.

The third thing was we started networks of gynecologists in infertility, and that was started under my tutelage. We also started

Women's Health Centers to train younger members, Women's Reproductive Health Network. There's that and there's something called the BIRWCH [Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health]. I had a staffer, Donna Vogel, who did the heavy lifting on that.

Tacey Rosolowski: I'm sorry, I missed the name of the arm of the Women's Health Centers that were training younger people.

[00:05:34]

Florence Haseltine: I think it's called WRHR, Women's Reproductive Health something, or Women's Research and Reproductive Health. We have to be careful because of the acronyms. Once an acronym's established, you forgot what it meant.

Tacey Rosolowski: And what is the acronym for that?

Florence Haseltine: WHRH, W-H-R-H. You always have to be careful when you have a W and an H and an R not to make an obscene word out of it.

Oh, there's one other thing our Center accomplished, which most people will never know. I had a deputy director named Art Campbell. He was an Ichabod Crane-looking guy. I guess he still is. And he was the deputy, and I didn't have enough work for him. We had a conversation one day, and I said, "Would you be happier

doing some of the work you used to do? You can still be my deputy. You're not going to lose the title or the money, but do some work [that's important] to do."

So he decided he was going to study what were called male prostitutes in Seattle, but you couldn't use the word "male prostitute." He coined the phrase "sex worker." So every time you hear it, Art Campbell did it. So that was a great transition, because now it's applied to everybody. It was applied because of him.

Tacey Rosolowski: Huh. That's really funny.

Florence Haseltine: So it's odd what comes out of—

Tacey Rosolowski: For sure. For sure. So you mentioned the WHRH, but then there was another program that you—

[00:07:07]

Florence Haseltine: Well, then there's something called the BIRWCH, which is related to it, but it's by the Office of Women's Health, but Donna Vogel, when she was working in my Center, did both of them. And she was okay on that.

Tacey Rosolowski: Any other areas that you felt had a lot of impact?

Florence Haseltine: I think that we just pushed sex differences in women's health. I mean, when I walked into a room, even if I wasn't the head of the Office of Women's Health, people thought of me, thought about gynecology and women's health. I mean, it's just who you are. And now the acting director of NICHD is a woman, obstetrician/gynecologist, named Cathy Spong, and she's a deputy director. I don't know if she'll be chosen or not.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting. So you feel like the whole field's in a substantively different place at this point or—

[00:07:58]

Florence Haseltine: I feel that it's got research underpinnings. It takes a long time, but people are pretty resilient in OB/GYN. If you decide to go into academic OB/GYN, you're going to take a huge pay hit right at the beginning, probably get about one-third what you would do in private practice, so you're dedicated right from the beginning to an academic career. Pediatricians get the same salary inside or out, so they don't usually leave until they can't get grants, and then they go out.

Chapter Ten

Managing Work and a Household; Women in Washington, DC

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine talks about how she addressed the challenges of maintaining a household and parenting in New Haven, Connecticut while commuting for fifteen years to a high-pressure administrative position on Washington, DC. She summarizes what her two daughters are now doing.

She also notes that President Bill Clinton brought many women to Washington during his presidency, and many of them commuted as she did. She talks about how she was part of a group of commuting women who would get together periodically to talk about professional challenges in DC (noting that this group was written up in the New York Times). As an example, she tells an anecdote about getting women into the Cosmos Club (closed to women until 1987) so they could use the facility for professional entertaining. She notes that the Inventory of Child Well Being came out of the network of professional women who were part of the group.

[00:07:58]+

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting. Now, I mean, I'd never really asked you this question, but why didn't you consider private practice?

Florence Haseltine: I would have been bored to tears. I never had any interest in it.

Tacey Rosolowski: You obviously got some gratification dealing with patients, but that was not where your primary—

Florence Haseltine: No.

Tacey Rosolowski: So what do you feel needs to happen? You decided to retire in 2012, and what did you feel at that point and now? I mean, what's needed for the next step for the field to really evolve?

[00:09:04]

Florence Haseltine: Younger people with better ideas. I think there are clearly a lot of problems. Many of them haven't gone away. I think most of them now, many of them are workplace issues but—

Tacey Rosolowski: What are some of those that are resistant?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I mean, the biggest one is how do you manage households. That has not gone away. And I think the other difficulty you have with people like myself is that we get to know what can't be done because we couldn't do it or we tried, and my feeling is, is that—and I think we discussed this last night—was that when somebody gives you an idea and you immediately think of all the reasons it can't be done, it's time to get the hell out of there.

Tacey Rosolowski: That sort of deadwood thinking, yeah. [laughs]

Florence Haseltine: Time for other people.

Tacey Rosolowski: Right. So how do you manage households? I think you were talking about daycare too.

[00:10:04]

Florence Haseltine: Well, it's the same thing. I mean, it all revolves around how do you manage your private obligations.

Tacey Rosolowski: Have there been changes in that, either in the way younger generations think about that or the way workplaces are organized?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I can't answer what I would consider with a great deal of precision that question, but I do see that, for example, my daughter was given maternity leave for three months in an academic medical center. I mean, that didn't happen. But she has a friend who is an oncologic surgeon at another institution, and she had to go back to work in two weeks, which is what we had to do. I mean, people brag about it, but, in fact, it really wasn't an option. So that's a big difference. It's not everywhere, but it's somewhere. But she still has to worry about who's going to take care of the kids as she goes along.

But people are putting things in place. I'll give you another University of Wisconsin example. There's a guy named—what is his name? Last name is Eisen. He's at Davis. And he was at a meeting, he said, in Lake Tahoe, and he saw a woman with a baby,

taking care of baby, and he went up to her and he said, “Oh, are you taking a break from the meeting or something?”

She said, “Oh, no, I’m the nanny. The person is at the meeting.”

And he said, “What?” Jonathan Eisen, I think it is. He said, “What?”

[00:11:45]

And she said, “Oh, yeah, Wisconsin will send a nanny to a meeting with a woman to care for it.” And he said that changed the way he thought of things. He now runs a website and account so that if there’s a meeting that’s all male, he will highlight it as another almost all white male meeting or something like that. And he has a web and a blog and things. I sent him a meeting where there weren’t enough men, even if there was only one woman, to qualify for his disdain.

So those things are hugely important. I doubt if many universities offer someone to go with a meeting with somebody who has a small baby [unclear].

Tacey Rosolowski: That’s a serious financial commitment in an institution.

Florence Haseltine: It’s very serious.

Tacey Rosolowski: We haven't talked about your own experiences with that. When did you have your children [unclear]?

[00:12:41]

Florence Haseltine: I had them when I was basically thirty-seven and thirty-nine. I hadn't had kids when that last interview was done. I had people live in the house.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, so you had live-in help.

Florence Haseltine: We had live-in help, and the kids went to daycare during the day. We had a cleaning person. I didn't want anyone doing anything that I wouldn't want to do all the time, so we split it up. We always had live-in help to cover the night call and the emergencies, and when I moved to Washington from New Haven and had to split my time, there was always someone covering at night. The kids went to daycare during the day, and we had someone clean. So all our money went—I mean, that was just the way it was.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, just for the record, your husband's name?

Florence Haseltine: Alan Chodos, C-h-o-d-o-s. A-l-a-n.

Tacey Rosolowski: And your oldest daughter's name?

Florence Haseltine: Anna.

Tacey Rosolowski: And her last name?

[00:13:41]

Florence Haseltine: Chodos. They have their father's last name.

Tacey Rosolowski: And your younger daughter?

Florence Haseltine: Elizabeth, and her last name is Chodos.

Tacey Rosolowski: And what does your husband do?

Florence Haseltine: Well, he's a retired physicist. He was on the women's track at Yale and got stuck in a senior research position, and they were not increasing his salary for years. But we decided that he would stay there with the girls until the last one graduated high school, and then he got a job down here at the American Physical Society, which he enjoyed a great deal.

Tacey Rosolowski: And where is Anna right now?

Florence Haseltine: She's at the University of California, San Francisco in geriatrics. She's a geriatrician. And Elizabeth is in Chicago and is the Executive Director of Oxbow.

Tacey Rosolowski: And you have grandchildren.

[00:14:36]

Florence Haseltine: One grandchild, three months old. Louie!

Tacey Rosolowski: Louie. Is Anna's child or—

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, Anna's.

Tacey Rosolowski: Louie, all right, and that is L-o-

Florence Haseltine: U-i-e, Louie. Named after Alan's father, who was called Louie, and he was a wonderful man.

Tacey Rosolowski: How did you and Alan work it all out? I mean, did you have conversations about it? Did it fall to you—

Florence Haseltine: We have not had conflict over certain things. We haven't had conflict over money, we haven't had conflict about what house we're going to buy, and we didn't have any conflict over who

would take care of the kids. You know, we bought the house with the intention of having someone live in if we had kids. I just think that we were philosophically so in tune that we didn't even have to have a lot of these discussions. The biggest one was I was going to take a job in Washington. We thought I was only going to be here for two years, and that morphed into a lot more. So that was a lot tougher. That commute was pretty horrible.

Tacey Rosolowski: So that was D.C. to New Haven.

[00:15:53]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, and, fortunately, for most of the time during that, there was a direct flight from Washington to New Haven, but I would leave from here Friday night, and I would leave Monday morning. I learned that if I left before the kids got up, there was no battle. So I didn't leave Sunday night, I'd leave early Monday morning.

One thing is they used to hold staff meeting on Monday, and I asked them to change it to Tuesday, and they did. So that was good.

Tacey Rosolowski: How many years did this go on?

Florence Haseltine: Fifteen.

Tacey Rosolowski: Fifteen years. Wow. That's a lot.

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, it was a lot. But, you know, I didn't know at the time that there were an awful lot of people who did that. So when Clinton came in, a lot of women came to Washington. Yeah, Clinton was good that way, and he brought in—and many of these women had started commuting, so we had a whole group of commuters.

[00:16:46]

And in 1993, one of the women who was in the White House, named Jane Wales, coupled with a friend of mine named Mary Clutter, got together and decided that we had to bring all these women to dinner once a month or have some dinners—we didn't know it was going to be once a month for the next twenty-three years—that we would get together and talk about what was going on and how one dealt with Washington. As I said, a lot of women are in fairly powerful positions.

So it initially started as women who commuted to Washington. It's morphed over time. It's been written up in *The New York Times* and *Science* magazine, so can't complain about that. But they decided that I would be the one to host it because I was a member of the Cosmos Club. Now, actually, my profession put me in the Cosmos Club.

Tacey Rosolowski: What is the Cosmos Club?

[00:17:51]

Florence Haseltine: The Cosmos Club was an old-boys' club founded in the 1890s or seventies or something like that. It was for people who were intellectual explorers, let's put it this way, scientists, writers, Pulitzer Prize writers, people who had—mostly you had to have written things to get in the club. You have to be recommended by two people and then four letters. I just went through this with somebody. And until 1988, locked out to women, and women had to enter the back door, and goes on and on.

In 1988, women got admitted to the club because they would have lost their liquor license if they hadn't, and the Supreme Court justices had to resign from the club. I mean, it was quite a big deal.

I got put in the club within the first year by my profession because they wanted me to have a place to meet. I had no place to meet people. In addition, women had an extra burden. If I was taken out, went to dinner with male scientists, they would want to pay, but they couldn't because I was a federal employee. And I didn't want to get in fights with them, so I would cook for them and have them to my apartment. I had an efficiency, so you can imagine at ten o'clock, what is a male going to do? So I would call him a cab. But it was uncomfortable.

So my profession decided to put me in the Cosmos Club, which was fantastic. So I started meeting them there, and the best thing about meeting people at the Cosmos Club was no bill appears, and I could always afford a dinner at the Cosmos Club for these people. So it was on my dime, but it wasn't onerous, and most of them probably thought I had an account. Some of them knew better, and they would give me the cash or something for their dinner, but it was not a problem. It eliminated a problem.

[00:19:44]

And two guys, OB/GYNs from the community, got me in. There were a few women who were admitted before me in '88. I know one other—I know probably who they are. One of them's Rita Colwell, who is a scientist wonder and became head of NSF. So that was Rita. And Miss Manners got in, I think that year. There's somebody else I know who also go in, but I can't remember their name at the moment.

Then the next batch I was in, so I probably was in the first ten women admitted. It may be low, low digit or maybe double-digit numbers, but not very high. And I started using it, and I use it all the time. I like that club. We use it when we travel. We get reciprocity. The old-boys knew what they were doing. It's very pleasant, [unclear].

Tacey Rosolowski: So this is where your commuting-women group met?

[00:20:50]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah. So we met there, and basically just told people how to deal with other agencies. People from all agencies would be there.

Now the woman who is head of NSF, Frances Cordova, even said in *Science* she'd come. She says, "I don't know if we still need those kind of things, but now we need them for friendship as much as anything else."

Tacey Rosolowski: But in the early days, was it a support group or just a discussion group?

Florence Haseltine: You never knew what was going to come up. As a result, we got a lot of things done. As a result of some thinking there, I had a staff person, Jeff Evans, who wanted to have a register all the different children type of studies into something, and I said, "Why don't you call it the Inventory of Child Well-Being or something like that?"

At this dinner, a group of us—some people were from the White House—said, "Yeah." So we talked to Ernie Monaz, and Ernie says, "Yeah." Ernie at that time was not Secretary of Energy, was in Office of Science and Technology. He came out and met with Duane and Jeff Evans, but [Jeff] didn't have a plan,

and Ernie said, “I went out and met with your guys, and they didn’t have a plan.”

I said, “You’ll have one tomorrow.” We sat down and wrote a plan, and that’s now called the Inventory of Child Well-Being, which is published once a year.

Tacey Rosolowski: So that idea came out of that group.

[00:22:11]

Florence Haseltine: That came out of the group.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, that’s cool.

Florence Haseltine: And other things like that have come out. And we often exchange information about who you cannot trust.

Tacey Rosolowski: So a kind of what’s the insider politics things.

Florence Haseltine: Yeah. We don’t go around saying that’s what we do, but if somebody brings up a name. Somebody brought up a name, I said, “Well, she’s a sociopath.”

They said, “How do you know?”

I said, "Watch. She always has a smile on her face, no matter what she's talking about. Watch out for her." Because she can talk about the most horrible things, like people being killed.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, dear.

[00:22:44]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah. And that person ended up not working there very long. Now, I don't know what happened. But the problem with my saying that is that person never came back to the dinner, because, you know, it's again talking about the elephant in the middle of the table. I have a bad habit of doing that.

Tacey Rosolowski: Were there some sticky points? We were talking about kind of doing the family and household management stuff with a two-career couple. What about from the perspective of your girls?

Florence Haseltine: They thought it was normal. I remember when I left the first time, we had a little U-Haul truck to take a few things down. Anna started crying because she thought we were getting divorced, and I had to explain to her, no, we weren't getting divorced. She said, "Well, all my friends say you're getting divorced."

I said, "We're not getting divorced. I'll be home next weekend." [Rosolowski laughs.]

Tacey Rosolowski: Were there any kind of rough spots, or what did you—

Florence Haseltine: The biggest rough spot was when planes were late, when they were bad—the things I remember as the rough spots were the travel, not anything else. I carried a beeper. The kids could call my beeper. They didn't do it much. I don't talk to my kids every day. In fact, the only time I talk to anybody every day is Anna now that she had this baby until she went back to work. Now she's back at work, and there's no point talking every day. I mean, we're not that kind of family.

Tacey Rosolowski: Some women describe these horrible feelings of guilt leaving their kids.

[00:24:11]

Florence Haseltine: Oh, no, I never had any feeling of guilt, zero.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, I kind of felt like you didn't get that gene or whatever it is.

Florence Haseltine: No. I had helped raise my youngest brother because my mother was sick, and I knew what raising a kid was like, and, you know, he's turned out—he ended up being fantastic. He ended up being the Associate Director of the National Security Agency.

Guilt was—I'm not a person who operates much on guilt. I had *zero* guilt. The only thing is other people would say, "Well, the kids aren't going to turn out well."

