

ORAL HISTORY OF JODIE GARDNER

Fourth Interview, October 5, 2006

This is Part 4 of the oral history of Jodie Gardner being conducted for the D.C. Circuit Historical Society. Today is October 5th, 2006.

Mrs. Grigg: Mrs. Gardner, we're going to talk about your activities during all these years. So do you want to start with your role in forming hospice?

Mrs. Gardner: Well, I was tremendously interested in hospice because I had just lost a friend through cancer – a long, miserable time. I was thrilled to hear that there was such a thing as hospice but was very sad that it came too late for my friend. I certainly wanted to get involved in it right away.

Mrs. Grigg: About what time period was this?

Mrs. Gardner: 1972. I did get involved right away. There was one in Washington which was just starting. I worked with people who were dying which was sad, but worthwhile. I eventually became chairman of the board for a while and it was just very important in my life. Later on, after I served as chairman of the board, I became involved in another hospice, which is the Washington Home Hospice. Actually, they were kind of rivals and I had tried to get them together to be one hospice without any luck. So then I really was more involved in Washington Home and that lasted quite a while.

Mrs. Grigg: Is this the one up by Wisconsin Avenue behind the Post Office?

Mrs. Gardner: Right, which is connected to what used to be called the Home for the Incurables, a wretched name.

Mrs. Grigg: I remember that.

Mrs. Gardner: But now it's the Washington Home and this is the Washington Home Hospice, which is a part of it.

Mrs. Grigg: Where was the other one? Where was the first one that you were involved in?

Mrs. Gardner: Well, we didn't have an in-house facility; these patients were all at home.

Mrs. Grigg: Is it still around?

Mrs. Gardner: Well, it's been taken over, it's now in Virginia. I think it's called the Capital Hospice.

Mrs. Grigg: When you were chairman of the board, did you get involved with all of the fundraising also?

Mrs. Gardner: Yes, but it wasn't terribly hard because it's such a wonderful feeling -- it really was -- to be involved in it.

Mrs. Grigg: That segues into your volunteer work at Sibley. Did that overlap with your work at hospice?

Mrs. Gardner: It may have something to do with my time at Sibley. I don't know. I did go to Sibley and I loved it. I was there for 30 years and I worked at a desk outside the operating room, and I was the go-between with families of the patients and the

doctors. I would tell the doctors that the family was waiting and I would tell the family that their patient was either still in the operating room or that they were in the recovery room. It was a lot of fun, a lot of nice people.

Mrs. Grigg: How many days a week did you do that?

Mrs. Gardner: I just did that on Mondays.

Mrs. Grigg: And how did you get involved in this?

Mrs. Gardner: On the 4th of July, at a friend's swimming pool, a friend told me that that is what she was doing and I said, I'd like to do that.

Mrs. Grigg: And when did you start doing that – '60s, '70s, '80s?

Mrs. Gardner: In the 1970s.

Mrs. Grigg: Seventies. I think this takes you back even further, though, then that would be the American Field Service —

Mrs. Gardner: Right.

Mrs. Grigg: What kind of work did you do?

Mrs. Gardner: A friend of mine, right after I moved here, asked me to join that committee. We would take care of the American Field Service students who were in the area, we would have a party at Christmas, etc. In the summer the American Field Service students from all over the country came to Washington just before they went home and they went to the White House where the president spoke to them. We

had to put them up, as I remember. I didn't put anybody up but we had to find places for them to stay. My own daughter went to Turkey – this had happened before – which is the reason I was so interested in the American Field Service. She had had this experience, and had a wonderful time. It led to her joining the Peace Corps when she graduated from college.

Mrs. Grigg: When the students come here from other countries, did they live with a family?

Mrs. Gardner: They lived with a family.

Mrs. Grigg: Did they attend a university or was it just a summer program?

Mrs. Gardner: I think they attend school. They are about 16 years old. That would be high school.

Mrs. Gardner: Yes, I think they were in high school. They went home in the summer.

Mrs. Grigg: Does your daughter do anything with them now?

Mrs. Gardner: Not specifically, but she does wonderful things all over the world. She's gone beyond the American Field Service. She's recently been in Rwanda —

Mrs. Grigg: Oh.

Mrs. Gardner: And, unfortunately, she fell there and broke her shoulder but she found the Rwanda Hospital very satisfactory. She thought they took good care of her. She has just been to Outer Mongolia. This is supposed to be about my husbands, but she is a remarkable girl. She's married and lives in Paris with her husband and

three children. They're over here now, but she's quite a girl and I think that the American Field Service helped get her started.

Mrs. Grigg: And when she's traveling the world what is she doing? When she goes to Mongolia or Rwanda?

Mrs. Gardner: She's a lawyer interested in human rights.

Mrs. Grigg: Something she learned at the dinner table. All right, Woman's National Democratic Club?

