Interview with Georgia Rountree and Paula Stadeker
March 9, 2006
Interviewer: Barbara Dickerman

Dickerman: [This is] Barbara Dickerman, interviewing Georgia Rountree and Paula Stadeker about their sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha. Yes, Georgia, I've heard that you did an excellent interview – a wonderful interview – with Loretta Meeks about your long teaching career. And I'd love to read that tape sometime myself, or listen to it. So tonight we're going to talk about sororities, and maybe a little bit of other activities, or earlier life of Georgia Rountree and Paula Stadeker. How did you happen to organize – as I understand, the original organizer of…

Rountree: Well, if you don't mind, I'd like to give you some background on the sorority before I go into what we have done here in Springfield.

Dickerman: Very good.

Rountree: In 1908, at Howard University, in Washington, D.C., a young woman named Ethel Hedgeman, along with fifteen other young women, founded Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, making it the – making it America's first organization which is established for, and by, African-American women. The sorority was incorporated in 1913. Now from the beginning, Alpha Kappa Alpha began to influence women of America in such a way, the women of the sorority would go out and secure the high school girls, who would be going on to college. They were cognizant of their benefit to the community. They spent their time, their energy, and resources to benefit the American families from Mississippi to the health project that we first had, to the reading experience, to partnerships in mathematics and science. The women of Alpha Kappa Alpha have used their collective educational time and contacts from coast to coast, to abroad, to make a difference in the lives of; and also to serve their motto, which is: Service to All Mankind. Alpha Kappa Alpha's nucleus of more than 882 chapters in the fifty states, also in West Africa, the Bahamas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Germany, Korea, the Caribbean, and England. They have become a force for positive action. As demands of sororities have become more demanding and more diverse, Alpha Kappa Alpha women have kept abreast of these changes, and they have programs which have risen to more than to meet the demands. All that they do as a group are all – as – together with the membership, is an accomplishment for the betterment of Alpha Kappa Alpha women and of African-American women. I have a hard time saying African-American, because I'm not African. [*she laughs*] I was born right here in the United States. But I have – I'm very proud of it, but never – I

have a hard time saying it, because we grew up saying other names. The objectives remain the same. They encourage the culture of high scholastic and ethical standards to promote unity and friendship among college women to alleviate the problems concerning girls and women; also to maintain a progressive interest in college life, and to be of service to all mankind. Now that comes from our history. That is just a small amount of our history. I hasten on to say that now I'm going to do it personally. I was made into the sorority at Tennessee State University, Nashville, Tennessee in 1940. I'm a graduate – I graduated in 1941. The Second World War was just getting started. After graduation I transferred to the graduate chapter in Nashville, Tennessee, Alpha Delta Omega. I started my teaching career in November of 1941. I was a vocational home economics teacher hired by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, because we could not travel. We had stations where demonstration agents had offices, and an area in which they supervised.

Dickerman: I don't quite understand that.

Rountree: Okay.

Dickerman: Demonstrating teaching?

Rountree: Okay. I was a home economics teacher – vocational home economics – in Brownsville, Tennessee for four years. In this we had to teach in the school system all day long, and in the evening we'd travel out into the county, teaching the young women, the mothers of the girls that we taught in school, how to take what they had and use on the farms. I stayed there four years, as I said. And then I was hired by the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. My station was Pulaski – [*phone rings, brief interruption*] The University of Tennessee, and actually University of Tennessee and the Agriculture Department of the United States. Now my station was at Pulaski, Tennessee. This was thirty miles from Nashville, which was my hometown. I needed another car in order to travel back and forth out in the county. My mother and father bought the car for me. I'd come home on the weekend, and they would fill it up with gas, give me groceries, and whatever, to – because I was only making sixty-five dollars a month at Brownsville, Tennessee. The government paid me in two payments, in January and July. And they paid me the big sum of a hundred fifty dollars, each payment.

Dickerman: Oh my.