I said, "Well, maybe they won't." But they did. They turned out just fine.

Tacey Rosolowski: That can happen even if you're home 24/7. [laughs] [00:24:53]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah. You know, I give Alan a lot of credit because he was the day-to-day caretaker and took care of the day-to-day details. You can't argue that that was an unimportant thing to do. It was very important. But he's much better at that than I am.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting. So, a really interesting division of labor.

Florence Haseltine: And I like my kids. I like to talk to them. I think they're interesting people.

Chapter Eleven

Professional Challenges at the NIH and How the Work World Has Changed for Women

After summarizing her reasons for retiring from the NIH, Dr. Haseltine notes that she has never built her identity around her work: "I answer to myself internally." She then focuses on professional challenges she faced working in government and changes in the work environment.

She first evaluates her own ability to understand and operate within the formalized (male) environment of the government work world. She tells anecdotes that reveal the consequences of this. She notes today the problem of getting women educated in the sciences has been solved: medicine has moved faster in this area than other disciplines because physicians are in demand.

She offers the following advice to men and women alike: spend money to free up time. She talks about differences in the questions that men and women ask her as a mentor/boss.

[00:24:53]

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me about making the decision to retire in 2012.

Florence Haseltine: I'd made that decision years before. It was a decision I was going to be retired by the time I was seventy. You know, when I was younger, I always rallied that the old people were taking everything up. I knew that when I got to be an old person, somebody would be rallying against me. They probably were long before I left. But I had a goal, so it wasn't a—and also by that time we had this new director, and he wanted to do things differently, and he wouldn't have had a good—I mean, I could have figured out a position, but I didn't fit into the structure as it was, and I had

plenty of things to do. As I say now, my job was interfering in my work. So it wasn't a wrenching decision. It was just a normal decision, time to retire.

[00:26:14]

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, let's go back and kind of pick up the whole technology piece.

Florence Haseltine: I do notice that a lot of people have a great deal of trouble retiring because their whole identity is tied up with being the director of or professor of, or something. But my identity has not been tied to that. My identity is much more internal. It's not that I don't like being appreciated, I certainly do, but I answer more to myself than I answer to anybody else.

Tacey Rosolowski: And who is that person inside you're answering to?

Florence Haseltine: Am I working? Am I doing something interesting? That's about it. But I do know that there are people whose value is determined by who they are and what their position are. That I have learned by taking these awards and watching them. And I do know titles are important.

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, that was an interesting discovery that you made about taking that particular exam, you know, to get that credential, that there are certain external signs that you need to have.

[00:27:36]

Florence Haseltine: Well, yeah, but there are times when I didn't properly pay attention to it. This is one of those odd things that can happen. Okay. There's a society, American Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, or American—I don't know, it's called AGOS, American Gynecologic and Obstetrical Society. Okay. It's an old-boys' network which used to have power in the field because it would pick who's going to be chairman of what departments, who you were going to move from one department to another. It was a real old-boys' club, very few women were in it.

And in the late eighties, early nineties, it was proposed that I be put up for nomination, and I was supposed to give a talk, and I gave a talk. And there's a way you're supposed to answer a question, there was a ritualistic way, and one of the guys was assigned to mentor me, but I didn't listen to him. I mean, I just didn't listen to him. What he said made no sense to me, so I wrote it off. So when I was asked questions, I didn't respond, "Dr. So-and-so, what an important question you've asked." There was a formula which I ignored. Well, I didn't get in, but often people didn't get in on the first round.

[00:28:50]

So the next time I was supposed to review things for that group, review somebody else's paper, and there's a formalized way you're supposed to do it. But that year, the women got together and wanted a woman proposed for the American Fertility Society, which is now called something else, but it was called that. And I said, "Look, I'll nominate her and we'll do a write-in campaign. She's not going to get it, but I can tell you this will piss the men in the field off so much I will not get into AGOS. That's the price. You have to understand what you're doing." I understood it.

So we went ahead and we put her up, and I got a phone call from the guy who was president-elect or not—you know, on the rung. And he was furious with me. I said, "Joe, it doesn't matter." Joe Leigh is his name. He's now president of March of Dimes. He's a great guy. But he was *screaming* at me. I said, "She's not going to get it. I mean, I did this because I was asked by the women, and I have a double obligation. I have no choice." I didn't feel I had a choice. I said, "I'm sure there'll be consequences, but you're going to get it anyway. Don't worry about it."

[00:29:59]

He got it, of course, and I didn't get into AGOS. I did what I was supposed to, and I didn't get in. But I got into the IOM that year. So what happened was they realized something was wrong with AGOS. I mean, that's one of the few things that—you know, nobody gave a damn about AGOS outside of AGOS. So it's like I didn't get my tenure, but I got the job at NIH. It's another one of those moments. And also it saved me $450-plus a year membership. But I could go to all of their meetings, which were members-only unless you were invited, but who wasn't going to invite the Center director? So I went whenever I wanted to.

And finally, the young people were so upset about it that they changed all the rules, and they asked me to come, and I said I would as long as I didn't have to give a talk. And I didn't even want to do it because of the membership dues, which are just outrageous. Government people have to pay out of their pocket. The government doesn't pay like universities do.

But Bert Peterson had gone to all the trouble of changing the bylaws, and this was a big deal. I went, I joined, I paid for two years, and then I went emeritus. [laughter] Because I don't go to it anymore and it doesn't have much power in the field. But they're struggling to find what they do. They do have some money and give a fellowship, though, and a scholarship, and it's a greeting point for—it's just an unusual society, let me put it that way.

Tacey Rosolowski: These stories are really interesting because if you're an independent person and you bristle a little bit with arbitrary rules and—

[00:31:44]

Florence Haseltine: Or even ignore them, which is my trouble.

Tacey Rosolowski: Or even ignore them, yeah.

Florence Haseltine: I don't read past the subject line.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, I mean, you can see this idea that you really are in a subtle way being socialized, and if you don't pay the proper attention to that and say, "Yes, I'm willing to be molded," you're going to be out.

Florence Haseltine: Yeah.

Tacey Rosolowski: Do you think that women commonly miss those signs or not given the opportunity?

[00:32:14]

Florence Haseltine: I think most women do pay attention to the signs if given the opportunity, they do read past the first line, but I think they're not

given the opportunity. Now, they may miss some of the signs along the way to get to that point, but I miss it like I would miss it for anything, because I don't read further than the first line. I miss a lot of things that way.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting, interesting.

Florence Haseltine: And even if I read it, I don't remember what I read or I'm not paying attention.

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, we'd started on the subject of household management and then kind of got to these larger professional issues. Looking over the scope of years, what have you seen change in the workplace for women?

Florence Haseltine: I think in biology and in medicine, the barrier's broken in terms of getting women educated. Getting them active and in the higher parts of the profession is harder. Medicine has moved a little bit faster because of just the need for physicians, whereas in biology they still say that 50 percent of the women don't stay in academics and, what is it, 50 percent of them—I don't know. The difference is a factor of two. So say you have 50/50 women and men getting PhDs. You'll have 75 percent men in the faculty and 25 percent

women. That 25 percent number has been pretty solid for a while in a lot of different areas like getting people on speakers' panels and things like that. So there's something about that 25 percent number which you'll have to crack at some point.

[00:34:05]

But I think medicine, because there's a huge demand for your skills, whereas there's not a huge demand for faculty biologists, I mean, there's a demand, but it's not the same order, I think that the increasing number of pressures, and these women are still young, makes it so that places have to be more flexible, whether they want to be or not. Now, that's not true in some of the other fields that just aren't cracking yet, but maybe with more STEM education at the junior high school and high school level, in ten to fifteen years we might see it. I mean, it takes a lag time of actually probably twenty years from getting people to be interested in high school to getting them out at the other end. I mean, it's really a long lag time, it's a whole generation, and we don't have that in the other STEM fields. But in medicine, it's not uncommon in an ad now to see a woman physician being advertised or using "my doctor, she" or something like that, so that's a dramatic change, just huge.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah. I'm thinking of that comment, "I want my daughter to be a lady, not a doctor." That's gone.

[00:35:22]

Florence Haseltine: That's gone.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, completely.

Florence Haseltine: My comment was, "Lady's a four-letter word." I make those comments every so often.

My other daughter rose in that fast—in the management, arts management, which is also a field that's got a lot of males that they'll take over a female.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, when you talk to younger women, you talk to your daughters—

Florence Haseltine: It's always about daycare.

Tacey Rosolowski: It's always about daycare?

Florence Haseltine: It's always who's going to take care of the kid.

Tacey Rosolowski: But, I mean, serving as a mentor, what kind of advice do you give to—

[00:36:03]

Florence Haseltine: Very pragmatic. Spend all your money on freeing up time. I learned that actually from Georgeanna Seegar Jones. She gave a meeting to the young women at the American Fertility Society, I guess in the eighties, seventies or eighties, and she says, "The one thing is, the only thing you cannot buy later in life is time, and spend all your money on freeing up your time. You can always buy a new dress. You can always buy a new car, new house, but you can't buy time." So I tell people the only thing money is good for is spend it on time.

Tacey Rosolowski: What do you tell young men?

Florence Haseltine: They never ask me.

Tacey Rosolowski: What would you tell them?

Florence Haseltine: I'd tell them the same thing.

Tacey Rosolowski: But what would you tell them to help women? How would you help them help women around them?

Florence Haseltine: Just be pissed when your wife isn't getting paid as much as the guy next to them, and help her with that. It's a money issue. But men

don't ask me those questions. They ask me other questions, but they don't ask me those.

Tacey Rosolowski: What questions do men ask you?

[00:37:21]

Florence Haseltine: Well, men will often ask which is the best program. Some of them will ask, if they know I'm interested in education, how—it's almost, again, always professional questions. I guess I had a talk with one recently about where to put their funds for their kids for college or something like that. But for the most part, it's "What is the best place for me to go and get a job?" Stuff like that. "What area of science do you think is hot?" or something. I'm not asked many of those questions by anybody anymore.

Tacey Rosolowski: And women do come to you with more pragmatic kinds of questions?

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, yeah. But I've been sort of out of the mentoring role for a little while.

Tacey Rosolowski: Did you find that women looked to you as a model because you—

[00:38:14]

Florence Haseltine: I have no idea.

Tacey Rosolowski: So you really don't have any clue about that. Interesting.

Florence Haseltine: I had a couple women over time come up to me and say they read my book *Woman Doctor*, and that's why they went into medicine, but that's the sort of—you don't know how other women or younger people regard you.

Tacey Rosolowski: Would you like to shift gears and kind of talk about the technology piece at this point?

Florence Haseltine: Sure.

Tacey Rosolowski: Or if you want to take a break.

[The recorder is paused.]

Chapter Twelve

An Innovator's Interest in Technology and Gadgets

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine talks about her lifelong interest in technology and gadgets.

She begins with her earliest memory of fascination with technology: in 1957, the International Geophysical Year, she was the first person in the world to see Sputnik III, for which she received a pin –her most prized piece of jewelry.

She notes that in college, she worked in the Hertz Hall of Music (University of California, Berkeley) setting up lights and microphones. She recounts stories of her how she was fascinated with new equipment when she was in graduate school and medical school, and skilled at solving problems technically. "I should have been an engineer," she says. Dr. Haseltine then notes her ease with computers (she wrote a program for sperm counting) and talks about the 1980s when "we were all hackers."

[Begin File 5]

[00:00:00]

Tacey Rosolowski: Okay. So it's about 2:28. We took a little break, and we were going to start kind of talking about your interest in technology, innovating new equipment. So when did all that begin? When did you start—

Florence Haseltine: I don't think it ever began at any time other than birth.

Tacey Rosolowski: Really. Okay. What's the first thing you ever remember inventing?

[00:00:24]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I wouldn't call it inventing, but I just like to play with any gadget I can get my hands on. I remember in high school there was the International Geophysical Year, and they had us go to the range to sit and look at the sky. They had what's called the telescope fence, telescopes set up to cover the whole sky that was visible, and they were looking for Sputniks in 1957, Sputnik 1, Sputnik 2, Sputnik 3.

Sputnik 1 went up and was spotted. They knew what its trajectory was and calculated its orbit. Sputnik 2 went up and came down right away. Sputnik 3 went up, and we got a call, "Go to the range and get on the fence so maybe you will see Sputnik," because they didn't know where it was going to be, but they thought that it would probably pass through—they had an idea of its orbit, and they thought it would pass over Mojave Desert, where we were, with the Northern Hemisphere.

Tacey Rosolowski: When you say "the range," is that—

[00:01:38]

Florence Haseltine: The range was a place in China Lake where they tested weapons and missiles.

So I remember I rode my bicycle down there, and it was cold and I had a jacket on, and I was sitting out in the thing, and behind me was the International Geophysical—well, it was the Greenwich

Mean Time was beeping. They had a big tape recorder running, and it would beep the time, "beep, beep, beep, beep." "At such-and-such a time, it is 5:58 Greenwich Mean Time," whatever.

So you were to sit there, and if you saw something go across your field, a bright light, you were to mark and say, I think, "Contact," and then "Contact" again when it went across the second one. It may have been some other phrase, but something like that. And all of a sudden, I see this bright thing, and it hits a bar. I say, "Contact." "Beep, beep." "Contact." I was the first person in the world to see Sputnik 3.

Tacey Rosolowski: Wow!

Florence Haseltine: And they gave me a little pin as a memento for the International Geophysical Year. It is my most valuable piece of jewelry, even if it's probably only a centimeter or a centimeter and a half long and made out of stainless steel and is the tiniest little pin you've ever seen. But it's my most important—of all my jewelry, it's my most important piece.

Tacey Rosolowski: Wow. That is so cool.

[00:03:03]

Florence Haseltine: And then when I was graduating from high school and went to Davis for the summer, NASA was just forming, and this was 1960. There were a bunch of people who had been watching these satellites left from the Geophysical Year, but by that time they had put up a lot of satellites in those three years. And I remember going over to somebody's house who had a telescope in their house, and they had a thing that opened and all that, and we were looking. We had the people from NASA there, and the guy said—come on, Snowflake. [Dr. Haseltine's cockatiel, Snowflake, flies into the room.]

And they said, "Oh, look over there. You'll see a satellite."

And the guy said, "Oh, I see it!"

He says, "No, no, that's not the one I want you to see. I want you to see the next one."

The guy had set it up so two would go through the field. I thought that was cute.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, that's really funny. And just for the record, when Dr. Haseltine said, "Go, Snowflake," she was actually not quoting the person back in time, but talking to the bird which is chirping in the background here. Snowflake is—what's the kind of bird again? [00:04:08]

Florence Haseltine: It's a cockatiel. It's very funny at times, but she likes to hear voices.

Anyway, so that was another thing. Now, I always liked—when I got to the end of my PhD work, I always liked new gadgets of any kind. As I said, I designed experiments to use this new—the ultracentrifuge, and that was how I separated out active and inactive cells of the *bacillus subtilis*.

And when I was in medical school, one time we had a patient and they said he was kicked in the head or something, had an infection. And many infections have a smell. They said, "Oh, it's *bacillus subtilis*, and he got kicked in the head." He was in a farm or something. Because it looked like it under the microscope or that's what the pathology.

I said, "No, it isn't. It doesn't smell right," because I'd worked with that bacteria. And so what we did, we took a sample, grew it up in the lab, and spun it in an ultracentrifuge, which you could do to figure out the guanine-cytidine ratio in a sample of DNA was, and we proved it wasn't *bacillus subtilis* because that had a different ratio. So I would often solve problems technically or with gadgets, or in this case huge machines, that could be solved a lot of other ways. So I just liked gadgets.

[00:05:35]

I don't think there's any overwhelming specific thing from that period. It's just that I was always attracted to it. I mean, in college I worked with the radio, television, theatre, and I would help record broadcasts, and then I would run the lights in the school, in the Hertz Hall of Music for concerts. That's how I earned money through college. So I gravitated towards jobs that required—I had to climb in the rafters to put the lights in the right place and the mics in the right place. So I gravitated toward the technical end of things. I should have been a civil engineer.