Mrs. Gardner: I don't think I did anything.

Mrs. Gardner: That's right, I never took an active part.

Mrs. Grigg: Were there any memorable speakers that you remember?

Mrs. Gardner: All the Democrats. Cabinet members. It was interesting – interesting speakers – I just went and listened so I really wasn't involved in it. Actually, as the wife of a federal judge, I couldn't be.

Mrs. Grigg: Were your husbands able to get involved in politics once they were on the court?

Mrs. Gardner: No. Warner wasn't on the court. He argued before it.

Mrs. Grigg: I was wondering if that applied to spouses as well?

Mrs. Gardner: Yes.

Mrs. Grigg: Did that bother you? Did you ever want to get involved in a campaign, whether it was local or national?

Mrs. Gardner: Of course. I was terribly involved in the Stevenson campaign, that was before Carl went on the court. I never got involved again. Of course, in Washington, anyway we didn't have any local senators or anything like that.

Mrs. Grigg: Other clubs? You mentioned the Sulgrave Club?

Mrs. Gardner: Oh that's right -- not much to do with my husbands. It's just a social club and where I would have birthday parties for my family rather than cooking at home. We would go to the Sulgrave Club; it was just very pleasant.

Mrs. Grigg: Are you still a member?

Mrs. Gardner: Oh, yes, but I don't go very often -- occasionally.

Mrs. Grigg: We're going to move on now. You mentioned, in passing, so I want to get more about this, about the night you met President Kennedy.

Mrs. Gardner: Well, the presidents used to have parties for the judges, like a reception once a year. I'm not sure if they still do that. Anyway, President Kennedy had a reception for the judges; and, when we arrived, we came through the entrance downstairs and, as we walked by, we saw all the bags waiting to go to Texas. They were all ready to be put on the plane. We went upstairs and we were all in the East Room and then they played "Hail to the Chief" and the President and Mrs. Kennedy came in. She was lovely in a red velvet gown. It was the first time

I'd seen her. Instead of having a receiving line the way presidents usually do, they split up, she would see half the room and he would see the other half. Carl and I opted to see him. We waited around but we did finally meet him. He said he had just been in Chicago for a football game. I thought he was wonderful. I had not been particularly enthusiastic before, but that night I fell in love with him!

Mrs. Grigg: He had a lot of charisma.

Mrs. Gardner: The next day he was shot, which was very sad.

Mrs. Grigg: Do you remember where you were when you found out he was shot?

Mrs. Gardner: Yes, indeed, it was a Friday. My children had the day off from school; I think there was a teachers' meeting or something. I was taking them sightseeing. We had only been living in Washington for three months and they hadn't seen much. So we went to the mosque first and then we went to some museum down near the Watergate. As we walked in, the women said, "The president's been shot." I said, "Oh well, he'll be all right," because I thought he had been shot just in his shoulder. She said he had been hit in the head; but I still didn't pay much attention and we went on sightseeing. As we were driving home, we drove up Massachusetts Avenue by the embassies – the flags were at half-mast.

Mrs. Grigg: Oh.

Mrs. Gardner: I went home and turned on the radio and heard the terrible news and I called Carl, of course, immediately. He had been lunching at the Metropolitan Club with John Harper, the minister of our church, and they were walking across

Lafayette Square, and some man said to them, “The president’s been shot.” He had the same experience that I did. It was unbelievable. The next day it poured rain. We went to the White House where the president was lying in state in the East Room. It was very moving.

Mrs. Grigg: Did you go in with the general public or was this because your husband was on the court?

Mrs. Gardner: I think it was with the judges. The next day, was it Sunday or Monday, it probably was Monday – anyway, we went that day to the Metropolitan Club and looked out the window and we watched the procession. We did not go to church. It was impressive to see General de Gaulle and the dignitaries from all over the world. Of course, there was Jackie with her black veil walking along – she walked between Bobby and Teddy, but it was an unforgettable experience, as you can see, is still very clear in my mind.

Mrs. Grigg: That was followed not that long after with the assassination of his brother and Martin Luther King; do you remember the riots in Washington?

Mrs. Gardner: Oh, yes. Carl had gone to Chicago to make a speech so I was alone when Martin Luther King was shot. Carl said when he left Washington, Washington was on fire. And, when he arrived in Chicago, Chicago was on fire.

Mrs. Grigg: Wow.

Mrs. Gardner: Again, I was driving down Wisconsin Avenue when I heard – maybe I had the radio on – I heard that Martin Luther King had been shot and then there was all

that rioting. I was glad when Carl got home safely. I was shocked. Were you alive in those days?

Mrs. Grigg: Yes. I don't remember the president being shot, but I do remember Bobby Kennedy's assassination. I was thinking, if we're still in the '60s, what about the landing on the moon? Did you have a television when they landed on the moon?