Rountree: Oh, I was living. [*she laughs*] Would you believe that on this massive pay that I was making, we bought supplies, materials, sewing

machines, and all kinds of things like that, in order to teach the girls how to do. Brownsville, Tennessee, only gave the buildings for the black students. Everything else came from our own pockets. That has nothing – that has nothing to do with the sorority; but in college – in college I learned that our motto was "Service to All Mankind," and I wanted those girls to learn in such a way that we were taught. And so we didn't mind. Incidentally, there was another girl who taught the sewing. And she, of course, was from Alpha Kappa Alpha as well. Now, after my service in Brownsville and in Pulaski, Tennessee, as I said before, I – Nashville was my hometown, so I joined the sorority in Nashville. And I had a wonderful friendship, because it was made up mostly of the teachers of Tennessee State, the doctors' wives, and doctors; my godmother, who was my seventh grade teacher.

Dickerman: Did you have godmothers with the sorority? Or [unclear] godmother?

Rountree: No, from my – I – I –

Dickerman: Okay.

Rountree: But what I'm saying is, they molded us. They started from the first grade – those who were Alpha Kappa Alpha women, talking about Alpha Kappa Alpha. Incidentally, I had one aunt who was a founder of the chapter at Fisk University. I have some history. [*she laughs*] I was able to bring in six women who were also Tennessee State graduates. One, of course, was my second oldest sister. We all were teaching home economics down in west Tennessee – that's fifty-eight miles from Memphis. Now I'm not going to go into this particular interview in the way that we were treated as black people. I hope I can hold to that.

Dickerman: Oh, you don't – do you think – well, it's – do you think it's important? I think it kind of is important to see – it's up to you, Georgia.

Rountree: Well, I was going to go on to – I could tell you some here that's –

Dickerman: In Springfield, probably.

Rountree: Yes.

Dickerman: But we're not there yet – in Springfield.

Rountree: No.

Dickerman: Whatever you feel is of importance yourself.

Rountree: When I was – in 1945, my husband, who had been in the Second World War, and had been over in the European Theater, came home. And I was – as I said, home demonstration agent in Pulaski, Tennessee. Pulaski, as you remember, was the hometown of the birth of the Ku Klux Klan. So this played a great difference in our lives, such as being home before sundown, such as my backing for a whole mile on a country road because they would block my way. And I would back, and go around another way. But all of that – I made sure that I was home by sundown. But, I ran into that again when my husband and I slipped over the county line to Biloxi, Mississippi, and we married, keeping it a secret for a whole year. But I always thought it was real funny what happened. We were walking up and down the streets of Biloxi, and there was a white man who kept following us. And then finally he says, "Y'all want to get married?" And we said, "Yes, we do." "What'd y'all say?" "Yes, sir. We do." We went up to his office. He married us.

Dickerman: This is after the war? After he – ?

Rountree: This was in 1945. After the war my husband came home. He came to Jackson, Tennessee, and I went to Jackson, Tennessee. We met there so that it would not be in the papers in Nashville, because hiring a – a married demonstrator – I would have lost my job, and – and all of my big pay.

Dickerman: I see.

Rountree: But anyway. Cause teachers coming on back – coming on back. The six women that I told you that I carried into the sorority – I did this at Jackson, Tennessee, where it was about fifteen miles from where we all taught. One of the girls – one of the girls had had her teeth out – extracted. And we took her with us anyway, because she said she didn't care about what anybody said about her. No man's ever asked you for teeth. [*she laughs*] You can block that off.

Dickerman: I love that.

Rountree: Anyway. My husband and I, when we – when we got married – after the – I guess he must have been a magistrate, because he certainly wasn't a judge – he said, "Now, y'all get the hell out of here. That'll be seven dollars." For years, I wondered where in the world – why did he say that? And then suddenly it came back to me: You did not walk the streets of Biloxi, or any Mississippi street, after sundown.

Dickerman: So he was protecting you, really.

Rountree: So he was protecting us, but he charged us seven dollars to marry us.

Stadeker: But told you to hurry up. Keep moving.

