

Interview with Margaret Olmstead

Interviewer: Thomas Katona

[FAR AWAY AUDIO]

TK: Actually this thing picks up pretty well, it can hear...

MO: That's impressive.

TK: It is, it's a very nice tool to have. It's quite useful.

MO: My first work experience was a babysitter when I was an 11 or 12 year old, a family of four children that varied in age from a baby up to a five-year-old. There were four of them. Their parents used to forget to come home sometimes so I would have them for a good half of the night. They had a very small house up from the folks on Route 7, I think it was four rooms total, and not in as good shape as houses are nowadays. Then I babysat for another family down the street from them that left me with a sick baby. They never told me he was sick and the three-year-old told me where the baby's medicine was when the baby was running a fever, and I had to take care of that one. My mother and dad were fit to be tied over that one, but I managed it. I stayed overnight that time, it was arranged that I would stay and babysit overnight and come home in the morning. I think I worked with my mother in the kitchen of the church when they served big dinners, and fundraisers and stuff. And she used to work with the Red Cross and rolled bandages and I'd gone down and helped her with that, although that was not especially interesting to me (laughs), because I wasn't very old. But we always went wherever the folks went and helped out wherever we could. That was part of it. We we're always going and doing things. We didn't have babysitters like they do nowadays. Then when I was in nurses training I worked part-time on the floors after I'd been trained for about a year. I got experience one day with a brain surgery that had just come back, and he was an interesting case. It was one of these things where he had a tumor, he was an intelligent lawyer, when he woke up from the surgery he had to be taught to eat and function independently from scratch; almost like a baby. I learned a lot there. We used to work on the floors occasionally. I'm not sure what all you're going to want from...

TK: Just a lot of the general things about work. About it being a learning experience; that's an important thing, learning from work.

MO: Yeah, because the end of my freshman year... this was a plum to be able to babysit something as big as that... babysit, I mean nursing. We got to work on the floors, I liked working with the newborns. That was fun. We worked with maternity once in a while, the novices, but you learn a lot when you're working in a hospital. There were experiences I probably would have not had. One mother came in to deliver and she had a tumor instead of a baby growing, and that was the most devastating thing for her to learn. She went in for cesarean, and there was no baby, and then she was on the floor with all new mothers who were celebrating and she was, and she was totally crushed. You learn a lot about psychology too. I finished training, worked in the pediatric isolation unit for the first little time after I finished training, and then when I got married we moved. Sarah's mother was born in the hospital that I trained in, the hospital I had been born in. I moved to Erie, Pennsylvania with her and when I moved to Concord, Michigan I worked an older couple with sundowners. He was becoming senile and difficult to handle, and the woman had lymphoma I believe, developing. So, she couldn't really take care of him much and I got to go up every day and run errands, and clean the house, and do things to keep them

going. Whatever hygiene he needed, getting him dressed in the morning, entertain him part of the day. Where did I work...? I worked in the hospital in Toledo, Ohio when Mark was little. I had the medical floor on the evenings and I sometimes had the keys to the pharmacy and had to fill the prescriptions at night, as well as covering the little emergency room that they had. They didn't get a whole lot of emergencies at that time, but that was kind of a multiple training. They didn't have a pharmacist on duty at night and if any of the patients in the house needed an emergency, or to fill some medicine, you had to go down and get them while keeping your work going at the same time. It was interesting. That was the [sounds like: orthopedic] hospital. We moved around a lot. From Erie, Pennsylvania we moved to Brian, Ohio where two of the kids were born, and then we moved to Toledo. I worked in the hospital there for a while and then I moved to Concord, Michigan where I took care of an older couple there. Then we moved to Arlington Heights and I was working at ManorCare with mostly older people. I worked there 21 years; that was a learning experience too. You had a bomb scare come up at one point in the history of our country and they had a new service, and they said "if you find any packages laying around that don't belong to anybody, evacuate the area, and if you can, get it outside." So I found somebody's bag sitting in the hallway one day, and I carried it out to the bushes and everybody laughed and laughed and laughed, but that was exactly what we were taught to do and I didn't take a chance on anything that could hurt the patients. We'd had a bomb threat by a disgruntled patient at one point, and that was what triggered that. But you work with all kinds of people. We had a young woman that was a patient for quite a long time, and most of them were older people, but you got a cross-section of all kinds of members of society.

