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Berkeley, California

John Goldman:

President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, The Peninsula, Marin and
Sonoma Counties, 2000-2002

Interviews conducted by
Martin Meeker
in 2005-2006

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John Goldman, 2002, photo courtesy of John Goldman

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Interview 1: November 21, 2005
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01-00:01:56

Meeker: Today is the 21st of November 2005, and I'm interviewing John Goldman at his home in San Francisco and this is for the Jewish Community Federation Oral History Project Leadership Series. Let's just begin. I'll begin where we usually do which is your date and place of birth.

01-00:02:33

Goldman: I was born in San Francisco on August 18, 1949.

01-00:02:37

Meeker: And tell me a little bit about your family. I know that you have three siblings. Where in the line of siblings are you?

01-00:02:52

Goldman: I am the second of the three boys, and then have a younger sister. So my brother Rick was the oldest, then me, then my brother Doug, and then my sister Susie.

01-00:03:02

Meeker: And you were all born in how many years?

01-00:03:04

Goldman: I was born two years after my older brother, my younger brother was born three years after me, and my sister two years after him.

01-00:03:15

Meeker: Can you tell me a little bit about your parents to start out with—or, actually, rather than talking specifically about individuals, which we'll get to at some point, but I'm wondering if you would perhaps just speak a little freely about your family, in a way in which you might characterize them.

01-00:03:40

Goldman: Well, I never knew my father's father because he died long before I was born, in fact died before my father was married. But I did know my father's mother very well, as well as my mother's parents, and so had a strong nucleus there. I actually also knew my great-grandmother, my mother's grandmother, before she passed away. I think I was probably about four or five years old, maybe a little older when she died. But we spent a lot of time with my grandparents on both sides, and also with my aunt, my father's sister. This is really the only family she ever had, so we still do a lot of things today with her. As far as characterizing them, is that how you wanted me to go? Sort of describing what they might be? In a general sense?

01-00:04:45

Meeker: If it's possible to not so much focus on individuals as the family dynamic.

01-00:04:53
Goldman:

[laughter] Well, that's getting complicated. I think growing up, our family, especially on my mother's side including uncles and aunts and cousins, were really quite close. We did a lot of things together, and I think part of the reason for the closeness was my grandparents on that side. Also true on the other side, I think, with my father's mother and his sister, we did things together and I think, interestingly enough, a lot of it revolved around the holidays. My father's sister was born on Christmas day, so that became sort of a multifaceted kind of activity. But we would travel together. My grandparents, my mother's parents, used to take us to places all the time, and then my father felt like it was appropriate to travel with his mother and the rest of the family so we had this great deal, two sets of trips all the time to different places, and it was a lot of fun. But I would say that the dynamics were a lot of co-mingling, quite a bit of interaction with not only my immediate uncles and aunts and cousins, but then stretching out to other facets of the family as well. So we like to say that I probably played with my wife when we were about four or five years old in some sandbox, but we never knew each other because it was going out quite a bit into the family.

01-00:06:30
Meeker:

Can you talk about this culture of interaction, a lot of interaction not only amongst your immediate family but reaching out to aunts and uncles and what came around then. I'm wondering what do you suppose was driving that, second from, if you think about kind of characterizations of the 1950s were really often times talking about, and looking at family life because it's kind of the great era of the nuclear family, and which families lived in the suburbs and while the idea that the corporate husband is—his satisfaction is outer-directed notion that people are very much inner-directed toward the nuclear family to find satisfaction. I kind of wonder about growing up in this more extended unit—how did that feel? Did it seem like you were with the times or out of the times?

01-00:07:43
Goldman:

Oh, I think it was very much typical of the times. I think that my grandparents very much wanted to have the family together. That was very important to them, interestingly, and I think about my mom and how important family was to her, but my dad was the quintessential "Ozzie" type, and I think in many ways my mom was the quintessential "Harriet" type in certain aspects. In certain aspects.

01-00:08:12
Meeker:

In what aspects?

01-00:08:13
Goldman:

Well, I think as you were saying, the outer-driven elements from my dad, the corporate type who'd play golf a couple of times a week, he had his Thursday morning buddies, they'd play nine holes, and he always had this thing starting at seven and ending at nine so they could get to the office at a reasonable

hour, and then Saturdays he played golf I think almost every week. And my mom was really the homemaker in a lot of ways. The difference was neither of them kind of got stuck in the rut of those personas. It was interesting that, for whatever reason, and I'm sure we'll get into it, about their participation in community affairs—was a big part of what they did, even though they kind of fit the mold.

01-00:09:10

Meeker:

Well, let's explore that then in the context of these larger family gatherings. To what extent did it seem like there was an overlap between the gathering in the family. I come from a big family and on big holidays, New Year's Eve, and lots of weddings going on, the family got together. But my family doesn't have a, like the, philanthropic interest that has a natural tie to communal life. Was there any way in which that tie to philanthropy and communal life sort of crept into family gatherings?

01-00:09:59

Goldman:

I don't think so. I think those were—it was family getting together, the philanthropic and community activity was kind of a separate thing but it did certainly start with my grandparents and their parents, and going back and back and back as I'm sure you know, but I really didn't see it overtly come into play in those family gatherings at all. It wasn't—those gatherings I just remember as being an awful lot of fun, which is good. [laughter] At least they were fun then.

01-00:10:44

Meeker:

[laughter] More complicated now.

01-00:10:46

Goldman:

Much more complicated now. Much more—different families, too. But I thought one of the things that was nice, and I thought you were getting to this, is that I know that my mother's parents always included my father's family in their gatherings, and other too, but mostly, it was interesting. They really reached out, and it didn't extend to the other branches of the family the same way, which is fascinating. I don't know, I don't know. I just don't—I don't know why at all, except that they lived in San Francisco, so I think that may have been part of the reason.

01-00:11:26

Meeker:

How close did they live to you?

01-00:11:28

Goldman:

My grandmother, my father's mother, and my mother's parents lived very close to each other. Probably within less than ten blocks, is my guess.

01-00:11:38

Meeker:

Well, since this sort of communal participation ethic didn't really play a role in these family gatherings, I wonder how, and in what way you learned about, or perhaps were taught, about your family's interest in philanthropy.

01-00:12:00
Goldman:

Well, I think it started certainly with my mother's parents. My grandfather has been involved in a lot of business activities, clearly, but also with the Federation, for a long, long time—second president of the Federation.

01-00:12:22
Meeker:

Do you know the years?

01-00:12:23
Goldman:

No, I don't. I know you do. I know that you can find that out. I wouldn't term him as a Zionist per se, I'm not sure he would label himself as a Zionist, but he was a moving force in the creation of Israel, and very much behind it, and one of the forces of the community to back it, and working with a lot of the other notables from that era. So, Jewish affairs, which I differentiate from being "Jewish," were very important to him. My grandmother was really steeped in the arts and culture in general, that was her interest, she was not as Jewish or Jewish-affairs oriented as her husband. So it was an interesting dynamic because you had sort of this—these differing elements of involvement, which actually I think is terrific. Different perspectives, different ideas of what they wanted to do. And that got passed on, certainly, to my mother. My dad—I don't think my dad's mom—she was involved in some civic organizations, no question about it, but I don't think he was truly steeped in philanthropic activity but being around my mom and being around her family and picking up what he did from certainly his mother, as well as his sister who was pretty involved in civic organizations, I don't think that taught him to be involved, but he was more inclined, and more so as time went on.

01-00:14:15
Meeker:

Do you recall how you learned of your grandfather's participation in the creation of the state of Israel, because by the time you're born it was already on the map.

01-00:14:26
Goldman:

Right, right. I don't know if it was dinner conversation or just picking it up along the way. It was not something that was talked about specifically or directly, but over time I started picking it up.

01-00:14:49
Meeker:

How did you respond to that? How did that make you think about your family and how did that make you feel about yourself?

01-00:14:57
Goldman:

I don't think it was a big deal. It wasn't something that he talked about a lot. I do recall a couple times chatting with him where we get to the subject and he would talk about what had been going on in the world and why he felt this was so necessary. So it was just passing on, more than anything else, his experience. I don't know if it changed my attitude about Israel one way or the other at all. I didn't go to Israel until '71 for the first time, so it was—it didn't have as much meaning for me, I don't think, until having gone.

- 01-00:15:48
Meeker: Well what meaning did Israel have then for you?
- 01-00:15:56
Goldman: All I knew was that this was the home of the Jews, this was the homeland created because of the Holocaust and all the things that you were told and taught. And it felt like, “OK, that’s nice.” But it wasn’t significant. Not when I was growing up.
- 01-00:16:14
Meeker: It didn’t feel like a place that was a goal?
- 01-00:16:21
Goldman: Not in the slightest. It wasn’t a big deal. I mean, I thought, “Yeah, it would be nice to visit sometime. I’ve heard there’s some great things.” But at that age, before college, it really didn’t have a lot of meaning to me.
- 01-00:16:37
Meeker: Do you remember the ways in which your grandfather talked about Israel and his decision that it was an important part too—
- 01-00:16:46
Goldman: Like I said, he didn’t talk about it a lot. It was more conversational, and he really didn’t talk about.
- 01-00:16:53
Meeker: Well, conversational in a way which, like, “Look at this item in the newspaper,” or “Gosh, what do you think about this?”
- 01-00:17:00
Goldman: No, when I was growing up, and we used to live next door to my mother’s parents during the summers, and so we’d go over for dinner once a week. He’d always like to have a chat with his grandchildren, and we’d get into some interesting political [laughter] and other discussions which got to the point of being arguments. But those are a whole other thing, and they were great because he loved, he loved to challenge and we’d love to challenge him too because he had some pretty strong beliefs about certain things. But he did not spend a lot of time talking about Israel, and so it wasn’t something that came up a lot nor about Jewish affairs.
- 01-00:17:51
Meeker: Well, what was at the center of these debates, these strong debates that were going on?
- 01-00:17:54
Goldman: He was a pretty strong Republican, and I think almost all of us were Democratic. Especially in those times it was a pretty turbulent moment anyway.
- 01-00:18:10
Meeker: And so are you talking about—

- 01-00:18:11
Goldman: So, politically—political views
- 01-00:18:14
Meeker: Yeah, about the period in which you were already coming back from college, or in high school?
- 01-00:18:17
Goldman: Oh, still in high school. Before then, we just would get together and have lots of fun and talk about things not really in depth. But we also talked about nuclear power a *lot* because it was—he served on the board of PG&E, was a big proponent for nuclear power plants and I—and I bet others were sitting there saying, “This is the worst thing, these pollute everything.” There was a lot of discussion about environmental issues and we’d go on and on and on. But it was fine. It was all meant in fun, and he liked to try to draw us out and he liked to have us speak our minds and then he would challenge us and he would just shake his head and say, “You really have a lot to learn, you know.” So he was truly a wonderful, wonderful, warm and loving man. He was a great, great grandfather and we really enjoyed being with him.
- 01-00:19:18
Meeker: Is that a kind of exchange that perhaps you adopted with your children and grandchildren?
- 01-00:19:24
Goldman: I think my wife would say yes. That we get into that argumentative element a little too much. Actually, her mother and I have had many conversation—discussions, we like to call them. My wife thinks we yell at each other on occasion, that was before she got it all but we had lots of fun debating.
- 01-00:19:52
Meeker: So, you mentioned that your grandfather was Republican and your father was too.
- 01-00:19:59
Goldman: Still is, he thinks. [laughter] He thinks, though he doesn’t vote that way very often anymore.
- 01-00:20:06
Meeker: Well, it’s an interesting question, because I’ve had the opportunity to look at particularly San Francisco and California history in the ‘30s through the ‘60s, and it seems that a lot of active communities in San Francisco and California were Republican. But I think to be Republican in California meant quite a bit different thing than being Republican elsewhere.
- 01-00:20:34
Goldman: Oh, I think a San Francisco Republican is clearly a Democrat anywhere else.
- 01-00:20:38
Meeker: OK. Is this as it was then?

01-00:20:41
Goldman:

Then, now. Yeah. Very few that I would say towed the Republican line.

01-00:20:48
Meeker:

Because you had the California Republicans with Nixon, then you had the California Republicans of Earl Warren.

01-00:20:55
Goldman:

That's right. Very different. Very different.

01-00:20:58
Meeker:

This is the day which when you're forced to articulate your own point of view, that's a moment of which you're forming that, that point of view. Do you remember your grandfather or perhaps in exchanges with other people, your father perhaps, acknowledging that differentiation and saying, "Well, we're this kind of Republican, not that kind of Republican"?

01-00:21:35
Goldman:

No, I don't think we had that for a long time, until later on in life. And you could have that point of view. I think that it's interesting tracking my own sense of where I stand politically, because I was a "died in the wool" Democrat on the verge of being Socialist growing up, and especially during my college years and then when I went to business school. I had a friend ask me at the end, and he was also a pretty strident Democrat, saying, "Well, do you feel like you've been 'Republican-ized'?" and I said, "Well, I guess I have been." Sort of the whole sense of fiscal conservatives and conservatism crept in, and so now I'm—I've kind of evolved into being fiscally conservative to an extent, but even more socially liberal, if you will, than I was before, and trying to strike that balance is interesting. I actually think there's so little difference in the middle between the two parties anyway. Most of our friends, I would say, are probably fiscally conservative and it's only a matter of degree, and socially liberal, and again it's a matter of degree, and so you pick the party that you think fosters your views more than the other but they're not that far apart.

01-00:23:14
Meeker:

This is talking about college or graduate school, how it effected your thinking—we'll get to that, but I don't mind jumping ahead there. But this question, particularly, I think it's important to explore your ideological system. This is a narrative of political life in post-1960s America of the social issues and the economic issues. And I think, perhaps in California—particularly prominently in California—those two divisions have been drawn, and it's been possible for people and parties to pursue what might appear to be contradictory perspectives. Or not contradictory, but just divergent. As you were going through your MBA program, I wonder what did it mean—where were you, and then where did you end up on economic issues? What did it mean to become "Republican-ized" at that point in time?

01-00:24:30
Goldman:

Well, I think it's helpful to think a little bit of how I ended up there in the first instance. Because if we start from being a child of the '60s, being eligible for the draft, stridently opposed to the Vietnamese War to the verge of considering being a conscientious objector or going to Canada, etc., etc., going to a Quaker-based school—Swarthmore—did not support war and armed intervention of any kind. Having gone through all of that and then serving—being involved with legal services as, if you will, alternative service instead of fighting, which I did even though I didn't have to at that point, and becoming disenchanted with the legal system but realizing that the best way to change corporate America would be to learn more about it and make changes there. It was being radical within the corporate environment.

That's why I went to business school, was to change the world. Change the corporate world, change the business structure, the whole, all the market forces you were talking about, and then going through business school and realizing there were an awful lot of people just like me who really wanted to change the world too and make it a more sensitive, more appreciative kind of discipline, looking out for people. In fact, we had professors saying they had to get us off this social liberal bent that most of my classmates had. We all went through the same thing, so it was—they kept saying, "That's all well and good." They used to teach the whole sense of social responsibility years back, they didn't do that with our class because we were so far ahead anyway they had to sort of pull back and say, "Now, you have to understand. Business exists in order to make money, that's not a bad thing." [laughter] So I was like—we all sat there saying, "Well, yeah it is a bad thing because you're not doing it for this, and this, and this." I mean, it was very funny, to have this interaction with the professors. So then, after a couple years you realize there is a place for business. You can make money and do good things, those are not diametrically opposed or in conflict with each other. It can happen. I was in the Public Management program because that's—all the sudden I realized that's what I really want to do, is take some of this discipline and be able to apply it to the public sector. But, it did change us. It gave us appreciation for the dynamics of business, and all of us felt the same way. It didn't mean we gave up on our ideals, it just gave us an appreciation there is a different side to it.

01-00:27:31
Meeker:

It sounds to me like you're saying you went to business school with this notion of changing corporations from the inside, and the way in which you wanted to change them was to create a heightened sense of corporate responsibility?

01-00:27:46
Goldman:

Speaking their language. Being able to speak their language and then say there's another way to look at this. Let's not be so driven by shareholder value, and that's not the be-all end-all. Unfortunately today, you can see what

happens when people feel that's it, period. What's in it for me, what's in it for the shareholders, that's it, that's all that matters.

01-00:28:06

Meeker: What happens?

01-00:28:07

Goldman: Well, they get in trouble. You know?

01-00:28:11

Meeker: You're referring to Enron?

01-00:28:13

Goldman: Absolutely. Sure. When it all becomes about money and nothing else. Making money for money's sake rather than making money generating good products, doing good in the community. It's all part of what the ethic should be, and I think we've seen what happens when it's not that way. That's sort of going far afield, isn't it? From where we were.

01-00:28:36

Meeker: Not really. Because in a sense we're, whether you realize it or not, charting the emergence really of the kind of historical sensibility, and actually being someone who was at Stanford Business School in the 1970s when there is this really confrontational generation and sensibility, what happens as a result of that confrontation, as it seems to me you suggested to me before we got on this strain, as kind of a synthesis in some ways. And it's useful to explore in a participant's perspective how that happened, so you have a generational perspective of people your age who went into business school not expecting that they would come out broke.

01-00:29:39

Goldman: There was definitely a career path envisioned for most of the people.

01-00:29:45

Meeker: There was a career path envisioned and you wanted—you had a family.

01-00:29:49

Goldman: I didn't have a family at the time.

01-00:29:50

Meeker: OK, but you probably imagined that at some point that would be part of your life, you'd have dreamed, and I suspect that the desire to be able to support them and do something with your day was part of the motivation, but there was also this conventional path, you're coming from a Quaker school, having a sense that an important thing to do in life was to do something good. But then on the other end coming out after engaging in conversation with professors who were saying, "That's great, but what about the profit margin, what about stockholders and so forth?" There's this kind of remodeled sense of how you're looking at the world. That's just, again that's sort of a hypothesis, what are your thoughts on that, and if for instance—

01-00:30:49
Goldman:

About being re-molded—well, I think experience molds us anyway, so if I had gone into law school where would I have ended up? I don't know. What kind of law would I have practiced? I really was rather disenchanted with having gone through the experience because I felt like the legal system was just not a very good system for making things change. But I feel like I've been through—I've been influenced all through my life by things that have happened, things in the outside world, things that happened to me, so I think that we're constantly getting redefined in a certain way, especially from our ideological side, it's fluid. I feel that even today, I'm not so resolute and firm but there are definitely points where I will draw a line in the sand and say, "I can't do this" or can't support this, and beyond that, do something about it, make a voice heard. So, I think that's one of the things that came out, was the importance of making your voice heard rather than just sitting there saying, "This is wrong." If there's one thing that's been instilled in me by my parents and grandparents and others around me, that's what's been instilled in me.

01-00:32:24
Meeker:

So making your voice heard.

01-00:32:28
Goldman:

For better or for worse [laughter].

01-00:32:33
Meeker:

Again in the context of your MBA program, and in the context of professors who perhaps were maybe influential, did they hear your voices? Was there any way in which your class, your cohort, was influencing the way in which they taught what they taught?

01-00:32:58
Goldman:

That's a tough one. I'm not sure that really happened. Again, these are individuals ten, twenty years older than we are, maybe a little older in some cases, but they were going through changes too, so they saw what was happening around. They also felt they had a duty to imparting the knowledge that they felt was important, so they couldn't abandon that, they had to stay with that. And they had a job to do. Which was fine, but I think that one of the things that was interesting, in fact just having had this reunion, is—were the number of professors who came back to be with us at this reunion. Because this was a rather dynamic class, close-knit, we have tons of friends still, some of our closest friends are from way back then, and it's great. Don't share the same views, but there's a true appreciation of what everybody is doing and I think the thing that pleases me, and I think Marcia as well, is that so many are involved in doing charitable work, getting involved with community, finding a specific *something* that they want to put their energy into. So it's clearly—we're all products of that era, and it's just interesting to follow people and see where they've ended up. I think there's a lot of similarities, even for those who have been tremendously successful, they know being successful

monetarily is just not enough. We're all at a point where we have families, and we've been successful or done our thing and now what?

01-00:34:54

Meeker:

I don't know if this is how it's going to Stanford but [inaudible] promoted case studies that—

01-00:35:06

Goldman:

Stanford's a little unusual. Doesn't work exclusively with case studies, that's the Harvard model. Stanford works more from a theory based approach, and looks at and develops a discipline for decision making, which is great. It's more exploratory, a lot of teamwork which is unusual—was certainly unusual. There is a differentiation between the Harvard approach which is you learn your lessons from what happened, and you're right or you're wrong. It's a little more strict, and it's tough, it's highly regimented, and you really put in hours. Stanford has a different approach, as I said. The basics are all the same. When you go to accounting it's not much different, you go to finance it's not much different, but the applications, the group study, and dealing with issues more hypothetically based on solid theory is the way—Stanford's approach is really to look at twenty, thirty years out and say, "We're giving you the tools for what's going to happen then." It's remarkable from that perspective.

01-00:36:26

Meeker:

Is that something that you've adopted?

01-00:36:30

Goldman:

Absolutely. Now we think of as a little mundane, which is computers. Back then, in those dark days, there were no—we had big, big computers. You didn't have laptops, you had to go down in the computer lab and do Cobol or Basic or Fortran, you did your own coding. I remember when we got our first Texas Instruments calculator, they were selling it for ninety-nine bucks, to do some pretty basic stuff. So, we really were prepared for what was going to happen. I think that was the greatest gift that the program gave. And being in a position where you could be prepared, rather than telling you exactly what, but being a little more adaptive.

01-00:37:24

Meeker:

Now with the theoretical approach, was there an application of that approach not simply for business practices and advanced technology, or for instance, kind of integrating that with the social mission that you came into the MBA program with?

01-00:37:52

Goldman:

Well, I do think that the thing that has stayed with me the most, other than the ability to understand financials and look at how one should deal with any kind of situation involving the fact that we are a money driven society—we are, and that's just the way it is, that's what capitalism is all about. Understanding the elements of capitalism is something that's important, but beyond that is the process of making decisions and that is a discipline that the program

hammers away at even today, over, and over, and over again. You don't ignore alternatives, and there is a process for approaching a problem, determining what the alternatives are, evaluating those alternatives, looking at the bases for making a decision, and then making a decision. So it's a step by step process that I don't know if I consciously go through it all the time, I have, but I use it all the time because a lot of people forget that you don't have to do anything. Actually, that is an alternative, so-called null alternative, so it's there too, but having the rigor to go through a process that lets you look at options and not be dedicated to one or pre-judging the outcome before it happens has been quite helpful to me.

01-00:39:35

Meeker: Let's rewind a little bit.

01-00:39:39

Goldman: Of course! [laughter]

01-00:39:40

Meeker: We jumped ahead quite a bit, but that's useful and we might want to return to this period. But as a kid growing up in San Francisco, tell me a little about—we talked about your family, let's talk a little bit about your education and what, if you think that's an important thing to talk about or not.

01-00:40:40

Goldman: Well, I don't know if the educational elements are, though there are certain things that I would say were very important. I went to Town School, which was a boy's school in the Pacific Heights area, we all did other than my sister because it was for boys only. Had some great experiences and not the best of childhoods growing up. When I was pre-teen, I was pretty nerdy. Somebody who used to get up at five in the morning to read books, was not into sports at all, was kind of off by myself, not very confident. I did get some good things out of the experience. One very important thing was that the head of the school and his son who was an English teacher, were demanding about being able to write well, and proper use of the English language, and they hammered that in. It's a skill set I think is lost today. The ability to communicate is practically gone with the upcoming generation, so being able to—not so much speak well, that came on later in life—but to write effectively and write properly was a skill that I picked up, both at Town, and later at high school, I went to Lick-Wilmerding which is also for boys only. So when I left town, went on to Lick, I was getting in my teen years and befuddled.

01-00:41:48

Meeker: Was that like a feeder school?

01-00:41:51

Goldman: Pretty much. It was very much a feeder school, not everybody went there, not everybody got in, but there were a good number from Town that went, but some people went to Lowell, some people who went to Town moved

elsewhere. There were not a lot of opportunities for high school following Town, so there were a good number that continued on.

01-00:42:15

Meeker:

Most considered Lowell as the public school for bright kids to go to—

01-00:42:18

Goldman:

Right. They didn't have some of the high schools that exist today as being alternatives. So my freshman year was almost a lost cause, until I had one of my cousins—I was going to go out and he said you should do something in athletics. This was a guy who didn't even want to play catch, it was just awful. So I said, "Well, maybe I'll go out on the track team and run." He said, "No, I think you'd be good swimming." So I joined the swim team, and that was one of the best things I ever did in my life.

01-00:42:58

Meeker:

Why do you say that? I went out for cross country and other sports and nothing really stuck, but then swimming became great. Something I could organize my life around, to a certain extent. At the same time, actually, my academics got much better.

01-00:43:31

Goldman:

No, it's amazing, and the same thing happened to me. I was always a good student, one of those types who really wanted—I felt I had to, I felt like I had to have good grades for my parents. Not so much for me, but for my parents. I had no clue what I wanted for me at that time, but swimming gave me something to do, and have something to get better at. I knew I was always a decent student.

01-00:44:04

Meeker:

But you weren't doing it for yourself.

01-00:44:09

Goldman:

The swimming I was. Not the studying, not then. Then I started getting more interested in the sciences, and I loved math, and I loved chemistry, and I loved physics, and I did well at those. And in fact, at one open house, the chemistry teacher at the school was asked by my parents how I compared with my older brother because there was a lot of comparison going on. He was first born, he was a good baseball player, he was very smart, got into Yale. This is probably my junior—sophomore or junior year, I don't know—and the chemistry teacher looked at my folks, because my dad asked the question, and he said, "Rick and John are like night and day. They're totally different people, so I wouldn't compare them." And that's the first time I think anybody ever told my parents how different we were, because we really were. I was abso—

01-00:45:12

Meeker:

How did you know what your teacher said?

01-00:45:14
Goldman:

My parents told me. Or maybe he told me, I'm not sure which one, but he said, "I just wanted you to know," in fact, I think he may have told me, says, "I just want you to know your parents asked about that." That was the way the school was, actually, and I really respected some of the teachers. I had a couple of favorites, he was one, the other was Sarah Crome, who was the upper math instructor. I thought she walked on water; she was a tough, tough lady, but she was exceptional. What made her even more special was that she applied to Swarthmore when there was a very strict quota on Jews attending, and very few if any got in, so she never made it.

01-00:46:00
Meeker:

What attracted her there to begin with?

01-00:46:04
Goldman:

She just thought educationally—I don't know if she was from the East originally, I don't know why. And then there was this guy who was a year ahead of me who I thought was the smartest guy I'd ever known in my life, who applied to Swarthmore and didn't get in either. So, I didn't even put it on the map, I thought, "That's impossible." But anyway, back to swimming a little bit. Over time, I got better and better. I used to swim individual medley, freestyle, and breaststroke and I finally got sick and tired of individual medley because I didn't like it at all, and ended up focusing on freestyle [laughter] it's a hard one is right, it's hard today. So I ended up focusing on freestyle, but mostly breaststroke. That was my stroke, and got pretty good at it. My senior year I became captain of the swim team and I was shooting for the school record, which I did break on the very last meet. That record probably lasted a year, but it didn't make any difference. It was an accomplishment. I guess what was happening was during that time there was more and more that I felt I was accomplishing. I became editor of the yearbook, and all of these things sort of fit into place, but what I realized was if you really want to be good at something you've got to spend the time to get good at it. Our senior year there were four of us who would get up at four in the morning, four-thirty we'd swim at a local pool on our own to get better and better, we just drilled it into each other. Get home around six o'clock, have breakfast, drive over to school, have practice that afternoon, and it was a long day, but, like most people, that's when I did my best. I see it in my kids when they are multi-tasking is when they do best, it's an interesting thing. So, it got to be a much better experience as high school went along and I became really part of that community more, had my first real girlfriend, that was OK. It was one more thing. All the steps you have to take in life.

01-00:48:28
Meeker:

And I'm sure they had prom, and—

01-00:48:30
Goldman:

Oh yeah, yeah.

01-00:48:31

Meeker: And you participated in all that?

01-00:48:33

Goldman: Yeah.

01-00:48:34

Meeker: I wonder about this comparison you said, with your older brother. Because I imagine in the way in which you're describing your elementary school years and your first year of high school, it was difficult. It was probably—I would imagine, and correct me if I'm wrong, that it would have been an anxiety to be a second, in the middle of three brothers, of being compared to your brother who was apparently proficient in sports and good in school, and there would always be this both desire and fear of being compared, and then once somebody does compare you it says that you know you are different, that maybe, and some people would elicit feelings of inadequacy or maybe would free one from the sense that they've always been compared. Was any of this going on?

01-00:49:40

Goldman: Well, first you talk about family dynamics. My older brother and my younger brother kind of teamed up against me. That happens to the second in a threesome all the time, you can't have all three co-existing. That was unfortunately, I think, something that developed as we were growing up and I was the outcast and I think my younger brother needed my older brother for his—this is just a conjecture—but I think he needed him for his own sense of self worth, and I just became the rebel. I really became the black sheep of the family in a lot of different ways. That became more and more evident later on in life, [laughter] that we'll hold off.

01-00:50:32

Meeker: What did it mean to be a rebel or black sheep in the family?

01-00:50:36

Goldman: I did things differently. I was the one that was going to the Haight, I was the one that wasn't going to wear some of the clothes that my mom said I ought to wear. That started changing real fast over time, and I would stand up to my father in particular sometimes and say no, and paid the consequences for that on occasion, but I decided I had to do things my own way, whatever that was going to be. I wasn't going to be under their thumb.

01-00:51:10

Meeker: Do you remember any experiences in particular that stand out in which you said "no"?

01-00:51:14

Goldman: Oh yeah. But I don't know if they go on this oral history. Yeah, we had some combative times. The only thing I'll say is there was one time where I said I was not going to do something he wanted me to do, I refused. I stood up, just said, "I'm not going to do it." So he said, "OK. Then you can't get this." I

said, “Fine.” All that did was get me more angry, but I think I finally capitulated, which I could not stand. It was the worst feeling in the world, but I finally gave in. I’m not somebody who gives in very easily, pretty stubborn streak. So that probably fed some of it as well.

01-00:52:02

Meeker: What year did you graduate high school?

01-00:52:06

Goldman: I graduated in ‘67.

01-00:52:08

Meeker: You mentioned the Haight. So, an eighteen year old in San Francisco, you were probably living about half a mile—

01-00:52:18

Goldman: Little bit more, I think, but that wasn’t a problem. It was a few concerts. I was going to say, more correctly, you had these amazing bands performing around here. I’ll never forget as a senior at a deb party, the girl told her parents—asked her parents, I should say—”You know, I really want this one band to play,” and they said, “Oh, sure.” It was Janis Joplin and Big Brother and the Holding Company, I mean that’s the kind of thing it was. It was like, OK, it was a great show, that’s all I can say. I just loved it. But all these bands that were playing, the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, on and on and on. It’s a Beautiful Day, I could go on—I’ve got all the albums still. That was a time when music—I think we always grew up with music, but that’s when the music that was important to me really sort of took charge, and that was when rock ‘n’ roll was everything.

01-00:53:31

Meeker: Do you remember what you were getting out of it, was there something tangible or was it just simply—I mean, not simply—but more complex, like a kind of emotional response?

01-00:53:46

Goldman: I loved it. I think it absolutely was emotional. I just sort of gravitated to the music, I felt like this is my music, I love this! It was very different, there was some that was very raw, some that was gentle, and I think as rebellious as I can be, I think of myself as a gentle person and somebody who really cares for other people. It resonated with me, and it was fun. It was a very different world, and I loved it. I think that’s where that sort of gravitating to something that was a little different. It was a lot different.

01-00:54:31

Meeker: Did your brothers participate in that?

01-00:54:33

Goldman: Not my older brother. I didn’t participate with my brothers at all, I was just going with some of my friends, and we’d sneak off as much as we could. It was—

01-00:54:46

Meeker: I can't imagine that something like Janis Joplin as someone your parents would have approved of.

01-00:54:52

Goldman: Well, they didn't—I know my father didn't like it at all, starting with the Beatles. He thought it was just noise, and he kept saying, "This is just noise." And I said, "No, it's not. This is really good music." Again, people change. Now, I like some forms of hip-hop. I love jazz, I like gospel. I like all music. But I think that was something that in my generation was very important. Music became a fundamental element of our lives, which I don't think it ever had before. It was the beginnings of music being so important and what we did every day, and what we liked, and it was a language of our generation. There's no doubt in my mind. And it's continued that way, ever since. But that was the first time that music was not just a side activity, it was almost a purpose in and of itself.

01-00:56:05

Meeker: Did you ever have dreams of becoming a performer yourself?

01-00:56:10

Goldman: I'm sure everybody does, but I knew better than that. I could sing OK, but I wasn't musically trained other than my obligatory two years of piano lessons which I hated.

01-00:56:23

Meeker: So you never joined a band?

01-00:56:25

Goldman: Never joined a band.

Begin Audio File 2

02-00:00:16

Meeker: So let's explore your choice of Swarthmore. It's senior year of high school—

02-00:00:31

Goldman: Actually, at the end of junior year one of my high school buddies and I decided that we were going to take a trip back east. We wanted to look at the Ivy's together. So we started up at Providence, Rhode Island and looked at Brown and kind of worked our way south from there. And he'd go to some schools and I'd go to others. I thought Brown was incredibly stuck up, at least the person I talked to. The guy, whoever was interviewing me, made me feel like I was inferior. So that was off the list fast. I visited Harvard and really liked Harvard. I thought if I can possibly get, this is where I'd really like to go.

02-00:01:21

Meeker: What was it about it that you liked?

02-00:01:23

Goldman: Oh, first of all the campus was gorgeous. I just happened to be there when it was looking its best. I loved Cambridge and Boston. I think of all of the places in the United States that I could live other than San Francisco or the Bay Area, it'd be Boston. I think that's true for a lot of people living here and a lot of people living there. They say it all the time. It was young. It was energetic. It was fun. There was a lot going on and there was a lot of prestige. I just thought that Harvard had it all. It's an imposing place, but it has a lot of character to it.

02-00:02:00

Meeker: Did you feel a sense of inferiority there?

02-00:02:04

Goldman: No. They were really nice. They were very welcoming. They suggested an interest and suggested that I apply and all of those good things, which got me excited. I knew, at least I had a sense that I should explore going away from the Bay Area. There were two forces that played into that. The first, my parents—which I haven't talked about—took us on trips all of the time. We went to a lot of places. They encouraged us to do things on our own. When I was 14 or something around there, I went on a trip to Scandinavia and the Soviet Union. This was during the Cold War. It was a chaperoned trip and all of that, and it was a group of young people.

02-00:02:54

Meeker: What group was it?

02-00:02:55

Goldman: It was through the Putney School back in, I think it's in Vermont or New Hampshire, that organized this. It was a great trip. It was a fantastic trip. It was strange and disturbing seeing communism in full force. I have to say, you talk about things that lend themselves to your fabric and your character, because we got our passports taken away as soon as we got to the border, you know the Finnish-Soviet border. If you leaned your head out of the train of the car, the Soviet soldiers had these big sticks and they'd whack you on the head. You'd say, oh, this is different. I understood how valuable freedom was from that trip. I have never forgotten it, ever. It was seeing the drabness of the people in Moscow. There was no emotion. They were always dour and things, basic things, were just not part of their lives. It struck me pretty heavy. It was a really good trip from a formative point of view.

02-00:04:19

Meeker: Looking back on that, what extent do you think that what you saw was merely a feature of communist government as opposed to the character of the Moscow people?

02-00:04:36
Goldman:

We went back to Moscow. We went at a very bad time the second time. It was almost total anarchy. It was supposedly democratic but we knew there was a huge gap between the haves and the have-nots. This was on a Federation mission, I think it's been about six years now, which is a whole another thing that we will talk about. That was quite a trip. But I actually prefer the way it was under communism. At least there was order, at least things were kept up. The buildings were beautiful and paid a lot of attention to, and there was the historical elements. But as far as living a life. I can never imagine living in that kind of atmosphere. Anyway, travel was a big part of what we did. As I said, our parents took us all over the place. There were some rather memorable trips that we went on, especially our trip to Europe. But I wasn't worried about going away from the Bay Area. The second part that I probably felt good that it was good to go away was I really wanted to get away from my family. That was the rebellious and black sheep part of me coming up full boar. We went down, we went to Harvard. We also visited Yale. My brother was there and I said I don't really want to be around my brother. It'd be nice to be near him I guess, and I don't really need to be in the same place. That would continue this competitive element. Then I went down to Penn. One of my brother's good friends was there and I got to know him—still know him today. His name is Bob Shiff and I said to Bob, "So what do you think?" He said, "John, you really shouldn't go to Penn. This is not the school for you. Have you thought about Swarthmore." I looked at him and said, "I don't think I can get in." He said, "Oh you can get in, you're smart enough."

02-00:06:51
Meeker:

Why do you suppose he said Penn isn't for you?

02-00:06:54
Goldman:

He knew me well enough.

02-00:06:55
Meeker:

What was it about Penn?

02-00:06:56
Goldman:

It's sort of an urban kind of school. He actually thought that I could do better. That was his point of view. He's a great guy. And I did stay in touch with him during my college years because Swarthmore and Penn are not that far—they're like 11 miles apart. I thought about it and said, "OK." That night I was staying with an aunt and uncle, Teddy and Sissy Geballe, who were amongst the larger clan that we used to get together with all of the time. He was working for Bell Laboratories in Summit, New Jersey. He said, "Why don't you stay with us while you're on the East Coast?" I thought, "Great!" We were talking at dinner and he said, "You know," because I was going to be with him a couple days, I had split up from my friend at that point, he said, "you really should look at Swarthmore." That's two people. His brother-in-law, Howie Friedman, who's an architect, who is my wife's uncle—and we'll get into the genealogy at some point—I worked for during my high school

years, during my summers, in his architectural firm here. He always talked about Swarthmore as being the most beautiful campus in the country. It was like this running thing. So all of the sudden I said, I might as well check it out. So I called them up the day—I had one more day available—I said, “I’d love to drop in.” They said, “Well, the Dean of Admissions isn’t around, but the Dean of Men is, would you mind talking to that person and then taking a tour?” I had an interview. I had a conversation with the Dean of Men, a guy named Bob Barr. I started thinking midway through, “Wow, this is probably a good place for me to think about.” Then I went on the tour and I kept thinking about my uncle Howie saying this is the most beautiful campus. This really is gorgeous. There was something to me about aesthetics being just as important as everything else, which is one of the reasons I didn’t like Brown. I thought it was drab and boring and ugly. Whereas Harvard wasn’t.

02-00:09:13

Meeker:

What was it that happened halfway through this interview or in the interview itself that—

02-00:09:21

Goldman:

Bob Barr, even to this day, one of the genuinely nice people in this world who really cares about other people. He was trying to find out about my experience. He wasn’t trying to sell me Swarthmore. He wanted to talk to me about what I was looking for and what I liked and there was a real appreciation for what I had been going through and what I was looking for. He was supportive. It was just really nice.

02-00:09:53

Meeker:

As best as you can remember, what was it that attracted you to Swarthmore?

02-00:10:00

Goldman:

I guess I was looking for a place where I’d be comfortable, that sort of suited my—I had been going to a small school. I had been going to small schools a lot. I didn’t mind going to a small school. I liked the sense of community. I liked the opportunity to be challenged academically. It provided in a lot of different ways, but also to be yourself and not try to fit a mold, which I think you gathered. [laughter] I fit my own mold. And to try something really different that would maybe be a little tough for me. And even then, academically it was really a tough school. So I wasn’t so sure it was going to work out.

02-00:10:54

Meeker:

You know, it’s interesting—this is probably something we can talk about later as well—reading through your family, I can remember there’s this contradiction of intention in the way you talked about your family. I was wondering maybe if you could comment on that. From what I understand it’s this wanting to set yourself apart, the black sheep, some of the difficult changes you had with your parents, you’ve always said no. And then also,

when you talk about your participation on the non-profit side, you describe it almost as a heritage that's congenital?.