Tacey Rosolowski: Really?

Florence Haseltine: Because my favorite thing to do is watch bridges going up and to watch construction. I love watching—being on roads where there's construction, even if it slows down, so I can see what they're doing. Drives everybody crazy. I'm happy it's slowed down, and they're pissed.

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me about bringing in work with IT into all of this, because you kind of mention them together. What's the connection?

[00:06:49]

Florence Haseltine: They're not separate for me. I did take a computer class at Berkeley in the sixties, a FORTAN 2 course, but computers were

hard for people like me then, because if you're dyslexic and you had to make punch cards and you made one mistake, it wouldn't work. So I sort of withdrew from that for a while.

Then I was talking to my sister once in the probably early eighties, and I said, "Susan, I really have to get these grants written. I'd type a grant and there's a typo, and I have to go back and retype the page and put in another typo. I can't see the typing mistakes."

She says, "Well, get a word processor. Apple's just come out with this little word processor."

Up to that point, the secretaries had Wangs, but I couldn't use them, or hadn't thought I could use them. So I got an Apple computer. It is the only loan I have ever taken out, other than a mortgage and my medical school. I've never bought a car on time, nothing. But that computer, I borrowed $2,500 from the bank, bought a computer and a printer. The printer cost as much as the computer. And I became free after that.

[00:08:05]

Alan and I, we had to write programs to get the printer to work. You had to write your own driver programs. And Alan and I wrote a program for sperm-counting because I had to count sperm one day and I thought that was ridiculous, so we developed a way of my taking pictures, timed pictures, and then counting how

far the sperm moved, using the graphics tablet that Apple had then. It originally came with a graphics tablet, but that didn't sell too well, so they abandoned it. But it was quite useful for us.

Later, we wrote that program, and I traded the program, the copyright to that program, which, believe me, was a very simple program, for two Revco Freezers in my lab. [Rosolowski laughs.] And then I started writing code for taking my patients' histories, and I'd drag the computer I had. So I was known at Yale for the first person to have a personal computer and introducing Apple computers to them. But, you know, they took off rather fast, to say the least. So I just liked to get into computers. All my friends were. I joined an Apple user group in New Haven. Most of my friends were connected outside of my direct work with my interest in computers.

And then when I came to NIH, I never forget, I had a branch chief and he had this PC, and he was so proud of it. He said, "Oh, I've got this done, and I have it so nobody but myself can get in it."

And I said, "Oh, could I look at it or something?"

He said, "Sure."

[00:09:42]

I sat down and I got into his stuff right away. I had no trouble going through a back door. I mean, PCs weren't out very long. I

probably went into the operating system and just pulled it back, because I knew how to do it. Horrified him, scared him to death, that that could be done.

But I knew how to do those things and I liked doing them. I liked playing with them. And at the beginning of computing, everybody shared all their programs. There wasn't all this proprietary stuff. I mean, there might have been a little bit, but we were all hackers. Well, that, of course, changed rapidly. But I always had a Mac at work, and nobody could understand it. And I remember getting called out once because I took a portable computer to a meeting in Switzerland. And my boss calls me in when I get back and he says, "There were complaints about you using the computer." Well, that's how—

Tacey Rosolowski: What was that about?

Florence Haseltine: I don't know. I mean, I was using a computer, making noise. So, actually, I used to sit in the front row. I did move to the back so that my noise wouldn't bother people, but now it doesn't matter. But that's how early I was in using those things, and I had the little teeny portable ones. I had all kinds of things. Every time a new one would come out, I'd buy it. I had a Newton when the Newton was out. And I just liked doing the things.

[00:11:08]

I had to argue with Duane every two years to get a new portable, because that's about how long they'd last. He had no understanding of it, none. Now, that wasn't true of Guttmacher. Guttmacher understood computers pretty well, so it was all right.

But the IT people, I used to do IT things, and—oh, in '95, the government had a furlough. It was closed down. And I during that time started Haseltine Systems, my company that manufactures wheelchair containers, and I did it during that period. But I made the mistake of showing somebody in the office the website for it, and they thought I was using the government machine to run a website. They had no understanding that you didn't do it, but the IT people did. So they were supposed to mirror my computer to see if I was doing nongovernment work. I wasn't, but I knew I wasn't. And I knew what their mistake was, and so—

Tacey Rosolowski: Did you find that using these gadgets, having these new possibilities for work, how did it make you think differently about problems? Did you help you work faster?

[00:12:19]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I knew you could work faster. You could do things. I couldn't have done the data analysis without having those. I could have. It would have been clunkier. But the Apple computer, until

recently, was way ahead of everybody else. It's losing its edge now.

So I just was using the technology to do what I wanted. I liked email right away. I used to have it when it was called Bitnet. That was before regular thing. And I remember being resentful that I had to change from Bitnet to @nih.gov, but that's the way it was.

So to me, what's interesting is always doing the next thing with it. I don't know. It's not easy to explain why you like something. You just like it.

Tacey Rosolowski: Mm-hmm. And a lot of people, when new technology comes in, they're afraid, and they have to go through this onerous process of learning how to do something a new way, but it sounds like you really embraced that process.

Florence Haseltine: Oh, I liked it.

Tacey Rosolowski: "Let's go for it."

[00:13:31]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, I don't see any reason to do the same thing twice. You might as well not do anything unless you're learning something.

Tacey Rosolowski: Right, and that gives you an advantage if you're operating in an environment when there's constantly new stuff coming out.

Florence Haseltine: Well, that's the way it is on the web. I mean, I now run these webpages, and I sometimes write all my own code. Sometimes I use frameworks, but I'm not afraid to sit and learn it. I mean, sometimes it's pretty hard. I can spend a whole vacation just getting one coding to work right, but once it works right, it works right. And when you're dyslexic, you know you make a mistake in every sentence, so you just run it every time you make a sentence, and you, "Oh, I didn't put the semicolon in. Forgot a space." You know what you do wrong.

Tacey Rosolowski: So you have a system for troubleshooting pretty immediately.

Florence Haseltine: Yeah.

Chapter Thirteen

Founding Haseltine Systems, Entrepreneurial Ventures, and Getting Along with IT People

Dr. Haseltine begins this chapter by telling the story of Sandy Welner, whose cardiac problems and resulting disability led Dr. Haseltine to start her own company to market her design for a container that would enable airlines to safely ship customers' wheelchairs. Though her company has been manufacturing them for twenty years, she calls her company "a failure" and explains the commercial challenges of the invention.

She then tells a number of stories to show how she got started using different technologies, some of which led to inventions. She first tells about first working with databases. Next she tells how helping her daughter to choose a prom dress led her to write a program that she eventually patented, sold and that is now licensed to Microsoft. She talks about her current interest in databases and coding, and her work with databases associated with non-profits. She talks about her work on the Global Virus Network that is now tracking information on the Zika virus. Dr. Haseltine notes that she often takes on projects because she wants an excuse to learn a new technological tool.

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me about founding Haseltine Systems.

[00:14:24]

Florence Haseltine: What happened was, is the government—well, two things happened. The first thing that happened is one of our students at Yale, Sandy Welner, after she finished, she went on a trip and had a cardiac arrest, for probably dietary reasons, and ended up paralyzed for maybe six to nine months and even unconscious for a long time.

When she came back, she lost a lot of her ability to function, but she would come to our journal club in New Haven, and that's what I would do every Saturday when I went up to New Haven is

go to journal club in the morning. I used to take the two girls too. They'd sit under the table or something, but my job was to take them on weekends, so I did.

But Sandy one day was walking behind me, and she said—I asked her some question about her being in disability, and she said to me, "You know, the worst thing was I couldn't masturbate." My two daughters are behind me. They'd never heard the word used in that way, and not being able to do it was a physical disability, and most people don't think of that. And I was so—Sandy could drive you crazy, but I was so impressed that she was able to put her finger on something in the disability world that was just fundamental to humanity.

Tacey Rosolowski: And totally invisible as a problem.

[00:15:52]

Florence Haseltine: And totally invisible. So she came to Washington. I put her on a program for women and disabilities, but I didn't have her talk about disabilities. I had her talk about vaginal infections, which was an interest she had. She came and gave the talk, and it was her first outing as a disabled person. And Sandy then got embraced by the disabilities community here in Washington, and she got a job at Washington Hospital Center, but she couldn't do physical exams. So I was on a sabbatical here, now I'd been at NIH seven years or

so, and I went to help her, and I helped her—I was her hands, so to speak, and I'd do exams for her. She'd make the decisions. I'd do the exams.

One day she went on a vacation to Australia, and her wheelchair got busted. When she told me, I said, "Oh, I'll buy you a container for it." There weren't any, so I decided to make it. It's as simple as that.

So we had this huge furlough, and I decided to make a container, so I started the company, because we were unemployed. Nobody had any control of it. And when NIH came back, I told them what I'd done, and they said, well, that was okay.

I started writing the patents. I found a person to help me, a designer. I had an attorney up there, and he knew a guy who designed containers for Stanley Tools, so he helped me. He's since died. So he helped me find a manufacturer, so I had a manufacturer in Minnesota.

[00:17:31]

Tacey Rosolowski: What's the man's name?

Florence Haseltine: What is his name? It'll take me a second to remember. [George De Bush.]

Tacey Rosolowski: Okay. Do you recall the manufacturer's name?

Florence Haseltine: The manufacturer is called Aggressive Industries. They're in Minneapolis. And we've been manufacturing them now for over twenty years.

Tacey Rosolowski: Wow. Wow.

Florence Haseltine: I used to take them to trade shows, but people didn't show an interest, but the last couple years, the TSA has bought a lot of them. And now there's another company, twenty years later, that's making a soft cover and another hard cover, but it's made with multiple parts. It's for a fixed frame. So when people ask me about it, I send it to them. I probably should just sell the company to them and be done with it, but there's not a big market for it. The airlines all loved it and then wouldn't buy it.

Tacey Rosolowski: Hmm.

[00:18:27]

Florence Haseltine: Well, they're not in the business of protecting luggage. I have a lot of things to say about the airplane, but this is not the time to talk about the airplanes. Put it this way, it's a business experience.

So that was how that got started. And that actually has served its purpose in other things, because when I consult or my husband

does something, we just dump it all into Haseltine Systems, and that works out well.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting. So was that kind of a departure, I mean operating as an entrepreneur in that way?

Florence Haseltine: No, not really. I mean, I had to learn some things, but I'd gone to business school and learned about accounting.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, exactly, exactly. [laughs]

[00:19:14]

Florence Haseltine: I would say I was spectacularly unsuccessful, so I'm ready to go on to my next venture. Isn't that what you have to be a successful entrepreneur, is to have many failures before you have a success?

Tacey Rosolowski: Why do you consider it a failure?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I mean it hasn't made a lot of money, that's all. But it's done its purpose.

Tacey Rosolowski: What are the takeaways from that experience? Were there any moments of learning or "aha"?

Florence Haseltine: The main one is make sure your customer really wants what you're making, and I designed it for the airlines and they didn't want it. That's another thing where it would be good to get somebody else in who thought differently, because I know all the reasons it won't work, right? It's another one of those examples.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, why was that something you expected the airline to make and not something that people who owned wheelchairs would want?

Florence Haseltine: If you've seen the size of these things, where are they going to put them?

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, okay, so it's that kind of pragmatic issue. Got it.

[00:20:10]

Florence Haseltine: In fact, I often, if somebody calls and asks about buying something, I'll talk to them and mostly discourage them from getting it because it's just not going to work for them. If somebody buys it over the transom, I don't have that discussion. Somebody just bought a great big one and we shipped it out. We ship from Minnesota, so I now go to Minnesota every so often. I love it because it's a big factory with all kinds of stuff going on.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, I bet. [laughs] Well, that's pretty cool.

Florence Haseltine: But what happened with that, though, was I got a webpage up, and they cost a lot to get up in the 1990s, mid-nineties, and one day the computer that it was on died. We didn't really have a backup, so I had to go into the cache of our computers and [unclear] things down. But these were not dynamic webpages; they were static in those days. So within twenty-four hours to forty-eight hours, I had to learn how to build a webpage, and I did. It wasn't that hard, not then.

[00:21:13]

So then things just kept evolving, and by the end of the nineties, I had gathered—another problem came up at NIH, in that study sections would say they didn't have OB/GYNs to review grants. So I got a bunch of all the OB/GYNs, eight hundred OB/GYNs that were academically qualified, not all of them had grants, but many of them did, or had had them, and I put a database together and then I put the data online of all these people. And originally, we put their CVs up, but quickly that became an issue, and I had to go through many of the CVs and tell them, "I'm taking out your Social Security number, birth date," you know.

But that got me started on databases, and then I wanted to make a dynamic database, and then in 1999, while I'm doing all of

this, so I've learned how to put up a website—in fact, NIH even gave me an open IP address to build a website on, and they never took it away until—I don't know what eventually happened to it, because I didn't need it after a while, once I started buying my own server time. I used to own my own servers in a server facility. Now I just use Amazon things. So you have to morph very quickly in this business.

[00:22:41]

But NIH allowed me to have an open IP address, and I was one of the—I don't know how many people they did, but all the IT guys knew me, and one of the reasons they knew me is because, number one, I'd been causing them trouble from day one, but also because the IT was moved out of our institute and put in a building offsite, and I gave them space in my shop so that they could have a few people onsite. Because I kept saying to Duane, "We need an IT person on every floor." And finally I had open space and I just threw IT in there.

So we always have gotten along, because I understand how important they are, that you can't run anything without them. And most people just think they're background noise, and they're not appreciated. I mean, secretaries had a bad enough time being appreciated. IT people *really* have a bad time, and yet they are the core of every operation today. Number one, the guys at NIH, they

have to worry about security, they have to worry about all these hundreds of machines, they have to keep them up to date. It's not a small job.

And I was a math person, which caused everybody other confusion. But one day one of our IT guys dies. He was in his sixties or something. He just dropped dead. And no one could get into these machines because he had it password-protected. They came to me and they said, "Do you know what his password is?"

I said, "Yes."

They said, "What is it?"

I said, "It's simple."

And they said, "No, no, no. What is it?"

And finally I said, "It is simple, s-i-m-p-l-e." That was it. That was the password.

[00:24:28]

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, you know, it's interesting because this is another leadership issue. How do you work with different functions, essentially, within an organization and make sure they're appreciated. And you were uniquely placed to bring IT into that because you spoke their language and you'd always spoken their language.

Florence Haseltine: Well, and I had to teach a lot of them how to use Macs.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, okay, yeah. So there was a back-and-forth there, a mutual respect happening too.

Florence Haseltine: Well, even the woman running it, one day came to me and she was trying to print something out, and says, "How do you make it into a pdf?" And I had to show her on her computer. It was a PC computer, actually. But it didn't matter. I respected what they did, because I really knew how hard it was at times and how boring it could be. I mean, keeping your system up to date is just plain boring. So there are people who definitely appreciated what I did. I think that when the hierarchies have been afraid of you, "appreciation" is not the right word, but, you know, I had what I really wanted, which was time to think. Remember, time to me is a really critical element.

[00:25:43]

So then what happened was—oh, and the Society for Women's Health Research, we were one of the first societies to have a webpage because I built it, and we built it with Night Ridder or something initially. But that was in the middle nineties. So by the late nineties—there was something I wanted to say that happened then that sucked me in IT-wise. [pauses] Oh, yeah. It's Thanksgiving vacation, I'm home, and my brother Eric seems to be there or something, but my daughter Elizabeth wanted a prom

dress. I am not the type to go shopping for prom dresses. I'm the type that goes into a store, sees what I want, buys it, and walks out. I sort of killed the prom dress type of behavior. But I went with Elizabeth and I'm sitting there, and these girls are coming in, "Oh, I love this dress. Can I have a picture of it to send to my father? A Polaroid? Can we put it on layaway? Is Janie going to wear this same dress? Oh, what kind of shoes should I get? Is that necklace going to go with it? Oh, no, Sally's wearing that necklace."