Mrs. Gardner: Yes. We did have one. Now there is something that was happy. Yes, that was the summer that Mary came back. Mary went to Senegal with the Peace Corps. After she graduated from college she went right out there; and there she met Fred Davis, who was also in the Peace Corps and they got married there which was great fun. Carl and I went over for that, but they came home from Senegal, I think, on the day of the moon walk, so there was a lot of excitement in our house. We did watch it on television and that was exciting for us.

Mrs. Grigg: It's so interesting listening to you talk about seeing the president's luggage in the hallway. You would never see that today. If you heard this kind of news on the – these big events – you'd be on your cell phones; it is just so different.

Mrs. Gardner: It is very different.

Mrs. Grigg: Well, since we are still in the '60s, why don't we talk about the Vietnam War. Do you have any memories of protests in Washington?

Mrs. Gardner: I don't really have anything interesting to say about it because I wasn't involved, fortunately. My son-in-law was in the Peace Corps instead. John was too young, I guess, so he could not serve. I was not happy about the war. They were not

terribly pleasant times because of Johnson's being very unpopular; it was a very difficult time.

Mrs. Grigg: I think we may have already talked about President Nixon resigning. Did we talk about the day he resigned?

Mrs. Gardner: I wasn't involved in any way. I have this picture in my mind of President and Mrs. Nixon walking across the lawn on their way to the helicopter, and I suppose we watched the whole thing on television, but that's the picture that remains in my mind, that of his getting on the steps and waving goodbye.

Mrs. Grigg: Do you remember if your husband was in court that day, or was court in session or did the federal government shut down that day?

Mrs. Gardner: No, I can't remember what day of the week it was even. I sort of think he was with me, but maybe he wasn't – I'm sorry.

Mrs. Grigg: It just occurred to me to wonder what happens on a day like that.

Mrs. Gardner: I should've kept a diary, which I didn't.

Mrs. Grigg: This was a big news event. I'm going to stop the tape for a moment. We're going to talk about your trip to Senegal for your daughter's wedding.

Mrs. Gardner: Well, we were quite surprised when she went off to the Peace Corps. We didn't expect her to get married over there, but indeed she called us and told us that she wanted to marry Fred Davis from New York, and apparently I knew his stepmother. I didn't realize it, but we all flew over together – Fred's parents and

Carl and I all flew over and our children met us at the airport in Senegal. This was just after Bobby Kennedy was shot. Mary drove us to the country the day before the wedding. All over Senegal people were worried about Bobby Kennedy. It was amazing, they all had their radios on and they were sympathizing with us. It was quite amazing. The wedding was in a nice little church in Dakar. The next day at 11:00 o'clock there was a memorial service in the same church with all the same people and even Fred and Mary came to the memorial service for Bobby.

Mrs. Grigg: Wow.

Mrs. Gardner: It was amazing to me how deeply they felt as well.

Mrs. Grigg: You met the ambassador while you were over there?

Mrs. Gardner: Yes. The ambassador had a little party for us at the time and then, actually, after the Kennedy's service, we went back to the ambassador's for lunch and they were very nice. After that, we flew off to Florence where we visited Adlai Stevenson's sister; she rented a villa in Florence. We had a wonderful visit there.

Mrs. Grigg: That sounds lovely. Do you want to talk about any other travels in your time?

Mrs. Gardner: Well, we were invited – I didn't realize how important this was going to be – but we were invited to go to Salzburg, Austria, to the Salzburg —

Mrs. Grigg: Music festival?

Mrs. Gardner: No, it was not the music festival; it was to the Salzburg Seminar for American Studies. It was a session on law and students came from all over Europe to this session and there were four professors and their wives. Actually, we took our two youngest children. We lived in a castle.

Mrs. Grigg: When was this, approximately? Was Judge McGowan on the court yet?

Mrs. Gardner: It was 1967. Carl went on the court in 1963. It was a wonderful experience. We went back three more times.

Mrs. Grigg: Did you stay in a castle each time?

Mrs. Gardner: We stayed in the castle – the same apartment – each time but the children didn't go. It was lovely. We would take a weekend and go to Vienna – all the faculty – and that was great fun. We went to the "Merry Widow," I remember, in Vienna and it was a terrific experience.

Mrs. Grigg: (Clock ringing). Let's stop while the clock rings. When you were in Salzburg, how long was the session? Was it a week, two weeks?

Mrs. Gardner: I think it was three weeks. It was in August. The students came from around Europe and the professors from the U.S. I think Carl was the only judge. They were teaching – we were teaching – about American law.

Mrs. Grigg: To European law students?

Mrs. Gardner: Yes. We had an Egyptian, I remember. What's that, is that Europe. Egypt is – Mideast, I don't know.

Mrs. Grigg: Do you remember what Judge McGowan was teaching?

