

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Rozanne Robertson

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Family Memories Oral History project

Interview # FM-A-L-2018-010

Rozanne (Posy) Robertson, who worked as a Human Resource (Personnel) manager at several businesses during a time when female managers were rare, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Family Memories* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Feb 20, 28 & Mar 6, 2018

Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:19 + 2:17 + 1:44 / 2.32 + 2.28 + 1.73 = 6.33 hrs.

Session 1: Growing up in Springfield, IL in the 1930s & 40s, and Northwestern U.

Session 2: Life as a young woman in business management during the 1950s, '60 & '70s

Session 3: Career as a Human Resource manager, successful marriages & retirement

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 14, 2018.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Rozanne Robertson, *Family Memories*, FM-A-L-2018-010

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Rozanne (Posy) Overaker was born on March 20, 1931 in Springfield, Illinois, where her father was an attorney. She graduated from Springfield High School in 1948, and then attended Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, majoring in business administration, with a focus on personnel and labor management at a time where few women were enrolled in the program. Upon graduation in 1952, she was hired by Marshall Field with the help of a recommendation from one of her professors.

Over the next several decades Rozanne worked at a variety of firms in various positions, mostly in human resource management/personnel jobs. She sometimes earned the support of senior executives, but also occasionally encountered resentment and resistance from some of the men in upper management. Firms where she worked included Ethicon (a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson) Coleman Instruments, G.D. Searle and Boise Cascade. In 1960 she earned a Masters' Degree in Business Administration from Northwestern, one of only two women in her class. After working at G.D. Searle for four years, she was suddenly discharged but given no explanation for her supervisor's action. She sued the company, but eventually dropped the case.

In 1971 Rozanne married Ed Kowalczyk, a business consultant, and she also ran a consulting business advising companies on personnel matters while helping several firms with labor arbitration issues. The couple moved to east Texas in the late 1970s where Rozanne was hired by the Curtis Mathes Corporation as its human resource vice president. After several years, they moved to Bloomington, Illinois and opened a Curtis Mathes Rent to Own store. Six months later in 1981 her happy marriage ended tragically when Ed passed away. She struggled with the loss but maintained the business for the next couple of years. In 1983 she married C. Bryant (Bim) Flatt, owner/manager of Buckhart Sand and Gravel in Springfield. She retired from business shortly thereafter, and began volunteering for various organizations, including the Red Cross, the Dana Thomas House, the Kings Daughter's organization, her church and others. Upon Bim's retirement they moved to Florida, living on a boat for several years until returning to Springfield in 2006. Bim passed away in 2012. A year later Rozanne married David Robertson, an old beau from her college days who had just lost his own wife. Since 2008 Rozanne assisted the ALPL Oral History Program as an interviewer, and especially with editing interviews. Posy passed away on July 1, 2018.

Subject Headings/Key Words: business climate in America for female managers in 1950s, '60s and '70s; growing up in Springfield, IL in 1930s and '40s; G.D. Searle & Company; Curtis Mathes Corporation; Ethicon (Johnson & Johnson subsidiary); time and motion studies; union negotiations; Coleman Instruments; Boise Cascade; Northwestern University; C. Bryant (Bim) Flatt; Ed Kowalczyk; human resource management; David Robertson

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.

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