[00:27:35]

Well, I was about to vomit. So I said, "Why don't we take pictures of these, put them online, have her turn around, we can video it, put a little video up." Because by that time I knew how to do this. And if you think about it, that's only three or four years of learning coding. "Why don't we do this, and then you can comment, and so-and-so can pay or send you the credit card." So by the late nineties—because I know this happened in '99—I was pretty able to do a lot of the things we now require, but I had to write all my code.

So I put the program together. And my brother was there for Thanksgiving, and I said, "Well, what are all the things—?" And we started thinking, and I realized that if I wrote a patent on it, that—so I went and did a patent search, and there was *nothing* like it. So I put in a provisional on Thanksgiving Day for two reasons.

One is that's the day when the government was closed, and the other is I was home. So we put in the provisional.

I told NIH about it. They weren't interested. It then took nine years to fight for that patent. It was called a business patent, and the Patent Office had decided during that time it wasn't going to give business patents, but eventually it broke free and gave the patent. The patent costs me about $50,000 to do over a nine-year period, so it was quite a long time. I sold it for $160,000 [a few days after] it was issued.

Tacey Rosolowski: So this was a patent for—

[00:29:19]

Florence Haseltine: Shopping.

Tacey Rosolowski: For shopping.

Florence Haseltine: For interactive shopping. And people use it all the time now. But Microsoft owns it now. I sold it to Intellectual Ventures, and they, I think, licensed it to somebody, I think it was Microsoft, because I see Microsoft does that kind of thing.

But you can understand, because if you want to know if somebody else in your class has it, what jewelry should you wear with it, what would be recommended, and you get those things all

the time, even on Amazon. You buy something and it says, oh, people who bought this, bought this.

Tacey Rosolowski: How interesting.

Florence Haseltine: So the patent is used all the time. I sold it because it was immediately being infringed, and they've created two other patents with it, because it was a very well-written patent. So I ended up with a bunch of patents, none of which had anything to do with my work.

But in the government, they give you all the things you can't do. There are lots of rules. You subtract from infinity the rules they give you, what does that leave you with?

Tacey Rosolowski: Tons. [laughs]

[00:30:19]

Florence Haseltine: Right. It's called infinity. So I look out the window one day and I said, "I don't know to build roads. I could build roads." I don't build roads, but I'm just saying it was that kind of a thing. So since then, I've morphed into a lot of coding and try to keep up with new coding things and new ideas, and I usually work with a lot of young people. Most of the people I work with are under thirty.

I have a story about my learning how to do some of this. I found a little widget online, and I bought it, because people who write their own code, if they find something they really like and somebody wants you to donate money, you just do it. It's sort of how you tell who real developers are. It's sort of an honor system, which I didn't know, but I just bought this from this person.

Then I had a question, so I emailed him. It turned out he was a high school kid in New Zealand. So he and I would be online frequently because the time thing was great. He could work in the morning when he got up, and it would be evening, so I wasn't at work. I could work from home. And he'd sign on to my computer and he'd say, "You didn't put the comma here, you did this wrong, you did this wrong." And one day he said, "I looked you up on Google. Why are you doing this? Don't you have somebody to do it?"

I said, "Oh, no, that's my grandmother." [Rosolowski laughs.]

[00:31:35]

He said, "Are you on Facebook?"

I said, "I'm homeschooled. I'm not allowed to be." [Rosolowski laughs.]

But after working with him for maybe a six months to nine months, he disappeared and I never—you know, I guess he went off to college or something else.

Tacey Rosolowski: Right. How funny.

Florence Haseltine: But I often work with people who are literally born after 1990. Now I have to say ’95.

Tacey Rosolowski: That’s funny.

Florence Haseltine: So they’re fifty years younger than I am.

Tacey Rosolowski: So what’s going to come next?

[00:32:08]

Florence Haseltine: I haven’t a clue. What I do now, though, is I work with a couple nonprofits helping them set up their websites. Some I just do trivial stuff. Some I do major stuff. With, like, the Global Virus Network, I’m working pretty heavily with them. I’m running their website, and if we ever get more money, we will build a database, an index database of the viruses for the people within the group to use.

Where the Zika virus came along, one thing about being involved with viruses is that every year you've got a new disaster. But this Zika virus thing is pretty interesting, and so I'll be going to Paris in a week to their a Zika virus meeting. So I go to a lot of the meetings to find out who's doing what and what's happening. I'm not a virologist, I'm not a research virologist, I just am interested in the whole process. So I do that right now.

Tacey Rosolowski: So you're going to be setting up a database for the Zika virus?

Florence Haseltine: No. Right now I've set up a database of people who were on our task force, and we exchange information. But I want to set up a viral database, and I'm going to Russia first to one of their big data centers or people who do data work and manage it, because I'm interested in displaying of data and things like that.

[00:33:27]

Tacey Rosolowski: Very cool. So with displaying of data, what are the things that you're thinking about that?

Florence Haseltine: Well, to get people to understand it. For example, I went to a talk in Beijing on viruses, and there was a gentleman there, a professor, who was talking about how you can visualize the chromosome, and that there are certain—you can visualize it as though it's a road

race down a chromosome, and there are potholes and things like that where they're missing pieces. And if you can visualize it, you can think differently about the problem.

And I attributed it, to explain what he did, I said, "Look, you and I have to deliver a set of cupcakes for a birthday party in two hours, but we have to drive down this mountain road. So we drive down it and it's smooth, and we get there and the cupcakes are delivered just fine. But if we started a half an hour later, there would have been a rainstorm, and some rocks would have fallen on the road, creating bumps and potholes, and we would have driven the cupcakes down and they would be messed up. On the other hand, if we'd waited even longer, that big boulder would have come down and blocked the road, and we wouldn't have even gotten through."

So those are sort of what'll happen on a chromosome. You'll be trying to go down it, it'll be smooth, it'll be potholed or it'll be bumpy, so if you're late and not getting the product there, that's one problem. If you're all messed up, then that's another problem, etc.

[00:35:03]

So, try to visualize how this data affects the end product. So I'm very interested in that type of visualization, and they do that in Russia, so I'm going to go talk to them and see how they do it.

And I have a specific project that I want them to do it for, so we'll see.

Tacey Rosolowski: What's the project?

Florence Haseltine: It's a GWAS, what's called GWAS. I have a GWAS database. It's a little old, but it can always be updated. But I want to see if they can use that to show the bumps in the road.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, interesting. So how does that relate—I can't remember the name of the guy who does the beautiful data.

Florence Haseltine: The guy in Europe?

Tacey Rosolowski: No, it's an American guy. I'll think of the name.

[00:35:40]

Florence Haseltine: I don't know. Maybe it's a name I need to know.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, yeah. He has a lot of books out, actually.

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, I've got some of those books. This is more—I need a little more dynamicism than just a nice chart. Besides, part of what I do is I've got a problem and I want to find a new way of doing it, so I

want to learn how to do it. So I do things as much for what I'm trying to do as for the process. I like the process. Like my experiment because I wanted to use a new machine, I want to use a new computer language.

My brother-in-law [Mark Chodos], who I work with quite a bit because he's a server person, I wanted very much to scrape all the data from the Patent Office to show how many women versus how many men were getting patents, and etc., etc. So I found some people doing some work here, some work there. I've taken all the members of this [unclear] Academy, and I've structured it so that you can look to see what patents they applied for, how many each person has, and I've done some analysis on it.

[00:36:48]

To do it, I had to learn a new computer language, which I'm not very skilled at yet, so my brother-in-law's helped me a lot with this, but now I have it and I can go back and parse it for other things. So wanting to find out this data was wanting to learn this program. So it's hard with me sometimes to tell. I'll pick a project for which I'll need to learn a new tool because I want the tool. So I'm probably more interested sometimes in the tool than what I'll get out of it. But you have to get something out of it to show how to use the tool.

Tacey Rosolowski: I understand that whole process. It's a different model for success and reward and learning and all that.

Florence Haseltine: Just learning a new thing is, for me, reward enough.

Chapter Fourteen

Learning about the Importance of Awards; Effecting Change for Women; Hard Lessons Learned

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine briefly sketches her involvement in the Foundation for the History of Women in Medicine then notes her own ignorance of how important awards are for an individual's career track. She talks about how women can effect change in their fields and tells an anecdote about blocking a male colleague's entry into the Institute of Medicine. She talks about things she might have done to facilitate her own advancement in academia and government, noting male attitudes to women in leadership positions.

[00:37:54]-

Tacey Rosolowski: I wanted to ask you about your involvement with the Foundation, if it's okay to switch gears here.

Florence Haseltine: Sure. I'm not probably going to be too much help, but—

Tacey Rosolowski: Because you were on the board for a while, just [unclear].

[00:37:54]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, and as I said, I thought the Foundation was originally set up to help the Archives that now are at Drexel after their long, torturous problems with MCP becoming Hahnemann, that became Drexel. So I think everything was still at MCP at that time. I don't think Hahnemann had gotten into it, or maybe Hahnemann

was part of it and they wanted to rescue it. I just thought that it was to raise money to help the Archives. That seems to either not have been true or I misinterpreted it or morphed into something else later. I don't know. But I remember that they were very interested in preserving some of them, and there was a great guy on it named Cohen. I guess he'd been a dean or a dentist or something, who gave quite a bit of money to get the thing going.

There was women, several women who were part of, I think, a headhunting firm that were involved, but I'm not putting too many things together, because I wasn't invested enough to really find out what was going on. Probably my attention wasn't there, so I can't be very helpful on that one.

Tacey Rosolowski: Okay, okay. You received the award in 2013.

[00:39:40]

Florence Haseltine: That was very nice. It was supposed to be a ceremony at NIH, but it couldn't occur because the government was closed down for bad weather. It was Hurricane Sandy, I think.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, that's too bad. Yeah, that's too bad.

Florence Haseltine: Well, we had a nice luncheon. It was very nice. I was very—I mean, it was nice to get it. It was very special.

Tacey Rosolowski: Now, what do you think awards like this do for women?

Florence Haseltine: Well, at the end of your life, it just makes you feel good that somebody recognized you, but at the beginning—I've learned a lot more about awards. It's something I still don't have a fundamental gut feeling about, so my interpretation of it is more of a scientific analytical kind.

I did not realize that getting promotions, one of the things that was considered was awards. I knew that in promotions it was important to get national recognition if you're going up for associate, and international if you're going up for full, and that's one way you say it, is they presented at national or international meetings. I did not know that you can say they've got a national or international award and that that has a lot of weight. I think many women didn't know it. I became more aware of the discrepancy with awards and their permutations once we started this RAISE Project, so that's only eleven years old. So my fundamental understanding of awards didn't mean very much. I mean, I would watch men get awards and feel bad that I didn't get them or no woman got them, but not understanding how they fit in.

[00:41:17]

In Europe, they fit in quite a bit, because without getting awards, many times you can't advance at all or you won't get a bonus. So awards are often—and now if you look at it, there's been a proliferation of *huge* money awards, but they're not given overwhelmingly to women. They're given mainly to men.

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, I'm wondering if this is a mentoring issue, too, because ideally a mentor should be a person who takes you into the office and says, "Hey, look, you know, you really need—."

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, but the mentor has to know about it.

Tacey Rosolowski: Pardon me?

Florence Haseltine: The mentor has to know about it. How can they know about it if they've never gotten one?

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, well, that's what I'm saying. You know, there's kind of a vacuum. If there aren't any women above you on the ladder, you know, and you don't have a male mentor who's willing to give you that information, you're really operating at a loss or a deficit.

[00:42:15]

Florence Haseltine: Well, yeah. It was my not recognizing how important AGOS was to my evaluating things because *I* wasn't interested. I mean, that's a mistake I've often made, is that I'm not interested in something, so I give it no value, and that, of course, is not true, not true. And many awards you want because they will help you promote you professionally.

And one of the ways that women can effect change—and I did this only once. Well, maybe I—I did it once because of a physician I knew was really horrible to his patients, and he wanted to get in an organization, and I just said, "He's not acceptable, because I know what he's done to patients. I mean, he's got a problem."

And then the other time someone wanted to get in the National Academy, and I knew that he was both a crook and had sexually harassed people. And after he was nominated, he didn't get in on the first round. I went to the two nominators and laid out what was going on, which I do think bearing witness is important when you can. You don't have to do it openly, but you do have to do it, because if you don't do it, these people get more empowered. By that time, I understood what the IOM meant. I did not understand it when I was admitted.

Tacey Rosolowski: Tell me what you learned.

[00:43:44]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I learned that people will fight to the death to get in it. They'll pull everything they can because it means so much to their career, I mean, that people can be—you know, put names of—someone told me about a thesis he was writing, and his professor put somebody else's name on it as well so that he could curry favor with this other guy to get into the Academy.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, my gosh.

Florence Haseltine: I mean, that kind of shenanigans. I don't know if he ever got in or not, but it was that kind of—and I think that over time, because there are so few positions in the academies, that they're highly sought after because, for example, deans will brag how many members of the academies are in their university. It tells about the thing. If a guy is in the Academy and sexually harasses somebody or gets his postdoc pregnant, he's not going to get fired, because they don't want to lose one of their, you know, cranes [phonetic], so to speak. So you don't always understand where something fits in.

[00:44:54]

But for the most part, my job has been to try to get people in, because if you do something—I mean, if I ever am hostile about

somebody, it bothers me more than helping. I forget if I help somebody, but if you try to stand in someone's way, I'm more apt to remember it, so I try to avoid those situations, because my feeling is if they're such a shit, you don't want them sitting in your head.

Tacey Rosolowski: Exactly. As you're looking back, are there certain things that you could have done really differently in general or at certain moments so that you advanced more quickly or had a better success pattern?

Florence Haseltine: That question can never be properly answered, but I will say that probably my being disrespectful cost me. But I have been in situations where I've been severely disrespected and had to fight back, and one of them was when there was a period at which I was the token woman being evaluated for jobs, and one was at the University of Minnesota. I think it was Vice President of Health Affairs, something like that. And, you know, these public universities have these search committees where they select from every department, there are twenty-five people on the committee, everybody goes around and asks a question. They're all cookbook questions. But I was often thrown into these with no preparation, not knowing what they were. The men were given documents. I later found that out.

[00:46:33]

But at one of them particularly, they went around the room, and the last guy sitting on my left says, "I've got your CV. You've done a lot of things, and I see you come from Bobbitt country." Now, you may not remember the Bobbitt story.

Tacey Rosolowski: I do.

Florence Haseltine: Okay. So the implication was the castration, you know. And so this is another place my business training had helped. That's called poisoning an interview, because what that does is it makes everybody uncomfortable, and they blame it on the person who's being interviewed. So I knew right away—well, I had a sense anyway, but I knew right away the interview was dead. So at that point, there's no reason to be a sweetie-pie. And I just looked at him and I thought for a second, and I don't know how long I thought, but I looked at him, I said, "Yes, you've put a lot on the table, but I don't see the knife." *No one* has ever forgotten that interview.

[00:47:36]

I got a letter of apology from the university. Big fucking deal. I mean, what is a letter? You're not going to get the job. You

don't need a letter. And he was kicked off the committee, but, I mean, clearly he should have been.

And I had other things like that happen at interviews, but that was about the worst that ever happened. I mean, I'd often—once at the University of Maryland for the president of their campus I was one of the finalists, two finalists, and I'm standing in this—the trustees in this tree of men, who are all six-foot-four or above, all white-haired and skinny, and, boy, I didn't fit. So the guy who got the job was six-foot-four. I'm not sure if he was quite that tall. But my brother said, "The better man won." But, you know, those are things that happened to you along the way.

Tacey Rosolowski: Did that kind of stuff change you at all?