TK: Did you ever have any problems with employers?

MO: Yeah I did, I worked on the Williamsburg Wing at ManorCare in Arlington and I had one aid that came in inebriated and I had to let her go. She didn't understand why, a couple days later she was sensible enough to have picked up why, but you couldn't let a person in that condition take care of patients. That's where you'd have lawsuits come up if anything happened to the patient. If they dropped them, did something to injure them, insulted them when they were in a bad mood. Most of the staff was not too hard to get along with. There were a few that were kind of temperamental once in a while. Once in a while you'd have someone with a chip on their shoulder and you had to kind of cool them down a little, talk to them for a few minutes and see what was going on. There were a couple times when staff-members didn't come into work and I got held over for a second shift, because there was no one to work.

TK: That's got to be rough working two shifts.

MO: I think the hardest part was when I worked upstairs and they had two wings. One nurse served one wing and I had the other and I had like 40 patients. That was quite a lot to do all of the medicines and treatments with. Still, I liked it up there. A lot of the patients upstairs were long term; they were going to live the rest of their lives up there. Downstairs they had Medicare and they had the more expensive Williamsburg Wing where they paid more to retire to that section. We had some interesting people down there too though. One man objected to the fire alarm when it went off (laughs), he took his cane out and he tried knocking the fire alarm down off the wall and he lost his balance and he broke his hip. He was so mad.

TK: I can totally relate to that living in the dorms when the fire alarm goes off in those inopportune moments, it's so loud.

MO: Well, this was a gentleman who had an eye for the ladies too. He had his eye on a lady down the hall whose family did not want them to have a relationship. The families would come in and they would be fighting, you know, "Keep them apart! We don't want this" and he'd go out in the dining room, sneak around the back way, and go into her room so they could be together (laughs). I mean when you're up in the 90's if you still can enjoy it's not that bad, you're not going to have a baby, you're not going to spread infections, you're all treated with medications so there's no problem there (laughs). I have a different outlook than I did when I was younger I guess, the older you get the more you can understand how of those things happen. He just had more hormones going than most of the men at that age. Everything had to be hidden from the public though, because the families did not want that. They... well you know, sometimes if one of the parties have a lot of money and the other one is accused of wanting to use them for their money and so on... that wasn't the case there, because they both had enough money to be in that exclusive wing. And they knew one couldn't outlive the other (laughs). Oh, shoot. That was an interesting time. They took patients out on tours and sometimes I'd sign up for trips like that. I had a couple of grandkids that I took out with them in their strollers when they were little to go places. Where did you go?

MO Grandchild: I remember going to Shedd Aquarium with you guys once. I think I was four or five.

MO: Yeah, we'd take the patients out. There was a church down in the next community that used to have salad luncheons, and we'd take a whole busload of people down for that. I think I took Laurie down there a couple times when she was a baby... and Jennifer, I took Jennifer too when she was little. I've got a picture of her in her little red dress in the stroller. It was fun, but getting them in and out of the bus was another story. You'd have to be so careful to get them buckled in and to get those wheelchairs into that handicap bus, and if they're not buckled in either the chair will slide and bang into something or the patient will fall out of the chair. There was one lady that fell off the seat. She had lost one leg before and she broke the other leg when she fell, poor soul. I wasn't on the bus that time! So, I don't know what happened there. I just know that we buckled them in good when I was there. You didn't want anything like that on your records. But it was one of those things, when you get a supervisor that was really hard to deal with, if you could just hang on and do your work, teach yourself to keep your head above water, sooner or later they were going to leave, until the last one. And I got to 65 and I said "I'm not staying, I'm going." My father had had a stroke and they called me from Ohio to tell me I needed to get down there right away, because he wasn't going to last. They wouldn't let me go, I had to find my own replacement, by the time I'd found my own replacement he had already died, so I missed being with him. Towards the end my mother was so sick and they told me she wasn't going to make it and they told me no, I couldn't take the time off, because they had just give three of the other nurses vacation time, well I figured a death in the family was more important than vacation time, but they didn't, so I said "I'm 65, it's time to retire." So I retired and moved up here. I've got two families up here, and I really haven't spent much time with the ones that are up here. I'll have to get reacquainted with some of them (laughs). And then I've got seven patients.