Rountree: Yeah, get back across that state line. What else was I – [*shuffling through papers*] After a whole year, we decided that we were going to live in Illinois. My husband had been given a job in Springfield, Illinois. The way he got his professional job – his cousin was a chauffeur to Secretary Barrett. And he asked – the chauffeur asked Secretary Barrett if he would get his cousin a job, because his cousin did not want to teach, but he didn't – he wanted a professional job. So Secretary Barrett brought my husband to Springfield. He assigned him to the archives, under Margaret C. Norton. And I was trying to think of the – of the – there were two other ladies in the office. No man had ever been in this job. So these ladies – and they were – I used to tell my husband, "Nine old ladies" – they liked him so well – I should say loved, cause they truly did love us – beautiful. In fact, those years were just absolutely beautiful in Springfield. The women wrote an examination and gave us money for gas and a car, and sent us to Chicago to take the examination. This was the examination that everybody had to –

Dickerman: Librarian, I guess. Or was it? Archivist?

Rountree: Patronage examination, or – it was civil service – civil service examination. They also later sent him to the University – American University in Washington, D.C., and in this he visited many of the sites and things that he wanted us to see later in Washington. But one of the things that he loved about the university was that he was right across the street from Methodist Church. So he – he went in, and they welcomed him to – to the nth degree. He says that when – when he sang – and he had a beautiful, big voice – when he sang the hymns, a lot of – everybody was turning around and looking. [*she laughs*] Well anyway, the reason why I mention that is because at that particular time, we were not going to church, unless we were a program of the – for the white churches. We did not belong to the white churches. One of our sorors, Doris Parker, who is now librarian at Little Rock, Arkansas, came to Springfield. She taught at Feitshans High, the first black to teach at high school level at Feitshans.

Dickerman: Her name was Parker?

Rountree: Doris Parker. The reason why I mention Doris, was the fact that she went to Asbury Methodist Church. And when they extended the fellowship to her, they let her stand there and they accepted her, then they said, "Now wouldn't you be more satisfied in your own kind?"

So Doris found her own kind. And we were certainly glad that she did, because she was very outstanding. But what black woman is not outstanding? If they are Alpha Kappa Alphas. We – this is one of the things that we strive for: was to try to get women who were academically able, who were personable, and who were leadership. So –

Dickerman: What was the year you came to Springfield?

Rountree: I came to Springfield in 1946. I came up here many times in 1945, but since our marriage had not been announced, I – I couldn't be open about it. But when I retired – when I – excuse me – when I left that job in Pulaski, Tennessee – made up my mind that I was coming to Springfield to live – 1946. Now in 1946, I stayed here – I stayed in Springfield for three years. But before I practically pulled my hat and coat off, I found an application to teach here in Springfield. The superintendent was very nice – very nice. Mr. Bone. He would quote Bible verses, and then he would tell you something heartbreaking. And that was – "We don't have any black teachers in Springfield. And when the time is right, we will – we will call you, to see if you're still interested." And that's exactly what they did ten years later. They called while I was working as a dietician at St. John's Hospital, and wanted to know if I was still interested in teaching.

Dickerman: Ten years from '46.

Rountree: Yeah. Now, during all of this time, I came – as one girl said in the history of me – Edna Shanklin – she said, "Georgia Rountree came to town with a – as a college graduate when all she had, was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha; and her certificate to teach." This is true. Now all the time, I was looking around for sorors who were interested in trying to find – or start a chapter. It takes fifteen sorors – graduate sorors – to organize a graduate chapter. And then you have to go through a process of learning – you have to do a service project, and all kinds of things like that. Well, it took me twenty years to find fifteen sorors. I would get together six, or five, or nine, and some of them would move away from town; and two of them died. Now, Helen Perry and Margaret Ferguson were natives of Springfield – outstanding women, both graduates of University of Illinois. However, in 1983, we were able to get the sorority chapter chartered by Peggy LeCompte, who was our regional director at that time. We were chartered in December 1983, at Sangamon State University. Now since that time, we have grown from that fifteen to –

Stadeker: We're now up to thirty-four.