Florence Haseltine: It made me realize I was probably not going to leave NIH, so I'd better start [living in] my head.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting, yeah. I mean, I'm also thinking in a situation like that, with that guy and the whole poisoning the interview, because, yeah, I can totally—I can feel the atmosphere, how it changes, you know, how it changes, like it suddenly drops ten degrees.

Florence Haseltine: Oh, yeah.

Tacey Rosolowski: And I'm thinking there are a lot of women in that situation who would really reach back to old femininity lessons. "How do smooth the water? How do I make it nice?"

[00:49:04]

Florence Haseltine: No, but I had been taught that you couldn't smooth the water. That was the reason you get—I mean, that's what education is for, is to give you tools in case something happens. But immediately when he said it, and I said "poisoned interview," I mean, it was a flip, and I don't know I recall that. I mean, I hadn't been in business school. This was in the late nineties, I assume, so at least fifteen years, maybe even longer. But the minute it happened, I just knew what had happened. And, you know, you can't do anything to retrieve a poisoned interview, so there's no point. You might as well nail the bastard, because, number one, it won't be forgotten. What would be forgotten, and the other thing, or they would just forget who it was who did that, and they would say, "Oh, that was another weak-willed woman," or something. But this way, they won't forget the event and they sure as hell won't forget my answer. This is what you want.

Tacey Rosolowski: I was looking at your CV and see in 2004 you have listed here Senior Managers in Government, the JFK School.

[00:50:18]

Florence Haseltine: Oh, yeah, that was set up to the—this was later. I applied for and was sent up to the Kennedy School that they send government people up to. I just thought it would be interesting to go again.

Tacey Rosolowski: How long were you there?

Florence Haseltine: Just a month.

Tacey Rosolowski: And what was the subject matter you were immersed in?

Florence Haseltine: It was just management issues of different kinds. I'll never forget, they thought I was asleep, so they called on me, and they said, "Oh, could you describe the structure of your Institute?" Because that was what everybody was doing.

Well, as I said, I understood structure. So I said, "Yes. I work at a Center, and my Center answers to the head of the Institute. And the head of the Institute answers to the head of NIH. And the head of NIH answers to the Deputy Secretary of Health. And the Deputy Secretary of Health—." And I went right up the line. And the guy just froze, because he thought of a much more linear structure. Anyway, it was very funny.

Tacey Rosolowski: That is, and they thought you were asleep. Somehow I can't even imagine that, but—

[00:51:20]

Florence Haseltine: Oh, I do—I probably was snoring.

Tacey Rosolowski: But you snapped back fast. [laughs]

Florence Haseltine: Oh, yeah. I'll never forget the confusion on the guy. He said, "Now we'll go to something simpler." [laughs]

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, that's really funny. That's really funny. Okay, well, I just wanted to check and see where that sat in—

Florence Haseltine: It was worthless.

Tacey Rosolowski: It was?

Florence Haseltine: It was fun. I didn't even keep up with anybody I met there.

Tacey Rosolowski: But that's a really telling moment, you know, that story with that interview and then suddenly having that knowledge base come back to you and save you, really, because what an uncomfortable—

[00:51:55]

Florence Haseltine: Well, it saved my pride. I did not walk out of there feeling like I'd been killed. So that's important.

Tacey Rosolowski: It is. It's a great example.

I kind of lost my train of thought, and I have to actually say I'm kind of getting brain-dead right now. [laughs]

Florence Haseltine: Yeah, let's stop.

Tacey Rosolowski: All right. Why don't we take a break and—

Florence Haseltine: Let's go see Sherlock.

Tacey Rosolowski: That sounds like a good idea. All right. So I am turning off the recorder for today at twenty minutes after three.

[End of April 9, 2016 interview]

Interview Session Two: 10 April 2016

Session Two
Interview Identifier

[00:00:00]

Tacey Rosolowski: Okay. So today is April 10th, 2016, and the time is about quarter of ten in the morning, and this is our second day of recording with Dr. Florence Haseltine. And that's how you pronounce it, "Has-el-teen."

Florence Haseltine: "Has-el-teen," yeah.

Tacey Rosolowski: I was saying "Hay-sel-teen."

Florence Haseltine: I don't have a strong feeling about it.

Tacey Rosolowski: People do that with my last name, too, and I don't bug them about it. Okay. But "Has-el-teen" is what you prefer. And we have everyone here. We have Snowflake, we have Sherlock, and the crew is ready.

We were talking a little bit before, as we were finishing breakfast and deciding what we were going to do today, and two

topics came up. One was the evolution of your research, and the second topic was your lone-wolf status and kind of finding success, finding your way as a lone wolf. So I was going to leave it to you to decide which one of those we start talking about, because I imagine they are even connected.

Florence Haseltine: I would assume they're connected. [Rosolowski laughs.]

Chapter Fifteen

An Early Interest in Sex Differentiation and Editing Women's Health Research

Dr. Haseltine begins this chapter with anecdotes that show the evolution of her interest in sex differences and then focuses on how she channeled this interest into activities that have had an impact on women's health research.

She recalls that she was approached to edit the journal, Women's Health Research, and explains how she solicited articles for the journal. She notes that the journal was very quickly listed in MedLine; she talks about the editorials she wrote to address leadership issues in promoting diversity and gender equity.

She concludes this chapter by noting that "sex differentiation is related to everything," and tells an anecdote about sex differentiation and global warming.

Florence Haseltine: My basic interest in research has started probably with a question that every child asks, and that is why are there two, meaning why are there boys and girls. And I asked that at a very young age.

[00:01:35]

My father who, as I now know, is considered Asperger's—the information that came out in the nineties, we read *Time* magazine, we gave him a copy, he says, "Yes, that's what I am,"—probably explains a lot of how I've approached things ever since. You combine an Asperger's father and a hyperactive dyslexic child, and there's apt to be a little bit of amusement along the way, otherwise known as conflict.

But what happened was my father would answer questions directly. If you asked him a scientific question, he would try to answer it. He had done a huge amount of reading; he was very knowledgeable on many topics. So I asked him why there were two sexes, and he kept trying to answer the question. I'd ask him more, and finally—and I think I was about four—he said, "When you grow up, you figure it out." And I think that how a parent handles that question of why are there two sexes—and in my case it was, "You figure it out," which was a scientific approach, versus "Oh, you'll find out when you're older," which is a social approach, can help trigger the acceptance of science.

I didn't realize it quite at the time, of course, but the first book he ever gave me on sex was in the early fifties when the *Kinsey Report* came on, on the sexual behavior of the human male. He got the book and he gave it to me. Now, I'm an eleven-year-old. I just learned how to read. I mean, that's quite a book for a kid to read. So that still didn't explain the question, because it didn't answer why. It answered more what.

Tacey Rosolowski: What was your reaction to the book?

[00:03:26]

Florence Haseltine: I just thought it was a curious book. I mean, I think that it put a dimension on human sexuality that no one at that age could

possibly understand. And much of the book, even if you read it today, is just—you know, it's overwhelming, it's kind of boring, but it was very important. I mean, it led the charge for a lot of other things that happened.

So my interest always was—and in high school, I remember there was a lecture on something called g_____ or g_____—I'm sure of the pronunciation—of male and female twinning, where the female would be masculinized and not fertile, and so they often would just slaughter the female because she wasn't good for milk production, or she was led off for veal. But thing was, was that the person who gave that talk I saw many years later. She was a high school student, one of my competitors in high school, and she never remembered giving that talk, but she did, and I remember that was a—

[interruption]

[00:05:00]

Florence Haseltine: So when I got to undergraduate, there was no real discussion of sex differences, and in graduate school when I was studying bacterial transformation, there wasn't any. But once I got into medical school, I knew that that was going to be one of my interests. And

as I got to Yale, I got to meet people who had abnormal sex differentiation. There are a group of people who are ambiguous.

So I got more interested, and my research as a postdoc-type person in Frank Ruddle's lab was on making mosaic mice. That was fusing male and female embryos and then seeing which were female and male and seeing what came out afterwards—much of the time, of course, those what are called mosaic animals came out as male—and just trying to figure out what was going on there.

My first publication as a scientist after I graduated medical school, I had published before as a grad student, but afterwards was on sex differentiation, and it was in *Science* magazine with a wonderful man named Susumu Ohno, who was one of the most gracious scientists I was ever allowed to interact with. I didn't work with him because he was in California at the City of Hope, but everyone who's known Susumu Ohno says the same thing: he was a fabulous human being.

[00:06:23]

Then I wrote some papers on chromosomal abnormalities in human development and things like that, and I got some grants on it, got an NIH grant, and then I got it renewed. So my basic interest was always in sex differentiation, and I continued that interest, and to me what's important—in fact, when we founded the Society, I had long talks with Sam Thier, again, this man who

was at the time head of the Institute of Medicine. He, incidentally, later became head of Partners, founded Partners in Massachusetts, so he's well known in the Boston community.

Tacey Rosolowski: And his last name again?

Florence Haseltine: Thier, T-h-e-i-r (sic). You always autocorrect but it's that. So I'm sure all of his documents are going to be in other parts of the library.

But Sam and I would sit at the Cosmos Club having lunch, and we would talk about women's health and how to project it, and he always agreed that sex differentiation was really the core of it, that what is difference between men and women and how does that affect their physiology later on. And now with the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences, of course, we have a Society totally devoted to that. So I have a place to go once a year and listen to great talks and just sort of swim in the sea of science. I don't know how else you describe it. It's one of my favorite—it is my favorite meeting.

[00:07:59]

But women's health became the focus because of the deficit in women's health research in the early nineties. And so I was approached by a woman named Mary Ann Leppert, who has a

publishing company, in the early nineties and asked if I would edit a journal called *Women's Health*. And I said, "I will, but I'm not a good editor in terms that I can't read things and make editorial corrections, so we'll always have to have a co-editor," which we did. And I was lucky that Ann Wentz [phonetic] was the first co-editor and then Bernadine Healy was my second co-editor. So we got Medlined right away.

And I remember at one point we had to withdraw a paper because there was some mistakes or errata in it, and Mary Ann said to me, "Oh, I've never had to do this before."

And I said, "Then nobody reads our journals," you know, because every journal is going to have that problem at some point. It's just how you face it. And my thing was just, "Okay, we're wrong, say we're wrong. Tough."

So everybody always wants a first-class journal, and that's all they talk about, but my feeling is there's first-class people, there have to be second-class people, and being second-class isn't so bad because you're still swimming in this pool. And I probably would be listed as a second- or even third-class scientist. What I did was solid and honest but not extremely innovative.

[00:09:36]

Tacey Rosolowski: So it would be a logical step to move to an important role, which is helping get publications out in a particular area.

Florence Haseltine: Right. Oh, I think that that journal was very, very important, because what we did originally was we took papers. I said, "Send me papers that have been peer-reviewed in other journals, got good reviews. Send me the reviews." But the journal said, "This isn't appropriate for our journal." And with that, we had no end of publications for the first year, so, I mean, it was unbelievable the backlog, and we could get them out pretty fast.

I did it for ten years and then it just got tedious and I wasn't interested in doing it longer, so I resigned. But I did do it for a full ten years, and the one great thing about being an editor is you can write editorials, and I had a huge amount of fun writing editorials. It's the only part I miss of not being a journal editor. [laughs]

[00:10:34]

Tacey Rosolowski: So tell me about the types of articles that you accepted. I mean, what did you give voice to?

Florence Haseltine: Well, a lot of them were on the clinical differences between men and women with cardiovascular disease, some *Science* papers on sex differences in animals, things like that. It eventually became more of a sociological journal, like a recent article which I think is fantastic was by Molly Cairnes' group. It was [unclear], which showed that people who were rejected with their early awards, you

know, the K Awards, which are called sort of intermediate or training awards, starter awards, they have various acronyms, that the men, when they didn't get the award, it was often there were suggestions on how to improve it, it was often said the guy is good but this might not be ready, or something like that. And the women, it basically said the women weren't competent to do the things. Now, I'm oversimplifying it by a huge amount, but it's that kind of thing.

[00:11:37]

Molly Pollack Cairnes publishes quite a bit in the journal. So I think it has a different role now than it did. But initially getting those papers published that were scientific or heavily scientific were more important because then it made the other journals want them. They would cite papers. So it became Medlined within a very short period of time, as soon as Bernadine took over, and she took over about a year after she left NIH. So she left NIH in probably '93, so maybe by '95 she was already the editor. But she was a *very* good editor. She was meticulous, and I have always held a huge amount of respect for her, and I think she passed away far too early.

Tacey Rosolowski: Tell me about writing the editorials. What was the content?

Florence Haseltine: Well, the first one I wrote is one that's still valid today, of how to get a diverse group of people to do, say, a meeting or to do anything. And what I said was first you set up what you want to talk about, and then you find your minorities that are expert in the field, and you call them up. Today I still think you call. If they don't answer, you email afterwards. But then you call and you ask them if they would be willing to talk on these and are these dates acceptable, but have enough range so that you can change the dates.

[00:13:12]

Then they say yes, and you put them in where they want to be on the schedule, because they're often overcommitted. I know a few really phenomenal minority scientists, and they get hit for everything because we need to have a [unclear] or the thing. Some of them, of course, will be women.

But then what you do the next thing, you set the dates by them. See, you have to think about this in advance. It's like you're talking about what is the oral history going to do, you have to think in advance what you want it to do. So the second thing you do is then you call up all the women in your portfolio, and many of them would say, "Oh, you should really ask so-and-so."

And I'd say, "Oh, he recommended you." Now, I'd never talked to him, but it didn't matter. But I wasn't going to put up with dumping on—you know, thinking they couldn't do it.

Then they picked—now, this isn't always true today, but it was true in the eighties and nineties. They would pick exactly the topic they wanted to talk about, and they would always say, "I can't come because I have kids. What are we going to do about them?"

I'd say, "Bring them. We'll get daycare," because every hotel, even then, had daycare provided. In fact, no one ever did.

Tacey Rosolowski: No one brought their kids?

[00:14:30]

Florence Haseltine: No one ever did, which I think was surprising, because we could have arranged daycare.

Then the second is that they would give me no end of grief at the beginning why they couldn't do this, why they weren't good enough for that. I just pushed through it, and then I put them in, and I always put them in with the topic they exactly said. Then I'd have a bunch of other topics, and I just poured in the white males, because they would talk about anything.

Now today you can get women who will do that. There are certain women who feel comfortable enough to do anything. The

problem was, is down the line the minorities and the women would get their papers in for the publication. The men, you'd have to kick and scream to get it in, and often I would just exclude them because they wouldn't get it in within a reasonable time period. So that was a stereotypic way of dealing with the problem at that point. I think there are still some more nuances today you might want to do, some of the very prominent women. I now know one woman I can put on any program, dump her in, and she'll talk about whatever she wants to talk about. The men will just talk about anything. It doesn't matter what their title is. They'll talk about what's interesting to them. I haven't arranged a meeting in maybe five years, so I can't say that that still holds true today, but it was a good way of doing it. That was one thing.

[00:15:51]

Then another editorial I wrote about how long it would expect if you were to change the composition of a faculty, even if you said you wanted all women—you wanted parity of women versus men in, you know, ten years, five to ten years. It turned out there weren't enough women in the pipeline that were acceptable, unless you filled every single position, and you still wouldn't get it. It would take, using [unclear] size, a minimum of fifteen to twenty-five years just because of kinetics [population dynamics]. And the kinetics became important because about the time I entered

academics, they changed the rule so the retirement age disappeared. That added often twenty extra years toward tenured professors' lifespan. That meant the turnover rate went from one in twenty years to one in forty years, so the turnover rate was so low, you could not, without expanding the number of slots or creating a new department, make it representative. And that's still part of the problem today; it's turnover.

Tacey Rosolowski: So it really became a kind of platform.

Florence Haseltine: It became a platform for putting out ideas.

And then another paper that I wrote, editorial that I wrote on that topic that I used from a talk I'd heard by Alice Huang, H-u-a-n-g, who, incidentally, was also at one point a Harvard professor. She looked at the thing and talked about small knocks, how—other people had done it, but I went to a presentation by her, how you can get to, say, be assistant professor but then maybe not make quite enough papers. There may be enough to get you to associate, but you sort of fall off the curve and you'd never get through the next step.