MO Granddaughter: I remember that supervisor... you were always complaining about she hated you, she hated you so bad. She knew you and Karen were friends so she made sure you worked on each other's days off.

MO: Karen was one of my coworkers and she was a little loud in her voice, and she was the kind who loved to tell jokes and loved to kid around. And they figured that wasn't professional while the patients

enjoyed it. I couldn't see anything wrong, she wasn't off-color, and she wasn't doing anything that was going to hurt anybody. Telling a few jokes made them happy, that wasn't such a big deal. So when that supervisor took a dislike to her I just ignored it. She didn't like me because I was a friend to her. There were a lot of nurses that came and went. I think the turnover was... it's always been relatively frequent in nursing. You get burned out sometimes. The idea of working in a nursing home when they're all older people in there... there are a certain number of them dying and then you get to the point where you don't want to say goodbye anymore. You just have it. So they would move to a different community or get a different job. I stayed there 21 years and I just figured I'd had enough at that point. At times I think I'd like to do one of these things here, but the joints won't take it, the knees just will not... Going down those cement floors up and down the halls. We used to have these big, heavy medicine carts... my goodness they were four feet across and maybe two-and-a-half feet deep, bins on both sides, and all the medications were stacked in those drawers, and you'd take that down the hall about six times a day. On the carpeting it was really tough getting that moved sometimes. Patients used to complain about the wheelchairs sticking to the carpet too.

MO granddaughter: [Inaudible]

MO: Well, this was nursing home carpet, it wasn't much different. You had to take that cart out for medicine, there was another cart for treatment, and you got out the medications and treatments at four different intervals during the day and evening. And there were some that came in-between, and there were IV's to be hung, and medications that had to be given at unusual times, so you kept running. And there were emergencies that came up now and again. They used to page a nurse when somebody was needing emergency care, but then there was another code... code gray or something for the wanderers that walked out... we used to occasionally catch this one woman in the middle of the street where the main traffic goes by. She'd get halfway across the street and she'd stand there shivering; she couldn't get across. The traffic was just whizzing by her and I was almost afraid she'd get hit. They had alarms on the door, but by the time you get from the back of the building to the front where the door alarm went on, she was already across the street halfway... couldn't move fast enough.

MO granddaughter: [Inaudible]

MO: Yeah, that was right in front of the hospital, and all the main traffic goes through from east to west and vice versa.

MO granddaughter: We were on that road for spring break.

MO: Did you go through Arlington? Did you show them the house?

Unidentified voice: Yeah, we showed them around. He painted it.

MO: He painted the house?

Unidentified voice: Yeah.

MO: It would be interesting to see what he did to the inside of it too.

MO: We used to get people stopping that had lived in the house before and moved out of state, and when they'd come through they'd come to the door and ask if they could see the house to see what we did to it. It had big flower wallpaper in the dining room, we took that off first week. The boys were

offended by that. David and Mark said “Ick!” That and the black and white wallpaper... it was a hound’s-tooth pattern in the bathroom downstairs and you could get dizzy just looking at that. We built two houses in Toledo, Ohio and I helped with that. We had the kids, just the two oldest ones at the first house, and there’d be a pile of drywall laying there and when the kids got tired they’d go take a nap on the drywall. That’s where David learned to walk, in one of those houses, yeah.