Rountree: That thirty-four. Now, you may say though: That's not many. Well: true. But the reason is you have to be about something when you are Alpha Kappa Alpha, because you've got to give back to your community. For instance, we had our first blood pressure screening at Grace United Methodist Church. We had one founder who was a – an eye, ear and nose specialist. She was a student then, but she graduated while she was here, working in the chapter. We gave blood pressure screenings for, I know, over a month. And we did – some of the people were just so thrilled that they did not know what to do; and they just thanked us like everything. Now we always carried on a project of giving to the poor – donating, things like that. We had one ball, which we called it the Pink and Green Ball. We were – we'd donate the money that we made from the ball to a charitable organization. It wasn't much. But – but it was a service project. Over the years, Alpha Kappa Alpha has grown so very much that they have to meet in a – I would say public place. For instance, they're meeting in the Carol Jo Vecchie Suite at St. John's Hospital every – and at Memorial Hospital. We have met in the Iles House. We have met at the Urban League. And in my basement. [*she laughs*] We – as a matter of fact, that's where we have all of the meetings leading up to it. And I served as the first president of the interest group, and president – first president of the sorority. And then Pam McDavid followed me. Now I didn't tell you how we got together. In order to get that fifteen sorors in town, we went together with Bloomington, Illinois. There were sorors there who needed people in order to charter for themselves. So we got together under the binding contract that when we got another – enough people into each chapter, we would separate, and we'd each have our own. Now, it's – it's a beautiful thing to know how those people from Bloomington came down on Saturdays, and stayed all day. And we'd fuss, but we – we'd plan, and we did. Now, they – some of them are still in Bloomington, some have gone on to Nebraska. But they – the majority worked at State Farm, and a very few in the teaching system – very, very few.

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Rountree: During the time that I was a home demonstration agent I had to go out into the county to teach the farm women and girls how to live on the farm. Now I did not teach in a public school. I – I was in an office. We had – I believe there were four white demonstrators, and four – four men – farm agents. Now in my office I had a farm man, and I – I had – and there was a secretary for each one of us. But that was all we had. But the girls and the women furnished all of the foods and everything that I used to – to demonstrate. Sometimes I had to take something that they – they wouldn't have on the farm, like that. Now each – [*she laughs*] – this is the fun part – each month we had a – a workshop

conducted by the University of Tennessee. We would be called to a mountainous section up near Knoxville, Tennessee. My farm demonstrator and I sat in the back of the classroom, and we also took our meals in the kitchen. Now, as I said, it wasn't too – it wasn't too bad, for this reason: We got all the best food because the cooks were black, and they were just – just so proud of the fact that we were in this meeting – whether we were sitting in the back or not. We just – we enjoyed every time that – but they stayed – it was in a lodge. Like the whites stayed in the lodge. We had to go down into McMinnville, Tennessee, and stay with home people – in homes. Now, that again, wasn't too bad; because those people were so proud of the fact that we were coming into their home. We had the very best of everything. Now that has nothing to do with the sorority. But in all of these things I – I keep saying: This is service to mankind. Now, I had sixteen demonstration clubs – that was adult women. And I had over forty of the 4-H club girls. Now, a number of times we took our girls to the state, and the boys would take their cattle, and we would do – we'd take our canned goods, and all things like that. Now, sometimes when they would get a – a prize – a ribbon – they were the last ones, always to get the ribbons. [*she laughs*] But we did make some outstanding – That was one nice thing about Pulaski, Tennessee; and that was it was the home of the Milky Way Farm, which bred thoroughbred horses. Well one of my farm families: a horse had hurt himself, and they gave him to the – the black farmer. Now, of course, they nursed the horse back to – to health. And their daughter learned to ride. [*she laughs*] Oh, it's –

Dickerman: That's something.

Rountree: I always try to look and find something good come out of everything. I'm going to have to make apology to all of you. I have been ill, you know, for over six or eight years, and I don't talk as plainly, and I don't talk as fast as I usually do. So.

Dickerman: I think it's going very well. Seems very plain to me.