[00:17:54]

So she talked about the small knocks that women get. They're not considered for this because, "Oh, they're married to

so-and-so, and he's going to do this," or, "She's—." You know, etc. The little knocks.

So I wrote something about that, I think, but those were the kinds of things that I could write about, just sort of observational things that were—I would, again, use some mathematics, for example, in how numbers—I would think about how to solve problems by numbers, like you go get the minorities and see what they can do, what's comfortable for them, first. And I never got in trouble for any meeting not being properly distributed.

Tacey Rosolowski: So what do you feel after ten years being the editor? What was the impact of the journal, the articles?

[00:18:51]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I think the biggest impact was people could get stuff published in that journal and other journals, and since that's a lifeblood, I mean, how can you ask a person to go into studying heart disease in women's health if no journal is going to accept the paper? And there's nothing. I mean, you can't.

The field that suffers the most from things like that is contraception. Now, there is *Contraception* journal, has been for a long time, but to prove a contraceptive is effective or develop one and get it out there, it takes almost fifteen to twenty years. What academic is going to want to do that? It's a career killer.

Now, fortunately, with the rise in data handling in public health, you could make a career out of evaluating it public health-wise. But that's evaluation; that is not development. So you're up against that developmental problem, and there are some people who've been able to do it, but they're really swimming upstream. I mean, you're always going to be swimming a little upstream, but you don't want it to be a torrent, and that's basically ten years coming at you like this. And, you know, you just cannot build a career over a topic that you cannot get published. Now, that doesn't mean you can't in the commercial or outside world, but there are different rules, and some of them are even tougher.

Tacey Rosolowski: Any other dimensions of the research, how it fed into later your policymaking?

[00:20:27]

Florence Haseltine: Well, I think basically just if it's related to sex differences, not human sexuality particularly, although I find the topic fascinating, as does everybody, but if feeds into what's going on in a process, I'm very interested. And I will tell you, global warming is a big part of it now because there are some animals that differentiate their sex, depending on the temperature. In turtles, for example—we're going to have to take a little side trip here into turtles—turtles, there are species of turtles that lay their eggs, and,

depending on the temperature gradient, will be female or male. They don't have sex chromosomes, but they use other genes that—there are a whole series of sex-determining genes, as we now know. This work has come out of David Page's lab and the evolutionary geneticists, that are used in sex determination in different species. Not everyone uses the mammalian one that you and I are familiar with, but there's a family of genes that have been used throughout different lineages.

And turtles and some fish use sex difference depending on the temperature at which they're incubated. As global warming changes, you're going to change the sex ratio, and so this can be used if you want to breed all of one type of sex of a fish and grow it up for food, which they do in China, or other things. But climate change affects sex differentiation. No one—we don't even know where all it does it.

[00:22:04]

So are turtles going to get into trouble? Say, well, it wasn't that bad, maybe a hot summer and they all turned out to be male, well, that's okay, because over a turtle's life of hundreds of years, that's no big deal. You know, there are going to be other turtles and you'll get cold winters and hot winters. But anyway, so that is one of our challenges. So sex differentiation is everywhere.

Chapter Sixteen

Issues for Managers and Being a 'Lone Wolf'

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine shares wisdom she gained through her years of administration and people management. To demonstrate how managers need to broaden their perspectives beyond their own fields, she tells an anecdote about selecting a new employee (from another field) because she would argue with her. She notes that managers cannot be friends with the people they manage, a situation that sometimes leads to loneliness.

Next she characterizes herself as a 'lone wolf' and notes that growing up in a household with a father who worked in government helped her understand and cope with the environment she would eventually work in herself. She explains that her outlier status gave her freedom and she saw no reason not to enjoy it.

[00:22:04]+

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting. Now, were there certain moments in your work at the NIH where sex differentiation came in?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I wasn't involved in [doing] basic research once I went to NIH. So I was involved in paying attention to what our scientists did, and, of course, I would be more interested in reading those papers than other papers. But I would say that once you're an administrator, you may have a specific interest and love of a field, but you're assigned to other fields to pay attention to, and you really have to change your hat. I mean, one of the fields I was assigned to manage was demographic and behavioral science,

about which I really didn't know enough. I mean, I would not have said that I could be a good shepherd of that, but I had some branch chiefs, a woman, Wendy Baldwin, who later became a deputy director at NIH, and she educated me when she thought I was off base. She would argue with me, and I would listen because that was her area. It wasn't mine. I wasn't pretending.

[00:23:30]

Later, when she left, I interviewed some people for the job, and there was one woman who, a week before or two weeks before I was to make the selection, got in an argument with me over something about a meeting. I had said this, and she wanted—was strong and felt that, and I selected her because I knew that she would argue with me. I didn't have to like her. I mean, I thought she was really competent, but we just weren't warm and fuzzy types that would match, but I had a lot of respect for her. I couldn't control her mind and she wasn't going to kowtow to me, and I really needed that, because I knew that if I picked someone who was either managed by somebody else or I could overwhelming influence, that the field would not feel comfortable.

[00:24:21]

And they funded projects that I thought were just totally out to lunch, and when they succeeded and they said, "Oh, and now we've got all these journals and all these publications," I said,

"Yeah, we put $12 million into it. I sure as hell hope something came out of it." But I still don't know. I still think that my opinion of that study is probably accurate, but it doesn't matter, because their scientific field feels it's valid, and that's what's important. I wasn't brought up in that tradition. There's no way, I don't know, I might have thought the same thing, but it wasn't something that I felt I should make hardcore judgments about. I could certainly have opinions, like any other scientist, but my job was managing it, not being obstructionist.

There were other situations where I knew the field well enough that I wanted somebody I could influence with talking about things. So I would say that people who are managers really have to understand their responsibility, and, in fact, when some of these people got promotions, I would say, "Now that you're going up, you have to understand that you have to treat everybody fairly. 'Equitably' isn't the right word, but you have to know that you're going to have favorites and push your own agenda, and you can only do it in certain circumstances." That's *very* hard for a lot of people to learn. I've watched many people rise and then have a favorite program that they had, and it's not healthy for anybody.

Tacey Rosolowski: As you were describing this decision to hire this person who could be confrontational—

Florence Haseltine: And she was.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah. But, I mean, I was thinking, wow, I wonder how many people really do make a decision like that? It seems like—that seemed unusual to me.

[00:26:34]

Florence Haseltine: Well, everyone thought it was unusual, because they all knew we had had a fight the week before. But I really felt strongly that I needed someone who was not a "yes" person.

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah, I mean, I think that's a great demonstration of something that people may not think about or that they might find really personally difficult to do when it comes down to it.

Florence Haseltine: Well, you don't have to like a person to respect what they do.

Tacey Rosolowski: Absolutely.

Florence Haseltine: I think that that was an assumption, that women had to like everything, but like is different. And also, when you're a manager, you're not friends with the people you supervise. You just shouldn't—and I don't know if I learned that or had that reinforced

when I went to business school or elsewhere, but, to me, you know—and I don't know where I was taught that being the boss is very lonely.

I've had to tell my daughter that, who became a boss at a *very* young age. She went from being a staff person to being the boss of this school, and she knows that she can't always be friends with everybody and that at night she has to go separate herself. She can't hang out with them.

[00:27:57]

Tacey Rosolowski: Did you find it lonely?

Florence Haseltine: It wasn't much different from other things. I had a set of friends. For one thing, I went to New Haven every weekend, where I still maintained my connection. I made friends eventually with another Center director when he came on board, Mike Weinrich, who I think is just a marvelous human being, but who also was caught in the same thing that I was, that he was—he now is back in the lab doing research as a thing. I made it so that he—I kept telling him, "Do not get in Title 42. Stay in the SES, so that they will not eliminate your position," or they will not—it's much harder to say, "Your contract is done. Go." You keep your benefits and—because he knew he was in a position where the community, unlike myself, who had tremendous community support, he did not. It

had to do with the fact he was a neurologist and they wanted a physiatrist. I mean, it was not personal, but it feels personal.

[00:29:10]

So he now works in a lab out at NIST and is getting a lot of rewards from that. He doesn't get praise or accolades from the line of command, but he gets it from his coworkers and peers. I just emailed him about it the other day, because I know that situation. But I really like him.

And I also kept some very close friends from my years at Yale. And then Alan Decherney came on board, and I've mentioned him a couple times. Even in the Archive thing, I mentioned him, and we're good friends. And I have a lot of women friends here from that group that we meet once a month. So I didn't—loneliness was not something that—I was alone, but not lonely.

Tacey Rosolowski: I missed Alan's last name.

Florence Haseltine: Decherney, D-e-c-h-e-r-n-e-y. And his wife, DeeDee, and we've just known each other forever, and, you know, those are the people you can trust.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting. Trust. Why is trust important there?

[00:30:20]

Florence Haseltine: Because if you know somebody for that long a period, you know they're not going to maliciously trash you or make it difficult for you, and, in fact, they'll help you, to their limits. I mean, and always have limits, so Alan can help me to a certain point, but he's not going to—and he may gossip and make jokes about me, but he's not going to do something that's malignant or hurtful.

Tacey Rosolowski: So after you've told me all about your friends you've kept for so many years, talk to me about being a lone wolf.

Florence Haseltine: Well, being a lone wolf is different if it's professional, and that is that because probably the same reason I got things done, as I said, it's Shakespearean. The things that make you good at something are the things that destroy you.

Having grown up in the government, I knew just to the core some things about how it operated. Having a father who was a research scientist, in some ways gave me protection, so that if I could get in a situation like his, I would have protection. People respected you. They didn't necessarily—they would make fun of you and they didn't particularly like you, you're not warm and fuzzy, but you had a comfortable niche.

[00:31:42]

So when I was a kid, my father would talk about he'd gone on a trip and he'd talk about all the horrible travel rules. Well, when I came to NIH, I had to deal with the horrible travel rules, which don't make sense to some people, but once you learn that they've been historically developed because of people cheating on them, you get to the point where—we had a motto in my shop, "Don't try to save the government money." Because you'd say, "But I can get a ticket for $300 instead of 900," but because that would require so much paperwork, it was going to use up as much money anyway, and you weren't saving anybody really money. You might be saving *your* money, your own budget money, but you weren't saving the government money.

So trying to save the government money wasn't going to work. So travel orders are written, you get them, you turn in the receipts as written. If you deviated from it, you did it at your own cost, your own expense, and you didn't advertise it. So I'd tell people, "These are what I want the receipts to say when you come back. I want the same plane receipt. I want the same motel receipt. I want the same cab receipt. Your expenses, do not ask for above expenses, it's too much trouble, it's too much work. You pay for your breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day anyway. Now you're being supplemented, so stop it. As written."

[00:33:08]

Most people get into a lot of trouble over travel. They fight about it. They spend a lot of their time wasting it, but if you try to do that, you're wasting your time as well, and it's not going to work. So that is a problem. There's a problem. It's a big problem, but there is not a solution, so stop. And that was my attitude about a lot of things in the government. I just highlight it by travel.

The other thing that was valuable was learning that there are a lot of rules in the government for what you can't do. Some of them are what are called legal rules, they're in law, like the Hatch Act. You cannot work on a Republican or Democratic thing. It doesn't say you can't work for an Independent, okay? And those things are critical, because people will interpret you can't work on a political campaign, but that's not what the law says. And you often have to get a lawyer to say, "Can I do this?" Well, put it this way; you say, "Am I excluded from doing this?" So occasionally I would contact lawyers, and I often—I'm not a great reader of detail, but there were times when I read detail.

[00:34:22]

So you could do a lot of those things, but what you couldn't do was prescribed. But as I say, and said to you last night, in the massive world, infinite world of things you can do, you take away what the government says you can do, and then you'll have an

infinite world of things you can do, and that was the way I looked at it. What I couldn't do, I didn't have to worry about, I just didn't do. So it was very hard to—I didn't like some of the things it said I couldn't do, but I didn't fight about it there. It wasn't worth the fight. You might discuss it with friends, "Isn't the government stupid for not allowing you to go to this meeting," or they're not going to do that, or whatever.

And some of the people on the outside wouldn't understand. I mean, one year Bernadine Healy cancelled all of our travel and I was supposed to give grand rounds somewhere, and I had to call up the person and not give them and say I couldn't come because the government wouldn't let me go and the government had to pay for all my travel, because I was in grants and they didn't want universities that I gave grants to to compromise me. So it wasn't just me; it's a general rule.

So the chairman of the department said, "Well, we'll pay your way."

I said, "You can't. And," I said, "unfortunately, I don't have enough money to pay it myself." So I had to cancel, and I was never invited back because—but later I got to the point where if somebody invited me and kept insisting that I be picked up or that they take me to this hotel or pay for it, I would just cancel the meeting. I didn't put up with that after a while. I'd say, "I can't

do it," and if they would keep insisting, I would just say, "I'm sorry, I'm not coming." I turned it around, because I just didn't need the hassle.

[00:36:08]

The first time it happened, it was terribly hard, because it was a person I'd been in residency with. And they blame it on you; they don't blame it on the system. You know, in the end it's, "You didn't show up when you said you were going to." But you live under those restrictions, and they can be quite annoying to different people, but you have to accept it. It's not—you're given other things.

Tacey Rosolowski: So what were the types of freedom that you did find in that system?

Florence Haseltine: Well, to think. So, because I created difficulty in meetings, my boss' solution was always, "Okay, we're not going to put her in other situations. We're just not going to assign her to committees." So I got assigned to committees that basically didn't do much and didn't meet much, if at all. I don't even think by the end I was on any committees.

[00:37:02]

And I wasn't asked to give presentations at—well, I was asked once to give a presentation, and I did such a good job that they never—I mean, I really did a good job, and they didn't—but it was only because my boss had been told that every Center director had to present. It wasn't because he particularly wanted it. But I made him uncomfortable enough, either that or there were several other people he eventually preferred more, which is also—I mean, he was very comfortable with another couple people. They weren't branch chiefs—I mean they weren't Center directors, though, they were one level down, and I think that he had come from there, and so that's what he was comfortable with.

But for a great many reasons, I was not welcome in different places. That gave me a lot of time. Now, one of things they do with outliers or tokens—and I wasn't particular token because I was female, but I was a token or outlier; I don't know how the best way of describing it is—is I had a lot of time to think. I also had a lot of time to learn computer language, so I would do the work I was supposed to do, and then I would spend a huge amount of time focusing on learning new skill sets. But they weren't part of my job description particularly, so everybody knew I was into data management and things like that, and they would come to me, and if a group needed some data-management handling, I would always help them, and people always found me helpful, but it

wasn't the kind of thing—my boss couldn't even type an email. Until he retired and lost his access to computers, did he even learn to make an email. He had a secretary print everything out. So he was not technologically sophisticated, as we should say. But it wasn't just him; it was the rest of the NIH that always knew about me.

I'd go places and people would say, "Oh, we've already heard about you." So there are certain people that got gossiped about, and I was never overwhelming surprised. So, actually, nobody even paid attention to what I was doing. I could go downtown to any meeting I wanted. I could work with people of the Society, do things.

Now, the Society, on the other hand, appreciated me a huge amount, and, you know, I'm always welcome at anything they do. Their biggest problem is just reminding me something's happening and my paying attention. But on the one hand, to have the government situation where you're considered an outlier, and then the other situation, where you're looked up to as really knowing a lot and having done a lot, it was a strange dichotomy.

But I often preferred just to go into the place that was, quote, "hostile" in some sense, because I had a lot of peace and quiet and I could think or work or, you know, I could read some science that was interesting. I could call up the scientists and say, "Did you

know so-and-so was—I just read their paper. So-and-so was doing the work." Now, I could not tell them what was in another person's grant, or even hint at it, but very often I would see all this science, and I could do a lot of hooking people up.

[00:40:23]

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting.