Mrs. Gardner: It was American law. I don't remember the specific subject. One year when we were there, Justice Burger was there from the Supreme Court. We had a trial – a mock trial – and I was something. I don't know if I was the criminal or whether I was the one who was attacked; it was sort of fun. We saw a lot of the Burgers. They were in the next apartment to us and we enjoyed them. One night he disappeared and Mrs. Burger said he just went out for a walk. I don't think – I don't know if chief justices can do that anymore. Anyway, he went out for a walk and picked up some friends, had a lovely time. I don't know if you could do that in this day and age or not.

Mrs. Grigg: Again, it was pre-cell phone; he couldn't call and tell her where he was.

Mrs. Gardner: That's right.

Mrs. Grigg: Did you get to know any other Supreme Court justices over the years?

Mrs. Gardner: Yes, of course. Lewis Powell and his wife Jo became close friends. Potter Stewart and his wife Andy were also close friends. Of course, Carl knew them all. Those were the ones we knew best.

Mrs. Grigg: How did you get to know them? Through Judge McGowan's world?

Mrs. Gardner: I got to know Andy Stewart because she was on the American Field Service Committee. My son-in-law was Potter's law clerk. I don't know how I got to

know the Powells, but we became very close friends. The others, well, let me think -- judges, I guess, are thrown together. Carl knew them all.

Mrs. Grigg: We are going to shift gears now and talk about Warner Gardner?

Mrs. Gardner: It is interesting that both my husbands went to Columbia Law School. Warner, after Columbia Law School, clerked for Justice Stone. Later, Warner was in the solicitor general's office which he loved because he tried cases before the Supreme Court. After that, he moved on to the – let's see, what was Frances Perkins?

Mrs. Grigg: I don't remember, I think Labor but I could be wrong.

Mrs. Gardner: Well, he went to work for her, but he found her pretty difficult. So, he left there and went to Interior. Ickes was head of Interior. He was interviewing Warner and Warner said, "I didn't get along very well with Frances Perkins," and Ickes said, "I wouldn't have you if you did." He got along very well with Ickes and was very happy there until he went off to the war. He had a wonderful job in the war. He was at Bletchley where he —

Mrs. Grigg: Decoded?

Mrs. Gardner: Decoded it and told the generals what to do. He was sent to Africa first and then Italy and then up to France. He was called to talk to General Eisenhower. He had one position and somebody else had another position. They argued in front of Eisenhower and Eisenhower opted for Warner. That was very, very nice. When he came home he thought he would have to go to the Far Eastern war, but

fortunately that ended. I think he went back to the Interior Department for a while. He was thinking about his future and he was thinking of moving to Berkeley to be the dean of the Law School at Berkeley. Well, fortunately, his wife was expecting a baby (that was obviously before my marriage to Warner) – they already had two children and his wife was expecting – but she had twins and he decided that he couldn't move her to California. They were lucky because what happened in Berkeley. I mean, it was a terrible place to be – it would've been awful. He was very glad that the twins had saved him, and so he joined with Frank Shea and started a law firm and called it Shea & Gardner until he retired at age 90. He died in 2003.

Mrs. Grigg: He worked until he was 90? Wow. [Tape stopped.] We've got to go back – I'm sorry, you were saying?

Mrs. Gardner: Warner did appear in Court a lot, in the Supreme Court, and then in the court of appeals. Warner was an appellate lawyer, really. He loved the Supreme Court and when he was going to argue a case, he would go out horseback riding in the morning. It relaxed him before he went to court. He told me this. He did this all long before I met him. I thought that was an interesting way to relax.

Mrs. Grigg: Do you know where he went horseback riding?

Mrs. Gardner: I think it was Virginia, but I don't know. He never rode any horses when I appeared on the scene. But apparently it helped him to relax. He would say that he just loved arguing and I have his notebook here which he treasured. It is the one he used always when he was arguing.

Mrs. Grigg: Did it have his outline for his arguments?

Mrs. Gardner: I don't know. I just know it's in the drawer right over here; I don't know if it does have that but I know that it looks sort of battered, but he wasn't going to throw that notebook away because that's the notebook he used when he was arguing.

Mrs. Grigg: Was he still arguing cases in front of the appellate court when you were married?

Mrs. Gardner: Yes. He was a great friend of Carl's and they played tennis together. They had a court Thursday mornings at 11:00 o'clock and the days when Warner couldn't play I would play with Carl, and the days that Carl couldn't play I would play with Warner. We would often have lunch together, all of us afterward. They were very good friends. They had great respect for each other. Their senses of humor jived very nicely. That was nice that they were such good friends.

Mrs. Grigg: I think we'll wrap it up for today.

Mrs. Gardner: Okay.

Mrs. Grigg: Well, we'll turn the tape off. This is the end of Tape 4.