02-00:11:51

Goldman: Yeah.

02-00:11:54

Meeker: Do those represent two different phases in your life?

02-00:11:59

Goldman: No. I think they might not be totally compatible. And I don't think it should be looked at, sort of this legacy of community work, which is steeped in the fact that our family has cared about the well-being of others. That is not incompatible, in my view, from being rebellious, not at all. I think a lot of it is driven by wanting—at least my desire to go away—was to some degree—I think every teenager has their moment of rebellion somewhere along the line. I just wanted to get away from my family and say I'm going to strike out on my own. That doesn't come in conflict with a sense of caring. The other side is that I think it was the idea that it'll be an adventure. Like I said, all of the travel opportunities that we had were adventures, and seeing a different way of live and a different environment. Clearly, the East Coast is very different from the West Coast and I'm glad I did that. So getting back to the experience of going through it, I said, "OK, Swarthmore is on the list." I decided that I would apply to Harvard. I decided because people were encouraging me to look somewhere where there was a scientific bent, at Harvey Mudd, which is one of the Claremont Colleges, which would have been a disaster I think. And then Berkeley, I thought, "Oh yeah, I have to apply to Berkeley because everybody in my family went there." I didn't get accepted to Harvard. I did get accepted to Harvey Mudd, but I discounted that as Southern California. I had a thing about Southern California already. Sorry. [laughter] I forgot you went to USC.

02-00:14:04

Meeker: That's OK.

02-00:14:06

Goldman: So it came down to Berkeley and Swarthmore. I mean, you talk about the most diametrically different places you can imagine. It was like, "Oh, how am I going to figure this one out?" I kind of drew up a ledger and I did pros and cons of each of them. I went through and I still couldn't make up my mind. I do remember getting the acceptance from Swarthmore. They didn't have a big fat envelope. Even in those days, you were looking for the big fat envelope. I do have to tell you this story of when our kids got into their respective colleges because it was fun. It was just a little thin envelope. I said, "Oh." My mom brought it up to me. She said, "You want me to stick around." I could just feel tears in my eyes starting to well up. The only thing I read was, "I am very pleased," and I just started screaming. I couldn't believe it, to this day I remember that so vividly because I didn't dare get outside. She said, "What's

wrong?" I said, "Nothing's wrong! I got in!" I kind of felt like that was where I was going to go. I went through the exercise of, yeah, I want to get away, so I did.

02-00:15:35

Meeker:

Do you remember your response to Harvard?

02-00:15:41

Goldman:

I was pissed. I was really pissed. Again, Howie Friedman's son Bobby, who I am very close to—I was very close to him then, less so now, but we've gone through a lot. We both applied to Harvard and Swarthmore. His first choice was Swarthmore, my first choice was Harvard. He got accepted to Harvard. I got accepted to Swarthmore. We both got rejected to our first choices. So we thought, "We should change our driver's licenses and swap identities and just go where we wanted to go." We were serious for a few days and then we said, "Oh, what the hell," that's just how it goes.

02-00:16:27

Meeker:

Do you remember what the role of your religious and cultural heritage was? I know that things that got very much changed by the late 60's.

02-00:16:40

Goldman:

Oh yeah. Yeah, it was totally different.

02-00:16:47

Meeker:

But neither of these, Harvard and Swarthmore, were both Protestant.

02-00:16:59

Goldman:

Yeah, right, softer form. I'm going to remember that, a softer of Protestantism. By that point—and I think it came out of the Civil Rights era, which we haven't talked about at all, which is a whole another element of what's gone on. If you think about the social sea change that went on when I was growing up, it was pretty dramatic, of all of the things that happened from the early 60s to the mid 70s. Like I said, that's why I think there was such an impact on even people going to business school. Jews were really heavily involved in the Civil Rights Movement, heavily, it was almost a cause that was part of us anyway. Of course, we've got to do something. We saw the illegal activities and everything else, but it was a bond between the black and Jewish communities, which unfortunately, has kind of gone away in a lot of ways from what happened then.

02-00:18:02

Meeker:

Especially in San Francisco.

02-00:18:08

Goldman:

Oh yeah, very much so, along with the free speech movement and everything else. I think by that point, the issue about quotas or anything like that had long disappeared. If you were Jewish, I don't think it made too much of a difference. What I think we both had going for us was we were from California and I know that the schools in the east were looking and saying,

“You know, this is where it’s all happening, we can’t be as insular as we’ve been.” I think it helped both of us get into those schools. Bobby Friedman was a lot smarter than I was, I knew that. In those days, SAT scores were really important. I think they’re still important, but I don’t think they’re quite as important as they used to be. My verbal was pitiful. I shouldn’t have gotten in anywhere to be quite honest. It was not good. My math was fine. What got me, what I think really helped was on the Math II, I did really well, and on the Physics I got a perfect score, which blew my Physics teacher in high school away, who didn’t like me at all.

02-00:19:33

Meeker:

So your rejection from Harvard wasn’t seen as evidence as discrimination.

02-00:19:39

Goldman:

No. No, because he got in. And besides which, once I got into Swarthmore, I could have cared less. It was like, OK, that’s the way it is. So I did go.

02-00:19:55

Meeker:

So you mentioned civil rights. When you were in high school in San Francisco, did you have any participation in that?

02-00:20:08

Goldman:

Yeah. I don’t know if we got heavily involved other than, because we didn’t have many marches here or anything like that.

02-00:20:17

Meeker:

Well, most of the marches, from what I’ve studied on protest, happened in ‘63 and ‘64, which you would have been a freshmen.

02-00:20:25

Goldman:

Yeah, the thing that really did impact me though was John Kennedy’s assassination and then Bobby Kennedy’s assassination and then Martin Luther King’s. Those things really affected us. We knew a lot about Martin Luther King. It was everywhere. His speech on the Lincoln Memorial was televised all around the world.

02-00:21:01

Meeker:

Do you remember how your community, your family, the people who surrounded you, responded to that?

02-00:21:07

Goldman:

What I recall was a lot of—again, because San Francisco being liberal, being tolerant, being steeped in that—we were like, “Yeah, we have to do something about it. We had our own moments when things were pretty rocky.” Later on, during the Rodney King trial, there were some incidents in San Francisco, up on Nob Hill, there was—I wouldn’t say it became a riot, but it sure came close. So there was a friction. There was a friction especially in the Western Addition. What’s interesting about the Western Addition is that that used to be a Jewish neighborhood that then the African American community came into.

So there's a lot of side-by-side, and then the Jewish members left, but there was still Mount Zion, right in the middle of it.

02-00:22:08

Meeker: Yeah.

02-00:22:11

Goldman: Especially in this area, so many neighborhoods live side by side, that it got to be a big deal. We saw, at Swarthmore, that freshman year I believe that there was a sit-in by the African American students to change the admissions policies and faculty retention levels for African Americans. They took over the admissions office. I think I had joined a fraternity by that time. It was a jock fraternity, mostly football. One of the football players wanted to go in and throw them out of there. I said, "Don't even get near the place," which was probably audacious for—I think it was my sophomore year—a young guy talking to one of the seniors, saying, "Don't even get near the place." The rest of the fraternity eventually got calmed down about it. The president of the college, Courtney Smith, died of a heart attack during the sit-in. It was the most horrible thing because he was a beloved individual and was clearly over a lot of strain over this thing. This was probably the most disruptive time ever in the college's—

02-00:23:35

Meeker: Did you ever consider wanting to join in?

02-00:23:41

Goldman: Oh yeah. I had actually gotten to know a couple of guys pretty well, a couple of the black guys. We talked a lot about it. What happened was, a lot of the black kids sat together but then all of our fraternity brothers sat together because we all had one dining area because it's not a very big school. I really tried to keep pushing. I tried to leave my group and sit with them. Over time, I was able to. I had a lot of friends there in every different strata and community group there.

02-00:24:29

Meeker: Did you ever participate in a civil rights organization formally?

02-00:24:36

Goldman: No, not formally.

02-00:24:40

Meeker: Because, by the time that you were in college, this civil rights had made a significant turn from integration to more separatism and black power.

02-00:24:55

Goldman: Yeah, exactly.

02-00:24:57

Meeker: Was that felt on campus?

02-00:24:59

Goldman:

Oh yeah, that's what I'm saying. It was really sort of a development to having an African American student center and really trying to get a greater sense of identity, which rubbed people, I think a lot of people the wrong way, because there was a cohesive and heterogeneous community. The separatist element for a lot of people, has no place here. But again, there was a change and everyone said, "OK, if you're going to foster identity, this is one way to do it." It's interesting that a couple of the people had been involved in the movement back then had become these fascinating spokespeople for working together more. Like I said, it goes through cycles. I'm still in touch with one of them on an occasional basis. Especially when we have our reunions, we talk a lot about the ways he's changed too.

02-00:26:04

Meeker:

Who is he?

02-00:26:06

Goldman:

This guy named Don Mizell, who's been in the recording business for a long time and wrote some songs and performed one of them at our 25th anniversary, but I thought it was really pretty terrible, but whatever. Donny's a good guy. We talked a lot about what he went through and how he is today. He says, "Oh yeah, it's always going to have a place in my life and it's pretty important."

02-00:26:35

Meeker:

When historians look at this late 60's, early 70's period and talk about black power and separatists and that impulse, but they also talk about how this impulse was felt across a wide variety of groups.

02-00:26:51

Goldman:

Oh yeah, absolutely.

02-00:26:53

Meeker:

Did you ever feel it as a Jew?

02-00:26:56

Goldman:

Absolutely. I think that's where I became more cognizant of who I was. That's what happened to everybody, this sense of know yourself. Know who you are and what your roots are. There was a lot of pressure to not try and assimilate.

02-00:27:19

Meeker:

How did you do that?

02-00:27:24

Goldman:

Well, one of the things that I remember is that I always went services, high holy day services with my family and of course went through the whole Bar Mitzvah episode. But I didn't do anything—I didn't think I was going to do anything in college, I was very similar actually. I'm trying to say, "I don't want that part of me to be part of my life anymore, I don't need." I had a

friend, a guy named Mark Hankin, a Conservative Jew, who asked if I would go to high holy day services. I said, “Oh my God, I hear all of these horror stories of what these conservative services are during high holy days.”

02-00:28:04

Meeker: So you were more of a reformer.

02-00:28:11

Goldman: Yes, I was reform. It was like two and a half hours long, but the most amazing thing was everybody was talking through the entire service. Remember, this was Philadelphia as well, so it was even more so. I couldn't believe. He said, “OK, time to go, let's get out of here.” This was the middle of the Yom Kippur services, this never happened at home, how weird.

02-00:28:34

Meeker: So, in a sense they were more free than—

02-00:28:40

Goldman: Well, I think they were religiously near Kosher. They were pretty strict with everything else. The women sat over here and the men over here. They mixed eventually I guess because I remember sitting with—it wasn't orthodox. Mark took me to services. My best friends were the Kalkstein family. They were my other set of parents while I was there. I was Ben Kalkstein's big brother in the fraternity. He died a few years ago unfortunately. He was even then, about 300 pounds, and here I was at 160. He was a big guy but the sweetest. I think he went by the nickname of Gentle Ben because he really was a gentle bear and just wonderful. We were incredibly close.

02-00:29:36

Meeker: Did you mention them simply because they were a Jewish family?

02-00:29:39

Goldman: Yes, they went to Israel, they had been to Israel. Ben's brother Dave was a year ahead of him at Swarthmore, and Dave and Ben and I, a lot of stuff with some other people, but they were on a Kibbutz. Dave was on a Kibbutz and working on a Kibbutz for a year and his dad Sam used to work, they were living in Israel. His mother is Quaker. They met in Swarthmore. These are one of the few Jews. The kids were brought up—some of them were more Jewish than others, I guess is the way to put it—but they definitely knew their Jewish heritage. So we had a lot of conversations about that. One of my other best friends is a guy named Kenny Gold, who grew up in Philadelphia, very Jewish, a jock, great guy. So I started having a lot of Jewish friends—not exclusively so, but they were my friends.

02-00:30:43

Meeker: Is this something that you sought out?

02-00:30:46

Goldman: No, I think it just happened but it goes back to you start getting a sense of yourself and who you are and how you relate to other people are what the

connections are. This clearly was one of those connections. They were people kind of like me, brought up—

02-00:31:05

Meeker: What was it, what was the likeness?

02-00:31:09

Goldman: This is the hardest thing sometimes to understand or know about, except that you could talk about things that you experienced because you were Jewish, whether it was services or having a Bar Mitzvah, or just how your parents were and how they were brought up. Kenny used talk about his mom who was *meshuggah*, all of this stuff started adding up and we just had fun—I don't know if it was fun. I shouldn't say it was fun. It was just a sense of connection that there was something more fundamental. And then it was coming out in ways when we shared a lot of values that were the same and we realized that those were Jewish values.

02-00:31:52

Meeker: Like?

02-00:31:55

Goldman: Again, caring about others, being sensitive, the whole sense of *tzedakah*, which we didn't call it then, the importance of education, the importance of learning, putting yourself second to what the other person may need and a relishing of life. Knowing that we have this opportunity to be on this earth and we're driven to make the most out of it. I also think there was a sense of understanding that we've been a persecuted people and knowing that we don't want other people to go through it, going back to the civil rights side, saying persecution and prejudice, we've been there and we know it. Other people can relate to it as we can relate to them.

02-00:33:05

Meeker: Do you remember the holocaust being part of the curriculum at school?

02-00:33:10

Goldman: No. Not at all, not one bit. There really wasn't much discussion about the Holocaust at all, even growing up for me. It felt like that was a chapter behind us, we were moving forward, until later on. I can't even remember first hit me. When it really hit me was when we went to Israel in '71, when I went for the first time, and we went to Yad Vashem. I always knew. I always knew enough. I knew about the 6 million. I knew about the concentration camps. There was plenty about that. But it was something that I just—I just said, "That's history now, it's different now." But going to Yad Vashem changed everything.

02-00:34:04

Meeker: Do you remember in your grade school years, the books that were being published about the Holocaust?

- 02-00:34:15
Goldman: I don't think so.
- 02-00:34:17
Meeker: I can't remember their names off-hand but they were bestseller books, but this was when the *Diary of Anne Frank* was published.
- 02-00:32:45
Goldman: Right. I did read the *Diary of Anne Frank*. That was part of our reading in high school. So yes, I did know that. I also read a couple of James Michener's books, one of them that was also about the Warsaw ghetto. I can't even remember the name of it, but I love Michener's writing. He was a Swarthmore grad too. Yeah. Which I didn't know until I got there. [laughter] Which was kind of cool. So, sort of picking it up as you went along, but not something that was an overwhelming presence, constantly in the back of my mind. It was not.
- 02-00:35:13
Meeker: Was it every anything that you might want [inaudible]?
- 02-00:35:21
Goldman: No, there was reference on occasion, but it wasn't usually a major topic. I don't remember many of the High Holy Day sermons. Not many struck me as being particularly wonderful.
- 02-00:35:56
Meeker: It wasn't something that the Rabbi would bring up?
- 02-00:35:42
Goldman: No. No. No.
- 02-00:35:45
Meeker: Were you ever tempted to go into your little [inaudible]?
- 02-00:35:49
Goldman: No, not at all.
- 02-00:35:51
Meeker: Not at all?
- 02-00:35:52
Goldman: Not during that period of time. They told me about the adventures, and I was just like, "Oh, that must have been fun." But it didn't get me excited enough to think about doing it.
- 02-00:36:05
Meeker: When did you decide to pledge to a fraternity in college?
- 02-00:36:04
Goldman: Well, I had a couple of really good friends, one of which was the other breastroker on the swim team—who was much better than I was. I think I

beat him once and that was the only time but we were best of friends. His name is Brad Lemke and then his roommate was a guy named Wally Bond, and Wally was from Pasadena. So he was one of the few Californians that I had seen there. They're the ones who sort of pushed. I said, "But it's all football." "Oh, no it's not, it's much more than that." So they encouraged me to pledge and I did. It was a really good thing for me to have done. It gave me sort of an instant group of colleagues and then friends. I remember my first semester at Swarthmore, I was really homesick, really confused, I felt like I had made the biggest mistake. I almost felt like I was in a fog for my first three months there. I remember coming back—it was the only time that I came back home for Thanksgiving, was my freshman year. Then that was it. I never came back again. I always came back for Christmas holiday, but that was the only time during the year that I'd come home. As a parent, with my kids having been scattered, I couldn't imagine them not being here for more than just once a year or once during the school year. I can't stand not seeing them. I guess my folks had more to rely on than just one or two so that made it a little easier. But being in the fraternity—that first semester was really tough. I thought I had made a mistake. Then I rushed and got in and a good bunch of guys. I felt then that I had a second home. We didn't live there. We didn't live in the fraternity houses and we didn't eat there. So it was purely social.

02-00:38:50

Meeker:

What did you study while you were there?

02-00:38:53

Goldman:

I wanted to go in as a math major, partially because then I wouldn't have to meet the foreign language requirements. It was a good move. I have never been good at languages. Then I started taking science courses and I thought that's where I wanted to go. I had a very bad experience with one of the professors in Chemistry. I said, well that's not where I'm going to go. Somehow I was invited to be in a seminar in political science. I started taking some poly-sci courses, liked them, and this one faculty member asked if I would be interested. I was a sophomore, that was unheard of. I thought, "Wow, this is pretty cool." There were two seniors and me as a sophomore, and the professor and that was it. That's pretty powerful stuff.

02-00:39:53

Meeker:

Sure.

02-00:39:54

Goldman:

Great course, really a great course. A lot of work, more work than I had ever done in my life and I didn't think I'd get through it, but I got through it. I started looking at economics as sort of this blending of political science and math so there was a quantitative element and more of a theoretical element. I started focusing in on economics. That's what I graduated in and that's what I got my degree in.

02-00:40:35

Meeker:

Let's finish up today by talking a little about what you hoped to do upon graduation and then how you ended up working for a period of time in the government and then became a conscientious objector.

02-00:40:48

Goldman:

Right.

02-00:40:50

Meeker:

I wonder if you can offer that story.

02-00:40:58

Goldman:

Well, I should probably talk about the war because the war was probably, I think if you ask most people of my generation, the one thing that impacted their lives more than anything else during that period of time. You had Vietnam. You had the invasion of Cambodia. You had the moratoria down in Washington D.C. You had all of the protests. I went to two of the moratoria marches.

02-00:41:36

Meeker:

Which years?

02-00:41:38

Goldman:

'68 and '69. '69 and '70 and then during the second part of '70—no, '68 and '69 for the marches, 1970 was the Cambodian invasion. We had a fast for peace, which I did for three days I think, three or four days. There were a whole bunch of us.

02-00:41:49

Meeker:

Was there an organization that you were involved with?

02-00:42:03

Goldman:

There was and I don't know if it was a Swarthmore peace movement or something to that effect.

02-00:42:08

Meeker:

On campus?

02-00:42:10

Goldman:

It was campus focused, but they were the ones to organize all of the going elsewhere, especially the Washington—those marches were amazing. I don't think people remember how many people were marching. There were more than a million, I know. There were a handful that caused disturbances. Overall, it was incredible, incredible. I still can't get over how many people were involved. Shifting to today, you just don't see that today, the same kind of social activism. Again, I think that was the culture and what we were growing up with. So the war was huge and one of the things that I think everybody knows is when their number was drawn and what their number was. But before that even happened, I had written some poetry in high school about the war in my senior year, about how I couldn't understand this and

how I couldn't accept it and how it was wrong, so it wasn't something just that happened. But I had been involved against the war for a long time. I had a real tough time deciding whether or not to go to Canada. I was serious about it. I think my parents were horrified about the thought of my going to Canada or serving as a conscientious objector.

02-00:43:37

Meeker: Was Canada going to be a pre-emptive move?

02-00:40:40

Goldman: Yes. No, I just had real problems with the idea of living in a country that allowed this to be going on. It was tearing into me, I could tell that. Even as a CO, I would be doing here, the only good thing I would be doing alternative service and I would be glad to do alternative service. I was very much believing in that. I think there was a consistency. I met with a friend of our family's who was a Rabbi. As I was going through the process, I wanted to apply for this, he walked me through it just to make sure that I believed in it, and he absolutely vouched for me so I was ready to go.

02-00:44:23

Meeker: [inaudible]

02-00:44:25

Goldman: Yes, absolutely.

02-00:44:29

Meeker: What did it take to be CO?

02-00:44:32

Goldman: You had to apply and go through an interview and everything else. It was a very rigorous standard. You had to have somebody who could vouch for you. The most important thing for you was your witness. It was an equivalent of a sponsor, but I think they call it a witness then.

02-00:44:47

Meeker: Did this have to be a religious figure?

02-00:44:49

Goldman: Most likely. If you a religious CO applicant it was much more likely. If you were a Quaker, yes, it was almost automatic because how can you say otherwise. But being Jewish, there were plenty of people who were Jewish serving in Vietnam, so it wasn't really a religious basis, but more of an ethical basis, much, much harder to prove. So I was going through the process and I knew that they were doing the number drawing and my number was 135. The cut off, when I graduated was going to be 175 so we were pushing the process a little harder. Then during the summer—

02-00:45:44

Meeker: How does that work, I don't understand the process. 135 sounds pretty low.

02-00:45:50
Goldman: It is, considered to 366, yes. It is definitely low.

02-00:45:55
Meeker: So if your number was drawn—

02-00:45:58
Goldman: They would pick out a number for each—they would randomly pick a date, which was your birth date. And go right down from 1 down to 366. We were all watching—I had a small TV.

02-00:46:15
Meeker: So everyone with the same birthday had the same number.

02-00:046:18
Goldman: Everybody on August 18th would have been 135.

02-00:46:20
Meeker: OK, all right.

02-00:46:24
Goldman: So we were watching this and there was a guy who was picked fourth. He walked out. It looked like he was a dead man. So we had to make some hard choices. I don't even remember who it was, I just remember that was a pretty awful moment. It was a dark, dark time. You felt really horrible that some people were in the 200s, 300s, they knew they were clear, but they felt horrible for their friends. It was really an awful thing to go through.

02-00:47:05
Meeker: Yeah.

02-00:47:07
Goldman: During the summer, late in August I guess it was, or early August, they dropped down to 125, so I knew I was clear. But I also had started making plans. Like I mentioned, I was interested in the law. I heard about this group, San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation and I said I'm going to do this, it's perfect. Out of school, I'm ready to live back in the city and work for a couple years before the next thing, which is exactly what I did. I was working in a paralegal capacity.

02-00:47:49
Meeker: This was in?

02-00:47:59
Goldman: This was 1971 to 73. My role was to work with some of the lawyers and helping those who are on Aid for Families with Dependent Children, (AFDC), and General Assistance, which was the catch all program. The AFDC program was part of the Social Security network. General Assistance was the city's own program. It paid an incredibly low amount, I think it was like \$235 a month.

02-00:48:30

Meeker: Were these in cash payments?

02-00:48:33

Goldman: Cash payments.

02-00:48:35

Meeker: What sort of work did this firm do?

02-00:48:39

Goldman: They would defend people who were not getting the appropriate level. They would give the general assistance cases over to the paralegals. So I had some really interesting situations. We obviously couldn't represent everybody. They'd be coming off the street and up to our offices, which were at 7th and Market.

02-00:49:07

Meeker: What were some of the cases that you defended?

02-00:49:09

Goldman: I would say, better than to say defended, represented.

02-00:49:13

Meeker: OK.

02-00:49:14

Goldman: The one most striking was this woman comes walking in. I think she's a woman. But she's 6'1" and has a heavy beard and it was a transvestite. I had never met a transvestite in my life. She was talking about her situation and that she was being denied and I represented her and we got—and it's still ridiculous, a couple hundred dollars a month to live on, even then, was impossible.

02-00:49:52

Meeker: Do you remember who the leader of this office was?

02-00:49:54

Goldman: Yes, there was a guy named Ralph Abascal, who's somewhat legendary in this area. One of the great lawyers of the people. He ran the office. The second in command at the time was a guy named Jay Eisen. Jay and I ended up as roommates when we were living here. We ended up sharing a flat. It was great. Jay's a terrific guy. He's up in Sacramento now doing civil rights law as I like to put it. Even to this day. We had a wonderful relationship with California Rural Legal Assistance, which was based out of the Salinas Monterey area, and they're the ones who worked with the grape growers and the various strikes, working with Cesar Chavez in particular for awhile, the United Farm Workers activities. There was a lot of environmental law that came into being as well as domestic law. We were the representatives at Legal Assistance Foundation for domestic legal problems, which were scary.

02-00:51:30

Meeker: Meaning?

02-00:51:31

Goldman: There's usually a gun involved somewhere along the line. You're talking about spousal abuse, so on and so forth. It was just scary.

02-00:51:40

Meeker: What was so scary?

02-00:51:42

Goldman: Well, there were guns involved in a lot of cases. When it comes to affairs of the heart, I'm afraid that people get pretty vicious. We had several confrontations in our offices and had to call the police and keep people locked up in rooms and had some doors broken down and intense moments.

02-00:52:05

Meeker: You mentioned that this experience turned you off to law.

02-00:52:11

Goldman: Yes.

02-00:52:13

Meeker: How so? What was it about—?

02-00:52:17

Goldman: I felt the system was dysfunctional.

02-00:52:22

Meeker: In what way?

02-00:52:25

Goldman: Well, I thought that legal services was trying to do a lot of good things and was incapable of doing it because there was only so far you could get. The only way that things changed is if you were able to elevate a situation to a class action lawsuit and then became a major case that had to be dealt with. It was slow. It was expensive. It didn't work. I was very upset with the system treating, especially people who were pretty downtrodden in a fairly reprehensible manner.

02-00:53:10

Meeker: What were some of the issues then that were not being treated?

02-00:53:13

Goldman: It's hard for me to remember specifically. There were a lot of civil cases that I knew were trying to be raised up. My exposure to much of the AFDC and GA situations, I just said, "What kind of situation is this?" People were being treated so badly by the administrators of these programs. They were in a position where they can't give any of this money away because they're running out of dough and they don't have enough. It was a lot of saying no. I didn't like that. I wanted to see some solutions rather than problems and

constantly having to have reasons why things couldn't be done started driving me nuts.

02-00:54:06

Meeker: When you discovered the things constantly going wrong, did you get a sense of what was happening?

02-00:54:18

Goldman: Bureaucracies. [laughter]

02-00:54:22

Meeker: Well some people might say we were under-funded, some people might say it was bureaucracies, some people might say that the people seeking funding were unfair or cheating or something like that. There are all sorts of responses. In a sense, it's kind of asking someone's opinion on how well the government operates.

02-00:54:47

Goldman: Absolutely.

02-00:54:48

Meeker: Yeah.

02-00:54:49

Goldman: And that is a legal system and I think that's what got me—it at least followed from there that the government structure, at least on the legal basis, is not working. Because you influence the government in different ways. I was at first looking at businesses being behind a lot of what happens in our society and said, "OK, these things are inequitable, let's try to change that or I'll try to do something to change that." And then going into the public sector, well this might be a little more affective way of making change happen.

02-00:55:30

Meeker: What did you learn that or what context did you come to believe that corporations have the power to perhaps to influence government more than vice-versa.

02-00:55:43

Goldman: Well, I think that was one of the lessons of Vietnam.

02-00:55:45

Meeker: OK.

02-00:55:50

Goldman: There was an old saying, the military-industrial complex, I'm afraid it hasn't strayed too far from that even today on occasion. But a high degree of suspicion that government was beholden to corporate interest in a lot of ways. This was—they were woven together. Right or wrong, that is where it came from. I don't think our government then, in a lot of ways, was as strong for better or worse, than it is today. I think it was—it didn't have the breadth and

degree of participation in everybody's life that we can now see that it does. Business was business. Capitalism was the structure. That was what transcended everything.

02-00:57:04

Meeker:

Well, it's probably a good time as any to stop, because I think we can come back next time I'll have a few ideas to follow up on. You can tell me a little more about your graduate school.

02-00:57:22

Goldman:

Something more interesting?

02-00:57:25

Meeker:

Well, I'd like to discuss things that you find more interesting.

02-00:57:28

Goldman:

No, I don't know if it's more interesting. This is actually more fascinating. It's weird going back in time.

02-00:57:32

Meeker:

Yes, it is strange, isn't it? Before we stop maybe if you can give me a sense as we're sort of a little bit out of step, but more or less your life trajectory, what would be some of the next topics for the next phase?

02-00:57:53

Goldman:

Beyond where we are right now.

02-00:57:57

Meeker:

What you see your trajectory as. If we were starting the next section of your biography, what would the chapter headings be?

02-00:58:06

Goldman:

Well clearly, my life with my wife, my life with Marcia. My experiences in Sacramento. The big move and how that affected me and my family.

02-00:58:32

Meeker:

From San Francisco?

02-00:58:34

Goldman:

From Sacramento back to the Bay Area. Our first real participation in the organized Jewish community. I shouldn't forget the kids of course. We'll have to talk about the kids and what they went through.

02-00:58:55

Meeker:

Where did you start the beginning of your participation in the Jewish community?

02-00:59:01

Goldman:

Upon the return to the Bay Area.

02-00:59:04

Meeker:

In what capacity?

02-00:59:06

Goldman:

Well, we were involved in a leadership development council that was formed specifically for people living on the Peninsula, which we were. That was our introduction.

02-00:59:19

Meeker:

Was that a JCF project?

02-00:59:22

Goldman:

That was a JCF project. And a very good one I might add. [laughter]

Interview 2: January 9, 2006
Begin Audio File 3

03-00:00:00

Meeker: Today is the 9th of January, 2006. This is Martin Meeker, recording an interview with John Goldman for the Jewish Community Federation Project, and this is our second interview in the series. As we were discussing a moment ago, I've said that we had finished up more or less talking about your college education. Some of your post-graduate employment work, and then also we started talking about Stanford Business School. So why don't we just kind of revisit that a little bit to get us started on the next line of questioning. So, just by way of getting started, could you again kind of describe your motivation to go to business school?

3-00:00:52

Goldman: When I was working at legal services, I think I mentioned that—that it convinced me that I didn't want to be a lawyer, and I was frustrated with the legal system, and I think I was still a little bit of a renegade at that time. And thinking about it, felt that perhaps the way to change the world, which I think a lot of people were thinking about at that time was to learn the language and be immersed in the world you wanted to change, and so I thought, well, the skill set probably would come from business school, and I really wanted to stay on the West Coast. So I applied to Cal, and I applied to Stanford. And Stanford had a public management program, which was pretty attractive to me, I liked that. Adjunct to what they were doing. That was started by a gentleman by the name of R.J. Miller, who was the CEO of—chairman I believe of Ford Motor Company, before he became the Dean of the business school. Felt there was a lack of business discipline in the not-for-profit and governmental areas, and so he pushed hard to establish this public management program, and that's what swayed it. I think I was accepted to Stanford, I seemed to recall that I was accepted at Cal, but I'd already made up my mind. And I was, looking back on it, very happy that I did.

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Meeker: Well, actually looking back upon it now, public management is what you've spent a good portion of your time doing, with the exception of working in the company that your father started, by working with the symphony, or working with JCF, and other organizations as well. Was it pretty clear to you that that was going to be a career trajectory for you, working in the public sector?

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Goldman: At that time, what I was considering was working in the governmental sector. And, that's why this program was so attractive to me. Where it was going to carry, as far as getting more involved in the community were—I did not anticipate. And in fact, I don't think that's one of the reasons that I went to business school, or for that program in particular

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Meeker:

How come? Now, I think in the last time, in fact I'm quite sure we talked a bit about the curriculum of the school in relation to this particular program, but I don't think we really talked much about your non-academic life, non-school life to the extent that was outside of the classroom. And I'm wondering, you know, and we did talk a little bit about it, and your experiences in high school and college, and some of the fun that you had in those situations, and I'm kind of wondering if you could maybe compare if your life changed or didn't during this particular phase of it.

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Goldman:

I think what happened in business school—let me back up. The way Stanford operates is that the incoming class is divided up into sections, and there are three sections that follow a similar track of classes, particularly in your first of the two years. And then you start branching out, and obviously there's some electives involved. But the core courses: finance, accounting, marketing, etc., are all taken by each section, and those are the required classes. And what happens is that there's a lot of—there's a strong bond that develops with your section, so you already have a subgroup of your class that you spend more time with, whether it be preparing for class or tests or whatever, or just socializing. The other thing that I think is kind of unique about Stanford compared to, let's say Harvard, is that there's encouragement of working together. And doing more of a team approach on work. I think the philosophy is that's what it's like in the real world, that's what they'd like to see more of, rather than becoming more individualized approach, and knowing some people who went to Harvard, you really are on your own, you either make it or break it on your own, you don't get a lot of help.

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Meeker:

Maybe the argument there is that the real world is competitive, and they force you to engage it that way?

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Goldman:

I guess, I don't know enough, but it's just a very different philosophy. I think I mentioned that Stanford also, the business school, establishes its course study, looking 20, 30 years down the road. And they say, we want our graduates to be prepared for the issues that are going to come up in two or three decades. Not dealing with—planned case study methods, not really using very much. It's more theoretical, as I think I mentioned. But getting back to the social element of the business school, the third area that I really respect the business school for is encouraging people to take classes beyond the business school. You didn't have a lot of time to do it, but you could take up to three or four classes, I think, across the street, as we like to say. And I think that brought people into the general community of the university. Our group, the friends that I ended up closest to, were mostly athletic, and we spent a lot of time playing tennis, some—I didn't play golf then but there were a lot of people who played golf, and our intramural football team won not only the Stanford championship, but beat Cal in the second year, which was a big deal. So it

was, it was a bunch of ringers, there was no question about it, you know. But, we got—we got very close to each other, and I think that's the thing that— from a social side, I recall, the most was that the friends that I made became our friends, we're still close to them. You know, we just had our 30th reunion, and it was like some people should get in better shape, it was a lot of fun seeing everybody, spending time with them. It was a little bit like yesterday, it was just frightening, when you think it's 30 years. And so there were—the friendships that I developed at business school are among the strongest, partially because you're kind of immersed with everybody for a couple of years, and a good number of our classmates stayed in the area. It's a lot easier than keeping friendships up in Philadelphia, or wherever on the East Coast.

3-00:08:26

Meeker:

I wonder about the cohort, what were they like? Where did they come from? I mean, you said they stayed in the area, does that mean that they were originally from here, or are they—

3-00:08:35

Goldman:

Oh, they're from all over the country. There are a lot of individuals from the East Coast, Midwest. A good number of Californians too, people from the West. And the other element, was there a good, healthy proportion of students coming from other countries. And I recall a fairly significant contingent from Japan, from Hong Kong, France, Germany, continental—

3-00:09:11

Meeker:

Was there an encouraging interaction among people from different countries?

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Goldman:

Oh yeah. The idea was there are a lot of them were getting educated here, and then going back. And they're still a good number who've kept in touch. We had at most—certainly our 25th reunion, I think we had 15 or 20 come back from abroad, which was I thought pretty extraordinary to come to a graduate school reunion and mix it up with everybody. It was great.

3-00:09:47

Meeker:

Was there any notion, either informally or formally at the university of the emerging Pacific Rim economy?

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Goldman:

Absolutely. I think that even then, China wasn't viewed as an up and coming, but everybody said just by sheer scale, it's likely to happen. But Japan was like that, as well as Hong Kong and Singapore as pretty major forces. But Japan, I think, was the focus of attention, not a surprise. I think Japan really was an economic power right up until the 90s. So, it was, it was interesting, talking to people about that. But I think there was at least, there was at least an understanding that where Stanford was situated, it certainly was a gateway to the Pacific Rim.

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Meeker: Was there any reflection in the courses that you were taking of that emerging concept?
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Goldman: I don't know if there was that much that changed the course content. I'm sure there was some specialized courses, but I didn't take them.
- 3-00:11:00
Meeker: What about language education?
- 3-00:11:03
Goldman: There really wasn't any language education. Not at all, I think that was understood that if you had language skills, that you had them before you came.
- 3-00:11:16
Meeker: You know, along with the emerging Pacific Rim economy, the other element that Stanford would have surely been engaged with would have been technology.
- 3-00:11:26
Goldman: Absolutely. That was where the emphasis was. One of the things I remember was we had to buy calculators. And then calculators were brand new, this was back around '73, and we got this great deal, I don't know if I mentioned it before. A basic calculator I think could do trig functions, for \$99. You know, that was a steal back then. They were these TI, Texas Instrument calculators, and they were like, I don't know four inches by two inches, they were huge, you know. So that was pretty funny. And there was a—quite a bit of emphasis of management information systems and programming, and we programmed, I mean things that are totally foreign concepts now—who does programming these days? It's horrible.
- 3-00:12:19
Meeker: Programmers.
- 3-00:12:20
Goldman: Yeah, exactly. Programmers do that. But we were required to do programming, and understand Fortran, Cobol and Basic, and be at least somewhat conversant. Again, I think the idea was get prepared for this, because that's where the world's going. And I would say that that was probably, of all particular areas, the specific areas, the one area where that facet of education has served everybody really well. I don't think my friends were ever scared about technology.
- 3-00:13:03
Meeker: I should probably move this just a little closer. No, it's all right, it's just, I want to put this over here so that if it rings, the poor transcriber won't lose their eardrums.

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Goldman: Exactly, that would be really bad.

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Meeker: OK, so you graduate in 1975. Now, what I'm going to do is actually ask you to maybe jump out of the narrative a little bit, and I know that you were involved, had been involved with Stanford as an alumni. Could you describe the extent of your involvement, and maybe, in a narrative sense, when you first became involved actively, as an alumnus?

3-00:13:48

Goldman: Well, I think I didn't get involved with Stanford directly from a volunteer point of view until we moved back to the Bay Area in '81. I would—but I would help in fundraise and supported them, certainly since then, and until this year, for every single reunion was either chair or co-chair of their fundraising effort for the class. And I finally put my foot down and said that's it, I'm not doing it any more. Then, one of the things that was unique also was because I think there was a lot of interest in athletics, many of my friends, and I think most of the business school class. We'd go to all the athletic events, and I really got excited about Stanford athletics because Swarthmore really didn't have teams worth following as much. So, that continued on, and I got involved in an ad hoc, well actually a task force that looked into marketing of Stanford football. Condi Rice encouraged me to get more involved, and asked if I'd do this, and I said I would. And then that led to being appointed to the athletic board, which I've stayed on, except for a one-year gap, for I guess about seven, eight years now.

3-00:15:23

Meeker: Can you describe this board, and your work for it, your work with it?

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Goldman: The way I describe this board is that it's the best board anybody can be on, because there's very little responsibility and lots of great perks. And there is now actually some significant responsibility that's changed over the last couple of years. And the perks aren't quite as good as it used to be anyway. But it's an advisory board that it designed to offer input to the athletic director. And also do some development work as well, and I think it's doing well on the first and not doing very well on the second. So, I think there's a lot more potential on the fundraising side that is moving in that direction. Appointed by the President, I think it's two three-year terms, and then you have to be off, and you can come back on.

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Meeker: Well, the common thread through both of these participant activities at Stanford is fundraising, right? Where was the place in which you really kind of, you know, cut your teeth in the fundraising world? Or was it something perhaps that came with your family?

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Goldman:

I think that the emphasis on fundraising was partially from the family. But I also think it came from being involved with Federation. Because I was involved with Federation, sort of being pushed on to get more and more involved, including getting involved. I cannot remember when I was campaign chair, but you probably have it somewhere in your notes. And that was a good number of years, I think it was almost a decade before I became President, which is unusual.

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Meeker:

Usually it's the year before, correct? Couple years before.

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Goldman:

Let's say two or three years. Yeah, but this was really way before, and so a lot of my Stanford involvement's been in the last ten years. So, I think Federation is probably where I cut my teeth more than anything else.