Florence Haseltine: So I enjoyed a lot of that. I wasn't particularly stressed. You know, to some people, that kind of thing, that they weren't getting accolades, might make them feel terrible, but maybe because I had the Society and another community where I was acknowledged and appreciated, that balanced it.

But I always thought of my job as a very—once I realized that that was it, I wasn't going to get any other positions, because I'd got through the tokenism of job searches, and by then I was aging into my sixties, and they're not going to hire somebody to run—they may hire a man, but they're not going to hire an old lady.

I would say content was the thing, but I didn't see any reason to rebel against any of it. I mean, I wasn't going to look for another job. I knew I was going to be there till I was seventy, so I just enjoyed the access and the freedom that I had by being able to be in the center of scientific inquiry and knowing what was happening in that world, because I just enjoyed that.

Chapter Seventeen

Impact on Women's Health and Work Environments

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine recalls contributions she has made to women's health: spurring creation of a Reproductive Science Training Program; influencing a change in research method requiring that women be included in clinical trials; creating the NIH's loan repayment program as part of fellowships.

In response to a question about how she has had an impact on the places where she has worked, Dr. Haseltine cites the view that until women comprise thirty to forty percent of workplaces, there will be no substantive change. She notes that she was aware that she wasn't paid equally with male colleagues at the NIH, but she avoided "battles she couldn't win." She tells a story about a colleague's vanity wall, noting that she never understood why people would create such a thing.

[Begin File 7]

[00:00:00]

Tacey Rosolowski: What contributions do you feel you've made?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I think the biggest one is, as I said yesterday, was the Reproductive Scientist Training Program, the loan repayment program, the change of policy of putting women in clinical trials. If I'm introduced that way, people come up to me and say, "You know, you made a huge difference." I've had many people come up to me about the loan repayment, once they know. Most of the time, nobody knows who did this, so it has to be pointed out, and I just think—I mean, it's over twenty years now, so does it really matter who started it? It doesn't.

I knew when I went to Congress that day and heard the Government Accounting hearings in June of 1990 that—and then within two weeks it was in newspapers all over the country, and nobody was really cited as doing it because really, in the end, it was about five women, all government employees, who were in on this. So none of us could take credit, and because none of us could take credit, it became universal. And one of the great things about it, to me, was that two weeks later, there was an article in the *New Haven Register* by a woman [who lived] two [houses] down from [our house in New Haven] about how women weren't in this study, this particular study that had come out, and I just looked at that. I said, "A fire's been lit. This grass is going to burn for a long time." And I knew it didn't matter if all of us dropped dead, it was still going to go, and it did.

[00:01:41]

Tacey Rosolowski: So in this particular instance, you're talking about the policy of having women in clinical trials.

Florence Haseltine: The fact that it became publicly debatable. Now, one of the really fascinating things about it is in 1995, the Shaywitzes published an article that was a front page of *Nature,* it was on the cover, of a male brain and a female brain doing the same task, which was [a] reading [exercise]. And what they found was that 50 percent of the

women—okay, all of the men lit up their left side of their brain and all of the women lit up the left side of the brain when doing a certain task, sort of in the temporal lobe area, right above and in front of the ear. And what they showed was that everybody used the same thing, but that in 50 percent of women, it lit up the right side of the brain as well. So that caught me, because when I was a medical student, there was a type of stroke that men and women would get, and they'd become difficult speaking, but half the women would recover, but the men wouldn't recover. So my tagline for that is that when people have told me they say I think like a man, "I hope my brain doesn't function like one," because 50 percent of women don't have it. So that was so dramatic to me that they found a difference that might explain some of the pathology that we saw. So that alone was important.

[00:03:16]

Well, you can imagine the controversy that caused—could have caused, because if women could think their parts of the brain worked differently from men, is different bad or good? So Eleanor Smeal, who had founded the Feminist Majority and NOW was someone I knew. I would call her a social colleague. I talked to her, and she said, "This is terrible. It's going to make people think women are different from men and not worth it."

I said, "No, no, no, this is going to continue to happen. We're going to find this everywhere. Please come up to New Haven and talk to the Shaywitzes." She and another woman got on a train and spent a whole afternoon with the Shawitzes, who explained their data, and that was the end of the discussion.

It has reemerged in a recent article in, I guess, *PNAS*—I think that's it; I'm not sure exactly—that sociologists are saying, "No, these differences are social, they're not—," you know. But that's going to go on for a long time. But now the arguments are much less powerful, and they almost sound like whining or complaining. But I don't have any objection to people saying that women are the same as men. It's biologically just not going to work. You may want it all you want, but it ain't gonna happen.

[00:04:42]

Tacey Rosolowski: Do you feel that you've had an impact in the roles that you've had in making people think differently about including women in the workplace, promoting them, what women can do?

Florence Haseltine: Myself personally?

Tacey Rosolowski: Yeah.

Florence Haseltine: I wouldn't think that, but I can't answer all of that.

Tacey Rosolowski: Is that ever anything you set out to do?

Florence Haseltine: No. Maybe on a microscopic level, worrying about it at specific places, but, again, I mean, that's a bad penny that keeps coming back. That problem is so big that until they're—it may be catalyzed by a single person, but it's not going to be solved by a single person.

The reason I've always gone back to Rosabeth Kantor's book *Men and Women of the Corporation*—and I just reread last night or the night before—was that she pointed out that when people are tokens, they're used as examples of different things. When people become a minority, they have a larger voice, but it's more viewed as complaining or, you know, it's not really applicable. When they get to be more, which is probably—I thought it was a tipping point of about 30 percent, but looking at her charts and things, maybe it's even higher than that, 40 percent, things start to change, the dynamics start to change, and then it's a real problem. So until women get to be almost 30 to 40 percent, say, of an organization, it's hard to get change.

And I think that when you look at the biomedical sciences, you can see when tipping points occurred in these things. I think of the difference between the University of California, San

Francisco in the Department of Medicine, which gives twelve weeks of maternity leave, versus Northwestern's Department of Urology, which a woman just had a baby and they gave her nothing but grief while she was having it, and she's back to work operating in two weeks.

[00:07:11]

I came from a place where you operated in two weeks. I was back with my first child. People thought a Cesarian section was cause for people being out longer, but the C-sections done totally electively, the recovery is pretty quick. And also it probably tells you that surgery is not as stressful as—doing surgery is not, either having it or doing it, is not always as dramatic as people want to put it in.

And then after my second child, I was back in three weeks, because I thought—it was over the Christmas holidays, I thought I'd just take another week off. I wasn't as nervous.

But to tell you the difference is that both Dr. Polan and I, who [was] the other woman in [the Department], we covered for each other while we were pregnant and postpartum. The other thing is, is that I covered for all the men extra nights, so that when I couldn't take my nights for two or three weeks, they could replace me and not complain, and I always made sure I covered more nights than I ever asked for back. It's called putting money in the

bank and letting it save. Because I knew that the one thing that would be deadly is if they felt it was an imposition because you had a baby, and, you know, that type of thing has to change.

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, I'm also thinking with that 30 to 40 percent number in any organization, where does that 30 or 40 percent have to take place? Is it at the lower level? Is it mid-management? Is it executive level?

[00:08:56]

Florence Haseltine: I don't think you get the management level unless you get the underlying level. I think it has to push up. That's why it takes generation times to do.

Tacey Rosolowski: Interesting. Other contributions that you feel you've made?

Florence Haseltine: I don't really think in terms that way.

Tacey Rosolowski: How do you think of it?

Florence Haseltine: Well, I think of it in terms of I've gotten something done, I've pushed something through, and now on to the next. I sort of leave it behind for somebody else. Now, that may be because I was not used to getting recognition or awards for what I did. I did not

understand the value of recognition until more recently when I started doing the RAISE [Project] database.

Tacey Rosolowski: Oh, interesting.

[00:09:39]

Florence Haseltine: Because it was not—you know, when I started out, getting an education, getting a job, getting promoted, getting tenure, getting a grant, those were the important things. The unimportant things were things you didn't know about, or they might have been important but you didn't know about them. You didn't know about unwritten rules, like getting prizes and awards would help you get promoted and tenure. That wasn't emphasized, it was more nebulous, and even if it was emphasized, I was probably the type of person that wouldn't have paid attention, because I said, "Well, that doesn't matter. It's what you do, not what people see."

I'm not probably a very good follow-through person. I like to get something done, then I want to move on to the next thing. I learned coding one way. Well, now I want to learn new coding. I like to continue to build. So I don't think about things like that, and it took me a long time to understand how important it was that I became a member of the National Academy of what's now Medicine, that that gave me credentials that nothing else would have given me.

Tacey Rosolowski: What has it given you?

[00:10:50]

Florence Haseltine: Well, it's given me access. I go places. I go to places like China. Not in this country so much, incidentally, but more overseas. I wanted to go to a meeting in Shenzhen last year, and I noticed that they had a women's program. And I wrote and said, "Could I give a presentation on the RAISE Project?" and they said yes.

And then I sent in an abstract to present the Global Virus Network, which is just a management thing. "This is what we are. This is what we're trying to do," you know, etc. I was put on as a plenary speaker event. I mean, come on. It just took me by surprise, and then I realized it was because I was an Academy member and they could say they had a woman Academy member. So it has huge value.

I mean, I've been met at the airports by the Chinese Academy and taken to my hotel. I mean, that's a financial benefit, if you can think of it that way. I mean, I often find it embarrassing that they expect me to give an erudite lecture and they'll bring people in who have valuable time, and I think they're wasting their time. So it's a part of an underground system that I don't have innate in my core. And often, of course, I've gotten awards and recognition

since I retired, but then it's safe to give it to you. You're not going to cause any trouble. [Rosolowski laughs.]

[00:12:21]

So I think there were a lot of things, and salary was one of them. I mean, I knew I wasn't getting paid the same amount. I even knew at NIH I wasn't getting paid the same amount, but if you're going to go—it's not a problem you're going to win. It's got to be a [unclear]. Now, I do know some women who fought on that and won. I do know some women who've gotten many, many awards because they want them and they seek them out and they get people to write them, or they'll write them themselves and give them to people. And I didn't know for years that men wrote all their own awards, gave them to a buddy to send in. I don't think everybody does that, of course, but there are some people who do it, because, actually, it's not a bad thing to do. Most people don't know enough about another person to put them up, and if you like the person and say, "You should get this award. Would you write it up?" it's a standard way of approach. And buddies will go in and write each other up.

So one of the things I've done when I've talked to women's groups about how do you get ahead or something, I'll say, "Okay, I want each of you to write up the woman sitting next to you for award in her field." And then I'll say to her afterwards, I said,

"Okay, now you've done that. Write your own." Because I think women for the most part have not understood how awards play out. It's not spelled out that you need to have awards to get promoted, because you can't say that. You can say you have to have publications and you have to be recognized. What does recognition mean?

[00:13:57]

Tacey Rosolowski: Well, it's also still the case for a lot of women—I was recently at a meeting with a group of women talking about strategies to get ahead, and, in fact, the presenters were asking this exercise. I mean, each of us was supposed to present ourselves as a professional at the table, and the level of discomfort that a lot of women had in talking about their accomplishments, and these were legitimate accomplishments. I mean, they weren't lying about things on their CV, but still a lot of women still have that "good girls don't draw attention to themselves, good girls don't brag, you don't make yourself look better."

Florence Haseltine: Well, if you live in Washington for a while, you learn to use the word "I." [Rosolowski laughs.] And feel quite comfortable doing it. But it is true. Now, I'm sure there are a group of men who feel the same way. I don't think any of these things are unique to women. I think that with the lower representation, they become

much more problematic. And I have noticed that in my awards lists there are some men who just get all the awards. I've even learned how to spell their complicated names.

[00:15:11]

So there is a sub selection that, of course, that is important, too, and right now with the Global Virus Network, they're proposing an award to be given in Bob Gallo's name. Now, Bob Gallo, when I go to his offices, has his walls *covered* with many prizes and accolades. So the other day I said to him—he said, "Oh, go read something," because he was talking to somebody. He and I play this sort of game of him trying to put me down, and me responding and giving him grief. So he does that to a lot of people, but it doesn't—I'm comfortable with it. So I said, "Oh, I'm just going to read all your prizes and awards," because they're plastered all over the place. [Vanity walls almost never include people who work directly with them.]

He said, "Oh, the important ones are at home." I'm sitting there laughing. I mean, why would you have a vanity wall? So there are a couple people like that, that have vanity walls, but I just never saw the thing. Most people put up all their degrees. Because you had to, I used to put them at the very top so you couldn't see them or something. I just never thought that that was—I thought who you were was more important than what you

had been, but that's clearly not always how people think. So I have a little reality distortion probably there.

Chapter Eighteen

Creating the Assembly of Scientists to Sue the Government; the Global Virus Network

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine tells the story of how the Global Virus Network arose from a personal request that she form an organization that could sue the government on behalf of employees of the NIH over a privacy issue. She formed the Assembly of Scientists that joined with five other groups (including the ACLU). She then provides more detail about the formation of the Global Virus Network.

Tacey Rosolowski: You know, I was realizing that we hadn't talked about the Global Virus Network at this point. Tell me about that.

[00:16:37]

Florence Haseltine: Well, what happened is after I left NIH, I was doing a lot of IT work for the Society and a few other things, but one of the—well, first, something very interesting happened. A few weeks after I left NIH, I got a call from one of the scientists that I really liked quite a bit, and he said, "They've just passed a law saying that we have to show all of our financial statements, and they're got to be online, and that's going to include a lot of privacy data and things," because Congress had written a law following a *60 Minutes* episode where they showed congressmen were insider traders, that Congress had to show its holdings. Incidentally, they didn't say they weren't going to be insider traders, just said they had to show their holdings, and one of the senators got pissed at it, so he put all government employees above a certain level, SES and senior

managers. "And this is outrageous because some of the information that they're going to expose is raw, it's not redacted, they're going to have Social Security numbers, addresses, children's names, etc. Would you form an organization and sue the government?"

Now, I'd left NIH, but I was still covered under it because I had had to fill those forms out about a month before I left. So here's a person who's known to cause NIH trouble on some level, or mythologically to cause NIH trouble, being called, asked to sue the government on behalf of the employees at NIH because they could not have any retaliation against me since I was retired. So I said, "Sure, why not."

[00:18:15]

So I set up a webpage, formed an organization, became its president. The Assembly of Scientists, we called ourselves. People joined. I could set it up quickly because I know database management, had a website up, and sued the government, along with a few other groups that were actually doing the heavy lifting. I just put our group name on it. I remember getting called from *Science* about this, and I had to admit we only at that point had forty-seven members. We eventually grew to over three hundred, but its lifespan was not huge.

But what we did was, the suit was that this was a privacy issue and that it shouldn't be done, and we were joined by—there were a total at the end of six groups that were involved: my group, three private people, a Jane Doe and a John Doe, and this one guy who'd called me, which he was pretty brave because there could have been retaliation. And then a couple labor unions, the State Department Labor Union or something, and the Senior Executive Service.

[00:19:26]

We sued the government, and the ACLU took up the suit. I was told it would cost me $500. I never was charged the $500. I had a huge legal brief, everything, and that is all in the Archives at Drexel. I mean, if you can imagine how ridiculous it was.

So before it was going to go into action, Congress delayed it, you know, passed another law. Then it was delayed again, and then right before it was to go into law, about a year or so later, on April 15th [2013], Obama signed a law saying that it was negated except for Congress and the Hill.

Well, then actually someone in the Administrative Office said to me, "Thank you." I mean, it was hysterical. I'm in NIH for twenty-seven years, I leave, I'm the one they know can pull this off, we did pull it off, and they say, "Thank you." I thought it was hysterical. [Rosolowski laughs.] And now we're on their website

for their NIH Assembly of Scientists, which is not a very active one, but I do run it. You know, the whole thing is just—you know, they knew I could do it, and it was an important thing to do. That was actually quite important. But I never in a million years thought I would be in an ACLU suit, you know, filing against government. [Rosolowski laughs.] Anyway, odd things happen to you.