Stadeker: Especially for the tape. You want to go slower.

Dickerman: You don't want to go fast.

Stadeker: Sometimes people talk too fast, and you can't understand what they're saying. So why don't we go back to – you got these women together from Bloomington finally.

Rountree: Yeah, that's right.

Stadeker: Coming back and forth. What about – what kind of service project did you do while you were chartering?

Rountree: You know, I'm trying my best to – I know we did the blood pressure screening.

Stadeker: Did you do like a clothing drive? Or anything – ?

Rountree: Yes, we did that. We did – we gave clothes to the Salvation Army. And of course we worked in the Urban League.

Dickerman: Were there children in the Urban League?

Rountree: We worked with families with children. I organized –

Dickerman: 1983 that was.

Rountree: I organized the WIC program for the Urban League. And along with that, I had them to okay my teaching reading to the parents, cause many of them had not finished high school. And they were able – some of them were able to get their GED, under me.

Dickerman: At the same time, were you teaching – ?

Rountree: I was teaching –

Dickerman: – at Springfield schools, as well?

Rountree: Yes, I was teaching –

Dickerman: First as a volunteer.

Rountree: I was teaching – I was teaching at Edison all the time I'm doing this. I – I told somebody that in the daytime I was a public school teacher, in the night – in between, I raised my children – and at night, I was an advocator. [*she laughs*] We worked in projects along with Babs, and Mary Armstrong. It wasn't Mary, was it?

Dickerman: Mary Toberman? Does that ring a bell?

Rountree: Oh, Mary Toberman.

Dickerman: Mary Toberman and Mary Jo Potter.

Rountree: I only associated with the best. No, these are some of the ladies that saw to it that we made our home in Springfield. In 1970, after we had

completed our service projects, I was asked by Chris Breiseth to come in on a workshop on black history. Now immediately when he asked me – Chris was vice-president of the Urban League; my husband was president –

Dickerman: He was my neighbor. Chris was.

Rountree: Immediately when I got the invitation, I said, "Huh. Chris is white. What does he know about black history? I know more black history than he ever did." That was what I said. But when I got into this class, I've never known anybody who knew the history as he did, who taught it as he did. I really learned something. Now, because of this black history, I was able to be on the committee in the school system that was selecting materials and things for – for the schools.

Stadeker: The curriculum.

Rountree: Films, books, and so forth. And I also was able to help many who wanted to teach it. I taught it like I was taught, and that was right along with the history of the country. Wherever something was done, my professor would bring in, and we'd have to research. My professor was Merle R. Eppse. He wrote a book, *The Negro, Too, in American History.*

Dickerman: This is when you were in college.

Rountree: Yes. Back in the '40s. [*she laughs*] Now, getting up to – getting up to organizing – Finally Peg Lecompte, our regional director; Pam McDavid, and Nedra Joiner; and two other residents of Springfield, Alma Jones and Georgia Rountree started an interest group. Pam and Peggy was instrument[al] in bringing the Bloomington girls in. And in this we were able – along with Janice Rountree Thompson graduating from WIU [Western Illinois University], we were able to get fifteen sorors in Springfield, all at one time. [*she laughs*] So we did organize. Okay, Paula?

Dickerman: When did [unclear]? We'll go to Paula Stadeker now, who is a somewhat newer member. And she's been a friend of mine. I'd like to hear what brought her to Springfield. And then go on to the sorority, of course.

Stadeker: Well, I came to Springfield in 1980. I was in love. And so I moved to Springfield. I had been commuting for two years. And when I first came to Springfield, I didn't – even though I was already a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha – I joined Alpha Kappa Alpha in 1973 at Illinois State University, in the undergraduate chapter there. And then I had