3-00:17:38

Meeker:

Well, we can talk about that more later. So, of course we will. It's something that the JCF is very interested in retaining the history of. OK, well I think that the reader would be upset if I didn't kind of follow up on that enticing bit you dropped about Condi Rice.

3-00:18:00

Goldman:

Oh, you want to know about Condi.

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Meeker:

I want to know about Condi. [laughter] Now, what was her position there?

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Goldman:

She was Provost at the time. You know, she'd been involved with Stanford many years before her current position.

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Meeker:

Was she at the business school?

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Goldman:

No, she was in the university. The connection started because my mother-in-law had a very dear friend who—whose partner was the head of the international studies department at Stanford, and they introduced us to Condi. I also somehow gotten to know her, but Marcia had met her, I had met her, and she invited us to sit with her at a football game. As some people may know, she is an absolutely rabid football fan. She cut her teeth on football in the Big Ten, so that's football nirvana, I guess. Especially on the college level. And I had met her a couple of times and had some conversations, found her very interesting, and really very smart. And so my parents-in-law, I remember having her over for dinner.

But they were actually—they got to know her pretty well, we got to know her pretty well, and at that football game, she talked to me about what did I think

about the stadium and the way things were, and I said, “I think it’s dismal, and really bad,” and it’s funny, because this task force is all about marketing. And we came up with a list of probably 25 different items that should be addressed, and they’re still the same issues today, so it shows it takes forever to get anything kind of done.

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Meeker:

So was this—this must have been after the Super Bowl was held there, yes?

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Goldman:

Yes. Yeah, that was probably—if I were to guess, I’d say that it was probably about ‘91, ‘92, something in that range. Yeah, the Super Bowl was fun. Cold, but fun. And Condi was really interested, and again, the athletic director reports to the provost, that’s the hiring line. And so she was very interested, and Ted Leland was there. And she really wanted to do something. And Ted, I think had been a couple or three years, and really wanted to change things around. But, it’s still a problem today. It would be such a great expense, and there are so many opportunities. I think with the new stadium, that may change too. So then, from there on out, I mean, we saw Condi, I wouldn’t say frequently, but pretty often. And, when she left to join the Bush administration, we were invited to her farewell party. It was very nice, and I’ve tried to invite her to a couple of symphony concerts, knowing that she is a pianist. In fact, we went to one of her performances and spent some time after the performance with her. That was a fun evening. And I don’t think I’m quite like my mother-in-law, but we definitely are disappointed in where she’s gone, and her beliefs. That’s the way it is.

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Meeker:

So your previous interactions with her wouldn’t have led you to expect the way in which she’s positioned herself with Bush?

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Goldman:

I mean, I knew she was conservative, but there are quite a number of conservative people at Stanford. But no, I didn’t expect that she would kind of change, or be as strident as she is now at certain policies.

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Meeker:

But most of your interactions with her were within the context of athletics?

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Goldman:

Yes. And just then—just I would say we were, you know, friends. And we were very—I wouldn’t say we were close, close friends, but we were definitely friends.

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Meeker:

Well, this is kind of a general question, but I think in the overall context of your work for an organization like JCF, which is non-partisan, and you have to appeal to people across the political spectrum, this may be way too open-ended, but how do you do that? Have you developed a practice in which you

know, you maintain your beliefs but at the same time develop a way of interacting with people who don't share your beliefs?

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Goldman:

It may be too open-ended, but I'll give it a shot. I think one thing is work with Federation, and believe me, the symphony is loaded with people who are much more conservative than I am, so I mean, the focus of involvement for anybody who's part of an organization on a lay basis, is really to do better for that organization. And politics, an organization can be very political and often is, Federation is certainly political. But I look at it as political with a small p, versus political with a big P. And the big P politics don't really come into play. You know, I don't think too often if somebody's a Republican or Democrat, it really doesn't make that much difference. If their attention is to the bettering of the organization. And that's what everybody really wants. So, you know, I don't think you get too wrapped into big P politics as one might say. Small P politics, there's plenty of that, no question about it. But that's a different matter. That's working with people, and trying to get to a point of understanding and agreement. It's consensus building, I think we talked about that a little bit. That the need is to build consensus, not to take a certain stake, and draw lines—that's it. Because you don't get resolution that way.

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Meeker:

So, for instance, in the context of knowing Condi Rice through Stanford, the common goal was, you know, to improve Stanford's life, particularly in the area of athletics?

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Goldman:

Yeah. She was interested in how do we, in this particular area, how do we do a better job? It was clear the intent to do something was there, the execution hasn't occurred yet, but hopefully that will. But no matter how you feel about Condi, she's a very bright and articulate individual, and so having conversations with her, interesting, penetrating to say the least.

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Meeker:

Yeah, I could imagine. I don't think that there are a whole lot of people out there who would question her intelligence. That's something that's not up for debate, at least with her, I think.

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Goldman:

Points of view, you maybe have some differences.

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Meeker:

I think we'll probably get back into some of those issues when we focus more on JCF, when undoubtedly there must have been times in which politics did emerge, and there would have been questions about funding issues that would have somehow engaged big P politics, or kind of blurred the line between small and big P. But let's hold off on that for now, and let's, for a few minutes, talk about your family life, and your personal life, and how that was changing during this period of time.

- 3-00:26:40
Goldman: At Stanford, or after Stanford?
- 3-00:26:42
Meeker: Well, when did you meet Marcia?
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Goldman: Well, I met Marcia right after graduating from Stanford.
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Meeker: Could you tell me how?
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Goldman: Yeah, but it's a little involved. [laughter] And it's a good story. I knew it was going to come one of these days, so it's OK. About a month after, or three weeks after graduating from Stanford, David Freidman, who is related to me because his mother and my mother were first and second cousins, which made David my second and third cousin, I believe. You should know this stuff, right? David is also Marcia's first cousin, because his father and her mother are—were brother and sister. So, the fact is that the Freidmans and the Koshlands and our family used to get together all the time for reunions or whatever during the summer, and I've grown up knowing David extremely well. My brother Doug and David were roommates at Cal. David's older brother, Bobby, and I, both applied to Harvard and Swarthmore, I think that story I did tell. So we've been very, very, very close for years. Well, he was getting married, and I'd never met Marcia before. But we probably—don't recall it, but apparently we probably played together when we were about five, six, seven years old. It was a picture at David's mom's house, that everybody says, see, the two of you were there. I don't believe it. Anyway—
- 3-00:28:42
Meeker: It's a good story.
- 3-00:28:43
Goldman: It's a good story, but it's far from over. So we were coming, I was coming to this, and Marcia was going to come.
- 3-00:28:52
Meeker: The wedding?
- 3-00:28:54
Goldman: The wedding. Marcia had been married and was recently separated. And her mom, and her two aunts, one of whom is the groom's mother, were going through the guest list, and were deciding without Marcia's knowledge who she should meet. And they decided that Marcia really should meet me.
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Meeker: Do you want to explain?

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Goldman:

I don't know. It depends who reads this. Let me just say that my brother was not in favor of this marriage, because David's bride, Paulette Meyer, is not Jewish. So he had, and there'd been some other things going on, but they decided they were going to call Marcia and say that they'd gone through the list, and they wanted her to meet me, but not my brother, don't confuse the two. And Marcia was a guest. Obviously, I knew none of this.

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Meeker:

But this is the classic role of the *yenta*, isn't it? [laughter]

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Goldman:

It's the classic role of the *yenta*. And so Marcia made her mother and her aunts absolutely swear that they were not going to do anything or say anything, or she was not going to come. And of course, they were very disappointed, but they promised they weren't going to do or say anything. Fast forward to the wedding. Around women, I've always been pretty shy, but right after the ceremony, I guess when they were serving champagne, I'm looking around and I see this wonderfully beautiful and, I don't know, just caught me. So I went over and I introduce myself. It was Marcia, of course. And we spent about five minutes chatting. And she actually had been eyeing me at the same time, which was interesting, and the whole time she's wondering, OK. Which one sent him over. He's not bad, but who sent him over. So after five minutes I wandered off, and she tells me about two minutes later, my brother comes over and introduces himself. This is oh my God, what is going on here? And then after a few minutes he left. By that time, I came back, and it was a swimming reception. Because they had a nice pool up in Hillsborough. And so we were sitting around the pool, and we spent the rest of the time talking. And of course the situation is the pool is sort of down here, and there's a balcony from the house, looking here. Nobody cared less about the bride and the groom by that point, the marriage is over, they wanted to know where we were. They could care less. This whole thing is going on, and we have no idea. I certainly had no idea of what had transpired beforehand, but apparently everybody—all the adults had. And we will now fast forward—we became engaged, or we had started talking about marriage. We had been together for six months, we were up in Sacramento, and I think we're on a drive to the Bay Area. And she says, "OK, things are really great. It was really wonderful, I'm happy, I hope you're happy, can you tell me who sent you over at the wedding?" And I looked at her and said, "What the hell are you talking about?" She says, "You know, who introduced—who suggested that you and I meet at the wedding?" I said, "I don't know what you're talking about. Nobody sent me over, I came over on my own." And she just said, "Are you serious?" And I said, "I'm very serious," she just broke out laughing, told me the whole story, and I just said, "I can't believe this, this is—"

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Meeker:

So the whole time she was biting her tongue, right?

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Goldman:

Yeah, she was really good about it. And one more story, just to sort of wrap it up, because it all falls into place, and you'll see why. Her aunt Phyllis, Phyllis Friedman, mother of the groom, David's mother, wanted to throw an engagement shower when we got engaged. And we got the invitation, there was a folded card, and on the cover is a picture of Phyllis. And you open it up, and it says, "Celebrating Phyllis Friedman's first and only successful attempt at matchmaking." And then on the other side, "And Marcia and John's engagement." And so that was the whole thing. And it was hilarious. I mean, we still have it. We just laugh, it's such a great story, you know. And Phyllis of course takes all the credit for everything, including our children, our pets, you name it. And at the engagement shower, there were blow ups of pictures that my father-in-law had taken, which little balloon captions, because everybody knew at the—by that point, what the conversation was, but it was blow ups of us, around the pool, or saying hello to each other, and all these—

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Meeker:

From when you first met?

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Goldman:

When we first met. It was hilarious.

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Meeker:

So the photographer was on the scene, or people knew?

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Goldman:

And knew exactly what to do. It was so funny. And so much fun, so obviously, David and Paulette take all the credit for all of this. Even more so than his mother. And they just celebrated their 30th anniversary, so I guess it's worked out OK. That's how we met. [laughter]

3-00:34:54

Meeker:

That is a fantastic story. So what year did you get married?

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Goldman:

I better be right. 1977. May 29, 1977.

3-00:35:03

Meeker:

All right. But with this kind of you know, pre-ordained if you will, relationship, everyone else taking credit for it, did you ever feel any pressure to make sure that it's succeeded?

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Goldman:

To make it work? Well, I mean, first of all, you have to understand, and I don't mind sharing this, that I didn't call Marcia immediately. In fact, I didn't call her, she called me. She waited four days and said, "What's wrong with this guy?" But she did call, and we did set our first date, and then it was not a problem calling from there on out. But we really—it was as close to love at first sight, and I mean, I couldn't believe it, I said, this doesn't really happen. But it did, and we've been together for 30 years, so not bad. What was the

question? [laughter] Sorry, I forget the question. Oh, the pressure, the pressure. Well, you see, here was the interesting thing, was that my mother, of blessed memory, and my mother-in-law were on the phone almost every day. Just right away, they wanted this to happen, I mean, cause they just thought this was perfect. And—but they were good, they didn't push too much until I guess, we'd been going out for a little bit, and we were visiting my folks up at Tahoe, and without saying anything, they just said, "OK, your room is down the hall." You know, it wasn't separate rooms or anything, they were pretty forward thinking anyway. Whoa, OK. They want this to happen, let's be careful, which we did talk about. But other than that, there was no pressure at all. I mean, Marcia had to go through her divorce and all that, but she got married so young it was ridiculous. Her first husband actually is Catholic, and it was not a good scene. Not from a religious point of view, but it was a mistake, so, two Jews decided to get married.

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Meeker:

And the family's happy.

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Goldman:

I hope so. My mother-in-law loves me, she adores me, always has.

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Meeker:

Well let's then move to Sacramento and your job. So you graduated in 1975. Did you have this position upon graduating?

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Goldman:

Oh, before I graduated I did seek out some consulting positions, they were not interested in me at all. I don't know what it was, but I got absolutely nowhere. And then—

3-00:38:03

Meeker:

When you say consulting, what do you mean by that?

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Goldman:

Business consulting, like McKinsey or Bain or some of the big consulting firms. I didn't want to go into finance, and I was a little interested in marketing, but there wasn't much that appealed to me. And the director of the public management program was a guy named John Steinhart. John is one of my best friends. I mean, we just latched on early on. He says, "You know, there's this outfit up in Sacramento," and I knew about the Legislative Analyst's Office pretty well, because they'd done so much work on BART, and a lot of my interest was in transportation, even then. So, I interviewed with them, they gave me an offer in the spring, which was great. Before spring break, that's what everybody hoped to have, so they could have fun. And moved up to Sacramento in—I think I started in September of that year. No, I'm sorry, I started in July, late July. So I was commuting back and forth, because Marcia was here, she was going to UOP Dental School at the time. And she had been working with orthopedically handicapped kids for a long time, and looking at special education as something she was interested in.

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Meeker: Was she interested in becoming a dentist?

3-00:39:33

Goldman: No. See, I think that was sort of a filler. [laughter]No, she was looking at—because she had been involved with—she wanted to be involved for—you know, she was on her own, she had to pay the bills, but she decided she really wanted to move, and she wanted to go into special ed, and she had told me that Sacramento State had one of the best special ed departments. She just wanted to move up to me, so we didn't have the stupid commute. But it worked out absolutely great. She finished her BA and got her MA in special ed at Sac State. And we moved in and lived—we had decided about eight months into the relationship, I may be off, that we didn't need two apartments up there. So we moved in together, and then we bought a house in Curtis Park, which is a really nice neighborhood, in Sacramento. So that was great, we really enjoyed that.

3-00:40:41

Meeker: You know, considering what you studied in the MBA program and your interest, going into your father's business probably wasn't an obvious choice for you, but was there any question or offer at that point?

3-00:41:00

Goldman: This is the interesting thing. When I finished my stint in Sacramento, I did talk to him about joining the firm. And he told me he wanted me to start from ground zero. And here I was—

3-00:41:15

Meeker: In the firm or in your own?

3-00:41:17

Goldman: In the firm. And here I was a guy who'd been you know, dealing with the administration in Washington, and dealing with governors, and you know, I said, "What are you talking about?" You know, starting from zero, you must be joking. You know, I thought very highly of myself, involved in major policy decisions. When I went through my experience after Sacramento, and before joining the firm, I had a major dose of humble pie, and I learned a lot. And I said, "I am ready to start from ground zero," which I did. And it was the best thing, because I realized that's where you have to start, if you're going to learn business. I didn't know it then, but five and a half years later, I knew it on the second go around. We'll come back.

3-00:42:07

Meeker: Well let's—yeah, let's delve into the five and a half years. What does the Office of Legislative Analyst do?

3-00:42:13

Goldman: The Office of the Legislative Analyst serves the state legislature as its fiscal watchdog and review agency. It is—the staff serves the state legislature, both

the Assembly and the Senate. The Legislative Analyst is an appointed position, that—

3-00:42:35

Meeker: So it's a political position.

3-00:42:36

Goldman: It's a—well, this is what's interesting. It's an annual appointment. It is supposed to be non-partisan, and it is, because it has to be appointed and serves every legislator. So A. Alan Post served in that position, I think like 36 years or something. 36 years of annual appointments, just extraordinary. Because yes, you would expect it to be a political appointment. But it has not, never been, and I don't think it ever will be, because he established the parameters for being—serving in that capacity, to make sure that they were as non-partisan as possible. Doesn't always work that way, but that's what it was all about.

3-00:43:22

Meeker: But in order to obtain the consistency, in order to retain his job, he had to maintain a non-partisan stance.

3-00:43:30

Goldman: Absolutely. He and the office had to maintain a standard where politics really didn't come in. And it got tough, cause you're really, what I found was difficult after being there for three years, was you were saying no. There were three activities that the office has. One is to review the fiscal impact, and occasional policy impact, of pieces of legislation, as they go through the process. So there is bill review. The second big element is for the elections. I'm sure everybody's seen, hopefully, when they open up and they get the legislative analysis, that's part of the job for all the propositions. And the third, and the biggest, and the toughest, is the annual review of the governor's budget, which the budget comes to—I'll call it the Leg Analyst Office, because that's what everybody called it, in early December. Want me to stop?

3-00:44:41

Meeker: No, go ahead. I'm just—

3-00:44:43

Goldman: And then, we do, did an analysis of the budget. And the analysis was not just on a macro-basis, but then on certain policy changes and what the impact would be. Most of the attention seems to be on health services, social services and education, but my particular area of review, and my assigned departments were the Department of Motor Vehicles, part of CalTrans and the Highway Patrol. It was mostly DMV and CHP. And so there was considerable interaction with those departments, and I can get into some of the really interesting parts of it as we go along, so, would you like me to?

3-00:45:37

Meeker: Yes. [laughter]

3-00:45:38

Goldman:

Well it was, it was as I said, the budget review was the big—the elephant in the room, every year, made for celebrating the holidays really ugly. Because we had to get it in by January, the first week of January usually. So we worked all the way through Christmas, and usually Hanukkah, and right up to New Year's. So we didn't have an awful lot of fun. The only fun we really ended up having was on the Super Bowl. That's when we had all these great Super Bowl parties, we were finally done. But the DMV was usually not much of a hassle and it was pretty straightforward, but the Highway Patrol, a kind of unique position. The Commissioner of the Highway Patrol, as well as Department was given the kid glove treatment by most legislators. They needed the Highway Patrol, they wanted to take care of the Highway Patrol?

3-00:46:35

Meeker:

Political endorsements?

3-00:46:38

Goldman:

No, it was more not ticketing them, you know, cause they're racing back and forth, usually—Highway Patrol often times would provide drivers, ferry them around. The commissioner was taken well—was well taken care of. But there were two issues that were starting to pop up. One was the use of radar. It is still an issue today that is pretty much, that was going through a lot of consideration at the time. The Highway Patrol said radar is going to make our jobs a lot easier. The legislators did not want radar, they wanted visibility. Understandably, you know, they're racing around the state. They want to see that Highway Patrol car, they don't want something nefarious like radar interfering. And the second thing was the use of helicopters. Now, every law enforcement agency wanted to build a helicopter fleet. Any respectable and significant law enforcement agency wanted to have some helicopters. They felt that it was really important, it was kind of a macho thing. And over the three years, I consistently had this belief that we could have all these individual entities building up helicopter forces, when in fact the thing to do was really to have more joint powers work and coordination. And it was more important to coordinate than just keep on getting more helicopters and more helicopters. And I was totally supportive of radar, as long as there was a commensurate reduction, or at least a stabilization of the work force.

3-00:48:32

Meeker:

So I guess in this context, let me just ask you stop and you can reflect on this question. Were you in a position to make policy recommendations?

3-00:48:40

Goldman:

Yes. That's the whole idea, because there was the fiscal impact that had policy ramifications, and that's—having radar, in my mind, would reduce, or at least stabilize the cost of operating department, and introducing helicopters would push it way up. I said, "Well this is ridiculous, we've got other needs to work on."

3-00:49:01

Meeker:

So the main factor is that you were basically charged to weigh over things, like expense and then also expense vis-à-vis, effectiveness.

3-00:49:14

Goldman:

Yes, exactly. So that's where the policy—like in almost anything else, the fiscal impact has policy ramifications and vice versa.

3-00:49:27

Meeker:

But policy recommendations, you know, are not generated by computer. Well, maybe they are now. But at that point in time, undoubtedly, they were not generated by computers, so in other words, you're also dealing with human interactions and relationships.

3-00:49:40

Goldman:

Well that was—that's where this story goes. There is another element to it. So what we would do, is there would be budget subcommittees, which other committees might be for that particular area. And what happened was—do you have time, or do you want to switch tapes?

3-00:49:57

Meeker:

We've got ten more minutes on this tape.

3-00:50:00

Goldman:

OK, good. So, the drill would be that we would present our analysis to the particular budget subcommittees. And in both the Assembly and especially in the Senate, this idea of fooling around with the Highway Patrol carried absolutely no weight whatsoever. I mean, I was shot down. I had, especially on the Senate side, there was one Senator, I'll remember his name eventually, I know his first name was Al, who just skewered me in front of—and of course there are people all over the place. You know, and the commissioner, and saying, "Well, that's the way it goes, Mr. Goldman."

3-00:50:49

Meeker:

What was your proposal for the Highway Patrol?

3-00:50:51

Goldman:

It was to not let them have helicopters. They—

3-00:50:56

Meeker:

OK, I didn't realize they wanted to add helicopters as well.

3-00:50:59

Goldman:

Oh yeah, that was the issue, was the whole issue, was over helicopters. They wanted—they wanted to build the fleet and to encourage radar as a means of keeping their workforce stable or actually reducing it. They went ballistic. I got phone calls from the commissioner directly saying that I was—how disrespectful I was and how inappropriate this was, and that he would be fighting this, and you know, that I shouldn't be in this position.

3-00:51:26

Meeker:

How was it communicated to you initially of what the expectations would have been, or did you know? I mean, did you just walk into the—

3-00:51:33

Goldman:

Oh no, no, no. This is all reviewed, written out before. We had a big analysis, it was presented, it was circulated to all the legislators, all the legislators as well as all the departments. They got our analysis. I mean, this was par for the course. I mean, believe me, it had to pass review by the legislative analyst, the deputy legislative analyst, as well as my program supervisor and he said, “Well, I can’t disagree, just know you’re in for a little bit of a scuffle.” And I said, “I know.”

3-00:52:05

Meeker:

But what I was wondering was in advance of making these recommendations, did you realize what you would be walking into?

3-00:52:13

Goldman:

Oh yeah, that’s what I’m saying. Is that the review process, I mean, I knew this was going to be tough sledding, but they liked that. They thought it was good to say, well, this is tough, you know. When it came to CalTrans, the Director of Transportation is a woman named Adriana Gianturco, and boy, she was not only pretty foul-mouthed, but she was one tough cookie. And those were heated battles too. When it came to the UC, or the CSU system, there were battles over that. That was par for the course of being a leg analyst like this. But Glen Craig for two years made my life absolutely miserable.

3-00:52:54

Meeker:

Who’s that?

3-00:52:56

Goldman:

He was the commissioner of the Highway Patrol. But there was sort of something where we built up a relationship, because you know, it wasn’t adversarial. I tried to keep talking to him, I said, “Commissioner, I’m just trying to do what I’m supposed to do,” and he said, “You don’t know what you’re supposed to do.” And it started out that way, but you know, then we started talking a little bit more.

3-00:53:23

Meeker:

This is a difficult place to be in, you know, because particularly with the relationship or the issue of the Highway Patrol, you have a powerful commissioner who has a certain agenda, and then the way that you’ve described it, the people in the state house had a completely opposite sense of what they wanted. And here you are in the middle as a non-partisan, so you’re not going to necessarily have any people to stand in your corner.

3-00:53:52

Goldman:

What was I, 26 years old? Let’s start with that. Let’s start with that, you know. And here are these guys who’ve been serving, they’re in their sixties and seventies, and—Al Alquist, was the chair of the Senate Transportation

Committee, and he was one tough cookie. And he ruled that committee. And he was the one [inaudible] and you know, it's just like you see on TV, when you look at the Congressional hearings. You've got all the legislators sitting up above, and you're sitting at a table down below, and they're looking down on you, and it's so theatrical in a way, making you feel insignificant. And so then they turn around and start berating you and scolding you and humiliating you, you know. You just sort of sat there. Well, that went on for a couple of years, and you know, the Highway Patrol just drove it through, drove it through, just pushing and pushing, trying to build more—get a bigger air force, and the third year, I remember Al Alquist, turned to me and said, “Mr. Goldman, I finally see your point. We're not approving it this year.” It was—I mean, there was a gasp in the room. And I think I was the one that gasped first. Glen Craig was so upset, but he said, “Well, you stuck with it.” And it was a big deal, apparently. I didn't realize what a big deal, but these victories were few and far between. Especially, as you said, because things were powerful, and two months later I got a call from a gentleman by the name of Alan Stein. And Alan Stein, this might be a good place to take a break. You need to change tapes, because it's a good story.

Begin Audio File 4

4-00:00:07

Goldman: So I've been at the leg analyst office for three years or so and I got a phone call from a gentleman by the name of Alan Stein. And Alan Stein at the time was the secretary of business and transportation for the state. And as it is in the federal system, the secretaries of the various agencies formed the cabinet for the governor. At the time, the governor was Jerry Brown, I was appointed by Jerry Brown. I guess I wasn't appointed by Jerry Brown yet, but I'll get to that. And Alan, who came from Goldman Sachs, was asked by Governor Brown to be the secretary. He was the only Republican but he was a San Francisco Republican so we went through that on Jerry Brown's cabinet. And he called me and asked if I would take the position as assistant secretary of transportation. And I was blown away. That's a pretty significant position. You are overseeing the very departments that at the time I was reporting on, including the department of transportation, CalTrans, which is huge.

4-00:01:32

Meeker: And it's very powerful as well.

4-00:01:34

Goldman: Very powerful. And so Marcia and I had talked about it, and she said how do you feel about Alan? I said I love Alan. He's a great guy, he's one of the best people. Well, how do you feel about the rest of the organization? I said well, the problem is the deputy secretary is a very political person, and I'm worried about that. And I'm not sure she likes me anyway.

4-00:02:00

Meeker:

Deputy secretary would be the second in command?

4-00:02:03

Goldman:

Yeah. And I would be third in command. There was no other assistant secretary for the so-called business side. The position actually expanded while I was there for the secretary. The agency was the business and transportation agency, but became the business, housing, and transportation agency. And there was no assistant secretary of business. But eventually there was an assistant secretary for housing. So that was an interesting development. But I decided to go ahead, and it was a fantastic job. It was one of the best jobs I've ever had. Frustrating as hell on one side because it was highly political. I was appointed by the governor, I did have to submit all the conflict of interest forms and they were much less defined and they weren't as precise as you need to do today, and it was awful. It was just awful. So this is such an invasion of my private life, it's even worse now. I think I may have mentioned at one point that I consider Alan Stein to be my mentor in many ways. He showed me how you deal with the political environment, he showed me and taught me how to win. You know, to get your way, while making somebody else feel like they've won. So he really had developed an art form on dealing with publicity.

4-00:03:47

Meeker:

In advance of your selection by Alan Stein to this position, what had you come to learn about politics? You know you were in your 20s, I don't know how naïve or how experienced you were, but you know I mean it sounds like you already had a kind of disillusioning experience when you were working for the neighborhood legal center. And then you spend some time in graduate school, but you go into the political arena, you must have had some sort of education there or did your ideas about politics change at all during that first three years?

4-00:04:22

Goldman:

Well, I think part of the thing with the leg analyst office is you're very protected. It's like a cocoon, I mean because this is a highly respected office and you know you're serving the legislature and the governor sees you as, you know, on the other side. But the legislature takes care of the leg analyst office. But I could see—I mean one of our favorite things to do when we were there was to go over and see Willie Brown because he was the Assembly speaker and he ran the assembly rules committee like nothing I've ever seen in my life. You talk about theatre, it was the best show in town. And he was absolutely amazing and he wielded tremendous power, and it was entertaining as hell. It was great. And whenever we had sort of a slow afternoon, we'd ask, "Is the speaker on?" You know, and we'd check and found out.

4-00:05:21

Meeker:

So aside from entertainment—

4-00:05:22

Goldman:

It was actually assembly ways and means, that's right. But he knew politics. Oh God, he knew how to manage politics better than anybody I've ever seen. Before and after. I mean, he was and still is amazing.

4-00:05:42

Meeker:

Well, the Berkeley program, we have a pretty extensive interview with him. I've read it cover to cover and one of the things that was very obvious to me that yes, it was interestingly enough more about the workings of politics, small p less than big p. And what I mean by that is he didn't expressively in that interview so much of an interest in ideology or particular positions or certain particular constituencies for predetermined reasons. He was concerned with winning.

4-00:06:20

Goldman:

Yeah, absolutely.

4-00:06:21

Meeker:

And he was very, very skilled at it and you know forming coalitions and you know, destroying coalitions and motivating people to work with him for him. And it is a very different perspective on politics. You know, people probably sense that's the way that politics works, but they also like to think that ideas get thrown into the process.

4-00:06:45

Goldman:

And I think they do.

4-00:06:46

Meeker:

OK.

4-00:06:47

Goldman:

Just not in his case.

4-00:06:48

Meeker:

Just not in his case.

4-00:06:49

Goldman:

I think the thing about Willie is, it is about winning and how to manipulate it so you come out ahead. As simple as that. And that was what made it amazing. Was their respect for him? As a politician and being able to get his way, yes. As far as the ideal laws that he promoted, no way. Because what was his position? I bet you couldn't tell me today as mayor what his key policy positions are, or were. Cause that's not what was important. If you look at what he feels he was able to do, and he takes credit for it whether it's true or not, whether it be Pac Bell or this. Certainly City Hall he deserves recognition for City Hall. He got his way, big time on that. To have the feds put as much money in him and because of his allegiance with Nancy Pelosi and vice versa. No question in my mind that that would never have happened if Willie Brown had not been mayor.

4-00:07:47

Meeker: The refurbishing of the city.

4-00:07:48

Goldman: Yeah. And it's glorious and it's going to be I think a landmark to his administration forever, as well as the Embarcadero. I don't think he should take credit for Pac Bell, but he will. There are landmarks to his administration but it shows exactly as you're saying. I am going to get it done, I'm going to win. Not what, but you know.

4-00:08:16

Meeker: It's kind of interesting. That's almost on the model of the mayor of Paris, right? Because—.

4-00:08:22

Goldman: I don't know, well, that much about the mayor of Paris.

4-00:08:24

Meeker: Yeah, kind of the French model is really it's like, well, your legacy has as much to do with the landmarks that you leave as it does with the policies that you create in many ways. Or they're sort of seen as tied together in some ways.

4-00:08:38

Goldman: Yeah, and I think that you know it's going to be interesting how Gavin [Newsom] is eventually evaluated and judged. Anyway, so where we were?

4-00:08:48

Meeker: So when you were viewing him and kind of learning about politics, was this changing what you thought about politics?

4-00:08:55

Goldman: Oh, it sure was.

4-00:08:56

Meeker: How then did the Willie Brown style influenced your thinking about how the way things worked and then also your resolve to get things done?

4-00:09:07

Goldman: Well, one of the thing that was interesting during that period was that Willie was not speaker the whole time. Leo McCarthy became speaker as well. I mean Leo is a great, great person. Very different. He's more of a chummy, kind of bring everybody into the fold kind of person. And it's not we/they as much and he had his own style that was quite effective, not as effective as Willie's. And I think that's one of the things I saw was looking around at the various legislators and of course they'd be always asking for favors. That's one of the interesting things is when you're in the executive side of government, they need help with certain things. And there were some big issues that were popping up.

4-00:10:00

Meeker: For instance?

4-00:10:01

Goldman: Well, one of the big ones that was pretty ugly was diamond lanes. That happened on my watch, without my knowledge I might add. But it was introduced in Santa Monica, and that was the ugly side of things.

4-00:10:16

Meeker: Can you describe this?

4-00:10:19

Goldman: Oh sure. Adriana Gianturco who I referenced was the director of transportation at the time, and also went to Berkeley with Jerry Brown. And whether there was a relationship that was more than friends, I don't know, but she was tyrannical. She was so tough, could turn a navy sailor blue with her language, it was amazing. And she took no prisoners. She was absolutely committed to mass transportation. At the expense of highways, period. It was not even a question. It was all about mass transportation. And it was her decision that we were not going to expand the highway system one bit. That instead we had to encourage car pooling, mass transit, and changing people's behaviors. That's all well and good, except that this state was built on the freeway system. So it sounds great and it certainly plays pretty well here in San Francisco at the time, but that's not the only place that it went well at all. So one night, she ordered her engineers to take a long section of the Santa Monica freeway at Los Angeles. I don't know if you remember, or heard about this. Repainted with diamonds, and she actually took a lane away from what was used by everybody for a high occupancy vehicle lane. A diamond lane. And nobody knew about it, and so everybody woke up and was told that this lane is now reserved for those with two or I think at the time it was actually three or more passengers in a car. And it was World War III, I mean Alan was pissed. I think he knew about it but didn't know you know how far she was going. I may have to look back at the records on this one whether we knew in advance or not. Either way, it didn't make any difference. We couldn't give any warning to anybody. The legislators in Los Angeles were calling for her to be beheaded. It was so ugly and so awful. And Jerry the governor just sat there and said this is the way of the future. You know and he stood by her and she absolutely insisted that he take the heat on this. You know, it was amazing. It was just amazing. But it branded us from there on out, you know because we didn't stand up to her. And boy with the transportation committees, we just went through hell for a long, long time. Until the time I wasn't there.

4-00:13:25

Meeker: Do you know if this is one of the first instances of high occupancy vehicle lanes?

4-00:13:31

Goldman: It was the first.

4-00:13:32

Meeker: OK.

4-00:13:32

Goldman: California was way ahead. You know, I go back to it. Governor Brown was so far ahead of his time it's not even funny. Did I talk about Governor Moonbeam to you at all?

4-00:13:45

Meeker: No.

4-00:13:46

Goldman: I don't know if you remember. You were probably too young.

4-00:13:49

Meeker: I grew up in a very conservative Republican household and I've heard that phrase.

4-00:13:56

Goldman: OK. Well, the interesting thing is where the phrase came from. There was a columnist in the Chicago Tribune named Mike Royko. I think most people know about Royko.

4-00:14:08

Meeker: Yeah. He wrote about San Francisco regularly.

4-00:14:09

Goldman: Regularly. Because he was the one that termed you know it's full of fruits and nuts.

4-00:14:14

Meeker: Yeah.

4-00:14:15

Goldman: And you know I got to give him credit, he came up with some great lines. But he was the one that coined the term Governor Moonbeam for Jerry Brown. And the reason that it was given to him, and looking back on it, I think most of us would say we're pretty astonished, is because the governor had proposed in his budget to use a satellite, to get the state to connect with the satellite, either to launch one or to buy resources of one that existed a comsat, I think, for emergency communications purposes. Here we are today with our cell phones thinking what we would be doing without this stuff? I mean that's what it's doing. And with you know our DirectTV or whatever, and this is back thirty years ago, when he proposed using a satellite to connect for emergency purposes the communications of all the state and local emergency services. Brilliant.

4-00:15:23

Meeker: This is what the department of homeland security is still failing to do.

- 4-00:15:27
Goldman: Exactly. I mean here he was so far ahead of his time and Royko thought this was the most hair brained, idiotic idea he'd ever heard in his life. Ergo, Governor Moonbeam.
- 4-00:15:40
Meeker: Interesting.
- 4-00:15:41
Goldman: To his credit, before Royko died he did retract and say, "I was wrong, the guy was brilliant." And he is brilliant. The problem is he's surrounded with the biggest bunch of nutcases you've ever seen. Jacques Barzhagi and you know a whole bunch of others. I remember him saying to somebody that he would never hire an MBA because they don't have a clue how to make things happen. Jerry has great ideas. He just had nobody around or very few people around to implement them, and do it in a methodical—it's just kind of nuts running around the place. It was just, it was a zoo. So I have great respect for Jerry Brown. I did not respect his hires in most cases.
- 4-00:16:28
Meeker: Including this woman you worked for?
- 4-00:16:30
Goldman: Including Adrianna.
- 4-00:16:32
Meeker: Adrianna. Can we just revisit that one issue about HOV lines?
- 4-00:16:36
Goldman: Yeah. Sure. Absolutely.
- 4-00:16:38
Meeker: Quickly. I mean cause I think it's—
- 4-00:16:39
Goldman: It's a fascinating story.
- 4-00:16:41
Meeker: It's a fascinating story, but it also I think sheds some light on the process by which policy is made and government works or doesn't work. And I guess the question is what sort of authority would a basically a bureaucrat have to do something like this?
- 4-00:17:03
Goldman: She wasn't a bureaucrat.
- 4-00:17:04
Meeker: It's rule creating.
- 4-00:17:05
Goldman: She ruled bureaucrats.

4-00:17:06

Meeker: OK. But it's also rule creating, it's almost like law creating.

4-00:17:11

Goldman: Yeah, she made policy.

4-00:17:13

Meeker: OK. But I guess what was the difference between—

4-00:17:14

Goldman: What's the executive branch of government for?

4-00:17:16

Meeker: What's the difference between making policy and making law? So in other words, there had to be a punishment if somebody broke this rule.

4-00:17:29

Goldman: I think, and this is my opinion, that when you separate the legislative and executive branches of government, that the executive branch makes policy, the legislative branch reviews policy, and the judicial decides whether either one is right or wrong and says but you're not following the constitution or law that has already been established. I think the legislator often thinks that it is in the business of making policy. I don't agree. I don't think that's what happens. It's just like a board of directors and a CEO. A CEO will establish the policy. There are general parameters established by a board, and the board is responsible for reviewing. But one of the keys to making your policies stick is to review it with a board before it's enacted. And that's what didn't happen and for good reason. Cause it would never have happened. And everybody knew that, that this was a game. This is a power play. And that's exactly what it is, and that's what I think going in the politics, small p, is a lot of it's about getting playing and you know it goes back to Willie Brown. And you know it was a game to him of winning or losing. And you know I guess it boils down to who can get the score up as high as they can. And that's what I learned more than anything else is that you know, this is an interesting dynamic.

It also sort of reconnected to my business school training in an interesting way. One of my dearest friends in business school did go into business consulting with McKinsey. And one of the jobs that they were retained on was to review some aspect of CalTrans. I can't even remember, to make it a more efficient department or whatever. And I just thought oh boy, this is going to be ridiculous. You know given who's on top and the way that—let me tell you, Cal Trans bureaucrats are one of a kind. I mean they're the ones who decided on that sculpture that's on Interstate 280. So you know, they're not exactly—of Father Serra—I wouldn't use a CalTrans engineer to make a decision about art any time in my life cause that's not their MO. That's not their skill set at all. So you know you're dealing with true, true bureaucrats. And I'm not saying good or bad, I'm just saying they are. And so my friend and his colleague were doing this analysis and one day we were having drinks together and he says I don't get this at all. And I said what, Jim? He said there

is nothing rational about what goes on. This is the most irrational process, with government, and the legislature and executive branches, and CalTrans in particular. It's totally irrational. And I looked and I said, "What did you expect?" It is totally irrational. He couldn't believe it. He thought that you know there are rules and guidelines and you follow a certain process. And I said politics is possibly the most irrational activity man has ever invented. And I still believe it today. It is irrational.

4-00:21:07

Meeker:

Then how does somebody who presumably operates on a rational level? Maybe you don't succeed in that arena.

4-00:21:15

Goldman:

Well, that's why I'm not in politics.

4-00:21:17

Meeker:

OK. But you were involved in it for about six years or so.

4-00:21:20

Goldman:

No, I was involved on the periphery of politics, I was not immersed in politics. And that is actually a decision I made, I would not run for office for a host of reasons. I was an appointee.

4-00:21:31

Meeker:

You were an appointee, but you were also enmeshed in the bureaucracy which is kind of the heart of the politics, right?

4-00:21:36

Goldman:

I had to interact with them, but I wasn't enmeshed in it. I wouldn't consider myself totally embroiled in it. I'd deal with it and work around it, I think is probably a fair way to say it. But understand even though these various departments were supposed to report to me, and the individuals were supposed to report to me, they didn't report to anybody but the governor. I mean truly speaking. So Adrianna and the governor, I had a couple occasions where it'd be the three of us in a room. Believe me I was the odd man out and it was ugly. You know it was kind of the thing which is very intense, a lot of loud voices and coarse language and all sorts of stuff going back. It was fun to be there, but kind of frightening that this is how, you know, our decisions are being made.