Unidentified voice: [Inaudible]

MO: Yeah, four kids is a bit of work. We built that first house and then my husband Luke asked him if he’d help build this one next door, and we ended up buying it. He did all of the wiring in it and some of the plumbing, and the drywall, and we worked in there for quite a bit. That’s where David learned to ice-skate, on that pond up there. He was a year old and we found him a pair of little tiny skates and went up there and actually could make them go. I should have known he would learn to ski, shouldn’t I? He was that likes to come up here and get on the skis, he went to Marquette Mountain and he didn’t think it was big enough. He’s been going to bigger hills.

TK: Did it ever feel really hard working and having your family?

MO: Yeah, there were some times where it got pretty thick. When I worked in the hospital in Toledo, Ohio I would only work afternoons so that there was only a couple hours between my going to work and his coming home and we had a young lady in the neighborhood who babysat. Sometimes he wouldn’t come home, he’d say “I got tired of babysitting,” and the babysitter would call me... “I have to go home. My mother’s mad, I’m late going home, and I’ve got school tomorrow. What am I going to do?” And I couldn’t leave to go home, that got to be pretty touchy there. One night they had an electrical storm at home and the fish tank went out, she says “What am I going to do with all these tropical fish? It’s getting cold in the tank and there’s no heat and no electricity.” Well, you can’t do much of anything, just hope they make it (laughs), but it was his fish tank and he had a lot of fish in it. There were some difficult times there where you couldn’t get a babysitter. There were some times she wasn’t available and we couldn’t get a babysitter. You’re really stuck because you have to go to work. You can’t just... Sometimes you just fell into a rut where you were just getting up, doing housework, going to work, coming home, and picking up after everybody that was home in the meantime, going to bed, and going to work again. You were just on a treadmill and you could never seem to find a few minutes to relax yourself. Then Kathy came to live with me in that house in Arlington, Buster had died in ’79 so... When I bought the house it was ’80, and when Kathy came home with Sarah I babysat Sarah for a while. Kathy had a friend in North Elk Grove that we used to take her down to when I had to go to work. We used to go down sometimes I had sandwiches there and I’d eat them at the Elk Park, remember that? Fed the Elk some apples.

MO granddaughter: Yeah.

MO: Yeah, we had some outings that were kind of fun.

MO granddaughter: I remember we used to come home at like 11:30 at night and grandpa was sleeping on the floor by the stairs.

MO: I think one night I found him sleeping on the landing outside the bedroom doors right at the head of the stairs and I’d think “Oh great, he fell down those stairs.” Those stairs welled around. They came down half a dozen steps maybe and it turned and went the other way. She would have fallen a long

ways before she got caught. We put a railing up at the foot of that step... that was the carp bannister. I'm kind of proud of that job, I think we did a good job. We were in that house when mom used to come up to visit, mom and dad. That one time mom fell and broke her arm in the bathroom and had the door locked and we couldn't get it open.

MO granddaughter: I played rescue.

MO: You played rescue, I was at work and you called...

MO granddaughter: You could hear grandma in the other room yelling "Orville!" And then grandpa goes back there muttering under his breath, picks up a kitchen chair, and goes walking to her and I said "Grandpa what are you doing?" and he said "Your grandma fell in the bathroom, I'm going to go help her off the floor," and I said "wait a minute." So, I called the next door neighbors... I'm like six-years-old... and the next door neighbor came over and she's like "No, Orville don't," because my mom and my grandma are at work and... So, my next door neighbor called 911 and the ambulance workers came over and helped my great grandma off the floor and she'd broken her arm. They wanted to take her in and cast it up and...

MO: She didn't want to go?

MO granddaughter: Yeah, so we called grandpa home from work and mom home from work and I was the little six-year-old hero. That was a proud moment for a six-year-old (laughs).