left there and went home to Chicago; but Alpha Kappa Alpha, as Georgia Rountree has pointed out, is not only women of quality, but it's also an organization that requires a financial commitment. And sometimes when you first get out of college, you can't make that commitment. So, having gotten out of college, and having a young child, and just trying to keep my head above water, I really didn't look to be in a graduate chapter when I first got out. But when I moved to Springfield – unbeknownst to me, the same year that I moved here was the year that they had started the interest group, and were working on having a charter. And I really hadn't looked for it, but you know Alpha Kappa Alpha women find one another. And I was in a – the Laundromat, and I was washing clothes, and I had on an AKA t-shirt – not even expecting to see another AKA; because I was in Springfield, and I hardly realized at that time the black population that was here. I lived on the west end of town, and I went to work and came home. So I really didn't know that we had a whole black population in Springfield. So I wasn't looking to see someone. But there was a – another soror in the Laundromat; she saw my shirt, and she ran over – Valerie Blasingame – and she's, "Oh soror! Oh God, I'm so glad another soror!" And she's hugging me and everything. And then she goes on to tell me about this interest group, and the fact that they were going to soon have their chartering ceremony. And she invited me to come to the chartering ceremony, introduced me to the other sorors: Georgia Rountree and Nedra and Pam. And I – one of my mentees from Illinois State was now a soror here, chartering with them from the Bloomington chapter – a professor from that university. So you know, we always have a motto: You can't go anywhere, and you won't find an Alpha Kappa Alpha woman. So here I was, in the Laundromat – not looking for one, but there was one there, and she embraced me; and I've been in the chapter ever since 1984. And I've held several offices in the chapter. I've been president twice. I've held a number of other offices throughout my career. And Alpha Kappa Alpha women are the type of women that – not only are they educated, but they're sophisticated, and they're servants. We are always serving. When I joined, as soror Rountree said, we had the blood pressure screenings; we were working with the YWCA; when they first started their "Dress for Success" program, we donated many clothes to that. We continued the blood pressure screenings. We then got involved in voter registration, through the churches. At many of the churches, people were not registered to vote on the east side of Springfield, so after church we would do the blood pressure screenings, then we would also ask people if they were registered to vote, and get people to register to vote through that way, and have them in the community. We've helped decorate the outside of the Boys and Girls Club. We've done golf clinics with some of the students at the Boys and Girls Club.

Rountree: [unclear]

Stadeker: Oh, and then – and we did food at the Boys and Girls Club. We found – my children grew up here in Springfield. When I moved here my son was six, and my two girls were not even born. But they went to the Boys and Girls Club, and I used to take money to them periodically when I couldn't, you know, bring their meal to them at the Boys and Girls Club. And they would say to me one time; they said, "Mom, you know we're the only ones that go to get something to eat." But there were like fifty, sixty, seventy kids there. And I said, "What do you mean, you're the only ones that go to eat?" And they said, "Well Mom, nobody else brings money for their kids. You just bring money for us. And so they take us to get food, and we come back." So I talked to the other women in the organization, and we talked to the people at the Boys and Girls Club. At that time, I realized that a lot of the kids came, and they didn't even get to eat – from the time they left home. Some of them didn't want the school lunch, so they didn't eat. So we started providing meals once a month – hot meals; and not only for them to get a hot meal, but we had the place setting, had them sit down, had them learn how to eat in a place. And then from that, we would, you know, select several of them as a reward, and take them out to eat like at a restaurant, or whatever, so they would learn about those things. So we're always doing things to be of service. About nine years ago we started Fashionetta, which is a cotillion for high school juniors and seniors. And my daughter has been it, soror Rountree's granddaughter has been in it – but the goal of it is to get young women who may not have the opportunity for cultural events, to experience this. So we put out notices within the high school for any high school junior and senior that wants to attend. Because we are an African-American organization, we're seeking African-American women; but anyone who will come we would not turn them down. And the girls start generally in September, October; and run all the way through till March or April. And every month we have an activity for them. This year they worked at the Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery store with us. They helped us decorate a tree for the Memorial Festival of Trees. We've done St. John's Breadline, where they've helped serve food, as part of their activity. They're also now this year working on the Merrill Lynch "Money Matters" program, so that they can learn to be fiscally responsible – especially as we see their money is getting tighter and tighter. With them going away to college they need to know how to manage their money. The girls then also solicit ads from their friends and neighbors, and different businesses. And with the money that they collect, we then return back to them in a scholarship a great percentage of the money that they collect, so that they can have like some seed money for college, in addition to what scholarships and things they might have. We also give out