4-00:22:29

Meeker:

Sort of feel like the ship as being captained by a madman or something.

4-00:22:33

Goldman:

Well, as I said I have great respect for Jerry Brown, terrific respect. Not so much so for the people around him.

4-00:22:41

Meeker:

So, what brought about the end of your tenure there?

4-00:22:46

Goldman:

I had decided that I really enjoyed my job, I really did. There were some good issues that came up and met interesting, interesting people. And really from high and mighty to a guy who would come in and meet with me every couple of months about a perpetual motion machine. That's part of the job. But it was that range of people. And Alan Stein decided he was going to go back and actually join Montgomery Securities where he worked for many, many years. And I thought OK, I'll see how this works out with the deputy cause I think she's going to be the one who wants the job really badly. And things were getting worse and worse. And she is not a nice person, and she was certainly not nice to me and I probably just said to Marcia I'm going to say that I'm going to leave the place and see what happens. And so I went and saw her and I said you know I'm planning on leaving. She said OK, when? So I got my answer real fast and said that's it.

4-00:24:07

Meeker:

Was she the next director then?

4-00:24:09

Goldman:

She was for a while, but then when Jerry Brown left, she left. The day he ran for president, she was gone. So it wasn't too much later.

4-00:24:21

Meeker:

And do you know what's happened to her?

4-00:24:22

Goldman:

Yes, but I'm not going to tell you because then you'll figure out who it is. I'm not going to do that. All I say is that she's held various political offices in San Diego.

4-00:24:34

Meeker:

OK.

4-00:24:35

Goldman:

And I have had interactions with her because she ended up back in Sacramento in a staff position. And that's as far as I'm going to go.

4-00:24:46

Meeker:

All right. [laughter] Well, then let's maybe talk a little bit about your life in Sacramento. You were married during that period of time? And when did you leave? I guess about 1982—is that right?

4-00:25:03

Goldman:

'81.

4-00:25:04

Meeker:

'81, OK.

4-00:25:05

Goldman:

So we were there for nearly six years. Pretty much six years. So we lived in several apartments and we merged together. And I'm trying to remember if

we moved. I cannot remember if we bought our house in Curtis Park before we were married or after we were married. But Curtis Park is a pocket neighborhood between Interstate 5 and Highway 99 on the south side of Sacramento. And we loved it. We absolutely loved it. Marcia had a great job at a school, teaching and working with orthopedically disadvantaged kids. And just, we had a lot of good friends. Sacramento is a pretty neat area. I mean, the summer is hot, and evenings are warm. We had a little hot tub in the back, and a little deck, and the garden area. It was a delightful house—small, but absolutely delightful. We loved it. And our son was born there. And, you know, I just thought, “This is as good as it gets. This is really nice.” And so, when I left and we decided to move, I decided we were going to come back to the Bay Area, she was not happy because we really had some dear—we had neighbors who we were fond with, made a lot of friends through the leg analyst office, and we spent a lot of time doing stuff. I played a lot of racket ball with one guy in particular. And, you know, people were having kids about the same time. It was just a good home life. It was a great way to start out as married and with a family.

4-00:27:02

Meeker:

Did it seem like a company town, though? I mean, as far as the—

4-00:27:06

Goldman:

Yeah, in a lot of ways it is a company—it was; it is not now. I mean, it’s really changed a lot. The hardest part was you had to travel a couple hours every time you come to the Bay Area, and a couple hours to go to the slopes. So, you know, you were sort of in the middle. But we found plenty to do and I think, as I said, it was a fine way to start off. Having a relationship, starting a family, and we enjoyed it a lot. And there are parts that I do miss. I really liked our little house. And Sacramento’s kind of an interesting place. Yeah, it’s a company town—it was certainly then—and it didn’t have, culturally, the best of stuff, but it wasn’t awful. It wasn’t great. Old Sacramento started being developed when we were there and we really enjoyed that—in fact, that’s where I proposed, at some defunct Chinese restaurant. But there was appeal in addition to the environment—good restaurants, lots of music, and I’d say a lot of good friends.

4-00:28:26

Meeker:

So what was pulling you back to the Bay Area?

4-00:28:29

Goldman:

Well, I thought it was time for me to leave Sacramento because I wanted to get away from it. I mean, it was too political. You know, it got tiring after a while.

4-00:28:42

Meeker:

And you were done with the politics?

4-00:28:43

Goldman:

Absolutely. I said, "That's it." But it was tough, taking what I thought I'd developed as my experience in Sacramento, especially being a part of the Jerry Brown administration, nobody wanted to hire me. Nobody. There was one position that I saw at Syntex that was a governmental affairs position, and I never got that job, which was too bad. And I basically was not working and we had a child. And we had bought a house. At the time, you know, I wouldn't say money was tight; I certainly had money. But it was, like, we had this old house and then we got this house, and we had to remodel it. And we were living at my parent's place down in Atherton. And it was like, if you look at the list of—and my grandfather passed away during that period of time, to whom I was pretty close. And if you look at the reasons for divorce, I think we filled four out of the top ten easily.

4-00:30:01

Meeker:

And this being the early 1980s, there was a sharp rise in not only incidents but also the social acceptance of it.

4-00:30:12

Goldman:

I guess there was, but, you know, we stuck it out. You know, I was looking for work and Marcia was doing some work and raising our son at the time, and things were OK. I mean, we spent six months at my parent's home. They were really—my mom in particular was really good about it all for the most part. But yeah, it was OK. It wasn't bad. I mean, she was happy being back in the Bay Area because she was very close to her parents, but she was not happy about losing that position up in Sacramento with the school.

4-00:30:55

Meeker:

Why do you suppose it was so hard for you to find work?

4-00:30:59

Goldman:

I think it was Brown. I swear I was branded. And finally, I really wanted to get back into for-profit, because I figured, OK, it's time to get a real job. Or something like that. Something more traditional. And there wasn't anything that excited me. So part of it was me. You know, it was like, "What is there out there?" And government affairs was somewhat attractive, but those positions were not really available then. It wasn't a big deal. And then I was—which I think we have to save because it's too long and involved—a spouse of a relative of mine on my dad's side asked if I would consider joining this kid's clothing chain that he had developed. And that was where I eventually ended up, but there's a lot of history about that. How much time do we have?

4-00:32:09

Meeker:

We've got about fifteen minutes, ten to fifteen minutes.

4-00:32:12

Goldman:

All right. At least I can get started.

4-00:32:13

Meeker:

Yeah, let's get started on that.

4-00:32:23

Goldman:

The name of the firm was Jamboree, not to be confused with Gymboree. Jamboree. And this couple started it. Actually, the daughter of one of my dad's cousins. And the idea was to do something called off-price, which was starting to be a big deal. Discounting brand-name clothing. And this is for kids from toddler, roughly, to about age 12. Very basic stuff, things like Oshkosh and stuff like that. The idea was to offer twenty to thirty percent off, sort of the concept that you see at Ross, and Toys 'R Us, and Kids 'R Us, and all that kind of stuff. This was really one of the very first. And the first store was opened on Geary, here in the city. And it was hugely successful. There was people streaming in and out, and streaming in and out. And the owner of the store—

4-00:33:41

Meeker:

What was the business model for offering—

4-00:33:44

Goldman:

I don't think there was a business model to start with. That's part of the problem; there was no model.

4-00:33:48

Meeker:

Well, there was a notion that—

4-00:33:51

Goldman:

People would buy things. You know, they understood that they wouldn't have the same selection in brand names, but these were definitely brand names. They were definitely twenty to thirty percent off retail. At that time, big department stores set a price, took a markdown when they had some inventory left over—that was it. There was no, you know, real bargain basement kind of ideas. So I think there was a business model that existed, which was Lowman's. You know, Loehmann's did this back in New York originally and it spread throughout the country. For adult women's clothing, and pretty successfully. I mean, they did very, very well. But the idea was basic fixtures. You know, not a lot of service. You come in, you see what you got, and that's it. What happens to be there happens to be there. And so there was a second store opened in Sunnyvale, next to Loehmann's, which was an interesting idea. A third in Walnut Creek. A fourth—what was the fourth? San Mateo. And then the plan was to add a fifth and a sixth. A fifth and a sixth were opened—one was opened in Sacramento, one was opened in Marin. And there were plans for a seventh. Now, all this expansion was occurring in a very, very short window.

4-00:35:27

Meeker:

When did you join the company?

4-00:35:28

Goldman:

I joined in—I have to work backwards on this. I joined in the fall of '82. So I've been around—I finished in '81, left in, I guess, the winter of '81 from Sacramento. So about eight months, I think—eight, nine months. And here are

all these plans being made to expand to a seventh store with two stores that had just come online, with no capital. Zero. All funded by operating income. And I was—you know, I didn't know the first thing about retail. I knew a little bit about numbers. And I'm looking at the numbers and I'm looking at the margins and I'm saying, "There's no way to be successful at this. This is killing us." And I started talking—now, you have to understand, there were basically four people in an office in San Francisco. I drove up every day. And then we moved the office to San Mateo. That was kind of part of the deal—you know, let's get to the back of the San Mateo store. Four people: the owner, the buyer, the owner's assistant—you know, basically the secretary—and myself. Four people running all this stuff. And we were operating in this little space in the back, and so we're pretty much on top of each other. And I'm told by the owner, because I'd started questioning and talking to the buyer all the time about, you know, "How are we establishing our pricing on this? What are we doing? Where are we getting money to pay for these goods that are coming?" On and on and on. And the holiday season is coming up, right? And so we had these conversations and the owner finally said—because he was out at the stores all the time—told us that the buyer and I could no longer talk to each other. Everything had to go through him. So, whoa, this is not a pretty picture. Well, we get to the holiday season. We've ordered clothing for a seventh store that has yet to open because there's no money to open a seventh store. So we've got all this inventory from that. Because the credit was so bad, we were so late on paying on all our accounts, that the manufacturers are holding our goods until after Thanksgiving. Now, that's death in retail. That's absolute death in retail. And we didn't get our goods until two-and-a-half weeks—for all the stores—two-and-a-half weeks before Christmas. I mean, it was awful.

4-00:38:21

Meeker:

How long had you been with the company at this point?

4-00:38:23

Goldman:

Three months. Three or four months. This is all new. I mean, this is all new, and I am in the middle of this. In the meantime, the owner who had serious problems tried to commit suicide. It turned out he had tried to commit suicide probably three or four times before, but it was more craving attention. I mean, his whole thing was looking at the world through rose-colored glasses. Had never dealt with reality. And so, we had a disaster. Then we had an absolute disaster. I mean, the whole outfit cratered, you know, because we had too much, and too late, and no money. And he disappeared. He absolutely disappeared. And we're trying to run this thing. You know, so the buyer and me were just scrambling trying to figure out—we're having some pretty serious differences of opinion. And I'm all of a sudden left with trying to run something I know nothing about. And in February of the following year, in '83, he killed himself. And I just want to say, let's just fold this place. You know, there are all these wonderful people; the staff was terrific with people, and the stores for the most part were terrific. But long story short, his widow

comes to me and—actually, I have to take it back. Before he committed suicide—I’m sorry, it wasn’t February, it was later in the spring. His wife and he had decided they were going to sell the business, but they were going through a divorce. That’s what happened, they decided on a divorce right after the—I mean, it was the most dysfunctional marriage I’ve ever seen in my life anyway. But he hired an attorney for his interest and she hired an attorney for her interest, you know, both dealing with me. I said, “This is cockamamie. This is nuts!” So we were negotiating back and forth, and all of a sudden he did commit suicide later on. I mean, that’s when I think we finally decided they’d sell it for \$1, but I had to assume all of the obligations which I had no idea, since I never got a full look at the books, how big the operations were. And it was a lot. And it scared me.

4-00:40:52

Meeker: How much? Roughly.

4-00:40:55

Goldman: I don’t know, but it was certainly hundreds of thousands of dollars. It just got worse and worse and worse. And we had no credit with anybody. We had no money.

4-00:41:05

Meeker: Bad credit, too?

4-00:41:08

Goldman: Oh, yeah. Late pay, no pay. I mean, it was like, why should I buy it? You know, my dad kept saying, you know, “You might want to think about doing this. You know, how bad can it be?”

4-00:41:21

Meeker: “Think about doing this”—and he was encouraging you to buy? OK.

4-00:41:24

Goldman: I’m not sure his advice was good. But then I didn’t know what else to do, and I figured, “Well, what could be the worst thing in the world?” I don’t know what could have been the worst thing in the world, but that was pretty bad.

4-00:41:39

Meeker: Well, at that time you were probably thinking the worst thing would have been Chapter 11 or something, right?

4-00:41:41

Goldman: Yeah, but there was nothing. There was nothing. I mean, we could have sold everything off and probably covered most of it and just said, “Goodbye.” Looking back on it, we absolutely should have filed bankruptcy and disappeared. But, you know, sometimes you get pig-headed and say, “Let’s just go for it and see what happens.” Let me wrap up with this because it’s a good story. I had to figure out a way to establish some kind of credit position with somebody. And in retail in particular, there’s something called a factor that buys your accounts receivable, basically. Lends against the accounts

receivable. And so I had to go to New York. I went to this one guy. The only guy—I mean, I had been trying with everybody, but he was willing at least to meet with me. And we sat down and made an agreement. I don't know how it happened, I don't know why he did it. But it saved us, actually. And we were able to build on that relationship and we eventually got credit with everybody else. And we reorganized. But I was pouring money into the thing like crazy because we couldn't meet payroll, and we had to buy goods, and for a long time, you know, I was still putting my hands in the business. And in fact did put money into the company of a smaller amount for years, and I finally came to a position six years into it, five years into it, whatever. I said, "OK, if we don't achieve this by the end of this year, by this month, by this week"—I lined up for the last—for the holiday selling season. "We have to achieve this, this, this, or else we're going to close the doors." And we came close. Really close. But we decided—I decided it was enough. And made up a lot of the outlays when we closed out—I didn't realize how lucrative it is to close stores. You make a lot of money when you're going out of business, and that's why there are a lot of firms around that latch onto outfits that are closing their doors. Because you make a lot of money.

4-00:43:31

Meeker:

You get rid of the inventory? Now, I know a lot of entrepreneurs in the early years of establishing some sort of business are not taking salary—were you?

4-00:44:02

Goldman:

Yeah, I was taking salary at the beginning and taking some, you know, modest amount later, even though it was kind of ludicrous. How come you can take a salary and then, you know, pay out to keep it afloat. But it was—you know, I basically didn't take much of a salary for most of the time.

4-00:44:16

Meeker:

Well, I think taking a salary keeps a spouse happy.

4-00:44:20

Goldman:

It was OK. I guess that must have been the motivation, I don't know. But it was the best learning experience I've ever had when it comes to running a business. By far. And that's why I say, when I went back to my dad the second time and was eating humble pie, because I really could see how important it is to learn a business from the very bottom and build that up. I never understood and never learned the buying side of the business, and that was my downfall because the financial and the marketing I could deal with, but not the merchandizing side. And for that kind of business, it's an absolute necessity. For knowing how to run that kind of business, it's to know those two parts—the financial and the merchandizing.

4-00:45:09

Meeker:

So did you shut it down or sell the business?

4-00:45:11

Goldman:

We shut it down.

4-00:45:12

Meeker: In what year?

4-00:45:13

Goldman: And I sold—I think that would have to be '86. Or '87, I take it back. It was '87, I think, because that's when I joined my dad's firm. And so it was early '87 because it was right after the holidays. And there was one store that was left that I sold to the woman who at the time became my buyer and also became the store manager of the Sunnyvale store. And that worked out great, actually. That was a big store. That was a really amazing place. And we had all our warehouse and distribution out of the back of it, so there was a lot of space that we were able to [inaudible]. But it turns out that when you're selling good leases—and we had about three or four really good leases—that worked out to be lucrative, as well as selling fixtures, furniture, and a lot of clothing. So it was kind of exciting.

4-00:46:15

Meeker: So in the end, did you feel like it was a wise decision to continue?

4-00:46:16

Goldman: Not financially, but from an educational point of view. And understanding a lot of things that have stayed with me today: how to work with people, motivate people, how to run a business. You know, I saw the things that I was not able to do well and learn from that a lot.

Interview 3: March 28, 2006

Begin Audio File 5

05-00:00:00

Meeker:

This is Martin Meeker recording an interview with John Goldman for the Jewish Community Federation. This is tape number five, interview number three. And let's just get started where we ended up last time, which is talking a bit about your transition from being an entrepreneur to being an employee of your father in the Goldman Insurance Company.

05-00:00:27

Goldman:

It was at the time that I joined. It was Richard N. Goldman and Company. And I think that was 1986, was when that—no, I'm sorry. I'm getting my own dates messed up. It was 1987 when I joined, because I was at Jamboree in between. And at the time it was called Richard N. Goldman and Company. And I think I mentioned that when I had initially approached my dad about being with the firm—and I thought too much of myself, and he didn't think I had enough experience, and he wanted me to start at ground zero, and I didn't want to do it—this time around, that's where I wanted to start, and that was important to him and important to me. So I joined and just did policy reading and review and analysis, to make sure that what was supposed to be delivered was delivered. And I learned a lot just doing the grunt work, which I think you have to do to understand something. That's what I missed in the retail clothing business, was I was not exposed to everything. I didn't know the business, the total business. And I realized that's why I wanted to start from ground zero.

05-00:02:07

Meeker:

How many people were in the firm?

05-00:02:09

Goldman:

At that time, we were at the Alcoa Building, and my guess was, we were sort of on the order of something like 45, 50 people. And it started growing—continuing to grow. When I was first there, there were a couple of people that sort of took me under their wings and were watching out for me and guiding me. It was interesting, because I felt it was important for them to feel comfortable with me, just for me, rather than being a son of the boss. But it was a pretty interesting culture there, that's for sure. It was unfortunately one where there was a lot of finger pointing, and somebody had to be blamed if something went wrong. And I really didn't like that. There wasn't an awful lot for me to do. The first year was basically doing all of this policy work, and then it was decided I could be an account executive, which was a little fast, but that was OK. So I had the responsibility for accounts, and everybody knew that you need to have a good account manager working for you to be a good account executive. And, unfortunately, I had sort of some castoffs, rather than somebody who would be a really good account manager. So it was really pretty tough on a few occasions.

05-00:03:40

Meeker:

What kind of counsel did you have?

05-00:03:43

Goldman:

Well, it was interesting. One of the things that was nice for me was, I brought in several accounts by virtue of people that I knew who wanted some help and knew that if I were there, I'd watch out for their interests. And it's kind of the way my dad was, too. I mean, he obviously knew a lot of people. He was tougher about it. I mean, as I think I mentioned, he was kind of laser-like. See somebody who was involved with the business, or with their personal affairs, that he really wanted to have as a client, and he just would not give up. I wasn't quite as focused as he was, nor stubborn; I think that's a fair way to put it. I mean, he just was dogged about it. He just kept going, and going, and going. So I had a different approach. So I just kind of invited people in and went well, you know that if you're with us, I'll be watching out for you. And that worked. So people were kind of impressed that I kept bringing in pretty small pieces of business at first, and then some larger ones over time. That was the fun part of the job. I mean, I like sales as much as anybody else. So that's how it was for the first two or three years.

05-00:05:19

Meeker:

When you think about developing business acumen, is it in sales, do you think, that you gained the most from this position? Or perhaps another area?

05-00:05:31

Goldman:

Well, I think it depends on the type of business. I mean, insurance brokering is a very client-driven business. So the first part is bringing a client in. The second part is taking care of them. And I remember that early on, there was a client, a hotel that was a client, the Villa Florence, and they had a major fire. It started in the kitchen, and it went through the first floor, and it went right up the walls and actually went from the seventh floor down. Now, it didn't destroy it, because they got in there soon enough, but the manager of our claims department called me up and said, "I think you should come down here." This is like 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning. You know, they had to go in, do the cleanup, do as much salvaging as they could of various things. But it was the first time I'd ever been somewhere that was significant where there was a fire, and I mean, you don't forget the smell. You don't forget what—the residue of fire damage and smoke damage. And just walking around, there's water everywhere. Oh, and just, you know, things just blistering off the walls, and all the damage. You know, they're still trying to salvage rugs, and so on and so forth. And part of it was taking care of the people who were staying there and finding them places to stay, and get them out before, obviously, their lives were in danger, but then finding a place for them to go. And so, it became clear to me that the real test of a broker is how they respond when there's a loss. And so I got to know the claims process pretty well, and kept saying, you know, that is the key to our future. It seemed pretty clear to me that people left when they were dissatisfied about service. If they were dissatisfied about money, the price, we weren't the right people for them,

because we did not position ourselves as being the cheapest. And it was my dad's philosophy that we provide service above and beyond the call of duty to the greatest extent possible, within reason. And that worked, and people—there was very much of a hands on kind of thing. And our account executives knew their clients very, very well. So definitely a service-oriented business. That was what it was all about.

05-00:08:38

Meeker:

This may actually be kind of asking you to repeat, perhaps, what you just said, but also thinking—you know, foreshadowing a little bit, when we talk about the JCF, and in your statements, when you first came on board there as president, about focusing on a customer service model of JCF. In other words, providing good service to people who are your clients. But in the context of, you know, your work for the brokerage, were you developing a notion, or an idea, or even a philosophy of what service meant and how you would provide that?

05-00:09:18

Goldman:

Was I developing a notion? Well, I tried to learn what a customer wanted. Why were they buying insurance? And one of the great things about the business is—and I think I mentioned this before—is the exposure that one has to all different types of businesses and all different types of situations, all different types of people with all different types of motives, is really educational and fascinating to me. Because nothing really fits a cookie cutter type of approach. It just doesn't work. You can't take, sort of—say, well, because you've got this, then this is what you need. Much more labor intensive to sit there and try to figure out exactly what risks is this entity being exposed to? And yet, that's where I felt the real service came in, is trying to figure out, OK, what are these people most worried about? And that was my orientation all along, is to keep asking questions, and kind of probe to see what's going on here.

The only time we ever got in trouble is when somebody was trying to save money. We were so wrong for that. When they appreciated the service—I remember several clients that came over because they'd tell these stories about, well, we had this loss, and we're having trouble dealing with the insurance company. I said, "Wait a minute, what do you mean, dealing with the insurance company? Why are you dealing with the insurance company?" They said, "Well, that's what our broker told us to do." "So what would the broker do?" "Pass on information to the insurance company." I said, "Anybody can pass paper." But that's not what the business is about. So, again, figuring out, what does the customer want, what are they looking for, and how can we help them? And that played off in different ways, including trying to change from a commission-driven structure to a fee-based structure, especially with our larger accounts, so that there wasn't confusion on who we worked for. It was important to me to make it clear that we, as brokers, represented and worked for the clients, not the insurance companies. Because

we're independent. But the way people pay a premium the commission is folded into the premium, so they never see their fee. So that's just some of the things that we changed a bit.

05-00:12:22

Meeker:

No, that's helpful. And, you know, perhaps a related question. And also perhaps foreshadowing some of this stuff we're going to talk about with JCF, is this notion of stepping into a leadership role in an institution, which your family had already held an important leadership in. You know, that's sticky. You wouldn't be the first person to have experienced, you know, difficulty or some trepidation approaching that, you know, trying to fill somebody else's shoes, and dealing with the inevitable comparisons that would happen. How did you approach it, in the context of your father's business?

05-00:13:00

Goldman:

That is a loaded question, isn't it?

05-00:13:03

Meeker:

Well, answer it however you will, but, you know, clearly it's something that you've thought about.

05-00:03:43

Goldman:

Well, sure. My wife didn't think it was going to work. So that was hurdle number one. She thought this was going to be a disaster.

05-00:13:15

Meeker:

Challenge number one, too.

05-00:13:17

Goldman:

I think it was *more* in her mind than just a challenge. She thought it was destructive and I would be very unhappy. You know, I sort of just did what I felt I had to do, and there was a moment, in time—I don't know if I talked about this: My dad used to take the account executives out to lunch, and he wanted to get kind of the skinny on what was going on. And he was chairman, and there was a president, but he didn't want to be separated. I'm not going to get into that whole relationship between he and his president, but that was a tough and difficult one for me, because this guy was obviously threatened, as it was still very much a family-owned business. Not exclusively, but to a very large extent. So my dad had a habit of taking account executives out to lunch, and one day—you know occasionally, I'd go along; one day he invited me. And we're sitting around having a conversation—not much of a surprise. People were being a little guarded in what they say, and so on and so forth. And, again, to some discussion, and I say something, and I just got slammed, and I was put down. And unlike what I usually do, I just didn't say anything, didn't react. And we came back to the office, and about five minutes later, I counted to ten, I went into his office, and I said, "I just want you to know, if something like this ever happens again, I'm leaving." He said, "What are you talking about?" And I recounted the incident. He said, "Well, I was just treating you like I do everybody else," and I said, "No, actually, you weren't. I

would have appreciated being treated the same as everybody else, because you treated me worse than my colleagues.” And I never had to say it again, and he never did that again, and it was like, that was kind of the transition from working for him as his son to working with him as a colleague.

And that was an important step, because that changed the dynamic quite a bit. It’s not like we didn’t differ in our points of view, and have some good, solid arguments and heated exchanges. But there was a different sense of respect. And that really did alter the relationship of working with him. So I still saw him as my dad, but I also knew that I had my own responsibilities to help this business, and I knew that he wanted me—he made it very clear, he wanted to have me move through much more quickly than I wanted to and cared to. And so it took a while, and when it was the right time, step by step, it got to that point. And, you know, the one thing that I can say is that there were clearly values of how one does business that we shared, that we still share to this day, about how you deal with people, and what your role is, and you know, the fact that your most important job is to be there when it’s tough.

05-00:16:47

Meeker:

Well, that’s, you know, one part of the equation about moving into a situation like that. There is also—you know, you mentioned the person who is still filling the president’s role, and I imagine—

05-00:16:57

Goldman:

And the others.

05-00:16:58

Meeker:

Yeah, there were colleagues, as well, who you would have had to interact with in a certain way and position yourself. How do you approach that?

05-00:17:08

Goldman:

Well, before I joined the firm, I went out to lunch with each of the account executives, because I didn’t want to walk in and just have them think, well, he’s just, you know, dad’s kid, he’s going to take it over. You know, he’s just going to be a direct line to his father, blah blah blah. Because I wanted them to know, number one, I’m independent from my dad. Yes, he’s my father, but I’m working in this company, not for my dad. Number two, I wanted to find out from them what they were concerned about. And it was unilateral, I mean, they were concerned about succession, they were concerned about the future, and they were concerned about new blood and new energy. Because this was a business that had kind of stayed where it was for thirty plus years. And you know, it just grew and grew and grew and grew and grew, but there wasn’t a sense of mission or clear direction about where do we—how do we get to the next level. I wanted to start building trust and start building—and hearing from them what I needed to do to earn their respect. So that actually—it was not exactly the same, but it was pretty close with most of them. And I made it a point to try to get to know everybody in the office pretty quickly and interact with them, just, you know, do the walk arounds. It was a different style. There

were some who—as I said, one felt very threatened and tried to undercut me. Probably at every turn, didn't know that I knew everything that was going on. I mean, it's not a big place, so people talk. There was another person who wanted very much to take advantage of where I was as a way of moving up the ladder. So, probably, more than one. And then, you have a collection of different people, it's like anything else; you get a lot of different people with different motives, and there was, unfortunately, a sense—kind of a we/they mentality. And this isn't unusual for firms of that era to have had. And I was trying really hard to make it more of an us thing, and that was not easy. It's hard to change cultures; I learned that real fast. Very hard, especially when it becomes entrenched, and we didn't have a lot of turnover. So—

05-00:20:02

Meeker:

What were the elements of the culture of the business that you wanted to change?

05-00:20:09

Goldman:

It was, in my mind, so top-down. And it all focused on my dad, and he was, you know, the white knight—a great example: he used to say all the time, it's so easy to sell. I mean, this would be what all you guys know, because it isn't so hard, but the people that were brought in were brought on to service, not to sell. And it's a different persona that you need for that. You need to be somebody who's detailed and watches out for problems and stays on top of things, and is not out there trying to sell. And there were a couple of salespeople—all account executives, everybody was an account executive, but there were some who could sell but couldn't service, and of course, they were the ones who kind of flipped the business over and over and over again. And I was trying to—I wanted to see this evolve into something a little more businesslike, if you will. From what I knew, and what my experiences were, just get a little discipline in the place, and have some standards, and have some goals, and so on and so forth. And there were no goals. There were no sales goals. There was no sales training. There was no training. People were just, you know, plucked off from other places, boom, there you are, do this. And we had this unfortunate situation where—we liked to call it the sore thumb mentality. You know, you do something wrong, bam! The thumb, you know. But nobody ever got credit for doing something good. That was very rare. So we did all sorts of things, like having parties to recognize people, and did something—that became very effective, and we really started growing. And I take no credit for that. The fact is that people who were out there doing the drudgery, and those who were out there banging the doors, and those who were there working by that point, when I did become president, you know, I really didn't handle many accounts. I was not good at that, not at all. And I knew it. So I just said, I'll open the doors, and I'll be there for the meetings, and you guys step in, and the only thing that you need to know is if you run into something, before it becomes a problem, you've got to let me know so I can help resolve it. That is the biggest issue that I met continuously when I was president of the firm. People would not tell me before it was too late.

05-00:22:55

Meeker:

Well, you talk about the difficulties of modifying the organizational culture. And the textbook one, of course, is the question of succession, when you have, you know, powerful individuals start it, and almost like a cult of personality developed around this person. You know, like you said, your father says, well, just go out and sell; it's easy. Because it perhaps was easy for him.

05-00:23:16

Goldman:

It was easy for him! It was a piece of cake.

05-00:23:18

Meeker:

But then, when he begins to transition out, and there's—you know, over a period of time, unless there's a tragedy, there's an understanding well in advance that the transition has to happen. How did you guys manage that transition, and would you, looking back upon it, consider it a successful one?

05-00:23:38

Goldman:

I think, actually, it worked pretty well. We started with almost a triumvirate, which was a mistake, as it turned out. Sort of splitting up some responsibilities each person had, and that was before I became the president, actually, but I kind of divided up the world. And that one person would head up the sales effort, and he's your prototypical salesman. And what I learned pretty quickly is, you know, salespeople don't know how to manage. So it was impossible. It wasn't going to work. He had to be sort of be pulled back and put back into his old role, and it was actually myself and one other person who, for the most part, were responsible for running the place. And we had some bumpy moments. We developed a management team, and unfortunately, the management team kind of deteriorated into allegiances. So we had some friction and some problems, especially with seeing where certain things were going. But overall, I'd have to say some things were going pretty well. Not ideal. I was still having problems with the person who was president, and tried to make his life easier, give him some level of respect, but he was bitter. You can't do much about that. My dad would shove his nose in every now and then, but, you know, he was chairman. It was fine. And I think we grew the business very well. I tried to bring in clients, and one day I sort of went through our client list, just to see how many were in some way related to presence, and I was—I was, you know, concerned there were a lot of clients that had been there for a long time. I was—I felt good about what I was able to do. And unfortunately, a lot of them aren't there now, not after we sold the business. So c'est la vie.

05-00:26:06

Meeker:

C'est la vie. Well, maybe we should wrap up this chapter of the business story, and can you describe why you ended up deciding to sell the business?

05-00:26:19

Goldman:

Sure. We had a group—I decided, after I ended up with all of the stock of the business, to then distribute it to certain key people, and there was a key group

of people that I felt were valuable. And, yeah, between our management team, and our shareholders, especially in discussions with some of our—with our financial guy, and some of our other key people, our EVP in particular, he and I—while we didn't always see eye to eye, we did talk a lot. And we always—we had discussions—we had laid out, like, a seven to ten year time frame when I first assumed the presidency, in talking about where were going.

05-00:27:18

Meeker:

And what year was that again?

05-00:27:20

Goldman:

Well, let's see. We sold the business in 2002, so this was back in 1995. And I think I had been president for probably four or five years, I think. And we started laying down a path, and we realized that we probably should look at an exit strategy. And I know this is going to take a little time off, but it's important. We either were going to sell, or grow the business and acquire, or do something. We were either going to be acquiring or be acquired. We could get to a certain point where we issued stock, but that, to me, was the same thing as acquiring, because we got to a certain scale. And to go public, which was a big thing back then, obviously; not so much now. But we had the seven to ten year time horizon that we had established for building the company, and one of the things that we looked at would be, was really looking at roll-ups, bringing like-minded brokerages together, and we actually went down that path with some partners who approached us. That guy who was considered a great insurance expert in the Midwest, who did a lot of consultation—

05-00:28:46

Meeker:

So regional mergers is what you were looking at?

05-00:28:48

Goldman:

No, it was national.

05-00:28:49

Meeker:

National, OK.

05-00:28:50

Goldman:

And we were trying to work with other firms. And, plus a guy who'd been very successful in the Bay Area in building businesses, of brokerages, of leading them, and then moving them and so and so forth.

05-00:29:0

Meeker:

When did you decide the current situation and the current format of the company was untenable? Was it just that size or—

05-00:29:10

Goldman:

It wasn't that it was untenable. It was getting to a certain scale.

05-00:29:11

Meeker:

OK.

05-00:29:12
Goldman:

And one of the ways we saw that was to roll up and we thought developing, really combining forces and becoming more of a national broker is to compete with the big boys. We saw the big boys, you know, the big insurance companies, the Marsh & McLennans, the AONs, as being our—we were competing with them but we were different, you know, a different league. And we felt like we could do something to get much more head on as competition. That whole exercise turned out to be a very expensive and very destructive exercise. It turned out that the guy in the Midwest—I guess I can say it—was nothing short of a crook. And he took my personal money and it was all for himself.

05-00:30:01
Meeker:

Wow.

05-00:30:04
Goldman:

And the whole thing blew away. And it was embarrassing to me. I had had some advisors who said, “Don’t go down this path. This is a mistake.” And I thought, “No, let’s give it a shot.” And it was a bad move. So we—I ate a lot of humble pie and then—.

05-00:30:23
Meeker:

So the mechanism of this was that you—?

05-00:30:25
Goldman:

The idea was a good one.

05-00:30:27
Meeker:

Well, so you were to invest in his company and you—

05-00:30:28
Goldman:

I had a good philosophy, bad partners.

05-00:30:31
Meeker:

OK. Well, what was the philosophy? How was it—?

05-00:30:34
Goldman:

The philosophy was one of building scale. Having like minding people who were other—major independent regional firms come together, share back room stuff. You know, really make it a much more efficient operation but still have their own personalities and cultures, and so on and so forth. And I met an awful lot of people, some of whom really impressed me, who, if I were still in the business I would talk with today. You know, and we actually ended up sharing a little bit of business and using our talents. But I realized one of the reasons that these large brokerage—regional brokerages—or large regional independent brokerages is because they didn’t want to sell it to anybody or deal with other people. So there was that factor as well. They wanted to be their own boss. But it was just not handled ethically. And that’s one thing I don’t stand for. When I realized what was going on, I was just—I couldn’t believe it. I was really in shock. So we went back to our roots and kind of

rebuilt what we had, because I took a lot of energy out of us. And we were not—we sort of threw out there, “Well, maybe we’ll listen to some people,” if they are going to propose because we were a hot commodity by then. We had really good numbers and revenue stream was golden.

05-00:32:06

Meeker:

And the context was good as well, right?

05-00:32:09

Goldman:

Context was good. This was the late ‘90s, so things were good. And even though things went to hell, you know, it was still good. But that was later. And then one firm came in and didn’t want to just buy assets. All the other ones did. They just wanted the assets. They didn’t care about the culture, they didn’t care about the people. It was pretty clear—I mean, they didn’t—they paid lip service to it. But one firm came in and said, “We want to replicate you as a model for our offices around the country.” Now, that might have been BS but it sounded good and I trusted them. And we went—we started doing the dance and got closer and closer and a lot of negotiations and they were not easy. We finally said, “OK, we’ll sell.” And I’m glad we did. I think all of us had issues with exactly where was this business going. As it turned out, the doom and gloom that I saw didn’t really pan out, so that was a mistake. But I think people were ready. We could continue along, but then what? What was the next thing? All this happened seven and a half years after we set our seven to ten year plan, which I found amazing. Absolutely amazing.

05-00:33:36

Meeker:

And this was one of the options set out initially?

05-00:33:37

Goldman:

Yes. We weren’t sure who. We didn’t want to go that path but that certainly was one of the options. So it was... I think that’s where I took the greatest satisfaction, is actually seeing us lay something out. It was not of my making, but just sort of see the directions that we could go and it actually came to fruition. Kind of amazing when you think about it.

05-00:34:04

Meeker:

What did your father think about what was happening?

05-00:34:10

Goldman:

He actually thought that the best time to sell is when you’re on top and to take advantage of it. On the other hand, this was like his fifth child. So it became tough the nearer we got to the actual decision point. But he had moved on doing an awful lot of other stuff by that point. Anyway, he just wanted to make sure that this was the right thing. I made sure he knew the key people and felt comfortable. And I absolutely ensured him that he was going to be doing—allowed to continue to do what he was going to do after the sale. That they were not going to touch him, because I wouldn’t have stood for it.

05-00:34:57

Meeker: So he continued working with some clients?

05-00:35:00

Goldman: No. He never worked directly with clients.

05-00:35:05

Meeker: OK.

05-00:35:08

Goldman: He still brought business in. He still was a point of contact occasionally if something went wrong. He still—he wanted to give his ideas to everybody. But more importantly, he had the same office and an assistant and the firm—the firm that bought us paid for that. They weren't going to touch him. That's what was important. That he had a home, you know. And that's what I insisted. That he not be touched in any way, because that was wrong.

05-00:35:40

Meeker: This was also a period of time in which you were ramping up your activities working for those non-profits—

05-00:35:44

Goldman: Right. Exactly. And that was one of the reasons to sell as well, because I had made a decision. I think I've talked about YPO in the past.

05-00:35:58

Meeker: I don't think so.

05-00:35:58

Goldman: The Young President's Organization?

05-00:36:00

Meeker: I believe you've mentioned it, but—

05-00:36:04

Goldman: Yes. Behind getting married, and having kids, and probably going into this business, that was the best decision I ever made. Because what's interesting about YPO is that it's not this rich boy's club. It's an opportunity for people who are heading up organizations. You have to be a CEO or a president or a chairman—an active chairman to join. There are certain parameters you must meet as far as size and so on and so forth. There's a social element to it. But the most important part of what it offers is the forum experience. The forum is ten to fourteen people and the purpose is to have a non-judgmental, totally confidential environment to share anything. Anything that you want. And they are there to be your support group. I think everybody should have somebody like it somewhere in their lives. It's so important to have somebody you can talk to and say, "I'm going—I'm thinking about this." I'm... You know, or "I'm dealing with this," or "I've got this issue in my personal life." I mean, it's not restricted to business at all. In fact, it's more about the person than it is

about the business, even though the business is where you become eligible. Because those are what the big issues usually are.

05-00:37:44

Meeker:

Perhaps with the understanding that for people at this level, in this organization, there's already going to be some, perhaps, built in conflict or difficulty between personal life and professional life?

05-00:37:54

Goldman:

Well, that's part of it but I think it's also—there's an old saying, "It's lonely at the top." That's probably the bigger driver. That there are things... You know, we're human beings. And, you know, you can be at the very pinnacle of your business but if you're not personally OK, or if you've got things that are eating at you because, you know, we all have our issues. And it was a gift.

05-00:38:21

Meeker:

How did you learn of this organization?