MO: Well, you just have to think about this young boy who called for help when his mother fell, and they told him "get off the phone and quit playing," and how devastating that must have been to him. Instead of being a hero he was told the police would come and punish him if he didn't hang up the phone. You have to use a little bit of tact when a kid is on the phone and something is wrong.

TK: Yeah.

MO: I used to have to call 911 from the nursing home occasionally, but that was a different experience having your great grandma fall like that.

MO granddaughter: I think it was more humorous than anything. I think the department thought it was humorous too, Sabrina and Grandpa standing in the kitchen yelling at each other that "No, we're going to call 911" and "No, I'll get her off the floor, she does this all the time." I mean you'd have to know our next door neighbor, she was one of those poolside stay-at-home mom, tiny little thing with the bikinis and the long red fingernails, the one's you see in soap operas.

TK: Malibu mom?

MO granddaughter: Yeah exactly, very much a drama queen.

MO: Well grandpa was used to giving her a chair to pull herself up by, and I can relate to that since I've been here and taken several falls down on that driveway. That one time when I fell out on the road and hit the back of my head on the pavement, I had no way to get up and I was right in the middle of the road and I was right on the middle of a sheet of ice, so I rolled over, crawled to the mailbox, and got myself up with the mailbox. You learn a lot of tricks when you're not so secure on your feet. But he would take a chair over, she would pull herself up, and she'd be alright, but this time she had broken her

arm. She couldn't... I don't know how you got the door unlocked to the bathroom, she couldn't reach up to unlock the door because it was her right arm that broke.

MO granddaughter: I remember I used to lock myself in the bathroom and I couldn't get it open...

MO: We had a key at one time.

MO: We learned that small poker or screwdriver, you could just click it in there and it'd open it half the time. I was a smart six-year-old (laughs).

MO: You had a lot of life experiences behind you at that point.

MO granddaughter: Yeah.

MO: But when grandma went to the doctors and he put a sling on it... and put her to bed at night then she would take the sling off, and in the morning you couldn't find it. She might have thrown it under the bed, or she might have put it under a pillow. She said "I don't sleep with a brazier on" (laughs). Sorry dear that was a splint for your arm. And she took another fall in the bathroom of her house after she went home from here, she broke her arm again and that was it. The doctor said to dad "You just can't handle her at home anymore." He went to pick her up in the bathroom, he picked her up by the broken arm to get her up... and it was a compound fracture, there was blood all over the place, and they called a young man from the neighborhood that was walking by to come help him get her up, the kid ran home and got a clean towel. He could have found one at the house, but he was a kid that had had an accident, a brain injury, and he wasn't functioning 100 percent so he went home traumatized after helping dad get her up. He went home and he was distraught. So Dick and Lucile came up and they said "why didn't you call us?" and he said "Because I was going to get her up myself."

MO granddaughter: If we let them two live together the rest of their lives they would have killed each other. They loved each other, but they drove each other nuts (laughs).

MO: Well, they both lived to 97. Dad got there first, seven years later mom got there, which is a pretty good old age.

MO granddaughter: How much did you make working at ManorCare?

MO: I think my last wage was about \$16.80 an hour.

MO granddaughter: That's not too bad, I wish I made that.

MO: Yeah, well some day you might. Get your education under your belt...

MO granddaughter: I don't know about; that that was a hard degree.

TK: I hope both of us make that much, because right now we're not making that combined.

MO: Yeah, well that's a tough time of your life, because you really don't make enough to pay all of the bills, and I think that's what both sets of parents are concerned about because they're not sure that financially you can make it.

MO granddaughter: We know that, we're afraid of that ourselves.

MO: Well, Tammy goes home and raids your mother's refrigerator every time she goes home.

MO granddaughter: There's not a lot in my parent's fridge that we'd want to eat.

MO: Well there's not a whole lot in this one at times either.

TK: My mom's freezer... there's enough in there to last... an army wife.