[00:20:56]

But about that time, a woman named Sharon Hrynkow, H-r-y-n-k-o-w, had negotiated with Bob Gallo, who had founded the Global Virus Network. He had always wanted a network of virologists who would convene and share information. This was one of his dreams. And he was challenged once at a meeting in Ireland to set up something, so he finally came back and did it.

And two years into it, Sharon Hrynkow had talked to him. She was detailed from the Fogarty Center to State Department or something, and I knew her just because the women at certain levels of NIH know each other, and I respected her. She decided to get funds and, actually, I think the Fogarty Center gave money to get this going. The details of the money I stayed out of. But she convinced Bob Gallo to more formally organize it, and they got a board, and she was pretty good at—she was very good at process.

She needed help, though, and they needed a website. I said, "Look, I'll do it. I'll oversee it." A lot of the people on the board promised to get things done, and I went from one web developer thing to another, and they were all catastrophic. What I had done is set up a webpage that was actually quite a good webpage but didn't look good. I'm not a graphic designer, but I knew it would stir everybody to want better. And that's often what I do, is I'll throw something up and they'll realize what they really want, and then we can start working.

[00:22:48]

So finally it just got to get desperate because we were having an international meeting, and the groups, all these private groups that had set it up picked up atrocious things, and the list goes on and on. But I ended up saying, "Give me $2,000, and I will get a graphic designer and a person who knows how to do this well, and he and I will get it done." He's a young man. He's actually my friend Mike Weinrich's stepson. And he did that for me, and we got it up and running, and I now manage it and it's become a much more complicated webpage. We use a framework called Wordpress.

So I basically stuck basically close to her. There were a lot of comings and goings, people coming into the organization and leaving it, because it's one of those. And eventually what

happened was after about two and a half years, the funds to pay her we used up, and raising more money to do that, because she was being paid an adequate salary.

Tacey Rosolowski: When was this step up?

Florence Haseltine: It's five years old now, so it was set up—maybe it's six years old. It was set up and was running a couple years before Sharon came on board, and I've been with it since she came on board, and I've been doing it for about three years.

Tacey Rosolowski: And the mission is to—

[00:24:22]

Florence Haseltine: Basically coordinate viral research and to exchange information and react to global threats. So Sharon resigned in November, and in January, José Esparza [phonetic], a very well-known vaccinologist who had worked at [unclear], the Gates Foundation, who had retired, came on board as the president. And he doesn't like to drive. He had some medical issues. So I will often, when I go down there, I'll take him. But until we can raise some funds to more adequately handle that, it's not occupying full-time down in Baltimore. But I go down, and web work you can do anywhere.

So I do the database and web work for them, and I go to the meetings, and if they have funds, my meeting way is paid. If not, I'll pay it myself. So it's not lucrative for me, but it's very interesting. I'm learning about viruses. I never knew *anything* about viruses.

And incidentally, most women react differently from men to a viral infection. There are subtle differences, sometimes they're not so subtle, and pregnant women have a whole different issue. So all of a sudden, Zika comes on board, which is affecting women quite differently from men, particularly if they're pregnant. So sex comes in everywhere, even in Zika virus. And also female mosquitoes are different, and they now are breeding male mosquitoes which will fertilize a female and there will be no offspring because the eggs that are laid will be not developmental. So you just *never* know when my favorite field is going to pop up. I can assure you it's everywhere.

Tacey Rosolowski: So funny. That's great. [laughs]

Florence Haseltine: I look at the lens through sex-differentiation glasses.

Tacey Rosolowski: Mm-hmm. Very cool.

[00:26:13]

Florence Haseltine: So, you know, if a project is interesting, I get involved, work hard at it, you know, then I'll often pass it on to somebody else. I'm not the type of person who regrets leaving or going somewhere else or having other people do something interesting that I couldn't have done or would liked to have done.

Tacey Rosolowski: So what are some things you really want to do next?

Florence Haseltine: Just keep involved in the scientific community. It's sort of nebulous. I don't worry that I have to have a plan, because I know something will fall in my lap. It just has. I mean, how would I have known I was going to end up traveling to China, Russia, France, and Germany? And where else? Oh, yeah, Grenada, all because I got involved with viruses. Who knew?

[00:27:04]

Tacey Rosolowski: Who knew? [laughs] That's pretty cool.

Well, I'm pretty much out of questions. Is there something that you would like to say for the record before we close off, or a topic I may have missed?

Chapter Nineteen

Remembering Mother and Discovering New Family Connections

In this chapter, Dr. Haseltine focuses on her mother, Jean Ellsberg Hazeltine, and her mother's side of the family (which she had no contact with growing up). She explains that her mother was manic-depressive and talks about the effects of her mother's suicide in 1982. She explains that she was particularly affected by thinking of "a smart person like her trapped as a housewife with a devastating illness." She also notes that her father never remarried, leaving her and her siblings in a position of caring for him when he became ill later in life.

Next she tells the story of discovering the Ellsberg side of the family after an article about her was published in More Magazine and a member of the family contacted her. This has been a happy outcome of her mother's death, she says.

At the end of the interview, Dr. Haseltine talks about her own parenting philosophy and the reality of "losing your friends and enemies as you get older."

[00:27:04]+

Florence Haseltine: We didn't talk about my mother.

Tacey Rosolowski: Let's talk about your mother.

Florence Haseltine: My mother was manic-depressive and quite ill much of my life.

Tacey Rosolowski: Her name?

Florence Haseltine: Jean [phonetic] Ellsberg Haseltine. And, in fact, Daniel Ellsberg is my cousin. He's my first cousin once removed. He's my mother's

first cousin. And that has turned out to be very important, as I [unclear] later.

[00:27:43]

My mother died shortly after that first interview in '77. She committed suicide when I was forty, in 1982. So my children never got to see my mother or know what a wonderful—you know, some of her great cooking, and she could tell great stories. And that affected our whole family in many different ways. It clearly affected my brothers and sister in different ways than it affected me, but I ended up not having a mother who I could talk to or have help with while I raised my children. Now, I probably would have rebelled against most everything she said, but she had a lot of wisdom. She was a very sick woman, but she was very smart and she had a lot of wisdom. I remember when I was a child, she would tell me, "Don't expect people to thank you." She would say, "There are people who are evil and will do horrible things to you." And all those things have proved right. So not necessarily the terrible things have been done to me in the way she might have thought, but she knew things. She knew that one of my boyfriends was going to end up being homosexual, and another, schizophrenic or something like that. She could sense these things, because she just had a lot of life experience. And also with mental disease, she could spot because she had been in mental hospitals. And she was

just attuned to things. She was, I guess you might say, emotionally intelligent, a huge amount of it. But as a result, although her memory is very vivid to me, my children have none of it, which is kind of sad.

[00:29:33]

My father, being an Asperger's, was not warm and fuzzy, so he was no better a grandfather than he was a father, but my kids reacted to him very differently than I did. My daughter Anna thought he was cute. I mean, nobody thought my father was cute. That's a bust of him over there with his mouth open, which he always had. He was always talking about something, even if we would not listen.

And I know it affected my brother Bill greatly, and, you know, it has affected everybody. My brother Eric was the one who basically found her. You know, all kinds of sad things. Her death was not unexpected. I sort of knew at some point that would happen. But she was always struggling. I mean, to see a person who was as smart as she was, trapped as a housewife, which to her was a trap, unlike maybe I was trapped as a government bureaucrat, I had a great time. It was like being a senior scientist like my father, who could think anything they wanted. She could not think anything she wanted and act on it, and, besides, with the illness that she had, it was devastating. So she passed out of my

life at that particular point. Of course, that frees you from her further influence, but it also leaves you without her further influence. And at least I was old enough. Forty is old enough to be able to manage.

[00:31:09]

Alan's parents, on the other hand, filled some of that role. They would come down and stay with us a lot. Anna, at about the age of two, started to get very, very sick. She had asthma. She got respiratory syncytial virus, and had asthma for the first few years. We used to sleep sitting up in the rocking chair, and I showed you a picture of the rocking chair that she has today. She eventually grew out of it. You shed RSV after a couple years, and she has reactive lungs, but she doesn't have asthma anymore, I don't think.

But my father then never remarried. I think his marriage to my mother was enough for him, because she could be hard. It was sometimes hard to live with her. And he lived by himself. He wouldn't move into a nursing home. His mind was totally active until he died in his nineties, and he kept eating and drinking and smoking. He was very scrawny because he was not interested in much of eating, but what he ate was totally unhealthy, and he wouldn't have died even in '94 if he had bothered to take care of his teeth. He probably died of an abscess breaking, of septicemia. I mean, that's the only thing we can think of. He went to the

dentist, and he had sixteen abscesses because he wouldn't get his teeth fixed. He said, "Why should I get my teeth fixed? They're going to outlive me." That was his whole approach. And he was really unhappy that he lived that long, because his father had died at eighty-nine, and he thought he should die at eighty-nine. I mean, he was that kind of thinker. His brother just died at 101, and his sister is still going and is almost 100. So the longevity was certain there.

[00:32:58]

But as a result, later in time I had a sister in Los Angeles who would help with my father a good bit, but my brother Eric and I used to fly out and take care of him in his latter years, and my job was keeping his feet clean. I had to dump them in the water.

So the problem of not having a mother then, and having a widowed father, put an additional complication in our life. My dad could take care of himself all the time, but I imagine he was pretty lonely. So a lot of the things we tell our kids about my mother are certainly mythological memories. They don't really know who she was. My brother's children did know who she was, but her suicide threw them into a terrible loop. What we have later discovered is that that gene, the manic-depressive gene, it runs rampant through our family, actually probably on both sides. But on my mother's side—and this is now what happened in many years afterwards—

in the early 2000s, there was an article in *More* magazine about me, and it was about the time the movie *The Beautiful Mind* came out, so they called it "A Beautiful Mind," and they had a picture of me with an umbrella or something. It's a very good picture.

[00:34:22]

The woman who was editor of it at the time, Myrna Blythe, Myrna had been editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal* for many years and was a friend of mine, and I told her that I'd gotten a call from the *Ladies' Home Journal* about what doctors did to stay healthy, and I said, "Well, I do just what my doctors tell me to do, and I take my medicines as prescribed, as well as my antipsychotics." I *knew* they weren't going to print that. [Rosolowski laughs.] But everybody says, "Take the drugs, go to see a doctor, get on medication, do what you're told," and so I said I did that, and they didn't like it at all. They wanted me to say I exercise and eat right. Well, I do exercise, but I would be hard-pressed to say I ate right.

So, of course, they didn't print it, so I talked to Myrna. I said, "Come on, Myrna. You guys are always saying you want the truth. I gave them the truth, and now they won't print it."

She said, "Would you mind an article for *More* magazine?"

[interruption]

[00:35:49]

Florence Haseltine: So they did an interview, and that interview was interesting for several reasons. It was about a six-page type print in a magazine, which is a lot. There were some pictures. I said in there, and I said how my mother had committed suicide. And my niece read it and hadn't been told by her parents about it, and they were angry about it for saying it to the paper so she could read it. I mean, some illogic is in that statement. You don't withhold things from your kids like that. But, of course, she had been in her teens then, early teens. Let's see, if it was '82, she was only about eleven years old. So it was not a [unclear].

Tacey Rosolowski: [unclear].

Florence Haseltine: But anyway, they got mad at me for saying it. But by that time, she was older, so they could have easily [unclear]. My brother was often made at me for saying things, because he's the kind who every—it's a secret. So finally I've gotten to the point if someone says, "It's a secret," I say, "Don't tell me. I don't want to know," and then you should see how they handle it.

I said, "Look, I'm not holding secrets. If you give it to me, it's mine." I have had to hold professional secrets. Those are secrets. Personal things, I don't want to know. I'm going to find

out anyway. Why bother. It's probably not that important. So I'm really nasty to people now if they tell me they want me to keep things secret. And if they tell me after the fact, they said, "You didn't disclose at the beginning," I mean, I really find it objectionable, so mainly because they've told twenty-five other people, and then they get mad at me if somebody said something. That's a hard lesson you learn.

[00:37:32]

Tacey Rosolowski: You were talking about the *More* article.

Florence Haseltine: That was part of it. But more importantly, there was a picture in there, and my cousin Susan Ellsberg was in a beauty parlor and saw the picture and recognized it from when she was a child. It had been a family Christmas card. They got in touch with me through the Internet, through my NIH [email], and we had a family reunion of Ellsbergs. And I had not known my cousins on my father's side, and I also met my uncle, who was my mother's brother. He was born when she was nineteen because her father had had a second family. And I went with him on a plane trip, because he was a stunt rider, and two weeks later, he died in a plane crash. So I was so lucky I got to meet Tom.

Then at this reunion, we told the other cousins—and Daniel Ellsberg was there with his wife, Mary, and their daughter Mary.

Mary actually lives here in Rockville, Mary Ellsberg, or in Shady Grove, and she's very politically active. I think she went to Nicaragua, married a Sandinista, and then came home, got a PhD, but she's a very interesting woman and the whole family is very involved in political activity there. The son is in Haiti working hard. Really interesting people. Daniel Ellsberg, of course, is an important person in American history.

[00:39:06]

But in that line of the family, we traced our manic-depressive gene, because we could find everybody in the family who had it. And, in fact, one of the people in the next generation—let's see, below my daughter, so it's not my generation, but, yeah, the next generation, has already died from basically a suicide, drug problem. So this manic-depressive gene, you can spot it. Like I will vibrate with certain people with that disease, or the disorder or whatever you want to call it, but not other people with it. I mean, I can be in the presence with someone who is manic and I can spot it, and sometimes I have to get out. Like there's other members of my family, some of them when they have it, I just vibrate. I can't be with them. I mean, it's too dangerous for me because I do not want to send myself into that.

[00:39:59]

So that mother connection of going through on the Ellsberg line has turned out to be fascinating. They're very interesting people who came from there. And it's not a very large family, so one of my cousin's wives was an accountant and she started the whole family linage, and she can trace them all back to everything. I mean, some really good things have come out of that picture that my mother sent so many years ago, I mean, to reunite with part of the family, and I like them. They're really good, nice, interesting people. One of them lives in Astoria, which Eric and I went to visit, and that's, as far as I'm concerned, one of the most beautiful spots on the face of the Earth. It's just unbelievably gorgeous. It's too bad it's a little far out, but it's really something.

So my mother's family, which was kept opaque from me, because my mother was so afraid of her father, is a—I mean, there's not much more to say about my mother, because she died so much after that, in terms of influence and what, but then it was her lack of influence after that that was a real problem.

Tacey Rosolowski: How did that affect your own mothering, I mean your family of origin and—

Florence Haseltine: Well, I had probably determined my own mothering style before that. By watching what happened in my own family, I realize that

you depend on your parents until you're eighteen. After that, they're going to depend on you. So treat your kids as though they're your future caretakers. I mean, you hope they aren't, but, in fact, they're your future support, because as we get older and especially if you live to a really old age, your core group dies. I mean, a lot of my core group has died, my friends and my enemies. It's in some ways harder to lose your enemies because there's no way you can resolve anything after that. I mean, your friends still are your friends inside, but your enemies, you're left with them. Nothing has gotten—you haven't gotten over it. So I have found that you just prefer that they all live.

[00:42:18]

Tacey Rosolowski: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Florence Haseltine: No, but I think that there probably is, but it's kind of hard. It's forty years of thinking about what else was in there.

Tacey Rosolowski: Sure.

Florence Haseltine: What do you think, Sherlock?

Tacey Rosolowski: [laughs] Looks like Sherlock bailed out a while ago. He's pretty sleepy. This one, however, is just stomping all over my notes. [laughs]

Well, we'll have time to add something if you think of something later, but why don't I turn off the recorder now for the time being, and maybe we'll resume later if a topic comes to your mind. So I'm turning off the recorder at about ten minutes after eleven.

[End of April 10, 2016 interview]