scholarships to the community as a whole. Young women can apply, young men can apply – anybody can apply. We give out a scholarship in – there is a scholarship in soror Georgia Rountree's name; there's a scholarship in soror Alma Jones' name – because these are our founders, these are the people that chartered the chapter; and because they exemplify what we see as Alpha Kappa Alpha women. Soror Georgia persevered because nobody – nobody would have stayed this long. She's a golden soror. They're both golden sorors; they've been in the organization over fifty years. But it's her perseverance and dedication that has gotten us a chapter here in Springfield. Because I don't know – many of us, when we read the history, laugh and say: I don't know if I started in 1946, and I kept trying, and I had setbacks: people moved away; people, you know, didn't want to do it. Sometimes there were sorors here who didn't want to make the commitment. They knew that it required time and service, and they didn't want to do that. There were people who, as she pointed out, passed away. But she hung in there, and knew that eventually it would happen. Many of us today say: You know, we don't know if we would have done that. But you know, it was meant for her to do; it was her time, and her place to do that. And we really thank and honor her for that; and that's the reason that we thought, when you were doing the oral history, you should start with her – because she's the one who had the vision, and who persevered. The rest of us just kind of followed along behind her, hoping that we would measure up.

Dickerman: And I'm so glad we did start with Georgia, but get Paula in too. I had a question down here, but I think it's almost answered – the social aspects of the sorority. But the social is working together on these various projects, no doubt. You don't –

Rountree: We have socials.

Dickerman: – just play bridge, or dance, or what?

Rountree: Let her talk about the Pink and Green Ball.

Stadeker: We also – in the cotillion, there are young men that escort these young ladies. They have to be of a high caliber. We have a biography that's read about each young man, and the majority of them are going on to college. But we also try to partner with the Greek organizations – the male Greek organizations – Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi – we also do things with the Frontiers of America; they have a component of young people. While we are a female organization, we don't leave the men out – even in terms of networking now, because it is that money is so tight from the government, and people don't have a lot of money to give. We all partner together to do various functions.

So, like, we'll be having a Greek soirée this weekend – this Friday at Stella Blue's. And the money from that – the extra money from that will go into our scholarship fund, or towards one of our community projects. But all the Greeks come together to help one another. Whenever one Greek organization is having a function, the rest of us all make sure that we attend; because without the support of one another you can't do anything by yourself. And while we are the premier organization, we know that these other organizations have a place also, because everybody can't be an Alpha Kappa Alpha woman.

Rountree: Tell them about the service project at the fairground.

Stadeker: Oh, okay. Yes.

Dickerman: Another service project.

Stadeker: The other service projects that we've done – many people in Springfield are familiar with the Ethnic Festival; and when the Urban League used to run a booth at the Ethnic Festival, and they decided that they had – needed a break from that. The Alpha Kappa Alpha women stepped in and took over the booth, and we partnered with the men of Alpha Phi Alpha, and sold barbecue and catfish, and worked out there that weekend that they have the Ethnic Festival. Since then, we've not worked at the Ethnic Festival, but we are now parking cars out at the fairgrounds. And we have many young women and young men from the surrounding area who come and assist us with that. And with the money that we receive from that, we use it towards our community service projects, as well as some of our scholarships.

Rountree: Incidentally, I served on the committee that conceived the idea – Father Mascari at St. John's was the one who called us in. I was then president of the – of the Urban League Guild. And we organized the Ethnic Festival. The first year was success; it was always, always a success. The Alpha Kappa Alpha women have made many friends, and many, many dollars on the Ethnic Festival. And I'm glad to say that I was a part of that.

Dickerman: I do – I remember Father Mascari too. But that – working at those booths is hard work; but that's another social aspect, because it's fun. Paula and I have done it for the YWCA. Well, this has been very enlightening. It's wonderful. Thank you.

[*end of interview*]