MO granddaughter: Yeah, well that venison...

MO: Well there's good meat down in the freezer down stairs.

MO granddaughter: We'll just live off of my mom's canned jam and we'll have venison. We'll make it. We'll be alright.

TK: What we'll do, we'll get licenses and just pay your dad (laughs).

MO granddaughter: He doesn't need them for the summer for his crop damage permit. What did he get... seven deer last year?

MO: Well he didn't keep them all. He didn't keep all of the meat, he gave some of it away. Somebody hit a deer down by Marquette Mountain.

MO granddaughter: Yup, first dead deer of the spring, and I just got bit by the first mosquito when I was out there with the dog.

TK: No way.

MO granddaughter: It was a bug of some kind, it bit me right near the eye.

MO: Well I just put his flea, tick, and mosquito repellent on this week. The flies have been coming out. I was reading last night and a fly flew right in my book and came battering on the lamp. I don't know, you're not going to get seven pages I'm afraid.

TK: Well five is the minimum, so I'll make it. I've been creative before. Well, the next big question is unions; have you ever dealt with unions?

MO: We didn't have a union, but when I left town all the nurses in the hospital I trained in went union and they went on strike, and it was written up in all the National papers and it was a black-eye to the nursing profession. It was really bad because they just walked out. Now they're trying to unionize up here.

MO granddaughter: Well they're kind of... mom's doing it.

MO: Is she really?

MO granddaughter: She'd lose her job otherwise. She's not union, she's not salaried staff, so she doesn't have a choice. Her job's not that important to the head honcho of the hospital who keeps telling mother "We're friends, we've been through this together. We've never seen it necessary to unionize." Then two weeks later they'll fire 250 people this month, and maybe 1,000 by the end of the summer.

MO: No, there weren't that many...

MO granddaughter: Making room for the young people who don't need as much money as you people who've been here longer. What a big rip-off.

MO: That's a big laugh. I worked in a hospital in Toledo, and I was covering the medical floor, the emergency room, and the pharmacy, and they hired a young woman straight out of college who had no floor experience, absolutely none, had never worked a floor; and she didn't have any tact for the patients and bad bedside manner. They hired her over me at about twice my salary.

MO granddaughter: Was she pretty?

MO: I didn't think so, not that pretty.

MO granddaughter: Your boss thought she was pretty (laughs).

MO: But she was not... she was fresh out of college. She was young. And she was my supervisor. She had to have me show her where things were, and oh that was fun. "How do you handle this situation? We've got a patient who won't stay in bed and I don't know what to do with her," well I know why she won't stay in bed (laughs). That was kind of tough, because she was telling me what to do and she wasn't getting along with the patients and she wasn't knowing how to find things. I suppose she was 20.

MO granddaughter. Wow, 20 with a nursing degree.

MO: All she had was the B.A. and that was the end.

MO granddaughter: [inaudible]

MO: Oh good, she'll have to move up there then. You won't see too much of her.

MO granddaughter: [inaudible]

MO: Did anybody else she knows go in that program with [inaudible].

MO granddaughter: Just her.

MO: So she wouldn't have any buddies?

MO granddaughter: Nope, she couldn't make new friends...

MO: I remember when I was in nursing training I had a suitcase full of clothes, two uniforms, my parents had to take 300 dollars from my first year.

MO granddaughter: 300 bucks! Good god, that's outrageous.

MO: The year before me they had the nursing program where the girls got six months to learn everything they were supposed to learn in three years and were sent directly over into service, most of them. That was a whole lot different than what I was doing, I had three years of training... a lot of floor experience. You couldn't get anywhere without floor experience in those days. That's what surprised me when that girl came in, she didn't know how to make a bed.

MO granddaughter: [inaudible]

MO: No, in those days if you had the degree in your hand you could get hired.

MO granddaughter: Did you have to wear one of those nursing hats?