05-00:38:23

Goldman:

I was invited. I knew a lot of people in this chapter that was, you know, that's the Bay Area, but is mostly San Francisco down to the Peninsula. And there were fifteen people in it—or sixteen at the time. And I think I knew five or six. And a very good friend of mine that was in talked to me about it and I said, "Well, I don't run a business." And I wasn't president at the time. And they said, "Well, when you are, let us know." And there's a whole membership process you go through and it's—that was an interesting process I'll never forget but I was there for eight years, nine years, whatever and ended up being chair of the chapter and when I went through the experience, you know, the forums do rotate somewhat. At the core, though, it was really excellent. People were incredible. And I talked about it—the Jewish side of me was making me feel guilty about not working, but ever since my mom died, I felt like, you know, what am I doing in this life? And I said, "I'm in a perfect spot to do something beyond having a job and just feeling like that's what I should do." And clearly I had inherited from both sides this sense of obligation to the community and I threw out the idea that I think my future is to be in community work. And they were incredibly supportive and said, "If anybody should be doing that, you should be doing that. That's what you love." And they also made it very clear if anybody thinks that you haven't... Because I had that whole question, "Have I really been successful at business?" You know, definitely Jewish guilt. Have I really done anything—have I just been riding coattails? And from their perspective—and true, it came from me but they said, "Oh, my God, I wish more people had been as successful in business as you." You know, and they said, "You have nothing to prove." It was always, do I have something to prove. So that was sort of that seminal moment that made me realize, "OK, I'm transitioning." I'm going to dedicate my time to doing community work, which is exactly what happened.

05-00:41:02
Meeker: So that was—that sounds like an explicit decision you made at a certain point.

05-00:41:05
Goldman: I absolutely made a decision.

05-00:41:07
Meeker: What—can you date that to a year?

05-00:41:11
Goldman: Well, if I work backwards a little bit.

05-00:41:20
Meeker: Roughly.

05-00:41:20
Goldman: It's probably about 1997. 1997, 1998.

05-00:41:25
Meeker: And can you remind me what year your mother died?

05-00:41:27
Goldman: She died in 1996. So it was prickly, and it was probably right around, you know, right there. Yes.

05-00:41:34
Meeker: You know, I've read other interviews and it's been made clear there were some family difficulties preceding her death and immediately following that. And, you know, I mean, it's been recorded so I don't think we need to spend a lot of time on that unless you want to comment on it. I guess what I'm more interested in is how her illness and then her death, and there's going to be a lot of discussion about someone's legacy after they died, maybe influenced you, you know, your family life and your commitment to community.

05-00:42:10
Goldman: Oh, absolutely. I mean, that's—as I was saying, you know, her death—well, first I lost my brother in 1989 and then I lost her in 1996. And I started having sort of these inkling about, you know, what am I doing back after my brother did. But, you know, we had our own issues. When she died, I really stepped back and said, “What makes me happy? What do I enjoy doing? Should I be starting to look out a little more for myself and what I enjoy doing?” Selfishly, you know, which is not a—it's not an idea that comes really easily, again getting back to Jewish guilt. You know, saying, “I'm going to do this for me.” No, no, no. Your job is to help other people and so and so forth. But I really thought, you know, what do I enjoy doing? And I realized that what I really enjoy doing and always have, in business and in community work, is working with people. And I felt a lot of times the business interfered with that. And I enjoyed being part of community organizations because it was so fulfilling and I had the time to do it. I felt like I could make the time to do it even though at that point I had, you know, a growing family and I had a business

still running, and other stuff. It was the thing that I enjoyed the most. And I'm not sure exactly why but it was the thing that I enjoyed the most.

05-00:43:56

Meeker: You know, reflecting upon it, what was it about the business work of working with people that got in the way?

05-00:44:06

Goldman: It was that as much as I enjoyed working with people, the politics of the business, and sort of some of the things that were done and even so far as to say the drudgery of some of the work, I'm not always a detail person. In fact, I'm not a detail person. So that—those elements made it tough on me. I did not enjoy those parts of it. And yet, to be successful that's what it took. And I wasn't driven to, you know, to make a lot of money and to make this the biggest and the best business in the world. I wanted us to be very strong and I wanted us to treat our people well and give them enjoyment of what they were doing. But you can't do that with a lot of people and that was frustrating to me.

Begin Audio File 6

06-00:00:10

Meeker: How about before this period of time, what were some of the organizations that you did spend some time with?

06-00:00:16

Goldman: Well, when we came back from where we lived in Sacramento, as you know, and we came back here, we were in this young leadership group that the Federation supported down the peninsula, so that gave us exposure to quite a few different Jewish groups. I think it was a year later that I was asked to join Jewish Family and Children Services [JFCS], so that was in '82 or '83, something like that.

06-00:00:47

Meeker: As a board member?

06-00:00:48

Goldman: As a board member. And I was with JFCS for a long time.

06-00:00:56

Meeker: Why were you asked to join?

06-00:00:58

Goldman: Probably a good name. No, I actually met with Anita Friedman, she had just become the executive after a very rough period of time where the agency almost went out of existence. It was in bad financial straits.

06-00:01:17

Meeker:

Well, non-profit boards differ from organization to organization. What was the characteristic of that board? Was it primarily—was that board an honorary place for donors to reside, or was it a working board?

06-00:01:31

Goldman:

No. It was very clearly a working board of people who had a community presence. There wasn't at that time a strong development effort, because Federation still oversaw it. But I had had several members of my family that were in it before, so it wasn't that big a surprise. What did surprise me was, I think it was a year or two after I joined JFCS, that I was asked to be on the Federation board. That I didn't really expect. But I think I've served off and on for twenty-five years.

06-00:02:19

Meeker:

Why did you not expect an invitation?

06-00:02:20

Goldman:

I don't know. I thought I was doing fine the way it was, I think Federation wanted to reach out to the next generation, and did. It was fine, thought it was good.

06-00:02:35

Meeker:

What sort of expectations came with an invitation of membership on the JCF board?

06-00:02:41

Goldman:

On the JCF Board? I don't think there was any expectation that were articulated ever.

06-00:02:49

Meeker:

Were there any understood?

06-00:02:51

Goldman:

To give to the annual campaign, and to, I thought, help out on the campaign, and to use whatever knowledge you had or wisdom you had to help, but that was about it. [laughter] There was one where I think it was honorific in a lot of ways—

06-00:03:17

Meeker:

It's a fairly large board.

06-00:03:19

Goldman:

It's a huge board. I don't even know exactly how big it is, but I think it's something in the neighborhood of fifty-five or sixty people. That doesn't include any of the past presidents.

06-00:03:28

Meeker:

And the JFCS?

06-00:03:31

Goldman:

JFCS had twenty-five, thirty. Maybe a little fewer than that. But it was a struggling organization when I first joined, and I personally think Anita Friedman runs the best agency in the whole area. Not that I agree with everything, by a long shot, that she's done or does, but it's become huge.

06-00:04:02

Meeker:

So you first started participating with that in the 1980s. Would you discuss some of your activities for that organization?

06-00:04:13

Goldman:

With JFCS? Well, I went through various positions there—

06-00:04:22

Meeker:

You mean, different committees—

06-00:04:24

Goldman:

Campaign, Treasurer and so on, before I became president. I saw it expand. I can't tell you specifically, exactly, what I did, but as president I do know that there was one thing that struck me, and that was all because, interestingly it's sort of an intersection with business, we were approaching a client, and it was a major, major client and it was a prospect, and we talked to some of the key people about one part of their business, that's all we were interested in. Big banking concern. I got to know the point person on their side pretty well, and here was a woman who's not Jewish and one day she came up to me and said, "I don't know if you know this, but Jewish Family Services saved my life." I said, "I didn't know you were Jewish." She says, "I'm not." I said, "Really? How'd that happen?" She was married to a Jewish guy, they had a child. Her husband abandoned her shortly after the child was born. Here is a mother of a newborn kid, no resources whatsoever, no background whatsoever, no skill set to market, being a good housewife, and she was so distraught that she decided the only thing she could do was call her mother-in-law—former mother-in-law—who was just as furious at her son, and this woman said to her mother-in-law, "I don't know what to do. I have no money coming in." This guy just left her high and dry, and her mother-in-law said, "You should go to Jewish Family Services." And the East Bay Jewish Family Services, where this woman lived. She said, "But I'm not Jewish." And her mother-in-law said, "So?" And she did. And not only did they give her the emergency support that she needed, but they worked with her to develop her skill set, and here this person ended up as a vice-president of a major banking concern working with us. And I looked at her and said, "You have an amazing story to tell. Would you be willing to share this with our board of Jewish Family Children Services?" She said, "I'd be honored to." And from that point on, what I realized was, the thing that bothered me about the board meetings is you'd have social workers coming in and talking about their clients as "John X," you'd have somebody talk about a program, but you didn't hear from the clients. You didn't hear what—this is what it was all about. So, that's what we introduced. At every board meeting, we'd have a presentation from a client to

talk about their experience. Not to praise, but talk about what they went through so you get a sense, this is what this agency is doing in the community. And the breadth of the two, all over the place. I know you're going to talk about that sort of customer focus, that's where it came from. It was back to the same thing. It was just a very strange way that this evolved, but I still believe that today.

06-00:07:54

Meeker:

Can you explain the organizational structure of this? Is it similar to, for instance, the community federations that are autonomous to regions but are replicated throughout the United States?

06-00:08:05

Goldman:

You mean, our federation or just—

06-00:08:08

Meeker:

Yeah. There's a federation in the East Bay, and the South Bay, and San Francisco, and Los Angeles, and they're working on a very similar model.

06-00:08:17

Goldman:

There are territorial parameters to federations.

06-00:08:22

Meeker:

And Family Services is similar to this?

06-00:08:25

Goldman:

Yes. But not necessarily with the same geographical limits. And the agencies—originally, I think as you know, the Federation concept was born because the agencies needed money and suggested we need an umbrella fundraising organization that then distributes so we don't have all these little agencies trying to do it themselves.

06-00:08:54

Meeker:

That's brilliant.

06-00:08:55

Goldman:

And it worked for a long, long time. Until these agencies grew up, then they went out on their own, and then they were in competition. And the competition continues to be an issue today. So, ostensibly, in many people's minds, the agencies work for—are part of Federation, they directly report—if you took an organizational chart, that would be, in some people's minds, the reporting relationship. The agencies report to the Federation. That still exists today. I think that's ridiculous. Because they've grown up. They're independent. Do they really need—and we could go on a whole discussion—do they really need Federation, and that's the seminal question. Does a community need a federation? Well, it depends what the community wants. And I think that's the struggle that we're going through right now, is how to define what Federation does. But we'll get to that later on.

06-00:10:02

Meeker: All right. It's such a central question to what we talked about, so.

06-00:10:06

Goldman: It is. It's critical.

06-00:10:07

Meeker: Because when you look at other affiliation communities throughout the United States, and their organizations—their advocacy organizations, and their service organizations, there is a huge amount of competition for a limited pool of funds, and it seems to me the Federation concept is a unique one. The question is, is it unique in a good way, or is it flawed?

06-00:10:34

Goldman: That's a good question. That's the lengthy one right there, because we spend a lot of time on that.

06-00:10:42

Meeker: We can certainly feel free to touch upon that issue when we're talking about other issues. So, undoubtedly, when you were working for the JFCS, you were hesitant to talk about your contributions because certainly your work on the board is a group participatory contribution. But I'm wondering if you can maybe provide from your vantage point of a board member some of the important changes that happened in the organization during the period of your service, and then also your perspective on those changes.

06-00:11:23

Goldman: Well, JFCS has expanded into a lot of different areas from just being a social service and counseling organization. I think the first thing was that they defined—they looked at the various populations that they served, and one of the big ones—huge one at the time—were the Russian émigrés, and because Anita has a particular affinity with the Russian community—her husband has been a member of it since way, way back when—this became—and because we had significant influx of Russian emigrates in this area as well—became a matter of high focus for the organization, and there were a lot of services that were built around that. Bringing in the Russian community more into the fold while making it comfortable on their own—with their own customs and ways of interacting. There was also the whole issue of young people and the elderly as being key components of what JFCS was involved in. Adoption services became part of it, help at home became part of what we did. And there were services that were added, and added, and added. In some cases, and this is where difficulties arose, JFCS would go into an existing program and those that were—or be in competition with existing programs and kind of force a merger, an acquisition, or something like that.

06-00:13:13

Meeker: I'm wondering if you can maybe provide an example of how the JFCS started taking on some projects that were perhaps also already done by other organizations.

06-00:13:26
Goldman:

Well, I'll give you the one example that exists today. JFCS started doing student loans—or loans, I should say, emergency loans, not student loans—and they would do loans, occasionally some grants, but the loans had interest applied to them. Well, the Hebrew Free Loan Association saw that as a direct, *direct* conflict, and to be honest, it was and it is, even though its position is well-known, we're doing a different population, people should have choice, and on and on. It just swirled around and people were choosing sides, and getting upset, and divided the community. And the fact is, in most communities—most significant communities—the old Hebrew Free Loan Associations have folded into the Family Service Agency. So, this is the way it is. It's a Family Service Agency, it's there to provide aid, and this happened to be one way to do it. But, it never happened and it was like butting heads constantly, it was just—it was a perfect example. [laughter]

06-00:14:44
Meeker:

So this would have been, I'm guessing, your proposal that was brought to the board that was up for some discussion about

06-00:14:49
Goldman:

There was some discussion about it, and people felt that this is in direct competition, that Hebrew Free Loan had limited resources, we should have more out there. We're not just talking loans, we're talking grants, but it's all a matter of perception, too, so.

06-00:15:06
Meeker:

Well, was there a subsequent dialogue with the Hebrew Free Loan Association?

06-00:15:10
Goldman:

There was an attempt. It didn't go very far. It was pretty clear they wanted us out of that business entirely, and that happens. You get territorial too, and there was one thing I can say about JFCS, is that territory didn't always matter.

06-00:15:32
Meeker:

Was there ever an instance in which another organization was encroaching upon their territory?

06-00:15:38
Goldman:

Not that I can really recall. This grew from a little shrub to a giant redwood, that's probably the only way I can put it. This agency grew because Anita knew how to run an agency, and knew how to build an agency. It didn't matter what anybody else really thought, and that's where I think politically, to this day, she gets herself in trouble. Because more and more I think she sees Federation as an impediment rather than something worth anything to her or the agency.

06-00:16:29

Meeker:

And you had mentioned a changing relationship between—hinted at that changing relationship between her organization and JCF over the years, and am I right to assume that probably the vast majority of her budget initially came from the JCF. How did that change over the years?

06-00:16:48

Goldman:

They raised their own money. The JFCS and other agencies, but principally JFCS, started raising money in much larger quantities. The Federation tried to establish parameters as far as when agencies could solicit, could not do it around Super Sunday, could not do it around certain—like the closing of the campaign, and there were blocks of time saying don't raise money now because we need to make sure. And some people saw that as a capitulation to the agencies, still people believed we should be the umbrella fundraising organization for the entire community. Well, today, the annual campaign side for operating support, we're probably—the Federation's probably three or four percent of JFCS's budget. If you add the endowment grants that are made, then it goes up a bit more significantly. But this is the issue the Federation's dealing with today. If you have the haves and have-nots, how do you make a decision? What kind of rule? You can't just keep supporting everybody because then, since the annual campaign has not increased in real dollars, and yet these agencies grow, then the Federation support becomes smaller and smaller and smaller relative to their budget.

06-00:18:18

Meeker:

So for the JFCS, it went for roughly, or near one hundred percent of fund—

06-00:18:23

Goldman:

I don't think it was ever a hundred percent, there was a modest support and there was also governmental support which there still is today for many of their activities, but it was definitely the majority of the support down to what I just said, three or four percent.

06-00:18:37

Meeker:

Now, while you were serving on the board, I think this is important to the history of the JFCS. Was there a plan set out that there was going to be, for instance, a greater effort at development? What was leading, development or the projects? Was it primarily the entrepreneurial spirit of the executive director? How did it grow into a more self-funding organization?

06-00:19:07

Goldman:

I think that it was just the program demands. Meant, OK we've got unmet demand. I know one of the things that we did was track, statistically, the growth of the agency, and we relied on—there were statistics that showed how many people were approached but could not be served because we didn't have the capacity. So that led to the obvious, "Well, what do we do?" Do we want to keep it at that level? No, we want to grow. So, we had to raise more money, we had development goals, we had various functions, on and on and on. That's how it evolved.

06-00:19:54

Meeker:

Do you recall when the first Director of Development was hired?

06-00:19:56

Goldman:

No. I don't think it was that long after Anita became executive, I would say within three to four years, but that's a guess.

06-00:20:08

Meeker:

So you think she had a pretty clear understanding of the need to find—

06-00:20:11

Goldman:

She knew. But at that point, everybody was starting to realize that Federation could not meet their support needs, and either they had to stay where they were, or even shrink, or they had to start growing through their own efforts.

06-00:20:27

Meeker:

Was there—from someone who has participated in both organizations, you had mentioned the attempt by the Federation to limit the hours, or the year, or the period of time in which people could fundraise. Were there any other negative discouragements levied by the JCF on independent agencies?

06-00:20:55

Goldman:

Oh, you bet. [laughter] There's a lot of gnashing of teeth and stuff like that, but I also remember there was the big issue that got everybody upset, that continues today actually, is that Federation insisted—after I left JFCS—Federation insisted that every agency note in its letterhead, on its letterhead, in any public materials and media materials it is a beneficiary of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, Peninsula, etc., etc., etc. And JFCS steadfastly refused to do that. Steadfastly. Still does, won't do it. And I think there is a battle royal that started to build and continues today between JFCS and Federation, no matter what anybody says, there is a real divisiveness, and I've heard Anita say what she wants to say, and I've heard Federation say what it wants to say. I feel everybody should know that. And a perfect example is why should we say we're a beneficiary? That's not important to us. Why would you not put it down, unless it's a power struggle?

06-00:22:29

Meeker:

Do you feel like—and again, this is kind of moving ahead of that—but do you feel like the JCF has come to terms with its perhaps diminished position as a funder of community activities?

06-00:22:47

Goldman:

No. I don't think Federation knows what it really is there for yet. It's not defined yet, and so it hasn't come to terms because I think many people—you know, we talk about the Federation, and you can't say that—there are certain people who realize we have to truly redefine what Federation is to be relevant. This is—I'll get into it a lot, I promise you—because that is my big thing, is starting to get on the path of saying, “Why are we here? What are we doing, and why are we doing it? Are we doing this to make us feel better about what we're doing, or are we doing it to help people?” And help who I feel are the

customers, our agencies. And I still think there are a lot of people who feel that this is the central address for the community, this is the funnel through which everything should flow, and if you're not part of this then you're not part of the system, you're not part of the Jewish community in a federated sense. And that's kind of fruitless, having that kind of approach. I don't get—you could talk to other people about that one. [laughter]

06-00:24:08

Meeker:

One of the major activities that it seems that you participated in is the building of what became the Rhoda Goldman building.

06-00:24:18

Goldman:

Rhoda Goldman Plaza.

06-00:24:19

Meeker:

Rhoda Goldman Plaza, sure. Can you discuss what the motivation was to do that, and how they sold the project to you in a way that would make you buy in in the way that you did?

06-00:24:34

Goldman:

I was on the JFCS Board then, I was definitely on the Federation Board, pretty heavily involved. But that was almost a different thing entirely. It was clear because while being in Federation there had been lots of studies and lots of exercises focused on the community. Continuum of care from the ambulatory elderly to nursing facility. And Menorah Park had been built as a place for ambulatory seniors, and then you had the home. You had nothing in between. There was study after study done about where to locate something, where were we going to get the money, and what were we going to do, and finally Anita, who saw all this stuff, said, "This is crazy. We'll do it." That's how she operates. We've got a need, we're going to fill it. Period. End of discussion, that's what we're here for. And there was a collaboration with some outside health systems which had the hospital that had already been turned over, bought by UCSF, and they owned the property there and so there was a negotiation of building it and making this a very balanced approach. But it was shortly after my mom had passed away, and Anita had talked to me and then I talked to my dad and I said, "You know, this is exactly what my mother would like." And he agreed. It was the largest gift the fund had ever made at that point and time, and I knew that politics were going to be a problem somewhere along the line, I didn't realize how bad it had gotten because Mount Zion was a partner and yet they kept on being shoved a little bit more, and a little bit more out of the picture, and yet this thing got built. It was supposed to be an independent entity that was being a separate agency, not affiliated with either JFCS or Mount Zion, but its own board, own—it was going to run itself. That lasted about a year. As has been the pattern, JFCS eventually took it over, and that was not an easy thing to see.

06-00:27:44

Meeker:

What did it feel as an independent entity?

- 06-00:27:46
Goldman: I really do believe—when is this coming out? I really do believe that Anita did not want it to be a separate entity, ever.
- 06-00:28:05
Meeker: Well, in the newspaper coverage of it and Jewish Bulletin coverage of it, there's never a hint that it was going to be a separate entity.
- 06-00:28:17
Goldman: No, but the bylaws required it to be.
- 06-00:28:20
Meeker: But it was certainly—
- 06-00:28:22
Goldman: That's probably the best part. The only reason the Federation approved the project.
- 06-00:28:26
Meeker: OK.
- 06-00:28:27
Goldman: I mean, I understand there was a level of mistrust with one of the parties and they wanted to say, "No, no." It's going to be standalone. It's going to operate under the aegis of Scott Street Senior Housing Project. It's an independent entity from either Jewish Family Children's Services, which will have representatives and Mount Zion Health Systems, which will have representatives. And then Federation will pick other representatives. And there were a variety of actions that occurred to move it steadily more and more over to the JFCS side.
- 06-00:29:07
Meeker: For example?
- 06-00:29:08
Goldman: Changing the constituency of the board. I mean, as far as who "represented" the various entities.
- 06-00:29:18
Meeker: Well, this seems like a perfect case then, to examine the changing relationship between the agencies and the JCF.
- 06-00:29:28
Goldman: Yes. If you took something from way back, you know, twenty years ago to something like this, yes, that's where the comparison would be.
- 06-00:29:35
Meeker: Well, this is—this was built in the mid '90s, is that correct?
- 06-00:29:37
Goldman: Correct.

06-00:29:37

Meeker: Yes.

06-00:29:39

Goldman: Actually, it was after my mom passed away so, I think 1998.

06-00:29:44

Meeker: 1998.

06-00:29:43

Goldman: It was finished. And I served on the board for, I think, three years.

06-00:29:50

Meeker: OK. Well, you know, we could go and spend a little time talking about your participation in JCF, but it's clear that—also at this point in time the foundation, you're starting to play a role in that, as well.

06-00:30:04

Goldman: Well, my siblings and I had been on the fund for a long time. It wasn't just then.

06-00:30:10

Meeker: Well, I wonder if maybe you could just, you know, for the sake of the record and also your interpretation of it, just provide a little thumbnail sketch about the history of the foundation.

06-00:30:21

Goldman: Thumbnail sketch. That's going to be tough. I cannot remember when I officially joined the board of the fund. But I do know that my mom absolutely wanted to have a family foundation that was still the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund but she actively made sure that we were heavily involved in it and intended, you know, that we were part of the decision making process. It wasn't like the founder's decisions and so on and so forth. It was exciting. I thought it was great because there was a broad and yet defined presence for the Fund as far as what it did and where the interests were and what she was interested in and what my dad was interested in and so on and so forth. So, I mean, that was all good. We had a very good executive director, Duane Silverstein, who I thought had his finest moment after my dad came up with the idea of an environmental prize, which was a brilliant idea. I still think it's amazing that he came up with the idea. We were all involved in—I think I mentioned a little bit of this—being involved in the formative elements of the prize. But it was really Duane that pulled from so many different sources to find out how this could be positioned so that it would be attractive. He did a remarkable job. Truly remarkable. For which I'm not sure he ever got enough credit. But that was a split off from what the fund was going, which was social services, health services, the elderly, the environment, Jewish affairs. But a lot of it focused on seed money for new programs and projects where this really go things up and running. It was pretty daring. I mean, the Fund then was not afraid to be the first ones on the line. And I thought it was terrific. Very

exciting. And we had some quite interesting proposals that came through and plenty of banter about supporting them or not.

06-00:33:00

Meeker: Yes.

06-00:33:01

Goldman: It was a great experience.

06-00:33:03

Meeker: When you talk about reviewing proposals and having conversations about these things, is your participation primarily been as a trustee for its entire period of time?

06-00:33:17

Goldman: Yes.

06-00:33:18

Meeker: Well, can you describe maybe the structure of the organization and then what kind of role a trustee plays within it?

06-00:33:23

Goldman: Now or then?

06-00:33:24

Meeker: Well, the evolution of it, really.

06-00:33:28

Goldman: We'll see how far I can go.

06-00:33:31

Meeker: OK.

06-00:33:32

Goldman: Well, the structure of it then was we all, my parents and the children, were the trustees. I had an executive director, various program directors. It was never a large organization. And the staff would come to us with a docket similar to what is done even today and there would be a variety of proposals and we'd discuss them and, you know, usually it was consensual.

06-00:34:05

Meeker: So they would probably assemble a docket of proposals that were reasonable to be funded? In other words you probably didn't see—

06-00:34:12

Goldman: Only their recommendations.

06-00:34:13

Meeker: OK, all right.

06-00:34:14
Goldman:

They'd already sifted through and denied a whole bunch, you know, for whatever. But quite clear that, you know, that they were there to generate—they were the first line of review. And it worked beautifully. It was good. I mean, they had some occasionally quite active discussions and sometimes it was smooth sailing. We relied on the staff, obviously, for the knowledge and background. And you could sort of sense things that were appropriate to be supported.

06-00:34:58
Meeker:

You know, I'd kind of like to learn a little bit more about the work of the trustee in this instance. For someone who will eventually read this interview, it's often a mysterious process, by which a whole variety of projects come in, I imagine many of which are quiet well qualified to be funded. And these are primarily service-oriented projects, yes? Social services—

06-00:35:27
Goldman:

Yes. But there's capital projects as well, which always is a balancing act. How much do you put in of your resources to large, multi-year grants that then curtail what's available for program or project support?

06-00:35:50
Meeker:

But was it kind of a humane approach that you took? In other words a very subjective approach to reading the proposals and the family determined how they then feel or did they go through a lot of rigorous analysis? Was there a methodology that you applied to determine a—

06-00:36:06
Goldman:

I think it was a combination, actually. Clearly there was a humanistic side. What grabbed you, what excited you, what felt right. The analysis was primarily done by the staff. We had budgets, we had information about the project, we knew how much it cost, we knew how much funding was needed. I don't think there was as much definition of expected outcomes in evaluation methodology that is used now. Then, it was more like, OK, should we or shouldn't we? And if so, do we want to do it on the terms that are recommended or do we want to give more or do we want to give less? For a shorter period of time? Same period of time as recommended? More? Those were the kinds of issues that we grappled with. But we'd have a discussion about did this resonate? And everybody would speak their mind. You know, that was... I'm going to say it was just something that we felt compelled to talk about for one reason or another. Because some things would have lengthy common periods of that and some just—sounds good, we'll go. The key to me is having a really good staff that gets where you want to go. And when I've seen foundations go afield is when the staff drives the direction and it starts veering away from what the founders and/or the trustees want it to be.

06-00:37:46
Meeker:

OK.

06-00:37:45
Goldman:

So, you know, it's kind of a moving target. For the staff, it's kind of a check back to make sure and is this where, you know, and every now and then there's sort of something out there to test. Do you want to go over here? Either they'll say, "Yes, that's great," or pull them back in. If we were exploring some new areas, staff would generate white papers just to explore, throw out the questions we should ask of ourselves so that they understood more what kind of boundaries they had to deal with. And that, with other funds, is still being done today. The other funds that I'm involved in.

06-00:38:37
Meeker:

That's helpful and I'm wondering if I can get you to talk just a little less abstractly about what's at the center, and then what was at the fringe of your funding goals. You said you determined if something resonated or not.

06-00:38:55
Goldman:

Yes.

06-00:38:54
Meeker:

What is an example of a kind of project, whether it's specific or not, but a kind of project that was very clear that it resonated and there didn't need to be much debate about it?

06-00:36:06
Goldman:

Well, those are usually pretty boring.

06-00:39:10
Meeker:

Well, no. That's fine. I'm going to ask you next about the—

06-00:39:14
Goldman:

Of course you are. Here's one that I remember because there were so many that came across. I'm trying to remember the ones that really sort of stick out in my mind. I remember there was a proposal to help protect the mountain goats in Yosemite. And it seemed for a fairly small amount of money that this was going to have a huge impact of keeping this population alive and we knew how much my parents loved Yosemite and how much they loved the outdoors. And this just made sense. So there's an example of one no-brainer.

06-00:40:03
Meeker:

OK, good.

06-00:40:07
Goldman:

As far as the other side—

06-00:40:09
Meeker:

Yes.

06-00:40:11
Goldman:

I'm not sure my mom was around on this one but I remember the controversy, This was a staff proposal to work towards doing something about domestic violence. And it turns out that—

06-00:40:28

Meeker: Like a new program area.

06-00:40:26

Goldman: Yes, there's a new program area so a white paper had been developed and it turned out that a lot of the information and demand for doing something came from the trauma unit at SF General, because that's where people go. And I guess people were feeling like I got to do something about this and let's work with somebody on it. If I'm not mistaken, SF General was collaborating with an outfit that, I think, Werner Erhard started. I mean, you talk about the old EST thing going back and I don't know, it's like, whoa, this is really bizarre.

06-00:41:11

Meeker: The solution is I'm OK, you're OK.

06-00:41:12

Goldman: Well, whatever. I don't even—I mean, I think that's what it was. It was some collaboration. They were coming together. And it ended up being something called the Bell Campaign. And I'm not even sure what the bell was other than, I think, something—. I don't even want to go there. But there is some history about it. And if you wanted to know more you could check with the funds staff because I mean, I won't like—and I remember we were all saying the same—oh, my God, we're just barely making, you know, inroads into something like this and it's crazy. Well, that led to the Million Mom March and completely changed awareness about domestic violence. This thing exploded and then it collapsed because it over expanded rapidly and sort of imploded after that. So it exploded, it imploded. I thought it was a huge success because it raised awareness. I know my dad feels it was one of the biggest failures the fund had ever made because here was all this money we put in, gone. I look at it more as a venture thing. You're going to lose some.

06-00:42:24

Meeker: OK. So with the Million Mom March—

06-00:42:26

Goldman: Yes.

06-00:42:26

Meeker: Was this something that was developed from within or a funder came to you?

06-00:42:30

Goldman: Developed from within. Not the march itself, but the Bell Campaign was where the staff worked with these organizations and said what about doing something, raising awareness. Start looking at what this would look like, develop some alternatives, come back, green light, proposal. That's going into a new program area, that's exactly the way it went. So, you know, those are the fun ones.

- 06-00:43:08
Meeker: So, when you give your staff a green light on a white paper to move ahead in a new program area—
- 06-00:43:12
Goldman: Right.
- 06-00:43:15
Meeker: You know, for instance, on this one about domestic violence which you said was the Bell Campaign, is that correct?
- 06-00:43:19
Goldman: Yes.
- 06-00:43:20
Meeker: Then you start receiving submissions and you get this, you know—
- 06-00:43:26
Goldman: Yes, they do.
- 06-00:43:27
Meeker: They start and then they pass them onto you. But then there's—how was the Million Mom March proposed? Was it proposed?
- 06-00:43:34
Goldman: I think that it drew out of the Bell Campaign as something, as an idea. If we're talking about awareness and being effective in awareness, what about having a big public demonstration in Washington? And I don't know how much support we actually gave to that. We gave our support to the Bell Campaign and we kind of morphed into, you know something that got bigger and bigger. As I said, grew. It mushroomed faster than it could handle it all and then culminated in this activity which led to tremendous notoriety. Not to the fund but just the whole issue, which to me was what it was all about. That was what we were supposed to—isn't that what we were supposed to do is, you know, help get people aware of things and expose them and be successful in that way, too?
- 06-00:44:32
Meeker: Well, I imagine that's a discussion, or question that you would have asked with your fellow trustees after the—
- 06-00:43:40
Goldman: Afterwards, yes. And that's where some differ from others.
- 06-00:44:45
Meeker: What are the other opinions then?
- 06-00:44:47
Goldman: Well, it was either, "Yeah, we threw all this money away." Or, "Yeah, we did generate more awareness and this led to some, you know, gun laws." It restricted the availability of handguns more and more, which is clearly what's

happened. And so I said, “throw away the thing?”—*my goodness*, this is exactly—if you think that a foundation should be involved in any way, shape, or form with advocacy, if you agree that it should, this is a very successful effort.

06-00:45:21

Meeker:

Was there any question among the trustees about the degree to which it should be involved in advocacy?

06-00:45:25

Goldman:

Absolutely. That’s what makes it interesting.

06-00:45:31

Meeker:

Because, you know, it seems from my knowledge of the Foundation that advocacy is at its core, that that would be an agreed upon value. It’s just how advocacy manifests.

06-00:45:41

Goldman:

Yes. But most people look at advocacy as promoting a specific position on an issue. And is that the role of the Foundation or is to support programs that help people but aren’t promoting an issue? And that’s where the difference really comes in and where you have to sort of say, “Well, why are we doing this? Is it simply to fund organizations and we’re not going to get involved in the politics?” Or are we going to say, “Wait a minute. We stand for these ideals. Advocacy means that we act on our ideals.” I prefer the latter. I’m not saying that’s all we should do. There’s a balance point. I can’t tell you exactly what that is but I think advocacy—if one is being true—if one’s established, you know, the principles of why you exist as a foundation, then to promote those is an integral part of the activities of the foundation.

06-00:46:51

Meeker:

Well, you said that you don’t exactly know what the balance point is.

06-00:46:54

Goldman:

I think you nailed me on that one.

06-00:46:55

Meeker:

—which kind of surprises me because you would think that a foundation would actually have that set. So for instance, we’re going to give this much to services and we’re going to focus this percentage on advocacy.

06-00:47:10

Goldman:

There may be some that do that. I’m not really aware of any. I think it’s a matter of subjective, you know, degree—or subjective decision on what’s agreed.

06-00:47:25

Meeker:

Is there an objective degree to which a certain amount of funds are allocated toward certain interest areas, for instance?

06-00:47:33
Goldman: Yes, absolutely.

06-00:47:35
Meeker: OK.

06-00:47:36
Goldman: Yes. I know we went through this often so we'd have targets, you know, and when things got a little out of whack, we went through an exercise of saying 10 percent will go toward senior services, 30 percent to Jewish affairs, 25 percent to the environment, and so forth. And several other foundations that I've been involved with have done the same thing. And it can't be an exact science and it's skewed because sometimes you count capital gifts and that throws everything off. But I do think it's a good discipline because when you start seeing it trending away, either too high—above or below—if it goes below you start wondering, "Is this really an important area to focus on?" And if it's getting higher than what the target is consistently, then I think you are concerned about are we really doing—are we setting the wrong target? Should we be doing more of this? We obviously are, but should that be codified?

06-00:48:41
Meeker: What are some examples of changes in areas that you've perhaps moved away from and then areas in which—?

06-00:48:49
Goldman: Well, maybe not too much to this particular foundation. But I know with another foundation, citizenship, whatever that means.

06-00:48:59
Meeker: OK. Well, in academia that's like a million dollar word right now.

06-00:49:03
Goldman: Exactly. Well, I'm sure it is now. But, you know, this was—in this foundation it had been an issue for a long, long time.

06-00:49:12
Meeker: What foundation was this?

06-00:49:12
Goldman: It was the Walter and Elise Haas Fund.

06-00:49:13
Meeker: OK, your grandparents'.

06-00:49:15
Goldman: Haas Senior, yes.

06-00:49:15
Meeker: Yes.

06-00:49:16
Goldman:

First of all, I found it very hard to be clear exactly what was meant by that. But I think what I got a sense was it was to support programs that permitted individuals, especially those new to this country, to be participants in the civil process. So being full-fledged citizens, feeling that they are. And we watched this, you know, it was some target of 5 percent. And it kept dropping and dropping and dropping. And finally, we all sat there and said, "What are we doing?" You know, exactly what is this—what does this mean? And so we flipped it around and started looking at it as more community involvement, which was, I think, why it was intended. Citizenship was just the wrong word and denoted the wrong things. It was very hard to define, whereas fostering community participation and involvement and active presence, in a variety of different areas, was kind of a subset to the key areas of support that we've developed for the Haas Senior Fund. So that's just an example of one that kind of disappeared.

06-00:50:42
Meeker:

OK. Well, in the context of the Goldman Fund, then, are there fields that that has happened to, that have sort of been moved away from, and then some that perhaps have grown?

06-00:50:51
Goldman:

Well, what was happening was that the environment was growing, and it grew even more because of the process. So that was a really big change that affected everything. I think, to some degree, elderly services, since my mom has passed, I think has diminished over time. Clearly, Jewish affairs has risen considerably.

06-00:51:29
Meeker:

Why?

06-00:51:30
Goldman:

I think because all of the children really wanted to see the growth and felt that we weren't doing enough. And at the same time, we did not have a specific Israeli program, which we instituted. That also grew quite a bit. So those two—actually, domestic Jewish affairs and Israeli activities, became larger and larger over time. In fact, quite a bit. So, something had to suffer. As that percentage grew, other things became less important.

06-00:52:10
Meeker:

And sort of a follow-up on some of that, and it's almost 4:00. But, I guess, the last question for today is looking at foundation, there's been at least three generations of Haas and Goldman family foundations. Will there be a John Goldman foundation? I mean, do you anticipate a point at which—

06-00:52:29
Goldman:

We already have a foundation.

06-00:52:30
Meeker:

Oh, really?

- 06-00:52:31
Goldman: Yeah, Marcia and I have our own foundation.
- 06-00:52:32
Meeker: Oh, I didn't know that. OK.
- 06-00:52:34
Goldman: Well, we set it up a while ago, and we decided we wanted to have our own foundation. We have, actually, three giving structures. We have the private foundation, John and Marcia Goldman Foundation. We have a public foundation called the Serrano Foundation, and then we have our philanthropic fund, at the Jewish Community Endowment Fund. And the philanthropic fund is used primarily for our annual gifts, as well as what we call enabling gifts, which are usually in honor of individual events, where we want to have a one-time gift to recognize somebody. The Serrano Foundation—
- 06-00:53:30
Meeker: A little more on that endowment. So those gifts are the gifts that go specifically to the endowment, to the JCF, and then to the agencies and JCF funds?
- 06-00:53:38
Goldman: No. It's not limited to Jewish agencies. All the philanthropic funds and the endowment fund are used—well, recommendations are made to the endowment committee and to the board. Only the endowment committee and the board can approve the distributions. But there are recommendations made, which are usually followed. Occasionally they're not, because it could be that it's not a 501(c)(3), or something like that. Or maybe a lobbying organization, all these things that you can't fund through a philanthropic fund. But it's for support of both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations and activities.
- 06-00:54:29
Meeker: So it's not money that goes to the Jewish Community Endowment.
- 06-00:54:32
Goldman: No. It resides in the Jewish Community Endowment Fund; it is managed by the Jewish Community Endowment Fund.
- 06-00:54:37
Meeker: All right. That was something I was going to ask about later on, but now you've clarified—
- 06-00:54:39
Goldman: Now you're really going to get into the complicated structure of what we deal with. The Serrano Foundation is a public foundation. I mean, there are certain rules by which public foundations are guided, including the fact that the majority of board members are not to be part of the family, or the individuals who developed it. But its purposes are determined in any way that that board sees fit, or the trustees see fit. For a long time, we made that kind of the catchall for everything that was major and not annual, that our private

foundation did not do. Our private foundation was designed—we decided we were going to have a primary focus, and that was to support needy and disadvantaged youth in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. That's it. And the reason is a simple one. We felt that, especially when we established it, everybody thought that everybody living on the Peninsula was rich. And we knew better, and there was very little support for—or there was at least the belief that there weren't a lot of indigent needs out there, or indigent people with needs, especially in the mid-Peninsula. So we said, yes, there are, and we're going to do some of this stuff. Now it's become a little more flexible, but that's the one—Serrano Foundation has kind of become more of a shell, and the John and Marcia Goldman Foundation has grown. And that's what we've been—we have our own executive director, our kids—well, one of our children is a trustee. The other one hasn't agreed to be a trustee yet. But yeah, we have our own foundation.

