

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Mary Painter Bohlen

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Oral History project

Interview # ISE-A-L-2019-041

Mary Painter Bohlen, a journalist and educator who was a supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment, was interviewed on the date below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *ERA Fight in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: May 19, 2019 Location: Bohlen home, Springfield Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Dr. Jan Droegkamp, ALPL Volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:05 / 1.08 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on September 4,
2019

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield,
Illinois.

© 2019 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

Mary Painter Bohlen, *ERA Fight in Illinois*, ISE-A-L-2019-041

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Mary Painter was born in Bloomington, Illinois in 1950, to parents Linden Painter and Florence Beecher Painter. Her father was a grain and livestock farmer and her mother a former teacher and community volunteer. They lived on a farm near Anchor, Illinois. Mary graduated from Octavia High School in 1968 and attended Eastern Illinois University for two years. She earned her BS in news-editorial journalism from Southern Illinois University in 1972. She married Brent Bohlen in 1970 and in 1972 they moved to Boston where Brent pursued his master's and law degrees. While there, she worked at Brandeis University and Lesley College. They moved to Springfield, Illinois in 1976, and Mary earned his master's degree in public affairs reporting from Sangamon State University in 1977. She was hired by United Press International, where she spent five years reporting on activities in the Illinois statehouse. Her tenure included the epic 1982 fight over the passage of the ERA. ERA never achieved adoption in thirty-eight states as was required by the U.S. Constitution. Brent and Mary had a son, William, in 1979, and adopted their daughter, Elizabeth, from South Korea in 1986. In 1985 she began a 30-year career as a professor of Communication and Public Affairs Reporting at Sangamon State University, which was reorganized and renamed the University of Illinois Springfield in 1995. Mary used her personal experiences as a reporter as a teaching tool. She still wrote for publications in her retirement and enjoyed spending time with her four grandchildren.

Mary was active in the Springfield chapter of Women in Communications for many years, including serving as its president. She also co-founded the Springfield chapter of the Association for Women Journalists and was a member of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Subject Headings/Key Words: United Press International; Sangamon State University; University of Illinois Springfield; public affairs reporting; Brent Bohlen; Illinois State University; Southern Illinois University; Equal Rights Amendment; women in communication; Association of Women Journalists

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

COPYRIGHT

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955