MO: When I was in training we did. I still have it on a shelf in the closet. I haven't worn it since working the pediatric floor in the hospital I trained in. Once I moved away from there I don't think I wore it again much. Maybe I did wear it in Toledo. They had all kinds of hats in Toledo from different schools. There was one that was a double ruffle with a black band around the middle of it from one school, I don't remember what school it was. Some had blue bands on them, some had black bands, some had no bands. Ours had no bands, there was a flat piece of fabric that you'd fold to make the shape and it buttoned like a cufflink button on the back. That wasn't so bad. When we worked in the psychiatric hospital in training, we worked with some girls that came from another hospital from St. Elizabeth's, and they had an apron that had a hole in the center for the hip, it went over the hip and buttoned at the side, and one of the patients went a little berserk and he had her by her front apron and was twisting it up, and he almost killed her. She was turning purple before we finally got him off of her. I was wondering what she said to offend him, if she said anything. It was just one of those places that that could happen. That's changed a lot though, the construction of the human body has even changed! There's so much more detail known about it then there was. You figure when I was in training it was quite a few years ago.

MO granddaughter: [inaudible]

MO: Yeah, he doesn't know the microphone is there though.

TK: It's not a big deal anyways.

MO granddaughter: Three years from now somebody will be listening to this in the archives going "What is that noise?"

All: (Laughs)

MO granddaughter: Cookie! That's enough of that. You're a good boy even though you're a retard.

MO: That went on the tape too (laughs).

MO: We used to have to take our affiliations outside the hospital facility, and we went to a psychiatric hospital for a part of it, we went to a tuberculosis sanitarium for a part of it.

MO granddaughter: That must have been fun.

MO: Not really. Well, I had an aunt that had had tuberculosis in the bone and had been out at that hospital and lost her leg all the way up to the hip. So I had a lot of bad feelings when I went there. I had been over with my dad when I went to see her and I just kind of remembered some of the bad stuff when I was over there. When it came to the newborns from maternity and delivery, we had the facilities right in the hospital, and there was a tremendous sized board up there at north side. The hospital had two units, one at the north side of town and one at the south side of town. We had to train partly at one, and partly at the other.

MO granddaughter: Did you ever reach a point in the training when you thought "This is not for me"?

MO: I can remember when we were doing cadavers thinking something like that. We had to do cats first, everybody was given a cat to dissect, but we hadn't done as much dissecting in high school as you guys do. Good heavens, Tyler's even had some dissecting and she's only... 11? Mark said she's done some.

Formaldehyde is not a pleasant smell. There's 100 kids in that class, there was 100 cats degenerating and smelling of formaldehyde.

MO granddaughter: I couldn't even do the work in biology (laughs).

MO granddaughter: [inaudible]

MO: That goes with anything.

TK: [Inaudible]

All: (Laughs)

MO: Most of those animals were euthanasia victims I'm sure.

MO granddaughter: Where else do you get a dead cat (laughs).

All: [Laughs & inaudibles]

MO: I really think that the things that bothered me the worst working in nursing were patients that were in such bad shape that you really couldn't do anything to help them. After you get acquainted with them, you take care of them for 5-10 years, you don't like to see them go downhill. It's almost like losing a member of the family, but you do what you can for them because they deserve that. I had a patient with cancer in the mouth and throat and they had removed a great portion of the anatomy in there. And you had to do treatments that involved several different sprays several times a day. The odor was so bad that some of the nurses just wouldn't do it. I used to take her over to the treatment room to do her treatment and talk to her... that was kind of hard because she just hemorrhaged one night and that was it. That was a blessing for her because she was suffering, but it was sure a mess to clean up. Time flies so fast with something like that. You do see a lot of things. Back before they had the flesh eating organism identified we had a patient come in and his tissue was all puffed up and hard and water-filled. We had no idea what caused it. We thought he was poisoned with something, and it just sort of shrank and oozed... I wonder if it was that. It was certainly an odd situation. But we were in Youngstown. Youngstown was a still mining town... it went downhill and the mills were being closed, people were being laid off, and the economy was very bad for a while there. They had the wings in the hospital divided in the south side... one was the J ward... the men's ward... public. So finance was tight. That's where came in when I was working there, my father's father. You didn't know him, he was gone a long time before your mom came along.