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Begin Audio File 7

07-00:00:53

Meeker: What we're going to do with the remainder of today and Monday is talk about the JCF work, which is—

07-00:01:09

Goldman: I would hope so! That's the point.

07-00:01:12

Meeker: Well, I think we've talked about it tangentially, a bit. And so what I really just want to start out with is, perhaps, get a description from you—according to my notes, as early as 1981 you joined the Leadership Development Council.

07-00:01:27

Goldman: Yes.

07-00:01:28

Meeker: And can you describe that council and the work that you did with it?

07-00:01:40

Goldman: It was one of those efforts, back in the late 70s and early 80s—I think that was actually the second year of trying to bring young members of the Jewish community together, as a way of getting to know some of the issues and factors of the Jewish world a little better, and start, through education and understanding, cultivating them to be some of the leaders of Jewish organizations going forward in the Bay Area. This group was solely on the Peninsula. It was the first time that one had been designated for just being on the Peninsula. And we had, oh, my goodness, I think something like five or six couples. And it was a great way for us—Marcia and for myself—to actually meet some people, some new people, especially since we had just move from Sacramento. And it was a great way to connect and talk about shared issues, and you know, some we stay close with, still. And—

07-00:02:56

Meeker: How did the issues of interest to the JCF come into play in this group?

07-00:03:02

Goldman: They arranged for the meetings, and we had a speaker at each of the meetings, a little social time as well. And then, on our own, I think we had a couple of dinners, just because we liked everybody and it was fun. But, what Federation did was bring people to talk about a specific issue, whatever it might be, whether it be Israel, or at that time Soviet Jewry, and what was going on. What was happening with anti-Semitism at home. Obviously, talking about the Federation and its role, and so on. There were discussions about the various agencies and what they do. So it was—it really was meant to be educational and provocative, and there were some very provocative presenters, as well, so there was a lot of discussion.

07-00:03:57

Meeker:

For instance, do you recall any of those that particularly stick in your mind?

07-00:04:02

Goldman:

No, I just think that there were a couple of times—I don't remember specifically, but I do know that there were a couple of times where we had some pretty heated and intense conversations going on. As I recall, a lot—one that sticks out, I think, was the whole issue about anti-Semitism. And I think the scenario that was presented to us, just to encourage us a little bit, was kind of a doom and gloom one. And most people in that group hadn't really experienced anti-Semitism, ever. So it was like, "What are you talking about?", you know. There were also issues of—I think, as I recall, some of the hot buttons were issues around intermarriage. There was almost some Torah study that was part of it, interspersed. I mean, it was a pretty rich experience in a lot of ways.

07-00:04:56

Meeker:

It sounds to me like this council experience would have been maybe one of the first times that you really sat down and thought about issues of central importance to the Jewish community, and how they related to your life.

07-00:05:12

Goldman:

I don't even know if I thought about that then, but it certainly spurred an interest in saying, what's going on out there, you know? I mean, it was interesting. And yeah, you did start thinking, I think, that may be a fair statement, of where do I fit into all of this?

07-00:05:28

Meeker:

An opinion forming.

07-00:05:29

Goldman:

Yeah, well, at the very least—yeah, I think you're probably right, because having some of these opportunities to learn more piques your interest, and you're thinking about what was going on, and I probably did form opinions after that.

07-00:05:51

Meeker:

Well, so, you know, as an example, the question of anti-Semitism. How did what they were educating you about influence your thoughts on, you know, how widespread anti-Semitism is, or isn't?

07-00:06:07

Goldman:

Well, I haven't had a lot of experience personally. But hearing that, some of the stories that were told and some of the things that are going on, it makes you think, you know, there's still a lot of people out there who are anti-Semitic. And it kind of got me thinking about, well, why? Because here we are in the melting pot, and especially in this area, you sort of think, how can anybody be prejudiced at all, living in this part of the country or the world? But there is a reality out there, that it's kind of hidden, and you know, it was something to watch out for. And just not—I almost think, in a strange way it

made you feel, I can't really trust too many people automatically, outside of the Jewish community. Which is not a great thing to end up with, but it was—you know, that's sort of like—being on guard, I guess, is a nice way to put it.

07-00:07:11

Meeker:

You know, I think younger people, when they are introduced to concepts of, you know, discrimination, whether it's religious or racial, they think of it in the most glaring examples. You know, Jim Crow, or slavery, or something like that, or the Holocaust as an example of anti-Semitism. But there's not always a developed understanding of those kind of implicit or institutional forms of discrimination. Is that something, maybe, that you were coming to understand in this context?

07-00:07:45

Goldman:

Yeah. I mean, it's true, unfortunately, even today, that there are certain country clubs, you know, in the Bay Area that really don't let anybody who's Jewish in, or certainly anybody who's overtly Jewish. And it's kind of interesting, because you sort of think, what is this? You know, why would anybody be that way, especially in this day and age? And yet, it's sort of like hanging on to a belief that somebody has been brought up on, or has been passed on from generation to generation—I mean, it's just—or just, you know, this whole sense, I don't know. I don't know.

07-00:08:30

Meeker:

What about, for instance, other issues that you have mentioned, like Soviet Jewry. What was the question, what was the controversy?

07-00:08:39

Goldman:

Well, no, it wasn't so much controversy. It was more about—especially that time, there was a significant exodus of Jews from the Soviet Union to Israel and to the United States. It was the beginning of the flow that went right through into the 80s, and it was something that I think was being brought to our attention that this is something that's happening, and it's going to change the dynamics of the community, and it's going to change the relationships between the Soviet Union and Israel and the United States, etc., etc., etc. I mean, it was more looking at—speaking about the facts and what was going on, and letting us understand what was going on, and then projecting to where one might expect things to be different, because of immigration and so on. That's pretty much what happened.

07-00:09:36

Meeker:

So what were the predictions, for instance, about how the Jewish community in the Bay Area would change?

07-00:09:41

Goldman:

Well, it was going to be a real matter of, do we have the social service network to support an influx? In other words, who's going to be responsible? What are the needs? You know, is this—at that time, it was almost like just sort of sitting out there, things will have to change, but there wasn't discussion

about exactly what that change looked like. And now, looking back on it, I mean, it's been pretty unbelievable, that there's been a large amount of change to the community, simply because of the number of Russian Jews that have immigrated just to the Bay Area.

07-00:10:14

Meeker:

Well, I think we'll talk about that more in the context, maybe a little bit later, in the 1990s and so forth. And when you went to Moscow and Uzbekistan, for instance. But intermarriage issue, maybe we can touch on that for a second, in the context of, you know, when you start exploring these ideas in the 1980s. Do you recall what your opinion was, if you had an opinion, before you became integrated into this particular circle?

07-00:10:49

Goldman:

I mean, I always thought that anybody should marry anybody they want. And I happened to marry somebody that was Jewish, and the funny thing is, all my siblings did, too, which is not only rare in our family, I think that's pretty rare in almost any family, these days, anyway. But I always felt like, you know, if you fall in love with somebody, it just so happened that I thought—now, I'll probably—I mean, I never even gave it a thought, because I certainly dated women who were not Jewish, quite a few. Most of them were not Jewish, and yet, when I met Marcia, it was like, you know, that's who I'm going to marry. So it just happens she also was Jewish. And I mean—

07-00:11:38

Meeker:

Was it a “just so happens”, or that—

07-00:11:40

Goldman:

Not under the—given the situation, but that's a whole 'nother story about how we met, and everything else. You know, you're meeting at a wedding, and most of the people there are Jewish, and she certainly is. And so, that's how it happened. But anyway, I think, at that time, that was probably the first instance that I heard anything about how intermarriage could cause the Jewish people to disappear. Just from a wild generalization that this was a force. And I said, oh, come on. You know, we've survived an awful lot in the last several thousand years, so I don't believe that's going to happen. But it did make me aware, and did it change my attitude? Absolutely, but that's something that I wouldn't mind talking about later, as far as what I see, through having been at Federation and beyond, too. Because I think it can—intermarriage could destroy the Jewish people, depending on how you approach it. And unfortunately, I think some institutions have approached the whole issue of intermarriage in exactly the wrong way. But we'll hold off on that one, unless you want to talk about it now.

07-00:13:06

Meeker:

Yeah, let's just pursue it now. I'd hate to drop the train (of thought).

07-00:13:11

Goldman:

One of the national organizations—and I'm not going to mention who it is—about four or five years ago came out with a pronouncement that intermarriage should not be accepted. And I think this was a time when there were the beginnings of various studies about the effects of intermarriage, and this was a fairly liberal organization that came out and made this pronouncement. And this was when I was president of the Federation, and I was incensed, and made my points, not public, but I talked to the individual who was the regional officer for this organization. I said, how can you say—this is like throwing out the opportunity, just tossing it out the window, because my experience shows that a lot of non-Jews who marry Jews start, first of all, accepting and even embracing Jewish values. And second of all, a pretty good number convert. And when they convert, they're more Jewish than their spouse. And if anything, this is an opportunity to grow, you know, our numbers and bring—you know, get the value system in place beyond just our tribe. And I was just astonished that instead of taking this as a negative, the people weren't thinking about, let's embrace non-Jews, welcome them to the tent, and show them the richness of Jewish life, and let them make their own decisions. At the very least, it will give them an understanding, so when the kids come along, at least they're going to have some sense of what it's like and what the value system is, and what the religion is about. And as I'm sure you know, there are many rabbis—certainly, there are—I believe it's still true in the Conservative sect as well that—certainly the Orthodox would not marry a non-Jew, and I don't think the Conservatives will, either. And there are quite a few Reform rabbis that will not marry non-Jews to Jews. And so it's a hard thing, and I think there are two ways to look at it, and unfortunately, what was being promoted was to encourage Jews not to marry non-Jews. Well, what does that say to somebody who does? So, it still bothers me.

07-00:16:07

Meeker:

It seems to me like the perspective, from those who strictly oppose it, beyond simply on theological grounds for instance, is that this person coming who is not a Jew is going to draw the Jew away. But, in a sense, it sounds like what you're advocating is, well, that person who is coming into this relationship is, to a certain extent—is certainly less important to this question of, do we lose a member of the tribe or not, than the person who's already a member? And so it's almost like, rather than focus on this person coming into the relationship, focus on the person who's already a member of the tribe, and keep them there, to a certain—

07-00:17:04

Goldman:

Yeah, exactly. I mean, it's like—where are you putting the emphasis? I mean, to me, there are a lot of Jews who marry non-Jews who probably aren't the greatest practitioners in the world, anyway. Because if they were rigorous as being Jews, they wouldn't be marrying a non-Jew. OK, so let's start with that. So, actually, going through the exercise of involving the Gentile in this whole process may very well reinforce the Jewish spouse's sense of Jewishness. So,

to me, it's like, duh! I mean, it really is. It's like, wait a minute, you are just looking at this absolutely 180 degrees in the wrong direction.

07-00:17:53

Meeker: And the introduction of children, oftentimes, will continue to reinforce that.

07-00:17:58

Goldman: Sure, sure. That's why the idea, in my mind, is to give the opportunity now, so that when children come along, at least there's a foundation to make a reasonable decision, whatever that decision—and maybe it's unreasonable, I don't know, but at least the decision is with some knowledge. And that's where I think there's a saving grace for the Jewish people.

07-00:18:25

Meeker: That's helpful. So it was then, in the mid-1980s, that you joined the board of the JCF.

07-00:18:32

Goldman: No, in the mid 80—1980s, I'm sorry, yes, mid-80s. Sorry, yes. Yes, yes. [laughter]

07-00:18:38

Meeker: Mid-1890s, no. Was this a natural step to join the board, or how was that process—?

07-00:18:46

Goldman: Actually, I think it was '83, something like that. '83, '84. I was asked to join the board. I had, before that, joined Jewish Family and Children Services, I think a year or two before, probably a year. And I don't know if it was a natural step. It kind of surprised me. I thought the whole idea of the Leadership Development Council was to get us involved in Jewish agencies or organizations, and many did. Not all, but many.

07-00:19:20

Meeker: But not necessarily JCF itself.

07-00:19:23

Goldman: Absolutely not JCF, especially because the Peninsula was really the hinterlands in those days, anyway. So that was—you know, I like to make the joke, it's still the hinterlands in some people's eyes. But, I mean, there was plenty of JCF representation from the Peninsula, and Marin. Some from the East Bay. But I was a little surprised when I was asked to join. And my mom was on the board at the time, so that felt a little weird. And it was kind of fun, but I—there was something in the back of my mind saying, why are there two family members on this board?

07-00:20:14

Meeker: Well, it's a fairly large board.

- 07-00:20:16
Goldman: It is a fairly large board. I think there was a desire to have some generational sustainability play into it, I guess. I have no idea why I was asked. I really don't. But I did—
- 07-00:20:35
Meeker: Did you hesitate accepting the invitation?
- 07-00:20:38
Goldman: No, because it was really—I thought it was very much of an honor to be asked. I'm not sure that I was totally ready for it when I joined. It was very nice. To me, JFCS was more important, which is usually the case with agencies, you know, it's more hands-on, more direct service. I was intrigued by the agency. I thought it was really quite something, and being involved, watching it grow, was impressive, to say the least.
- 07-00:21:16
Meeker: What kind of work were board members you're talking about expected to do?
- 07-00:21:23
Goldman: At each of them—I mean, at JCF—
- 07-00:21:25
Meeker: Well, I think we talked about the family in terms of Children and Family Services the last time.
- 07-00:21:30
Goldman: Well, the Federation was more showing up, at first. I think there—what has evolved into the Planning and Agency Services at that time was all distribution, was allocations. I started getting involved in that. I mean, obviously, there was an expectation you served on committees.
- 07-00:21:56
Meeker: When you say allocations and distribution, that's just determining where the funds are going to go?
- 07-00:22:00
Goldman: Right. Exactly. And in those days, it was pretty much some increment, or some consistent percentage, over the previous year. There wasn't a lot of discussion about changing it, and it's still almost an immovable object in some ways. But that's what happens with long-standing institutions; they get sort of set in a certain direction and stay with it.
- 07-00:22:33
Meeker: Was there at this period in time more or less the same split between domestic and overseas funding?
- 07-00:22:41
Goldman: No. The percentage of overseas funding was definitely higher then.

07-00:22:47

Meeker: It was higher then.

07-00:22:47

Goldman: Oh, yeah. Yeah, it's dropped quite a bit. And part of that is a consequence of the fact that the agencies are larger. You know, we did have—at that time, the Amuta had been formed, as I recall. So it was a big step, and that sort of boosted our initial giving, anyway, to some degree. But I don't know if it was even 50-50 at the time I—I could not recall exactly, but it was more balanced than it is today.

07-00:23:30

Meeker: I think during your tenure as president it was about 60-40.

07-00:23:34

Goldman: 60 for domestic, 40—yeah.

07-00:23:49

Meeker: So do you recall how it was that that started to change, or what it was—what sort of conversations, perhaps—

07-00:23:46

Goldman: Oh, for the change?

07-00:23:47

Meeker: Yeah.

07-00:23:50

Goldman: Like I said, I think it was mostly—there were a couple of forces. One was a question about the significance of Israel in the minds of a lot of the younger people coming onto the board who hadn't grown up during the Holocaust, who hadn't grown up during World War II, who hadn't grown up with the formation of Israel and seen it as sort of the ultimate goal to preserve the Jewish people, to have a homeland. And again, being in this area in the States, and not really having that sort of direct tie, though, certainly there were positive feelings, I think, about Israel for the most part, until later on, by a lot of people. But it wasn't—it didn't have the emotional tug that it did for the previous generation, or for some of the people who had been involved with Federation for a long time. So—

07-00:24:56

Meeker: Was it maybe seen a separate country, quite literally?

07-00:24:59

Goldman: Yeah. The one that—there was certainly a sense of pride, and a sense of relationship, but not of ownership, and I think that's really where the difference came, because there was almost a sense of ownership, I think, especially with the generation before me and others, about Israel.

07-00:25:20

Meeker: They really felt like they helped build it.

07-00:25:21

Goldman:

Absolutely. I think they were totally connected. And that—I can't say that it's true for the majority of people in my generation, not even close. So, the other side, the other force, was really just the growth of the domestic agencies. And as they got larger and larger and larger, and trying to keep pace with that, and new agencies were formed, and you know, filling various needs, and as certain needs started accelerating, such as the Russian émigrés, more and more you had to make a decision about that weighting. And there was a tendency to take care of what's closest to home first.

07-00:26:03

Meeker:

Do you recall much about, perhaps, intergenerational conversation, or perhaps even conflict, about that issue?

07-00:26:11

Goldman:

About the split?

07-00:26:12

Meeker:

Yeah.

07-00:26:16

Goldman:

No, I don't think there was—you could draw anything on generational lines. I don't think it ever came out that way, though if anybody did speak up one way or the other, there may have been some generational differences, if you took as an aggregate all those who voiced their opinions. Probably something like that, so.

07-00:26:45

Meeker:

Let's move up to 1991, then, in which you first chaired the campaign.

07-00:26:53

Goldman:

I'm glad you remember that. I can't remember that. That seems so long ago. That was 15 years ago. Yeah, it was sort of that orderly progression, you know, that you go through, and then you say, well, you've got to do this—you know, you're going to have to be campaign chair some time.

07-00:27:12

Meeker:

But why was that? You know, because of the size of the board, certainly not all board members eventually, you know, move—

07-00:27:19

Goldman:

Well, most of them were smarter than to do that. Well, I had heard from a few people that they wanted me to eventually become president. I mean, that was a little sidebar conversation, which I didn't give a lot of credence to at the time. But—

07-00:27:43

Meeker:

Were these people who formerly held positions at one point?

07-00:27:46
Goldman:

Oh, yeah, I mean, these are people—you know, people who were around the Federation a lot in various guises of one sort or another. And I also had some good friends who had served, who urged me. Don Friend was the campaign chair before me, and he pushed it. And I thought, well, why not, you know? That's OK. It was a pretty standard operating procedure at the time. Some people liked to throw in some interesting variations. I'd been working since '87 in my dad's company, and so that—clearly having that presence sort of brought more to the forefront of being involved in the Jewish community, because obviously it was kind of a Jewish firm, too, in a lot of ways. So I said yes. And—

07-00:28:53
Meeker:

Well, what did being campaign chair entail?

07-00:28:57
Goldman:

Well, you oversaw the campaign. There was a campaign cabinet. There were a lot of workers. There were events. You had to make sure that people did call on the people that were supposed to. Obviously, the campaign chair would take a lot of cards for solicitation purposes, keep track of it. The greatest outcome of all of it, without a doubt, was at the time, we had the best campaign director in the business, as far as I was concerned, Nate Levine. And Nate and I became very good friends through this, and are to this day. And I value—I mean, I can now move forward 15 years and say, I knew it, because I kept telling people, this is a guy who should be a leader in this community. You know, a true professional in every respect. And he made—he made the job fun and made it easy, as easy as one could. And it was fun.

07-00:30:04
Meeker:

Well, what were the particular things that you did to ease your—?

07-00:30:08
Goldman:

Well, he did a lot of the work to start with. I mean, you know, he truly was a consummate professional, and he would be the one to say, OK, we've got to call on this person, you've got to call this person. You know, he'd nag me, if need be, to get the appointments, and he was a terrific strategist. I mean, he just knew so much, so it never came up, well, what do we do? You know, he'd been doing this enough times, and everybody thought he was terrific, and he still is terrific. And it just was the kind thing where it didn't feel like it was drudgery. It was enjoyable to do it, even though asking people for money is not the favorite thing for most people to do. So I think we tried to be very helpful, and made life a little easier for some of the solicitors.

07-00:31:05
Meeker:

Certainly the presence of staff members ensures some continuity from each campaign year to the next. Were there other ways in which particular bits of wisdom, or something, were passed down to you?

- 07-00:31:20
Goldman: Oh, I—you mean, as—
- 07-00:31:22
Meeker: What was the process of gaining the education and knowledge that was necessary to successfully—?
- 07-00:31:28
Goldman: Well, yeah, I did talk to a few people who had served in that position, and I think they all said the same thing. They said, start early. You know, try to get it going quickly, try to have your big donors in as soon as possible, and just keep the pressure on them. You know, there's a tendency to just sort of drop the energy level as you get nearer and nearer the end of the year. And back then, our campaign year actually was almost—it was a little convoluted, but almost an 18 month time, which is a subject I know we'll come back to. Because I'm sure you read that one in your background search. And so it was really hard with this kind of overlapping period of, you know, waiting until December, and everybody said, well, that's when the end of the year gifts come in, and blah blah blah. And I just thought that was crazy, anyway, but it still made sense to start early and get a good group of people to be around you and your campaign committee, and make them do work, because you can't do it all, that's for sure.
- 07-00:32:49
Meeker: Well, in some of your conversations—as best as you can remember what some of the larger donors.
- 07-00:32:55
Goldman: Oh, boy!
- 07-00:32:56
Meeker: I mean, I imagine that, you know, there is the conversation about, certainly there's an expectation that they'll be getting a phone call. But then the negotiation happens.
- 07-00:33:06
Goldman: No, actually, it doesn't.
- 07-00:33:08
Meeker: No, OK.
- 07-00:33:09
Goldman: It's never a negotiation on my part—and I don't care what the organization is. To me—and this is, I did learn this—what a solicitation should be about is a conversation, period. Because it is a terrific opportunity to hear somebody else's points of view. And, sure, if they're not inclined to give, their points of view will tend to be negative. But as a solicitor, there's a chance to set the record straight, if it's based on what are perceived as facts but aren't. It's a chance to understand the person better and to explore this. It's an opportunity to share the same concerns. I can't tell you how many times I've been with

people and said, you know what, I don't like the government of Israel, either. But the government of Israel is not the same as the people of Israel. These are people we're talking about. So that's—I can't tell you how many times I've said something like that. And I never sit there and—I mean, my belief is, at the end of a solicitation, when you make the ask, it is what you are hoping they will consider, and that's it. They'll make their own decision. One of the things that I think—you know, if there are lessons learned from doing this, and it's still with me today in other areas, you learn a lot about people when you ask them for money. You learn when you're on a solicitation—or when—when you're just asking people to give to an institution which you know, and they know, they should participate in, on the one hand, people sometimes astound you, because they are generous beyond their means, and they're willing to go much, much further than you ever thought they would. And then, you've got the flip side of people who just are stunningly not philanthropic. Don't get it, don't care, don't feel any responsibility. And to them, they don't see why they should. And unfortunately, in many cases, it permeates through all of their giving, or lack thereof. So, as somebody said, it's like playing golf. You get to see the true personality when you're out on a golf course, and it's, I think, equally true that you see a person's true colors when you ask them for money.

07-00:35:59

Meeker:

That's interesting, you know, that you learn quite a little bit about the constituency of the organization. But I think you also said that you learn about the organization itself.

07-00:36:10

Goldman:

Federation. Oh, sure.

07-00:36:13

Meeker:

What do you learn about the Federation by asking? Did you—you know, it's entirely possible that by hearing critical views, you may adopt certain critical views of the organization.

07-00:36:23

Goldman:

Oh, sure. I mean, it certainly has an impact. I mean, to probe and get a sort of sense, why is this person feeling this way, sure, I think that it does make you a little more introspective about what's going on. I don't know if there was—I mean, I'm trying to remember if there were any burning issues at the time about Federation itself. I think the biggest issue at that time clearly was Israel, and the government of Israel, which was a very difficult situation. I'm trying to remember—I mean, clearly, there were issues with the Palestinians, of course. But as I recall, there was stuff going on with Lebanon, and so on and so forth. I think that's where it may have started. And the whole issue of émigrés was big, and some people saw that as, this is our duty and our responsibility. Some people said they should go to Israel; why are they coming here? You know, we're not here—you've got the gamut. Well, that's what any community is. You're going to have very different opinions

from a lot of different people. So, great, I welcome it. But one of the things I also learned is you can't make somebody give money. You know, I mean, one thing about the Federation is, I think, a lot of people do give out of guilt, or maybe they just feel like they have to because they happen to be Jewish. And at least I try, probably not that successfully, to end up in a situation where people were proud, and pleased, or at least accepting, about giving to the Federation.

07-00:38:19

Meeker:

Can you recall any instances where an individual decided to really step up and contribute more than she or he had in the past—

07-00:38:29

Goldman:

Yes.

07-00:38:29

Meeker:

—or conversely, instances in which they backed off.

07-00:38:34

Goldman:

Yes. [laughter]

07-00:38:35

Meeker:

Can you, without naming names, just in the abstract, talk about some of the issues—?

07-00:38:40

Goldman:

Well, I think that what happened when somebody really steps up, and you sit there—I think, first of all, I remember clearly, one time—the person will not be identified—where, you know, we had this hour-long conversation, and the person says, nobody from the Federation has ever asked for my opinion. I said, “I’m sorry, I really am, because that’s wrong. And I—you know, I wish we had another methodology for doing so other than having a solicitation attached to it. But this is a perfect opportunity, and I will pass it on.” And all of a sudden, the person doubled their gift, and it was a significant gift. I also know that there were at least two or three people who were so upset about what was happening by the government of Israel, they just said, I’m not going to give. And I said, “OK, 60/40, or whatever it was—that penalizes...” They said, “I don’t care, if the Federation doesn’t do something about it, I’m not interested.” So that’s life.

07-00:39:43

Meeker:

Have there ever been a—I imagine there have probably been requests by donors to say, “Well, listen, I only want it to go the 60 pile, not the 40 pile,” or vice versa. How do you respond to that?

07-00:39:55

Goldman:

Until recently, we never said—I know in Federation we said no. That’s not how umbrella giving works. We have a mechanism to make that decision, and make it—and you know, we appreciate it, but that’s just not how it can work effectively. If we did that for everybody, it would be an absolute mess. We

would have no way to track how to, in any way, shape, or form, decide what actually ends up being given, in one direction or the other.

07-00:40:28

Meeker: Until recently? This has changed?

07-00:40:30

Goldman: There has been, on a very slight level, for major donors, an effort to allow direct giving. And by directed, they can be, for certain fields of service. And that includes Israel, or not. There have been people who have threatened to cut their gifts, because they say, "I will not give to Israel." There are people who are upset because we don't give enough to Israel, and they are cutting their gift.

07-00:41:06

Meeker: And so it evens out, almost.

07-00:41:08

Goldman: Yeah, but they both cut their gifts, so it doesn't even out at all.

07-00:41:10

Meeker: I see. What is your opinion on that?

07-00:41:15

Goldman: On directed giving, or—

07-00:41:17

Meeker: Yeah, on opening up this loophole in the giving policy.

07-00:41:20

Goldman: Well, I think that it's the way of the world. I think if it's done strategically—and we're getting into some of the stuff that happened when I was president. I was hoping that there would be a change in how the Federation operates in the first instance. And we did have some discussion about being more like a foundation. And it evolved to the point of saying, what we should be focused on are some key fields of service. And really identify them, and lay them out, and say, this is what we have. And sort of somewhat of a United Way-like approach of saying, decide if you can make an unrestricted, undirected gift, or you can focus on various fields of service. That's your ballot of what's important, from a donor's point of view. I have no problem with that. Absolutely none. But I wouldn't let anybody say, "I'm going to give just to JVS." I said, "I'm sorry, we shouldn't really take your gift; why don't you just give it to them?" Because I think that the Federation has a role to oversee the way—the melding, if you will, of the various efforts by agencies, and there very well may be opportunities where the Federation has to step in and say, you know, this program is so important that we're going to seed it, which is what I believe the endowment should do. To build it to be in a position where it can then generate its own support base down the road. We don't do that well, either.

07-00:43:04

Meeker: Well, that's kind of the position, or the role, of the expert, right? That then might be in conflict with the role of the donors—

07-00:43:15

Goldman: Sure.

07-00:43:15

Meeker: —as the, you know, in a democratic system, as opposed to a—

07-00:43:18

Goldman: Martin, I understand. But you either buy into it, or you don't. You know, that's what I'm saying, you either say, I have confidence in this group of community representatives to make the right decisions with lots of help from experts who I view as the professionals to help make these decisions, or I don't. It's a free world. You can do whatever you want. And it brings into question, is Federation relevant? I happen to believe it very much is. But it probably has to look a little different to become truly relevant today.

07-00:43:58

Meeker: Well, we'll definitely—

07-00:43:59

Goldman: I'm sure we'll probe.

07-00:44:00

Meeker: —some of those issues. Well, those are the really big questions, I think, that make this kind of interview useful. But before we jump into your presidency, I want to ask you about your work on the Israel and Overseas Committee. I have down here 1998 to 2000.

07-00:44:18

Goldman: Yes. I was not on that committee—we're skipping a whole bunch of stuff, like when I was treasurer, and all this stuff. Shame.

07-00:44:27

Meeker: Well—this is your interview as well, so if for some reason—

07-00:44:28

Goldman: We had a real problem when I was treasurer. Well, let me just fill in the gaps for a little bit, because what I was doing was, I was getting involved in nearly every aspect, from endowment to—you know, whatever, I mean, I was involved in a bunch of task forces, especially the émigré task force, and then I was treasurer. And the only thing that I bring up was we had a rather difficult situation that came up with our deficit. It was a deficit that never was fully revealed. It had started to accumulate to levels that concerned me a lot. And the suggestion at the time, from staff, was, well, what we'll do is we'll delay the actual cash distributions to the agencies and use the cash flow to eliminate the cash deficit. Of course, on the books it would have been a deficit, no matter how you slice it. And I said no. We're going to eliminate that deficit;

tell me how we're going to eliminate the deficit. "Well, we're going to have to get rid of people." I said, "Well, guess what? We're going to have to get rid of people." And it was like somebody dropped a nuclear bomb on the place. It was—it was ugly.

07-00:46:04

Meeker: What year was this?

07-00:46:05

Goldman: I think that was—let's see, it was two years before—so it was '96, I think, '96, '97.

07-00:46:11

Meeker: Well, it might not be a surprise that I haven't come across some of this stuff—

07-00:46:15

Goldman: I'm sure it's not a surprise. It was all internal. It finally came down to allowing positions to become vacant through attrition, and some of it being encouraged attrition. There was a lot of discussion about the Sonoma office, which, as you know, was added back in the mid-90s, I think it was, or even before then, and whether it was worthwhile. It was a pretty significant load factor. We weren't getting the support from the campaign from there that we thought that we needed to, but there was a decision to go in that direction. I'm still not sure—I mean, I love the people up there; they're great and committed people, but is there a critical mass? And that's the only question that I would throw out. We had a series of these kinds of things that went on. We never solved the deficit problem entirely, certainly to my satisfaction. And what it really did was cause us—what we did was we started withholding some of our CJF distributions and then to UJC, in order to fund our shortfall, our cash shortfall. It was really bad and extremely frustrating.

07-00:47:44

Meeker: Can you describe the structure of the debt, like, how it existed, where it came—?

07-00:47:48

Goldman: What happened—oh, it goes back to—remember when we were talking about a campaign being eighteen months. So people would project where we would end up with the campaign, even though six months earlier there was a decision on how those funds would be distributed. So if you didn't make the goal, where did the money come from?

07-00:48:10

Meeker: You still distribute it.

07-00:48:12

Goldman: You had to. And so, who was the one that came up short, was CJF, UJC. And so we had—

07-00:48:21

Meeker: Those are the national—

07-00:48:22

Goldman: Uh-huh. Well, with CJF, it was what we supported, and then that merged with UJA into UJC. And that—

07-00:48:28

Meeker: It's complex. I have those notes in my—

07-00:48:30

Goldman: I know; I'm sure you do. And it got worse and worse and worse and worse. You know, it was never really revealed until just a few years ago, when to his credit, Sam Salkin said, we have to pay this down, and it was taking a large chunk out of our campaign and just saying, we've got to pay this off so we're current. And now we have.

07-00:48:54

Meeker: Well, there's also the effort that could have made to be more modest in one's projections about how much the campaign would bring in.

07-00:49:02

Goldman: But you have to understand that the amount of pressure from the agencies about saying, we can't take a cut; that's going to destroy this program, this one; and then every one of them had their own spokespeople, you know, hovering around, either inside on the board of the Federation, or at least nearby, whispering in ears, and so on. It became untenable. It was impossible. One of the national organizations—I'll never forget this—we had a board meeting before the annual meeting at Emanu-El. We were sitting around this big table, and one of the national organizations—and I can't even remember which one—was receiving something like \$10,000 or \$15,000. And there was a recommendation to cut it by \$5,000. And you would have thought we had an earthquake. People are screaming and yelling and saying the sky is going to fall, on and on. It was endless. It was like, we're never going to be able to move very far. So that's, you know, sort of like a battleship. You know, trying to turn the battleship takes a long time.

07-00:50:08

Meeker: Or the federal budget.

07-00:50:09

Goldman: Well, I consider that the biggest of the battleships. [laughter] So, yeah, the sense of entitlement is an unfortunate part of any umbrella organization, unless you just say, that's it. It's over with. New game in town. And, you know, United Way, for better or for worse, did it.

07-00:50:34

Meeker: Has there been an effort, on the part of JCF to do that?

- 07-00:50:38
Goldman: There certainly—
- 07-00:50:38
Meeker: To re-educate the nonprofits?
- 07-00:50:43
Goldman: You mean the agencies?
- 07-00:50:43
Meeker: The agencies, yeah.
- 07-00:50:46
Goldman: There's been numerous attempts to bring them in, to get their buy-in to a new structure. And we were going down a certain path, and then, I don't know what's happened, to be honest. It's not where I would like it to be.
- 07-00:51:08
Meeker: These kind of issues, I get a hint of by reading through the publications and minutes and so forth, but there's very little official recognition of it. What is the culture of understanding of this problem? To what extent do people talk about it and recognize it in the institution?

Begin Audio File 8

- 8-00:00:30
Meeker: We were talking about the degree to which this particular issue that you were wrestling with, or began to wrestle with when you were treasurer was or was not a known quantity and a part of the internal conversation.
- 8-00:00:42
Goldman: It wasn't really known beyond the executive committee. I think there was probably something about it. There's probably some reference to taking care of it in the minutes then. You know, what was going to be done or had to be because it had to be approved by the board. But the real interaction happened at the executive committee. Mostly between me and the executive director. You know, I just said, "We can't do this. We're not responsible. This is crazy."
- 8-00:01:19
Meeker: Was this brought to a head to a certain extent by the recession of the early '90s?
- 8-00:01:31
Goldman: That may have had something to do with, but I don't think that had any kind of direct impact. I just think it was badly managed. That was one of the reasons that I felt like we should not allocate on any basis other than what we had pledged. Not necessarily what we have in the bank, but at least let's cut

off the campaign on July 1 instead of December 31. And everybody said that was crazy. But that's where we are.

8-00:02:00

Meeker: When are the designations made, the allocations?

8-00:02:04

Goldman: They're approved at the annual meeting in June.

8-00:02:07

Meeker: OK. So then you would have—

8-00:02:10

Goldman: And there's still a projection because you want to know where you're on July 1. And that's about a month difference.

8-00:02:17

Meeker: Well, and there's a difference between pledges and checks received too, right?

8-00:02:20

Goldman: No, not significantly. I mean there's a timing difference, but nobody has to pay their pledge until December 31. That's the standing rule and that's the right rule. That's how most organizations are, because you know you got payments over time to the various agencies. It's not just at the beginning of the year, it's quarterly or something like that. So yeah, our bad debt allowance I believe we went from maybe 2% down to 1.75% because the history was showing there are extremely few times when pledges are not paid. Now sometimes there's a need to form a committee to clean it up, cause some have been sitting around for two or three years. Got to go back to those people and collect before they make another pledge. And every few years that happens. There is a bad debt committee or collections committee that I happen to serve on once, and it's not a fun job. [laughter]

8-00:03:36

Meeker: I know that you covered this, and we're probably not going to get the kind of answer I'm looking for simply because the way that you've described it as the immovable, you know, battleship or whatever. And that is determining allocations. I presume that the agencies have to apply on an annual or perhaps, you know, couple year basis. And I imagine applications are probably substantial, and you know on all sorts of decisions like any foundation you apply too, right?

8-00:04:15

Goldman: Right. Right.

8-00:04:20

Meeker: Well maybe they way to look it at it as for new agencies that are entering in but perhaps haven't received funding or a newly formed. What is it that the committee looks for in approving funds? I mean certainly one is a track

record, but for those that don't necessarily have a track record, how do they then become successful seekers of funds?

8-00:04:54

Goldman: That's a really good question. Usually what happens is, if there's a new program, the agencies oftentimes grow out of programs. And there haven't been that many new ones in recent history.

8-00:05:09

Meeker: Programs of the JCF?

8-00:05:10

Goldman: Sometimes.

8-00:05:12

Meeker: OK. Or programs of agencies?

8-00:05:12

Goldman: Sometimes not. Programs of agencies.

8-00:05:14

Meeker: OK.

8-00:05:18

Goldman: There aren't too many times that I can think of new agencies being formed. But if you're asking if you had a zero based budgeting approach, how would one decide? I don't think anybody knows. Because so much is established on what the previous year's distribution was. So I do know that for certain—if it were a new entity, my expectation would be the federation would probably seed that entity through the endowment. Maybe up to 100%, depending on what the effort was. Let's say there was an effort that you know was a joint effort amongst several agencies, and then all of a sudden became its own. I think then there would be an expectation that that new agency had a certain degree of support from the rest of the community. Now that the Federation would fill in with the idea that, over time, that support would diminish if it stayed to its original mission. The problem is, a lot of agencies grow in so many different directions, and the biggest issue that I've had since being involved with the Federation and, in particular, the endowment, is that the endowment will fund new programs that then become absorbed after two or three years of funding into an agency. And that agency then comes back to the Federation saying well, this is the program you supported. We need more from the campaign in order to keep it going, otherwise we're going to have to stop it. Well, that's you know you're in a catch 22. And I think I've taken a pretty consistent position that either whenever it says future funding may be required or future funding implications, I said consistently, unless I see a way where revenues are going to be generated outside of the federation for this program, I will not support it. To me, there's a difference between time-specific projects. You know very much one-offs which I think the endowment

clearly has a responsibility to do. Never have a problem with anything like that.

8-00:07:50

Meeker: Can you think of an example of something?

8-00:07:52

Goldman: Sure. Let's say we want to beef up all the security systems, which is exactly what the endowment has done. It's basically a one-off effort to, you know, have a certain degree, a certain amount of funds that are set aside, to given the environment and the way that, you know, the frictions that occur between Jewish organizations and people that, you know, having bulwarks in front of the Federation office for example. That's a cost. The city doesn't do that. Having surveillance and cameras and so and so for at least some areas of security. Especially, you know, I mean let's face it: Jewish organizations and synagogues are prime targets for terrorists, so, you know, there has to be something. So that's a perfect example of endowments that we are covering X million dollars out of our funds for this purpose. That's what it should do. Ideal situation.

8-00:09:02

Meeker: Over the history of the JCF, there have certainly been programs that perhaps services are provided that there's a certain point that the community decides that perhaps they're not as relevant or necessary anymore.

8-00:09:19

Goldman: I wish that were the case.

8-00:09:21

Meeker: No. That's not the case, is that what you're saying?

8-00:09:23

Goldman: It's not the case. I challenge anybody who could give me one example of an agency that has disappeared. I have some thoughts on which ones should disappear, but that's not going to do anything.

8-00:09:38

Meeker: Yeah. OK. So there's just a tendency to.