MO granddaughter: Nope I didn't know him.

MO: Well, if you're ever with the family and you ever hear somebody chiding somebody who's using bad table manners, "Okay Sam!" know that that was your great grandpa. He had a moustache that was a soup-catcher. He was a character. He used to lick his fork and stick it in a pile of bread, shake off what he didn't want, and nobody else wanted bread after him.

MO granddaughter: He got the leftovers then right?

MO: Yeah. He lived with my mom and dad for a little while. He used to put that old maple rocking chair of grandmas in the doorway from the dining room to the kitchen; he'd sit there blocking the path. If you wanted to get through he wouldn't let you get through. He'd tickle you, he'd pinch you, he'd do

anything but he wouldn't let you get through. We had characters in the family too. Who would you say are the characters now?

MO granddaughter: Uncle David for one. That man can entertain.

MO: Yeah, your uncle David and my brother David.

MO granddaughter: I never met your brother David. No, I met him once.

MO: Yeah, Arlington he stopped by that time.

MO granddaughter: He helped mom and I finish shoveling that driveway the one time we got six inches of snow.

MO: Yeah, we thought that was a lot of snow.

MO granddaughter: God, what were we thinking?

MO: (Laughs)

MO: He's out in Oklahoma now. He's the kind that doesn't communicate. He doesn't even telephone anymore, he used to call Dick and Lucile pretty often.

MO granddaughter: Like you and Uncle Mark.

MO: Yeah, me and Mark are an awful lot like...

MO granddaughter: I wonder who's going to be coming back out of my generation in the family. You had your brother, mom's brother...

MO: You don't have a brother that qualifies, it'd have to be one of the girls, huh? Maybe it's Ben.

MO granddaughter: No Ben calls a lot, mostly with bad news, but Ben calls a lot.

MO: I guess he just got a job.

MO granddaughter: Wow, that's good that he got a job. I figured it'd be Tammy.

MO: Well, we'll find out shortly.

MO granddaughter: Yeah, I figure 5-10 years we'll figure it out.

MO: Well, she's about ready to move to Milwaukee and I haven't heard from her since...

MO granddaughter: The wedding?

MO: Yeah, well a little after the wedding. They've been awfully busy.

MO granddaughter: Yeah, me too.

MO: Every time she has the day off the call her from work wanting to know if she'll come in. Sometimes they even call Beth and ask if Tammy will come into work and Tammy's already there, but that can happen at work. I used to get called in when I had the day off, or held over, or somebody didn't come in...

MO granddaughter: Unreliable coworkers is what that comes down to, making you look bad.

TK: It's hard to find a job where you have everyone on the same page.

MO: Well the funny part about it is if you have one that you have trouble getting along with, usually if you can just hang on... they're gone and you've got things going better again.

MO granddaughter: I keep kind of waiting for that, because [inaudible]... She can't do that anymore, but she quit before. They just never wrote it down that she quit. They never sent it in to corporate so it was just like she didn't get any hours for a year, so when she came back they put her back ahead of me because it was never filed that she quit. Technically, I should be ahead of her in hours, but this summer I will be because she doesn't want the hours she's getting now.

MO: I think when I was working in ManorCare, when your grandpa died, they were very good to me. I was off the schedule for a little while because I still had two kids to raise and I had to get things sorted around. They were very supportive, but they forgot to continue my benefits. They sort of dropped them off. So, when I retired after 21 years, they only had me for 16-17, something like that, but I knew it was 21.

MO granddaughter: I clocked in the time, I remember it.

MO: Yup, but it's nice to have [inaudible] that you work with when something like that happens.

MO: Is that still recording?

[RECORDING ENDS]