8-00:09:44

Goldman: That's not just the Jewish world, by any stretch of the imagination. That's a problem in society. Personally, I still see it in AIDS support organizations. You know, there's the proliferation of tiny organizations serving one little niche and being so inefficient about it. Not that they're not effective. But terribly inefficient. It drives me nuts. And you know we, my wife and I, said if we're going to support some of these, we have to encourage them to fold into something or use their services or something, you know, cause this is crazy. It becomes very territorial.

- 8-00:10:26
Meeker: Is that mostly a question of identity of the appearance of organizations?
- 8-00:10:37
Goldman: Having their own identity?
- 8-00:10:38
Meeker: Well, I mean interacting with established mutual—
- 8-00:10:39
Goldman: Oh yeah, of course they might lose their identity, sure. I mean I'm sure, and it isn't just AIDS support organizations. I mean there's lots of them I feel like we are here for these people. And if we don't exist, they're not going to be served.
- 8-00:10:58
Meeker: OK. So for like instance, you know, Filipino transgender sex workers or something, right?
- 8-00:11:04
Goldman: Yeah.
- 8-00:11:95
Meeker: I mean, is that kind of what you're talking about?
- 8-00:11:06
Goldman: Yeah. And it's very true, obviously in the health world because there are so many different diseases, and people, I mean, it's clear we're exactly the same when you have a family member, a loved one, dear, dear friend who has a very strange disease that you never heard of. You know, you want to do something to help not only that person but others who may be afflicted and maybe, you know, less than a tenth of a percent of the population, and there's an organization serving that.
- 8-00:11:43
Meeker: You know, there has been, scholars argue at least, there has been a real proliferation and understanding of what a salient, cultural, social identity is. For an organization in a sense of way that is based on a singular identity that the constituents share. Undoubtedly, I would expect at least that that has been influenced or challenged in some ways by this proliferation of, you know, countless other identities. I'm wondering how that proliferation has influenced the work of the agencies and the kind of funds that they're seeking.
- 8-00:12:29
Goldman: I don't think it's influenced them an awful lot, because I think the established ones are established and they're not worried about what else happens, it's somebody else's problem. I think what has happened, though, is the pressures from smaller agencies that are growing and established agencies that are having more of a presence in the Jewish committee does affect a Federation and its ability to raise money. Because with the proliferation of activity, the

need for direct support from donors increases, and that ostensibly means there's life. I mean I know it's not constant, but there's not a constant pool. And one can easily make the argument, and I do believe this is true and one that we have to recognize, is, as one person pointed out to me, as the tide rises, so do all the ships. We have to look at the totality of giving to the Jewish community as a true indicator of what the philanthropic bent of the people of the Jewish community is.

8-00:13:58

Meeker: And your conclusion?

8-00:13:59

Goldman: My conclusion is what was reported by McKinsey is that, I believe, that those Jews who are philanthropic, two-thirds give to Jewish organizations, and one-half of that goes to Federation. Which means federation gets no more than one-third. I think it's even less than that. I may be wrong on the stats, but it's there somewhere. I wish I had that report. Maybe you can check on that.

8-00:14:35

Meeker: Well, this is the report that was conducted during your period of time, right?

8-00:14:38

Goldman: Yeah. Yeah. It shows, it's right there in black and white. And I'm not sure I've got the statistics right, so we'll have to edit that.

8-00:14:45

Meeker: I don't think I've ever seen the entire report.

8-00:14:47

Goldman: It's there. It's available.

8-00:14:51

Meeker: Actually, back a little bit just, a question I had. Clarification.

8-00:14:54

Goldman: I didn't ever get back to Israel or overseas either.

8-00:14:57

Meeker: Yeah. Yeah. We'll get there. I'm actually jumping back again to '91 where you were campaign chair.

8-00:15:03

Goldman: OK. Yeah.

8-00:15:04

Meeker: From what I've been able to tell, it seemed almost customary that the campaign chair became the president next year.

8-00:15:15

Goldman: No.

8-00:15:15
Meeker: No. That's a mistake.

8-00:15:18
Goldman: That is not correct.

8-00:15:19
Meeker: OK.

8-00:15:19
Goldman: It was considered a requirement to becoming president of the Federation. It was never codified. But there was an understanding that you had to be campaign chair before you could be considered president of the Federation. Therefore, the list of eligible bachelors and bachelorettes was really those who had been campaign chairs. And that became a problem more and more.

8-00:15:52
Meeker: How so?

8-00:15:55
Goldman: Those that were qualified and who people felt should be president had become president and what we were left with were people who had been campaign chairs, but, you know, you would hoped if by having campaign chairs serve for one year you'd have at least some group.

8-00:16:16
Meeker: A pool of 15 or 20.

8-00:16:17
Goldman: Yeah, that you could pull from. But it was amazing how many became campaign chair and then didn't continue with their leadership at all.

8-00:16:29
Meeker: They burned out?

8-00:16:30
Goldman: No. They didn't care anymore. They moved on to something else, whatever. I don't know what the reasons are. But they just didn't step up.

8-00:16:42
Meeker: Is there a different kind of quality that makes a good campaign chair in contrast to president?

8-00:16:50
Goldman: I actually think that one should not be the prerequisite. I felt that from early on. I think I mentioned that I was in YPO and that there's a very clear ladder of succession. And there are clear positions that you must have before and it's orderly. It goes boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. And it goes right up to chapter chair. And I think that's a terrific model, because anywhere along the way, you can see, is this person making it or not? They're really going to cut it or not. And most of the time, not all the time, they're able to stop the process

if it looks ugly. It does cause complications, but most of those people in those groups are self-starters, and it's amazing how some can't deal with having to reach consensus. They want to be autocratic. So it's you know, it doesn't work that way. We don't have anything like that at the Federation. I've tried. I have somewhere a white paper that I prepared that sort of followed that model and said somebody should fill three out of the four significant positions. Israel and Overseas, endowment, PAS, campaign. Those are the four big positions, and I think I would prefer that somebody be chair of each of those, three out of four, two out of four. But I think three out of four is better or maybe vice chair. But being right there. And I think somebody who's Federation president should at the very least have served on another agency, if not have been an officer. I think what you need is a combination of all those. Not just one thing, say campaign chair, and that's it, that's what you need. I don't think anybody ever said that, but they did say you cannot be considered and, until recently, that's the way it was. That mold has been broken.

8-00:18:59

Meeker: Who broke that?

8-00:19:00

Goldman: Adele.

8-00:19:01

Meeker: Adele.

8-00:19:01

Goldman: Corvin, yeah.

8-00:19:02

Meeker: Well, that's something we can talk about later on because she was not the initial choice.

8-00:19:06

Goldman: That's right. You found that out?

8-00:19:09

Meeker: That's in the notes, actually. [laughter] Well, that's something I surmised from the notes.

8-00:19:13

Goldman: It's also true. OK.

8-00:19:16

Meeker: Anyway, so we've talked about your work as the campaign chair.

8-00:19:23

Goldman: Now you want to go to Israel and the Overseas?

8-00:19:25

Meeker: Yeah. But you also were endowment chair as well?

8-00:19:28
Goldman: Never endowment chair.

8-00:19:29
Meeker: No, OK. Did you serve on the endowment committee?

8-00:19:31
Goldman: Yes.

8-00:19:32
Meeker: OK. In what capacity?

8-00:19:34
Goldman: I think I was just a committee member, I don't think I ever had an officer's position. I also was on a couple—there was an endowment development committee which is basically a fundraising, a smaller group. I'd been on that pretty consistently for a while.

8-00:19:46
Meeker: And what was the fourth major committee you mentioned?

8-00:19:49
Goldman: PAS. And I was on that.

8-00:19:52
Meeker: PAS?

8-00:19:53
Goldman: Planning and Agency Services.

8-00:19:55
Meeker: OK.

8-00:19:55
Goldman: What used to be allocations.

8-00:19:56
Meeker: Oh, OK.

8-00:19:56
Goldman: Then yes, I did serve on that. And endowment, and Israel and Overseas, and Campaign Chair.

8-00:20:03
Meeker: All right. Well, let's move on then to Israel and Overseas and, we've got about 20 minutes left, so let's try to focus on that.

8-00:20:11
Goldman: OK. It was pretty clear because I had been asked shortly after I was finishing my stint as campaign chair to consider—I had a visit by some notables in the Federation asking if I would be president. And I said no, I can't be president. I've got two young children, I'm heavily involved in a business, there was just

no way that I can do this. I mean, I can't even consider it until at least one of the kids is out of the house. And I can tell you, that it was established that the very next year that one of my kids was out of the house, I was going to be president. That was it. And they said that's when it's going to happen, and so you're signed up. So my two predecessors were Alan Rothenberg and Harold Zlot. And Harold, in his infinite wisdom, knew that two years before, when he just was coming in as president, he said to me you know John, you've done everything. But you have never done Israel and Overseas. You've not even been on the committee, and I want you to chair that committee. I said well, wait a minute. How would people feel if I just walked in and suddenly became chair? He says, I don't think that's the problem. The problem is, will you do it? I said well, what does it mean? He says two trips to Israel a year, including one of them being a mission. I wasn't too wild about that. Not cause I don't love Israel, but I don't like to travel. And I just been several times anyway. But I agreed to do it, and he was 100% correct. That experience changes one view of the Federation as well as what being in the American Jewish community is all about, *vis-à-vis* Israel, and all for the better, I might add.

8-00:22:21

Meeker:

Would you please elaborate?

8-00:22:38

Goldman:

First of all, meeting the members of the Amuta, not just hearing of them or visiting with a few of them when they came over was amazing. They're amazing people. Very, very forward-thinking, committed, looking at where things can be done, and I realized that a lot of what we were doing was kind of broad and shallow. And we had this wonderful representative with the Amuta over in Israel. Gila Noam, fantastic individual. And I got to know her very well, I mean I think she's just about as good a professional as you can find. Especially in that area. And we started saying, what do we really want to do? You know, and that's where the evolution is getting more. Even though I wasn't the one to actually implement, I don't think, but the idea of fostering a civil society and working on that much more. Actually, it was when I was president that that evolved. But I think we started then, and we did, on one of the missions, I remember going to a town in the north and visiting with some of the Arab Israelis that were there. And just—to see the stunning—there's no other word for it, the stunning difference between the Arab section and the Jewish section of the same time, I think just knocked those who hadn't known about it off their feet. It's just that this is an outrage. This is rather reminiscent of what our country went through during, you know, prior to the civil rights movement and what African Americans have gone through. It's just the treatment of second class citizens. I was like, you know the picture is truly worth 1,000 words. I mean I just sat there and said this is unacceptable. We should be more involved in this and changing it. And we did. So there were some things that got me very excited, that Harold was right to understand our relationship and by virtue of that, since Israel and Overseas got involved with then UJC, and the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Joint Distribution

Committee, kind of the offshoots from financial support, seeing how those came into play and what our role was going to be, made it very interesting, because it's similar to what donors tend to do these days. They want to give directly. And we were in position where we wanted to give directly.

8-00:26:02

Meeker:

As opposed to going through these distribution organizations.

8-00:26:04

Goldman:

That's right. That's right. So a little bit of controversy and a lot of interesting work that went on. And actually the work that the Federation does in Israel and Overseas is a wonderful model for how the rest of the Federation might work better, because you've got a committee that is passionate about their work. And you see the direct relationship and the sharing of the ideas, not always on a copasetic basis, but people are involved and energetic and get zealous about it. I mean it's good stuff.

8-00:26:51

Meeker:

You said it required two trips to Israel a year.

8-00:26:54

Goldman:

Yeah.

8-00:26:55

Meeker:

One was a mission. What does it mean to go on a mission?

8-00:26:56

Goldman:

A mission, well.

8-00:26:59

Meeker:

As an official representative.

8-00:27:00

Goldman:

Yeah, I guess it's an official trip per se. And I think we only ended up doing once a year as it turned out. But that is one where the Israel and Overseas committee as a group travels to Israel to look at projects, to meet with the Amuta, to discuss where we're going, have people come in, bring up ideas, have a lot of meetings, a lot of running around. It's a pretty exhaustive trip.

8-00:27:26

Meeker:

According to the notes, there was a discussion of a new pluralism initiative?

8-00:27:31

Goldman:

Yes. That was the other thing.

8-00:27:33

Meeker:

And that, from what I could tell, kind of represented unprecedented funding of religious groups.

8-00:27:38

Goldman:

That's correct.

8-00:27:41

Meeker: Can you describe how this came about?

8-00:27:43

Goldman: Same thing as civil society. I mean, it was the idea that reformed Jews were not—let me back up. We felt that the same opportunities had been given to people in this community as far as having opportunities to practice their religion the way they would like to. It was a model that was worth at least exploring and fostering. At least getting the voices heard because really, in Israel, you have had historically two voices: the Orthodox and the secular. And the Orthodox controls most of the laws and regulations of behavior. And we said that's pretty autocratic. And that doesn't reflect our values, and people can choose not to be involved, but at least those ideas should be out there to have a voice. And that's what it was all about. And yes, it was controversial. [laughter] But it wasn't that controversial because, you know, here, people would say, well of course, that's like—

8-00:29:00

Meeker: Well, the way that I read it was that, you know, one, there was the controversy of funding religious groups whereas before, previously it hadn't been religious groups. And then also I suspected some of the controversy came from—you know, I understand that JCF is not affiliated with, you know, any of the three major traditions.

8-00:29:24

Goldman: Right.

8-00:29:26

Meeker: But from what I see they're more—

8-00:29:28

Goldman: It's more reformed.

8-00:29:29

Meeker: It's more reformed than anything else.

8-00:29:31

Goldman: Correct.

8-00:29:31

Meeker: Largely because of the history of San Francisco and philanthropy in the city. So you know, it makes sense that there would have been a substantial funding of reform organizations in Israel. But I also noticed there was some funding of—

8-00:29:49

Goldman: Orthodox.

8-00:29:49

Meeker: Orthodox and conservative traditions.

8-00:29:51
Goldman: Yes, because we wanted to be balanced. That was the whole point—to just say, you know, these various organizations are doing good works in the areas that we agree with and support. And that’s exactly what we said. This isn’t saying that we want to shove reform Judaism down anybody’s throat.

8-00:30:10
Meeker: Yeah.

8-00:30:11
Goldman: Like I said, it’s trying to get the voice heard. There was no voice, and that was the intent.

8-00:30:17
Meeker: What were then the elements of the organizations?

8-00:30:21
Goldman: I’m trying to remember.

8-00:30:23
Meeker: Yeah.

8-00:30:23
Goldman: Now you’re asking me this. Like I don’t have your notes.

8-00:30:28
Meeker: I’m testing you here.

8-00:30:29
Goldman: Yeah. That I cannot recall the specific organizations that we were involved in.

8-00:30:35
Meeker: OK. But do you remember what it was about those particular religious organizations that appealed to JCF?

8-00:30:43
Goldman: Again, they were not trying to push a religious agenda, even though they were religious organizations. They were trying to get a message out, saying, this is what this means. You know, more, as I recall, informational to allow people to be a little more educated about what was going on. That’s what I recall as sort of the denominator through our funding.

8-00:31:13
Meeker: Well, this, you know, maybe hints at one of the really interesting, and you might correct me on my interpretation, differences between Jews in the United States and Israel. And that is that Jews in the United States have been some of the most vocal advocates on maintaining the separation of church and state, and that separation, if it existed at all in Israel, is much more murky. I mean, maybe I just don’t know what the situation in Israel is. It’s like how do you separate it?

8-00:31:50

Goldman:

Yeah. I think it is, but again the conflict is because or the difference is rooted in the fact that Israel is a Jewish state. The United States is not a Jewish state. Some may want it to be a Christian state, but it's not that either.

8-00:32:07

Meeker:

Yeah.

8-00:32:08

Goldman:

OK? So, we've had a history of religious tolerance because of the differences of people who reside here. Whereas in Israel, there is a set of similarities that are basic to its existence. Other than again, certain populations such as Druze and Arab Israelis, who are very comfortable, most of them, living in Israel for the most part. It's still better than what they would have elsewhere. But they, you know, that raises a whole bunch of issues that are coming up with the presence of the growth in the Palestinian population, Palestinians and Israelis. Which is not to me a conflict in terms. I hope at some point, when we talk about my role as president, that we also talk about the attempts for pluralism on the Federation board. I don't know if that's in your notes.

8-00:33:10

Meeker:

Yeah, it is.

8-00:33:11

Goldman:

OK, good.

8-00:33:12

Meeker:

That's definitely. I know that was one of your agenda items when you first started.

8-00:33:15

Goldman:

Absolutely. Good, we can expunge that from the transcript. That last comment.

8-00:33:22

Meeker:

Yeah. It's all right, we'll get there. You know, there's more that I want to cover with the overseas committee. You mentioned the civil society initiative. Can you describe that?

8-00:33:36

Goldman:

Well, again I think that one of the things that we have been for a long time—actually, I don't know how long, but the Amuta through the Federation, had supported some schools for Arab Israeli kids. And the more we saw of that and the more we realized, you know, this is what the future holds, is where Arab Israelis and Jewish Israelis can be together and learn about each other and share lives together as kids. We saw that the need for the educational component was a great thing to do, you know, for the future. And we also realized that there was a problem with offering the same rights to people who were second class citizens. As things had evolved with the Intifada and so on. So it just I think it heightened in everybody's minds that, you know, we have

to have Israel truly be a beacon of a just society and prove to the rest of the world that it can be done. And again, I'm not sure I can remember the specific programs that we supported, but there was a strong inclination to do that. And that again was not without controversy because people—I'm sure you may have read some of the letters in the Jewish Bulletin, as it was called at the time, just vilifying Federation for funding.

8-00:35:18

Meeker:

Well, that's something that happened more during your presidency.

8-00:35:19

Goldman:

Yes, it did. It got worse then.

8-00:35:22

Meeker:

Because that was, you know.

8-00:35:22

Goldman:

It was a huge issue.

8-00:35:23

Meeker:

Threatening Intifada. Upset the Intifada.

8-00:35:24

Goldman:

Yeah.

8-00:35:27

Meeker:

Actually, this is a point of clarification. I've heard you use this term and I've seen it in print and I just, I guess I just don't understand the difference between Arab Israelis and Palestinians or you use the term Palestinian Israeli.

8-00:35:45

Goldman:

Well, because I don't think Palestinian Israeli is a common term. That may well be, but I think in the future, it may not be. We don't know. Because I think there are people who view themselves as Palestinians and people who view themselves as Israelis. When I say Arab Israelis, those are people who are Arab who live in Israel and are citizens of Israel. They are Arab Israelis, and they are a sizeable portion of the population. Palestinians tend to be people who may live in Israel, but they are not Israeli citizens necessarily. They may be, but they consider their homeland to be outside of Israel.

8-00:36:27

Meeker:

OK.

8-00:36:29

Goldman:

Now they would challenge and say we're talking about Israel as well.

8-00:36:31

Meeker:

Yeah.

8-00:36:32
Goldman: But there is a distinct difference in at least my sense of terminology between a Palestinian and an Arab Israeli.

8-00:36:40
Meeker: And most of the programs that you discussed in the civil society initiative for instance.

8-00:36:43
Goldman: Most, but not—I mean yes. Because we're not allowed for any money—and from the Federation's point of view, anybody who considers themselves Palestinian is beyond the green line, which is the established borders of Israel. And we are not allowed as a Federation to distribute money beyond the green line.

8-00:37:19
Meeker: So the Amuta.

8-00:37:11
Goldman: Amuta.

8-00:37:12
Meeker: Amuta is really to look at Arab Israeli and Jewish Israeli relations.

8-00:37:19
Goldman: In the one particular area, yes.

8-00:37:21
Meeker: Yes. OK. Geographic area, right?

8-00:37:23
Goldman: Within Israel.

8-00:37:24
Meeker: Oh, within Israel.

8-00:37:25
Goldman: So you can't be on beyond it. No. No. It has to be within Israel.

8-00:37:28
Meeker: OK.

8-00:37:29
Goldman: And there are Arab Israeli members now on the Amuta. So it's even more interesting.

8-00:37:33
Meeker: Interesting.

8-00:37:34
Goldman: Yeah.

- 8-00:37:35
Meeker: Was that in effect in your involvement?
- 8-00:37:37
Goldman: No. It came after afterwards.
- 8-00:37:42
Meeker: There was also I think during this period of time the JCF, I think, focused on a particular geographic area within Israel.
- 8-00:37:50
Goldman: Yes.
- 8-00:37:51
Meeker: The northern part.
- 8-00:37:52
Goldman: Kiryat Shmona in the North, yes.
- 8-00:37:53
Meeker: Yeah, Kiryat Shmona. How was that site selected, what were some of the particular attractions of it?
- 8-00:38:01
Goldman: Oh boy. Well, first of all there was in and effort called Project Renewal, I believe it was. And Project Renewal was probably 15, at least 15 years ago when the idea was for each Federation community to twin with another community in Israel. And I don't know how those decisions were made, but our twin was Kiryat Shmona.
- 8-00:38:36
Meeker: OK.
- 8-00:38:37
Goldman: And, the north is really the breadbasket. And during much of recent history, certainly for the last 40 plus years of Israel's existence, it was also the one that was most susceptible to rockets, and you know, fear of attack because you had Lebanon and you had Syria right up there. And until after the Six Day War, you know, there was no defensible ground, and shelters were in every kibutz and every school, and everything had a big underground shelter because the bombings could happen any time, and did. And it's just pretty horrific. After the Six Day War, then Israel was able to occupy lands and control lands that clearly gave it a defensive position. So the number of rocket attacks dropped considerably. But there was, you know, sort of a pioneer spirit in the north. It is not in the urban areas, it's not in the desert, it's not in the resort areas, it's not a lot of the areas that people think about. It's different. It's a different part of Israel and it's farther away, more susceptible, and it takes some real strong people to live up there. But it's beautiful. Some of the most beautiful land in all of Israel. So, that has been kind of the focus of a lot of work over years and

individuals, as well as the community at large has been supporting new facilities and new opportunities for a long, long time. In the north.

8-00:40:34

Meeker: Well, I think we're just about done. But maybe I can get you to answer one more question.

8-00:40:37

Goldman: Sure. Of course.

8-00:40:39

Meeker: And that is when you were on your missions to Israel.

8-00:40:43

Goldman: Yeah.

8-00:40:44

Meeker: How did it feel to be there in an official capacity representing the United States and JCF?

8-00:40:49

Goldman: Well, I wasn't representing the United States. [laughter]

8-00:40:51

Meeker: Well, or JCF. You know, at least your immediate community.

8-00:40:58

Goldman: Well, I couldn't take any time off. It's not different than when I did. You're on, you know, I mean, it's just you're always on, you feel responsibility.

8-00:41:10

Meeker: Did you bring Marcia with you?

8-00:41:12

Goldman: She didn't go with me to Israel then. She's been to Israel only a couple of times. But she did go to Uzbekistan, so that was a big one.

8-00:41:23

Meeker: Yeah, well that was a few years before, right?

8-00:41:25

Goldman: Yeah, that's a very interesting story in a lot of different ways. I gave some of that to you, didn't I?

8-00:41:31

Meeker: No, I think that we should probably start with that next time.

8-00:41:34

Goldman: OK. [laughter] There are some great stories on that one.

Interview 5: May 15, 2006
Begin Audio File 9

9-00:00:12

Meeker: This is tape nine and we are recording. Today is the fifteenth of May 2006, and interviewing John Goldman for the Jewish Community Federation project, and the main focus of today is going to be your term on the Board presidency. Before we get there, a couple things that I want to follow up on prior to that. One was, we neglected last time to talk about your trip to Moscow and Uzbekistan, which was in 1994.

9-00:00:42

Goldman: Ah yes, [laughter] the infamous one. 1994.

9-00:00:44

Meeker: Which was in 1994, and you describe it as infamous. Why don't we start out with that.

9-00:00:50

Goldman: I described it as infamous. Well, it depends how many stories you want to know. This was a mission to, I guess, find out what things were like in a former Soviet Union country. What had transpired—what it meant for Jews living there, and then actually end up in Israel and escort some from their homeland to their new homeland, and so it was kind of an investigative event, and the interesting thing was that we signed up some people to go on this mission who were not very deeply involved in the Federation, certainly were not very involved in the Jewish community in general terms, and only one of whom had actually been to Uzbekistan before, who happened to be the executive director of Jewish Family and Children Services. So we had an eclectic and quite diverse group, and Marcia and I decided we were going to go a couple days early to go to Moscow. Her family is from Lithuania, or parts of her family are from Lithuania. She figured this is probably as close as I'm ever going to get to Lithuania, so let's go.

9-00:02:21

Meeker: And you would have had to fly through Moscow anyway.

9-00:02:25

Goldman: We were going to have to—we were all meeting in Moscow anyway, so we just decided to go early, and it was a nice, fairly new hotel, I knew things had changed a lot. We started out, and it was in—I keep thinking it was late March—and it was so cold. I couldn't believe how cold it still was then, but we were traipsing around and actually having a pretty good time. I had been to Moscow when I was a teenager, and what I noticed was people were dressed much more contemporarily, but the buildings had gotten very run down. A lot of cracks and graffiti, it was very, very different than from under the Communist regime, so in four years, five years, transformation. And we also noticed that there was a whole industry built around financial arbitrage of just trading currency.

9-00:03:29

Meeker: Oh really? Paper currency?

9-00:03:30

Goldman: Paper currency, dollars for rubles, for Euros, it was all over the place. It was really an amazing thing, that people made money off of trading their paper currency. Just one of the more interesting changes that occurred. But we went over to—we were going to visit Red Square and we had, I guess he was kind of a bodyguard, kind of a quasi-bodyguard, he was an Israeli who was asked to just be with us. He presented himself as somebody who was going to accompany us around, and we figured that's who he was, very nice guy. And we're walking over, and we got attacked and mugged by a group of gypsies. They wanted our money, and it was a pretty harrowing experience, because Marcia was pinned up against the wall, the other guy had been taken out basically just by a swarm, and they're all teenagers. There were a lot of them.

9-00:04:34

Meeker: So how did it happen, did they just approach you and ask?

9-00:04:35

Goldman: They just came right out of nowhere, all the sudden, I felt. All of a sudden, I saw Marcia being surrounded by half a dozen of these teens pressed against the wall, and all of a sudden, I found all these hands all over me. Now I had a heavy leather jacket, and you couldn't tell that I actually had my wallet in these, and they could have taken it. I just sort of tried to throw them off and just yelled, and they all ran away, and there was a mother standing there laughing her head off, probably a mother of one of them. But it was rather traumatic, and we were both pretty shaken. We got back to the hotel, and the clerk of the hotel said, "What happened to you?" We told him, he says, "Well, you're lucky it wasn't at night because you'd probably be dead." It was practically lawless.

9-00:05:21

Meeker: You didn't see any weapons then, or anything?

9-00:05:22

Goldman: No, but the stories were pretty—and so, our trip to Moscow wasn't exactly the best [laughter]. Let's put it that way, it all went downhill from there.

9-00:05:31

Meeker: Was the purpose of going to Moscow primarily as a tourist?

9-00:05:35

Goldman: Yeah, oh yeah. Just to see the sights. We saw some—it's an incredible city and there was a lot that we didn't see because we just didn't want to go out anymore for a while. So, finally, when our group was gathering, since it was considered a domestic flight, and we actually had a chartered jet that was flying from Moscow to Tashkent in Uzbekistan. It was a dead head flight, I guess, and for some—I don't know if it was for UzbekAir or whatever—but there were about fifteen, sixteen of us on a plane that holds two-hundred and

fifty people, so it was a little bizarre. Getting through the domestic terminal was like, you're wandering through one door after another and it closes behind you, and all of a sudden we're standing—we go through a door, and we're standing out in the snow. And it's just snowing like crazy, and there's nothing there. I said, "What are we supposed to do?!" Well, eventually a bus came along to pick us up to take us to the plane, and the bus has probably an inch or two of snow on all the seats. The windows are all wide open, this is so bizarre. It got weirder, to say the least. We get on the plane, everybody gets situated, and this woman, Anita Friedman, the Executive Director of JFCS, is talking to one of the stewardesses, and turns out that one of the pilots, I believe, couldn't fly because he was drunk, and so they had these other pilots, plus they had a whole crew who was apparently pretty smashed, and they were the dead head crew. They were just flying to Tashkent to fly back to Moscow on a later flight, with a few flight attendants. We saw the snow building up on this plane, on the wings, and Anita turned to one of the flight attendants and said, "Are we going to go to the de-icing equipment?" And she turned and said, "What's de-icing?" So we were a little nervous, and I turned to Marcia as we're at the end of the runway. Nothing's been done, and all of a sudden—

9-00:07:56

Meeker:

You're ready to take off with snow on the wings.

9-00:07:58

Goldman:

Yeah. There's all this snow that's been piled up on the wings, it was just sitting there. All of a sudden the pilot sort of revs the engine, and it's kind of shaking the plane, and that's how they tried to get the snow off. Just by shaking the plane, revving it up and pulling back, and revving up, and getting on the—we're shaking around saying, "Whoa." So, I turn to Marcia and I say, "Well, in five minutes we're either going to be fine, or it's been really nice." And that was about it. Obviously, I'm here, therefore we made it. But that was the beginning of this adventure, and the other thing I won't forget about that flight was about midway, one of our passengers was lying across the seats, and the whole bank of seats just toppled right over, mid-flight. It was a little harrowing. However, we got to Tashkent, checked in for a little rest, and toured around and I'm going to abbreviate it obviously, but we had our own plane that ended up having all sorts of supplies and luggage and stuff that was being ferried from one place to the other. Sitting in the front when it took off—it was a nice sort of regional jet—we took off, and the entire thing fell down on top of us. There were probably about twenty-six seats or so, thirty seats in the whole thing, it was wild. But we did have our own flight attendant, a woman from North Korea, who had never met a Jew in her life and had all these images. She was Christian, which was also strange in a Muslim country, and this was the only job she could get, and she was very concerned about her future, being non-native and certainly not Islamic. She started accompanying us on all of our trips. We went to Samarkand and Bukhara, and I think the things that we remember—first of all, in Bukhara we stayed at their five star

hotel which people set aside a month's worth of salary to go, and it was the worst hotel room I've ever been in in my life, and I've been in some pretty bad places. There was a pipe coming out for the shower and there were rats running all over the place, and two little beds that were sort of set in—no wider than probably a couple of feet. Ice cold, no heating, no curtains, no nothing. I don't know how my wife made it, but we made it through. Everybody made it through, but the one thing was, everybody said, "Do not eat anything that isn't—that you know isn't safe." And we figured out the only things that were safe to eat were the bread, and we could drink the vodka. Nothing else. We came over with tons of canned chicken, and I can't look at canned chicken anymore because we were eating this all the time. We learned very well how to move things around the plates so it looked like we were eating, but we had a couple people who got very, very sick on that trip. But they'd had these huge banquets for us, they were so excited to welcome us, and they had these feasts with raw vegetables and produce, and then lamb, and this, and that, and the other thing, and we couldn't touch it. So, it was pretty wild.

9-00:11:33

Meeker:

What sort of research did you do in advance of going on the trip?

9-00:11:37

Goldman:

I think we had a bunch of articles about what the former FSU countries were like, what to expect. We definitely felt like outsiders. We went to the market one day, and it was very clear that there was a traditional dress, and if you didn't fit in you were looked at like, "Who are you and what are you doing in *our* country?" It was off-putting, we learned a lot about what some of the agencies were doing, and I have to say that the Jewish Agency's reputation in my eyes rose considerably after that trip. Their work in moving people, helping people move to Israel was heroic under horrible circumstances, I mean, truly awful circumstances.

9-00:12:38

Meeker:

Was there—part of what you learned about it must have been some understanding of the different circumstances under which Jews were living in Uzbekistan when it was a Soviet state as opposed to afterwards.

9-00:12:51

Goldman:

We asked them. There were not many Jews left. The ones who were left were some of the family. There was this one synagogue that had nothing left in it. I think there may have been a Torah that was left or very safely guarded, but this family that was watching over it said, "We're going to lose this shortly as well." Uzbekistan was becoming highly nationalistic, and frankly, Jews were not welcome. But this has been the homeland for so many and so, usually the older people were the ones who stayed around. In fact, on our flight from Tashkent to Tel Aviv, I would say the age was considerably older than what I expected. It was some of the last families. Of course, when we got to Tel Aviv, we were the ones kissing the ground. I'm not sure about the people from

Uzbekistan, they were pretty freaked out. It was like, what's happening to me, what is this place? Of course, there was a whole group coming to take care of them and all that, but it was strange. Very strange.

9-00:13:54

Meeker: Was it possible to engage with these individuals who lived in Uzbekistan?

9-00:14:01

Goldman: Oh yeah. They had the translator for us, and most of them spoke Russian anyway, and Hebrew.

9-00:12:38

Meeker: Did you ever ask them—I mean you must have asked them about how the end of the Soviet Union affected their lives.

9-00:14:15

Goldman: Actually, I'm not sure we did. I think they were more interested in—we were more interested in what it was like being Jewish now versus then.

9-00:14:26

Meeker: In a Muslim country?

9-00:14:28

Goldman: Yeah. And before, there was tolerance. Judaism wasn't state sanctioned, but—and there was certainly anti-Semitism—but there was some protection of rights, of people. Now it was very clear the direction the country was going in was monolithic, and that's why our dear Korean flight attendant, who just latched onto us, just so appreciated us and our warmth and everything—part of the reason she was there was she spoke very good English, and she wanted to come to the United States but she had no way, *no way* of being able to, it was really sad. Here's a bright young lady who is caught up in circumstances.

9-00:15:16

Meeker: So far removed from her own homeland as well.

9-00:15:18

Goldman: Absolutely. And there was a large immigration from North Korea to Uzbekistan, as a matter of fact. Remember, Uzbekistan is on the old silk road, so there's a lot of culture that went through, and we learned a lot about that as well. Very rich in resources of all types, as we know, oil and gas in particular these days. Found out a lot about what was going on with some of the multi-national companies, oil companies, trying to get a hold—a foothold there. But North Korea had nothing, even then, so her family immigrated to try to get a better life.

9-00:15:59

Meeker: So when you engaged with these folks—the people who are immigrating to Israel—I would expect that they would have some mixed feelings about leaving a place that they knew to be home, going to this place that they

certainly knew of but they didn't know. How did they express those feelings, or how did they express themselves?

9-00:16:24

Goldman: Pretty much exactly as you said then. Great concern, knowing that to a certain extent, they had to do this. On the other hand, they didn't want to do this. It was still their homeland, one that they'd lived in, were used to in a certain lifestyle, and going to a totally foreign land in every respect, and not necessarily knowing the language. Not all of them knew Hebrew at all. Being sort of shoved into a culture that was quite different from the one they were used to.

9-00:17:00

Meeker: How did they practice Judaism while in Uzbekistan?

9-00:17:03

Goldman: Well they did have—as I said, there was a synagogue.

9-00:17:07

Meeker: Would they have been what we might consider Orthodox, or is it possible to put them in the same categories?

9-00:17:14

Goldman: I wouldn't—no, I don't think so. I don't think you can, it's more of an Eastern European Sephardic form, though they did seem to be more Sephardic in a way, which doesn't mesh with the fact that they're Eastern European necessarily. But when we were feted at their homes, it was like they rolled out the red carpet and wanted to thank us for coming. It was just on and on and on, they considered this a great privilege and I can't imagine how much of their livelihood was spent on these guests from the United States which they were just amazed people would come. So it meant a lot to them.

9-00:18:01

Meeker: Primarily you were there to help them in the transition to move?

9-00:18:06

Goldman: Yeah. Well, I think we were there to understand. It was, selfishly, for us. What it was like to be a Jew living in the former Soviet Union, what it was like to make Aliyah, to move to Israel. What the experience all along the way felt like. And we got a pretty good idea of that.

9-00:18:27

Meeker: Has there been an effort to—among anybody who went on this mission—to maintain contact with some of the people?

9-00:18:37

Goldman: Well, some of them we're still—still know. We never had a real reunion. I'm not sure anybody wants to do that. It's one of those things that you sort of say, that was an experience and I'm going to leave it back in the experiential pile and not visit it too often. Because it was tough, it was a tough trip. As I said, a

lot of people got sick, it was wearing, pretty exhausting. When the two of us flew home, I remember we could barely keep our eyes open flying from Tel Aviv to London, and once we got to London flying home, we were gone. We were gone so fast. Probably one of the more tiring and fatiguing trips that I can remember.

9-00:19:21

Meeker: How long were you gone?

9-00:19:21

Goldman: I think we were gone about ten days.

9-00:19:23

Meeker: OK. Yeah, that's quite a bit of traveling to do in a short period of time.

9-00:19:26

Goldman: Yeah, ten days, twelve days, something like that. It was a long trip. I'm a little more used to flying, now going to Israel now, but still it was the hopping around, and we kept the pace. It went on and on and on, and just had a lot of sleep deprivation along the way, I'm afraid.

9-00:19:43

Meeker: Do you feel like, considering all the physical difficulties that you were forced to go through, do you think that there was anything deeper that you were able to bring back as far as understanding?

9-00:19:57

Goldman: You mean emotionally? As I said, the respect that I have for the Jewish Agency in the first place escalated significantly. Young people truly doing heroic work. I was impressed. Clearly I, along with others, felt the circumstances for somebody living in a former Soviet Union country are pretty dire. And in a strange way, it felt like you were witnessing the demise of a presence in a land, and they knew it too. So, I think we tried to put ourselves in their shoes and realize how disruptive and disturbing the experience of being uprooted would be. And that was the purpose, to really get to know the country a little bit, see its bright spots, if you will, and then just be transported away. As one person on the trip said as we're flying from Tashkent to Tel Aviv on an Uzbek Airline plane, even though we were promised it was going to be El Al, and it wasn't, we were standing—and it was a horrible flight—and he says, “We're just about as far away from home as we could possibly get.” And I said, “You bet.” In all respects. It was not just from a sense of geography, but just everything about it. The whole circumstance was so foreign and different for us, which obviously was the purpose. And from that point of view, it was impactful, no question about it. Quite an experience. So that was the trip.

9-00:22:04

Meeker: Do you mind if I take a break for a second?

9-00:22:08

Goldman: Not at all.

9-00:22:21

Meeker: Unless you have anything that you think we should cover prior to the Board Presidency—

9-00:22:29

Goldman: Ready to roll.

9-00:22:33

Meeker: OK. Let's just start with your agenda that you talked about. In the notes, there was a discussion of it and a mention of it and a quote, and I believe the introduction goes something like this: "JCF can be so more than it is today. It can be open, more responsive to the needs of the community, to listen to what the community has to say and go from there." What was the inspiration to offer this as an agenda, and what were you responding to?

9-00:23:10

Goldman: I think there were a few forces that came into play. One certainly, certainly, is looking at the campaign—it goes back to what I think I mentioned before. The people felt they had to give, or were obliged to give, rather than wanting to give. I don't think that members of the community understood exactly what Federation was there for. I know that people had felt that Federation wasn't in tune, that there were a bunch of older committed members of the community meeting behind closed doors, not in touch with reality, and so part of it was trying to get back in touch. Trying to be more attentive to what the disparate members of the community were saying or would like to be part of, and that was the second thing, was reaching out and being inclusive. I think a lot of that is just the way that I've been brought up, is to be welcoming rather than excluding. I don't think anybody—well, there are a few people, obviously, who practice exclusion, but I don't think that most people think about being more welcoming all the time. I know—everybody that I know wants to be that way, but going from idea to actualization sometimes takes more of an effort than maybe somebody wants to do. And, I didn't feel like the Federation was meaningful to people. It just didn't seem relevant. I was trying to figure out, well, why is that? Why is that? And it goes back to the whole issue of who is involved in Federation. People who are committed, who see this as something important in their lives. But it was a pretty—the core, if you will, is not that extensive. So, the way—if I had an agenda, it was not to have a specific agenda. It was to get some concepts into place. I felt that, in the two years you are president of any organization, I don't care if it's the Federation or anything else, what can happen and did happen is that somebody would say, "We're going to do 'x'." And then, two years or later and 'x' has been achieved, and then the next person comes in says, "Well, we're going to 'y'." And then 'y' is—so it becomes sort of this meandering, ill-defined course that's followed. And when I came in, I said, "I don't really want this to be a two-year agenda." I'd prefer it was a 20-year agenda. And the agenda to me is to transform

Federation into something that people are proud to be part of. Period. So I'm not sure how that's going to happen, but isn't that what we want?

9-00:26:46

Meeker:

Well, having that sort of non-agenda agenda, and you had had a very long experience with the organization and certainly had ample opportunity to think about the ways in which you were going to implement that non-agenda, what were some of those ideas once you were looking forward to your period on the Board Presidency?

9-00:27:11

Goldman:

Well, one important aspect was to bring other voices into the tent. I felt it was very important to have members of the Russian community on the board, members of the Israeli community on the board, members of the Orthodox community on the board, and we did that. And it was a richer conversation for it. I think that, as a perfect example of where a two-year agenda then can sort of disappear, I'm not sure that today—there are certainly representatives of the Russian community, but I don't know how many Israelis are on the board, and I know there's no Orthodox member still on the board. We tried for two at least, and we had one and kept trying to expand it. And I think that's a loss. I think then you have some real doubts whether the Federation speaks for the community.

9-00:28:11

Meeker:

As a pretty concrete example of the way which you tried to activate your agenda, or at least your philosophy about what the organization should be, let's take the Orthodox members of the board. How were they recruited, how did you communicate to them that there was a desire to hear their voices? And then, as far as you can tell, why is it that they or the people like them are not still on the board?

9-00:28:45

Goldman:

Well, I think what happened—first of all, we went out and in the nominating committee, I think prior to it, I said, "This is what I'd like to see," and then we went to staff, staff got us names of some people, we picked two, I went and said, "I'd like you to join the Federation Board." They said, "You're kidding, right?" And I said, "No, I really would like you to be present. These are the expectations, this is what you'll be asked to do." So I said, one of the two did join, maybe we had both at one point, after my term was done and down the road—well, actually during my term, I think, the one who did serve left the area, was a rabbi actually, and there—I don't know what happened. There was not, at least, a sense of urgency to have a replacement. And we had a couple of Israelis on the board, and I don't—again, the circumstances changed, but there was not the initiative to replace that person. So, it was sort of unfortunate circumstantial changes that occurred. That's the way it goes sometimes.

9-00:30:05

Meeker:

Was there anything in particular, in the conversation with those folks who previously hadn't served on the board, that—how you were able to convince them that their voices were—in fact, that you did want to hear their voices?

9-00:30:23

Goldman:

I don't think I had to convince them about anything.

9-00:30:25

Meeker:

It was just a matter of approaching them.

9-00:30:27

Goldman:

Yeah. They hadn't been asked. And they welcomed it, and they said, you know, that, especially in the situation with an Orthodox representative, was like, "You know I'm not going to necessarily agree, and I'm going to speak out." And I said, "Fine, that's why you've been invited. As long as you understand that there's a decision made, hopefully you'll be supportive." Like any organization.

9-00:30:50

Meeker:

Do you feel that the—while they were on the board, they made a special contribution?

9-00:30:57

Goldman:

Yes. Absolutely. We heard very different perspective from some that we've had before. It was good. It was really good. Very much welcomed it. Maybe I was alone, but at that time I didn't really care, to be honest. I wanted to say, "If we're going to talk about the Jewish community, let's talk about the whole Jewish community. Not just the folks we're comfortable with, that we're familiar with." It's good to have some lack of familiarity along the way.

9-00:31:34

Meeker:

When you were introducing your kind of philosophy and approach towards your Board Presidency, you said that it's essential to open up the tent, and that while there's not a lot of people who are actively interested in not opening up the tent and being intolerant for difference, there's a difference between also that and then actively searching for diversity of voices. Did you ever hear it articulated that an active outreach was too much to do or was disruptive or something like that? Or did you hear much agreement?

9-00:32:21

Goldman:

I think there was generally agreement. People thought, "That's not a bad idea, we should do something like that." I think, and I've seen it in organizations even today, where, well, "Shouldn't we just get the best person?" Rather than somebody who fits a certain set of criteria, and I said, "Well, I think we can do both." And besides which, the criteria that we set are those, again, that are comfortable for us, and that's not necessarily a good thing either. So, if we had different sets of criteria for different people, I don't think there would ever be an issue. Even these days, I run into people saying, "Well, diversity's great and all that, but we should just focus on getting the *best* person." And to

me, that's code saying that diversity's a great idea, but it's not the most important thing. And I disagree. I absolutely disagree. Because I think once people are vetted to a certain point, it becomes pretty squishy to judge who's better or more qualified than somebody else, so you have to look for differentiating characteristics.

9-00:33:49

Meeker: How long is a typical Board term?

9-00:33:53

Goldman: The typical Board term.

9-00:33:55

Meeker: Well, there must be—you're appointed for a year, or two years?

9-00:33:59

Goldman: No, I think you're appointed—

9-00:34:02

Meeker: Sometimes organizations have two-year terms and three-year terms, or—

9-00:34:06

Goldman: No, I think it's three two-year terms and you have to go off unless you're an officer in which you can be—your off year can be active, and then you get back on again. There are a lot of people who go off. I mean, I went off at least a couple, if not more, times during my long time on the Federation Board. But the Board's—the Presidency is two years.

9-00:34:34

Meeker: OK, and so most people who are committed in the long-term serve six years on the board. Is there—is it typical to have a large stable of people who are interested in joining the board?

9-00:34:51

Goldman: Generally speaking? Depends on the organization.

9-00:34:57

Meeker: Well, no, I mean for the JCF.

9-00:34:59

Goldman: Oh, for Federation specifically?

9-00:35:00

Meeker: Yeah, yeah.

9-00:35:01

Goldman: I think there's a group of people who very much want to serve on the Federation board. Occasionally I would wonder why, because it's not necessarily, in the roster of potential board representation, high on the list, maybe it is for some. It's a pretty political board. I don't know, I don't think

there's a large stable. But I think there are plenty of people to choose from. So far, it hasn't been too much of an issue to get people to fill vacancies.

9-00:35:51

Meeker:

Another thing that I noticed when reading some of the general ideas that you had for the organization, you would often invoke terms like “vendor,” and “customer,” things that seem to come from the private sector. Granted, undoubtedly, a lot of the presidents of the board and board members bring their private sector expertise, but it seems like you were almost strategically kind of inserting those words, and I'm wondering if that was deliberate, and if so, what was it from the private sector you thought that could help the work of JCF?

9-00:36:33

Goldman:

It was absolutely intended. Not to say that non-profits should operate like businesses, because I think people naturally make that leap to a conclusion. It was that there are certain terms that people pretty much can agree on, as far as the definition of those terms, they could be useful in helping guide our Federation to where maybe the energies and effort should be focused. So, I used the term “customer,” which generated a lot of discussion and disagreement, I might add. What I was trying to do was sort of pare down what Federation does to as simple a basis as possible. To say, “This is what we are, and who we exist for.” And then listen to the customer. It was nothing earth-shattering at all, but the whole thing got just to become a mess because there was a disagreement about who was a customer. I felt very strongly that our customers were the people in the community, that's why we exist. We're giving a product to them, and therefore, an intermediate customer, if you will, would be the agencies that deliver directly. And we're there to help them be as effective as possible to impact the lives of the people of the Jewish community. But it was argued that really, the customers are not the recipients of service support from these agencies; it's the donors. I see somewhat the point, that if we don't satisfy the donors, we're not going to be successful as a Federation. However, I looked at the difference being a stakeholder versus a customer. And the stakeholders clearly are a myriad of elements in the Jewish community, one of the most important of which happens to be our donors. And the next stratum is our major donors, and that's fine. But to me, they are stakeholders, but not the ultimate customer. So, I got caught in that buzzsaw pretty early on, and it didn't stop for one day, trying to argue. And I did try to stand back and understand better, and I did. I can see a rationale for saying the donor is your customer, but I don't think—I still don't, to this day, believe they're *the* customer. I do think they're a stakeholder, donors are stakeholders, and that's about—the attention given is one you would give to any stakeholder, customer or not.

9-00:39:57

Meeker:

It seems like there can be at least two possible ways in which people may have disagreed or perhaps misinterpreted what you were trying to communicate. One would be from people who simply didn't like introduction

of a language of customers and buyers and so forth into the service sector of non-profits, that it seemed like it would have sort of polluted it in some way. And then there's also this other notion about people involved in fundraising primarily, and they feel like, well, my job is to raise funds for JCF, therefore the people I really have to please are not the people who are ultimately receiving our services, but who are the people who are going to be donating the money.

9-00:40:58

Goldman: Sure, which I acknowledged.

9-00:41:00

Meeker: In some ways those are kind of conflicting, though.

9-00:41:02

Goldman: Yes, they are.

9-00:41:03

Meeker: Those two critiques of what you were having to say. Was there a way in which you were maybe able to bring them together, or talk to them at the same time?

9-00:41:11

Goldman: No. [laughter] Not at all, which is why it was never really resolved.

9-00:41:14

Meeker: It's sort of like adding a third front or something to—

9-00:41:18

Goldman: Well, as you said, as a fundraiser—if you were in the fundraising side, then you could make a case that your customer base are all the donors. But while you could make that case, that's a pretty isolated view. That's just saying, "What I do is immaterial to what happens in the Federation as a whole." Not that it isn't important and doesn't allow great things to be done by the Federation, but it's isolationist. That's where we got into some real problems. But I think that the terminology aspect—trying to be overly simplistic got some people upset. I didn't expect everybody to agree.

9-00:42:12

Meeker: Do you ever feel like after having some of these difficult conversations, you were able to modify your language or your view to a degree that you accommodated some of their critiques, or...

9-00:42:28

Goldman: I acknowledged that I could see a differing point of view, but I didn't change my point of view, [laughter] if that's what you're asking. No, I did not feel like that was—I think you were correct, in that the two scenarios you said may have been one of the reasons for resistance.

9-00:42:48

Meeker:

These kind of big philosophical questions bring up the McKinsey report, or kind of allude to it, I think in some ways. I'm wondering if we can just talk about that for a little bit. In particular—

9-00:43:08

Goldman:

Sure. You did find it?

9-00:43:09

Meeker:

No, I haven't seen it yet. I did find the discussion of it at various points, so that's what I'm going to be working off of, so I'm going to ask you to help me think about this in more terms. For our next and final interview, because I'm afraid that's going to have to happen, I'm going to try to take a look at it before we meet for that. In advance of that, I do kind of want to talk about it now because I think it's important in relation to what we've just been talking about the past few minutes. From what I understand, this was a formal report produced by this consulting firm. There was also a report that preceded it, a think tank report, is that—?

9-00:43:55

Goldman:

Yeah, there was a session in—I'll remember it. It's near Monterey, Asilomar. Large gathering of representatives, people from the community, to develop some strategic planning and focus for the Federation so that, I think, was probably—

9-00:44:29

Meeker:

Yeah, yeah. What was the motivation to, the impetus to hold that event?

9-00:44:32

Goldman:

Probably about the same thing as what—trying to redefine what Federation was going to look like, to get everybody together and come up with something.

9-00:44:44

Meeker:

What I'm getting from you, it seems like, there was just perhaps this general sense of needing to re-articulate a purposefulness or almost a malaise or something, that it's like we have this—

9-00:44:57

Goldman:

I think malaise is a perfect word.

9-00:44:59

Meeker:

OK, so there wasn't anything in particular that was necessarily—?

9-00:45:01

Goldman:

No, I said it before. I think that there's a real question of whether Federation was relevant to the community at large, and what the community thought about—I mean, nobody had asked. Just sort of operating independently, going on and on, that's not exactly the best way to know if you're doing what you're supposed to be doing, which gets back to whole issue about—OK, why don't

we check with those people who are our customers, who we serve, and so that was where the whole question of the definition of a customer, and who that customer might be, started growing. As I said, I agreed with some alternative viewpoints because I thought it was very important to bring people, in my opinion, stakeholders, into the fold and find out what they were thinking, but I wouldn't consider them the ultimate customer. So, there was this previous engagement. I think a lot of people felt like excellent ideas came out of it, and nothing was done with it. So why McKinsey? Because I was more interested, rather than necessarily strategic thinking, I was interested in organizational effectiveness. And that report was not heavy duty in-depth, and I think there's been a sense by certain people that the sampling size was so small that it really isn't relevant, but I mean, OK, maybe it didn't fit all the statistical requirements, but it still came up with some really interesting stuff based on general expertise as well as just the sense, OK, what is going on in the Jewish community? What should Federation look like organizationally? From just taking a broad brush of opinions and expertise.

9-00:47:05

Meeker: Just to step back to ask you about the contracting of this study—consulting firms generally don't come cheap.

9-00:47:17

Goldman: No, but this was pro-bono.

9-00:47:18

Meeker: Oh, it was pro-bono. OK, and the driving forces—

9-00:47:23

Goldman: I happen to know some people at McKinsey.

9-00:47:27

Meeker: All right, so you were the driving force behind seeing this study being done.

9-00:47:28

Goldman: Oh yeah. Yeah.

9-00:47:31

Meeker: And the agenda of it, in particular?

9-00:47:37

Goldman: Organizational effectiveness. Get some information about the condition of the Jewish community, especially at home, any trends that they saw. They went a little further, actually, than I thought, but the key was some thoughts on structure, to make Federation more effective.

9-00:48:05

Meeker: The general conclusions that I've found in the notes that I've read so far talked about the fact that the mission of the organization is sound, but that there was a problem when it came to the implementation of that mission. They argued this had to do with—we need to better build what they described as

“competencies,” and then also to focus more on access, allowing more user-friendly portals to access the organization and the services that you provided. Can you discuss that general finding and those conclusions?

9-00:48:53

Goldman:

Well, let's start with the access point. Because, again, it's, do people want to be involved. And again, Federation was kind of this mysterious entity that was more an enigma than an understood quantity. So, I think that McKinsey looked at other organizations as brands that resonated with members of the Jewish community, and that if there was an understanding of the affiliation with Federation it would help us tremendously. Perfect example—the Jewish Film Festival: non-judgmental, a little out there, a point of entry for people who are Jewish who don't necessarily consider themselves Jewish, but have an interest in film and indie-film in particular. There's a lot of that, different types of presentations. So, I think that the take-away from that is—here is an organization, not very big, but it's a great portal for bringing people—for people who are Jewish, are not ashamed of being Jewish, but don't want to get involved with the more formal structure of a federation or an agency or something like that. The chance to express their Jewish-ness without committing on a level that isn't comfortable for them. And what was the first thing that...

9-00:50:40

Meeker:

Well, let's just talk about that a little bit more. As part of the report—what was, I guess, the history of the relationship between the film festival and the JCF?

9-00:50:52

Goldman:

Very little support. I mean, it was something that was supported, but not to a large degree. There had been issues in the past of films being shown that were highly controversial. They got many, many members of the Federation Board at one time or another rather p.o.'d, to say the least, and so it was sort of like, “Go ahead, do your own thing, we'll give you—we'll throw a few dollars your way, but you know, leave us alone. We'd rather you weren't around.” What I don't think people—I don't know if that's fair to say, “not be around,” but was not the most comfortable relationship until I think some people woke up and realized, “This is a great entry point. There are a lot of Jews who are excited about film and look forward to this festival, and it's great.” So I was, like, maybe there's a different way to look at this. And now, I think we have a very good relationship. I spoke at their board meeting one time, first time anybody from Federation—any lay leader from Federation—was involved. And we just talked about things. I'd say a few things about Federation, but said, “I'm really here to listen to what you think about Federation, and what you think about the community.” And they were rather up front, I can't say I remember everything, but it was good. So it was a good connection.

9-00:52:22

Meeker:

Has the level of funding changed since this—?

9-00:52:25

Goldman: I think so. I believe it has. I'm not really on top of it anymore, so.

9-00:52:29

Meeker: Aside from listening to them as a constituency and as a particular portal, were there any other ways in which you or people after you attempted to leverage that—?

9-00:52:40

Goldman: Yeah, I think that actually one of the things that did happen was that either our ED [Executive Director] or somebody from the board spoke at the beginning of the festival, which was a very generous gesture as well. So, yeah, and they're a great organization

9-00:53:03

Meeker: The other thing was the notion of building competencies.

9-00:53:11

Goldman: Yeah. I think that evolved into some structural questions. The issues seemed to be focused, again, around endowment. That, at the time, then, as now, the structure is such that there isn't a bifurcation of the fundraising and the distribution parts. They're all one and the same, which allows for quite a bit of control to start with, but it may be one of the reasons that—with the power that's generated by that, being more respected, more appreciated, kind of goes out the window with the power that's garnered from all this stuff. I mean, to have one person in many ways controlling both inflow and outflow, that's a big deal, especially when you're talking about the amount of money that is involved. So, in their wisdom, McKinsey suggested that the financial resources development (fundraising) and allocations and distributions be totally separate throughout Federation. That didn't necessarily go over really well with certain people, not that I'm terribly surprised.

9-00:54:57

Meeker: And has it influenced the structure, the organizational structure?

9-00:55:01

Goldman: Nope, not yet. I shouldn't say that. That's not fair. What has happened is that there is endowment representation on the Planning and Agency Services—Executive Committee. There is representation by PAS on endowment, and so at least you don't have to filter through to get the communications going between and among those people.

9-00:55:36

Meeker: So, it sounds like what you're saying is that there was a single person or a single office that controlled the flow of knowledge between the two?

9-00:55:45

Goldman: No, I just think if you don't have somebody from PAS involved in Endowment, there's a lot of money involved that is being distributed and you don't necessarily know about it. So you're not getting the total picture.

9-00:55:02

Meeker: So it's a balancing act.

9-00:55:05

Goldman: Well, if you assume that the PAS's work and endowment's work are in balance, which they're not, then I'd have to say, no, it's not a balancing act. It's not even an attempt to be balancing. It is what it is, a very large pool of funds for which some major grants are being made, and you need to know what's happening on the other side. Otherwise it's an isolated view of what's going on with a particular agency or program or whatever. When you don't have the two distribution forces talking to each other, it's like one can go in this direction, the other's going in this direction, and the problems that it causes by not being in sync are enormous. So, I still would like to see that structure clearly delineated as it should be.

9-00:57:01

Meeker: What are some ways that that could be done?

9-00:57:04

Goldman: Well, what McKinsey recommended was to have an FRD, have really two arms of Federation. FRD, Allocations and Distributions, that's it. And everything is divided into those two camps. So that means endowment would be split, and the fundraising side goes over to FRD, and the distribution side goes over to be part of PAS, to be the same.

9-00:57:31

Meeker: Wouldn't that also create a problem of lack of communication between the two?

9-00:57:36

Goldman: Between the fundraising side and the—exactly. Yes.

9-00:57:40

Meeker: That's what you want.

9-00:57:41

Goldman: That's the idea. The problem is having the two in one continuum.

9-00:57:47

Meeker: OK. I see what you're saying now. Chances of that happening?

9-00:57:53

Goldman: Still working on it. [laughter]

9-00:57:57

Meeker: The report also mentioned that the funding priorities, *vis-à-vis* Israel, could be better articulated. How was that understood and received, and what was done about it?

9-00:58:17

Goldman: Well, I think it goes back to this issue of either being broad and shallow or narrow and deep. We did re-articulate, we did follow that well in saying, “Wait a minute, what exactly is our focus going to be on?” Because we were giving grants, in large part, to organizations that had received grants before, so yeah, it wasn’t defined at all. I mean, maybe it was defined—if you were a grantee, you got a grant again—for the most part, not exclusively. So, what we established was a weaning period where the so-called automatic—I mean, they were almost entitlements—were given time to not be supported in the same fashion, and we started focusing on specific areas, and say we’re going to be giving x dollars for this and this and this, and then let’s look at what programs can fit into those. So it was a pretty significant change on that side, one that continues today. That much does continue.

9-00:59:32

Meeker: What, during the period of time, emerged as the main thematic areas that you were interested in funding?

9-00:59:38

Goldman: No question—civil society grants, and a lot of those were clearly directed at bridging the gap between the Arab-Israelis and the Jewish-Israelis. There were a couple others I can’t remember right now, you may have them.

9-00:60:05

Meeker: Yeah, I think probably down—down here locked away.

9-00:60:07

Goldman: Somewhere. I didn’t want this to be a test. [laughter]

Begin Audio File 10

10-00:00:00

Meeker: All right, we are back on. Well, actually, briefly what we were talking about off tape has to do with the executive structure of the organization.

10-00:00:15

Goldman: Right.

10-00:00:17

Meeker: I’m wondering if you could just kind of explain it to me, for the record, right, how the executive structure of the organization works, kind of flow-chart style.

10-00:00:33

Goldman: Well—

10-00:00:35

Meeker: Because I haven’t really been able to locate one.

10-00:00:36
Goldman: There probably isn't one. Well, let's put it this way, you have a Board of Directors, and the Executive Director, or CEO in terms now, reports to the Board of Directors.

10-00:00:50
Meeker: When did that name change?

10-00:00:03
Goldman: The name changed, I think, when Sam Salkin was hired. I believe, yes.

10-00:01:02
Meeker: And that was during your presidency?

10-00:01:03
Goldman: Yes. We felt that was fine, you know.

10-00:01:10
Meeker: Was it something that he wanted?

10-00:01:11
Goldman: Yes.

10-00:01:13
Meeker: OK, so that was part of him coming on board.

10-00:01:15
Goldman: He was a CEO, so he thought he should still be a CEO.

10-00:01:17
Meeker: Well, there was also a trend during that period of time, among a lot of non-profits—

10-00:01:21
Goldman: No question. Presidents who were CEOs or whatever. I was never quite sure what was wrong with Executive Director. I still am a little confused, but whatever, it's not the most important thing in the world, you know. A title is just not that significant, unless it becomes confusing. And I think what we felt was, we have a President and to have a CEO makes some sense, as long as people know what the difference is, but who knows if they do? So, anyway, so you have an Executive Director, and all departments, including Endowment, report to the Executive Director.

10-00:02:06
Meeker: And the different departments being?

10-00:02:09
Goldman: Well, you have Campaign, and you have Endowment, and you've got Planning and Agency Services, and you have Marketing, and you have IT, and, you know, all the various elements that would be involved.

10-00:02:26
Meeker: And the leader of each of those departments would be a Vice President now, or?

10-00:02:33
Goldman: I guess. I don't know.

10-00:02:34
Meeker: OK. Director levels—

10-00:02:35
Goldman: Probably not a Vice President. I don't know.

10-00:02:39
Meeker: OK, all right. There was—and I can't remember if this was part of the McKinsey report or if it was something that was a general discussion, but—well, there's also a position, Executive Vice President. I came across that and I couldn't figure out—

10-00:02:56
Goldman: That may have been as an interim before a CEO.

10-00:03:01
Meeker: OK, so, it became—

10-00:03:03
Goldman: And, you know, for those who are Executive Vice Presidents in non-profits, they are the ones that would be the equivalent of an Executive Director.

10-00:03:12
Meeker: All right, so I think we had some change of title?

10-00:03:14
Goldman: Yeah, we probably did.

10-00:03:18
Meeker: OK, that's where my confusion was coming from. Now I've identified the source of my confusion. OK, I don't know if this was a part of the McKinsey report or not, but it was something that was being discussed in this period of time. When Wayne Feinstein departed the organization, there was some discussion about, one, his role, and there was some criticism of it. And there was also some complaint that there was a lack of talent in the kind of individual that needed to serve in that position.

10-00:03:56
Goldman: In the Executive Director position?

10-00:03:59
Meeker: Yeah, or the CEO's position.

10-00:04:01
Goldman: Right.

10-00:04:02

Meeker:

What Salkin was hired for. Do you remember this conversation?

10-00:04:12

Goldman:

The conversation with, or just generally speaking about the competency of—

10-00:04:16

Meeker:

The general conversation about, you know, the difficulty in finding someone who could adequately fill this role.

10-00:04:22

Goldman:

Oh yeah, we had a search committee.

[A portion of the interview has been sealed until 2018.]

Interview 6: June 22, 2006
Begin Audio File 11

11-00:00:32

Meeker: Let's actually get started. We covered a good portion, I think; some main issues from your presidency in our last discussion. But let's talk about a couple of the major contextual issues that were going on and how they affected your presidency. And probably the first thing that we should start with is the beginning of the Second Intifada, which was late summer/early fall of 2000—just a few months after you got installed into your position of president.

11-00:00:59

Goldman: Yeah, actually, I remember exactly what was happening because—I remember my dad at Thanksgiving—I may have said this before; I'm not sure—making a toast to peace. And it really looked like things were coming together. And it was a dawning of a new era, and everybody was really feeling so positive. And less than one month later was when everything kind of hit the fan. Shortly thereafter, I think in the spring, was when there was a mission that we took to Israel—the spring trip to visit the Amuta. And it was interesting, on that visit, that we met with Hirsh Goodman, who was with the *Jerusalem Report* at the time. And his theory—and I think it's true today—is that it's good to have some kind of outside crisis, because if Israel ever had to face up to the inner crisis of Orthodox, non-Orthodox, sectarian, and all those situations, and how they would be grappling with each other, I think that it would tear the country apart. That's what he thought. Really kind of interesting from that perspective that there was a different viewpoint out there, of “this is almost a better thing.” And one could say that's true about the Middle East in general, that a lot of the countries think that the Israeli-Palestinian enmity is actually a good thing for their internal situations. I'm sure the Saudis feel that way, and others feel that way. But, you know, it prevents the inner struggles from rising to the surface in a lot of ways. At least, that's been the case. So I know I wandered off a little bit on that one.

11-00:02:59

Meeker: Was this notion new to you upon hearing it?

11-00:03:06

Goldman: Yeah, I think it actually was. I mean, it was an interesting kind of turn that I'd never thought about. I think all of us knew that there was the potential for conflict within the State of Israel over religious versus sectarian issues. And that there were lots of issues surrounding the Orthodox, and the special treatment that they received in a variety of different manners. But we never thought this was going to heighten to a point where it would really be disruptive, and certainly didn't see the Intifada as kind of a way of shunting that aside for the time being. I never connected the two, really.

11-00:03:53

Meeker:

To what degree do you think the question of some of this tension between the secular and the Orthodox has been exacerbated by a lot of the post-Soviet migrations that were happening?

11-00:04:09

Goldman:

To some extent. Definitely to some extent. Because of the influx of the Orthodox, at the same time there's been an influx of the sectarian members. I mean, it's just building up, you know, the populations that are of very different points of view. But I think more important has been the shift in the political structure to needing to have the Orthodox Party's support in order to form a government, and therefore having to address the issues that they bring up and having to respond positively. Which, in many ways, is the—if you would put it—the tyranny of the minority controlling policy for the State of Israel.

11-00:04:54

Meeker:

Just stepping back—and this is probably a difficult question to answer—but how do you suppose the Intifada affected the period of your presidency in the JCF?

11-00:05:09

Goldman:

[laughter] I don't know if it was so difficult, because it certainly heightened things a lot. I think—

11-00:05:18

Meeker:

Maybe a few examples, or—

11-00:05:19

Goldman:

Yeah, well, there were a couple things that happened. First of all, coupled with the Intifada was a significant rise in Palestinian and Arab presence in the various campuses. It had always been festering, but it hadn't risen to the level where it became something of, you know, the equivalence with apartheid, and occupation, and concentration camps. I mean it's, like, built and built and built...

11-00:05:55

Meeker:

Particularly at Berkeley and then San Francisco State?

11-00:05:57

Goldman:

That's right. Particularly at Berkeley and San Francisco State, but far from exclusive. I mean, Stanford and Santa Cruz were also experiencing real problems. Some at San Jose State, some at Foothill—I know that there were some issues. And it got to the point where Jewish kids were afraid, as it is true today—less so, but not a lot less so—of wearing a Magen David over their shirts going to school, or identifying themselves as Jewish at all, or speaking out in favor of Israel. That was a major shift that occurred. And we know that it was heavily funded by Arab and Palestinian money to raise the voices, and raise the presence. And it got, really, pretty bad. So that was one thing.

11-00:06:56

Meeker: Well how, then, did, for instance, organizations like JCF respond to this change of atmosphere?

11-00:07:06

Goldman: Well, it took some time. I mean, I think, you know, nothing moves quickly. But JC—

11-00:07:11

Meeker: Running in cycles.

11-00:07:12

Goldman: Yeah. [laughter] JCRC was really on the front lines. The Israel Project, which is something that was seeded by the Federation, had a significant presence on a lot of the campuses. We tried to build up the Israel in the Gardens celebration—a very tough time, obviously. And we had plenty of protests, several of which we'd never had before. But the big issue became around the Hillels. That's where more and more attention was—because Hillels were kind of a nice place for Jewish kids to schmooze, and get together, and maybe meet somebody of the opposite sex or whomever. And just sort of, you know, have a chance to interact. And suddenly they became sort of the focal point for this battle, and became sort of ground zero. So there was a need to put a lot more money into the Hillels. There was a need especially after—I know we haven't gotten to 9/11, but that's a whole other thing that changed the view of the Federation and how we were involved. But there was a decided sea change in funding, if you will, the front line of defense. And that is going on today.

11-00:08:43

Meeker: When approaching the funding of the front line of defense—and this, you know, is a way perhaps to look at one of the key issues involved in JCF overall, but in the microcosm at the university level—is this—maybe “ambivalence” is the right word to describe the commonly understood need to defend Jews' right of expression, representation, and history, communal life. At the same time as that, a lot of those people who are interested in defending Jews also are critical of the current regime in Israel. So that ambivalence requires some complex thinking, I think, in the way in which this ground-zero defense, as you described it, manifests or at least...nurtures its constituents in some ways.

11-00:10:05

Goldman: Let me respond in two ways. Because there is the general issue which has been constant in Federation's campaigns, where people talk about the government of Israel—“I don't agree with the government of Israel. I don't agree with the policies. I don't like what's happening.” And I think it's very important to remind donors, and the community at large, that Federation funds do not go to the government of Israel. They go to the people of Israel. They are supporting social programs, they are supporting Aliyah programs, they are supporting self-fulfillment programs, etc., etc. The social services, health services, whatever. So if you separate the government of Israel from the

people of Israel—just as I think maybe even today Europeans look favorably on Americans, but they don't like our governmental policies—same thing. You know, there's not that much of a difference. The second thing is really that our domestic support has been more and more significant to certainly younger donors, but I would say that the donor community at large. And the concern that was raised was that the activities on the campuses weren't just anti-Israel; there was a sense that they were truly becoming anti-Semitic. So people saw this happening, and saw the link, and said, "You know, really, you cannot separate the two." And I think it's very hard to separate the two. And so I think people internalize that as an attack on the community.

11-00:11:55

Meeker:

Well, then when we talk about these strategies in ground-zero defense, was there an understanding in which the strategies would differ in fighting anti-Semitism, versus fighting anti-Israel or perhaps anti-Zionist sentiment?

11-00:12:14

Goldman:

Like I said, I think it's hard to separate the two. I really do. I think there is a point where you can say, "Yes, I disagree with the policies," or somebody not Jewish can say, "Look, I mean, I'm very supportive of Judaism and the rights of Jewish people." It's hard to say, "I'm against the formation of the State of Israel" without it sounding like it's anti-Semitic. Forgetting government policy. When it becomes anti-Zionist, that starts falling over. I mean, you've got sort of a continuum of anti-Israel, from a policy point of view, from anti-Zionism to anti-Semitic behavior. It moves in that line, I think.

11-00:13:08

Meeker:

This understanding that you've developed, is this is something that you've held for a long time? Or was it helped crystallized by the events surrounding the Second Intifada?

11-00:13:20

Goldman:

I think it was clearly crystallized around these events, because I did not experience anti-Semitism to any large extent—barely at all in my life up to that point. And still haven't, except on one or two occasions that were pretty outrageous. But there is not as much that one is aware of, I think, growing up, certainly in this area. But it's there and I've seen it. This just happened to give it greater clarity and it was more in your face.

11-00:14:01

Meeker:

So perhaps in a sense experiencing not exactly firsthand, but witnessing the pro-Palestinian movements at Bay Area campuses, and seeing the fact that there was little differentiation between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, or protest against the policies of Israel, helped clarify your perspective?

11-00:14:32

Goldman:

Oh, absolutely. No question about it.

11-00:14:40

Meeker:

OK, so you were talking about some of the influences of the Second Intifada and the protests on campus were one of them. Are there any other examples you can share?

11-00:14:49

Goldman:

Yeah, it was interesting. The Consulate General of Israel sat down with me one day. We met regularly. And he suggested that the Federation should really take a position about having a rally. He was concerned that there were all these rallies and marches, you know, that were supporting the Palestinian effort, and there was no voice coming from the other side. And so I guess—I can't even remember when it was, but I think it was about a year into the Second Intifada that we had a gathering at Justin Herman Plaza. It was just overflowing. I mean, it was amazing. It was just, you know, to say, "We are one with Israel." And it was a remarkable day. And it was interesting because there was a lot of police, then all of a sudden a plane flies over with a big banner that says, "We are one," with a big Star of David at the end of it. And there were protesters all around, ringing around, you know. It kind of felt to me that the community was wanting to have a chance to say, "Wait a minute. It's not all one-sided, and we need to have our voice, and our strength, and our representation in this whole issue as well." And they're sort of waiting for the moment, and this became the moment. And I almost felt like there was a shift, from that time forward, that it wasn't so one-sided anymore. *The Chronicle* didn't just talk about the pro-Palestinian side. As a matter of fact, one of the things that also happened is we sat down with the Editorial Board—and this was arranged through JCRC, but I was there and several others were there. We probably had 20 or 30 sitting down with the Editorial Board saying, "You know what? Here's a list of the articles that you've written. Let us point out what we have a problem with." And we did. And they sort of looked at us and said, "OK, we can get that." You know? So it was an interesting time—[laughter]—to say the least. But I think people were scared at one point of sort of stepping out, and there was no forum for them to step out. And then over time we realized, "Wait a minute. We've got to do something." You know, just to bring in another point of view, if nothing else. And now, if we shift to today, I think there's been a definite shift in public attitude, and realizing that Israel has made practically every offer that seemed reasonable at the time to bring this to a closure. And with Arafat gone, look what's happened. You know, I mean, the internal struggles are really something. They basically have civil war. And there's a verge of uprising, and that is not good for Israel either. And so I think there's been a shift in attitude and a shift in focus, and I would have to say that the reporting is much more balanced that it was back then at the beginning.

11-00:18:24

Meeker:

When you had this meeting with *The Chronicle*, as specifically as you can remember, what were some of the kinds of things that you were objecting to? And then, I imagine there also would have been proposals about the kinds of things that you wanted reported on that hadn't been.

11-00:18:43
Goldman:

Well, there was a very famous video of, I believe—I'm trying to remember exactly, but it was a Palestinian kid over the dead body of his father with, you know, an Israeli soldier right there pointing a gun, or something like that. I'm trying to remember exactly. And that all looked like it was Israel's fault, it was very appealing, and all that. It turns out that the Palestinian adult was killed by wayward fire from Palestinians. But, you know, that kind of stuff never hits the paper, and when it finally does, it's, like, way down here, and there's big splashes up here. And so I'm sort of saying, "Why don't I get the whole picture?" The editorials were definitely biased, in my opinion. We pointed that out. But more than anything else was the way the articles were written. Because I think the other thing that changed it was, of course, 9/11. That identification of terrorism. These were fighters for their land and their rights, and so on and so forth. And you sort of sit there and say, "Well, what about the suicide attacks? And the way that they were presented as martyrs?" And we said, "No, they were murderers. They're not martyrs; they're murderers. Let's get this story straight." If you're going to be balanced in your viewpoint, and that's what we walked through, it's the way that it comes across. And at least I give the *Chronicle* credit: they listened and they did make some shifts. Certainly not to the extent one would want, but shifts in the way that they addressed. And we did get back a few months later and said thank you. Thank you for listening, thank you for at least attempting to address this.

11-00:20:48
Meeker:

Do you know if there were any internal questions within the *Chronicle*? I imagine they have some reporters who are—

11-00:20:56
Goldman:

Of course. [laughter]

11-00:20:57
Meeker:

—sympathetic to your viewpoint than others.

11-00:20:59
Goldman:

I wouldn't know. [laughter]

11-00:21:01
Meeker:

Yeah, OK.

11-00:21:02
Goldman:

Not party to those discussions.

11-00:21:04
Meeker:

This question of the rally is sort of interesting as well. I do remember reading about it. What part did you play in organizing that?

11-00:21:12
Goldman:

I was the emcee. I mean, I was asked to be sort of running the show. You know, we had musicians, and we had speakers, and it probably went on too

long. But it was a beautiful day. It really got to me, because there was a sea of people waving Israeli flags and singing along. Very peaceful. I mean, what would you expect? You know, it was just supportive. It was like a rallying cry, in a lot of ways.

11-00:21:45

Meeker:

Did the speakers, you think, have a diversity of viewpoints? Or did it seem like there was a real common—?

11-00:21:51

Goldman:

There was no diversity of viewpoints on that one. [laughter] No. I mean, there were shades maybe. There's a group called JESNA that is highlighting the fact that Jews were kicked out of their homelands within Arab countries. And, you know, there were probably one or two million Jews that were forced out from their homelands. And so you had the speaker from JESNA making a very compelling case about, "Look at the other side. Look at this fact that people don't talk about." It's the same thing. What's being done about that? And then other speakers, they were saying, you know, the Palestinians have never been welcomed into the homes of their brethren to speak of, except as labor. And Palestinians have been kicked out of Jordan, they've been kicked out of Lebanon, they've been kicked out of Syria. And it goes back to internal issues being put aside so that there's something else that protects those governments and their attitudes.

11-00:23:07

Meeker:

This question—"question" is sort of a banal word—but the Israel/Palestinian, Jewish/Palestinian question is one that is particularly susceptible to historical analysis from various sides. I'm not really quite sure how to ask a question about this, but, in hearing these historical arguments, and using them yourself as you just did, how do you feel about that? Is that something that—?

11-00:24:05

Goldman:

You mean the fact that the Hebrew people were the first residents of this land anyway? [laughter]

11-00:24:11

Meeker:

Well, yeah. I mean, that's a question. But then there's—

11-00:24:15

Goldman:

But then the Palestinians came in. Well, the Palestinians and the Jews were living there under British rule for a long, long time, you know. But Pal—

11-00:24:22

Meeker:

OK, maybe a way to ask the question is that history is used to explain the divisions, and the problems, and the battles. But I never hear history used to offer a solution. And I'm wondering if, in your knowledge of the history from the various vantage points in which it is told, do you see any angle in there for history to be used in the service as some sort of reconciliation or end of the constant strife?

11-00:25:03

Goldman:

You would have to assume, then, that the tribal differences have been resolved in other parts of the world as well. I mean, if you really go back in time, these are tribal issues and have been. It's the same in Yugoslavia, and we saw what happened there. It's the same in Ireland—in Northern Ireland. It happens there. I mean, these are tribal differences that lead to ongoing battles. The problem with using history is, first, there has to be an agreement on the history that's being used as a solution. So it depends how far you go back. I mean, the conservative elements of the government have already said that Judea and Sumaria are part of Israel. I mean, that's a lot of area, you know? That goes right into Jordan. So it's the way you want to use it. You know, the fact is there's never been a State of Palestine. There is no such thing as a Palestinian State, never has been. There was the Palestinian Mandate that encompassed a whole lot of land. And the British basically said, "We don't want to deal with this anymore," and they walked away. That's a great solution, isn't it? [laughter] So, I mean, I don't know how you'd answer the question because history has always been used by factions that are warring as a justification, and it depends whose history do you use.

11-00:26:46

Meeker:

But when you kind of bring up these other tribal issues, which I think is a useful analogy to a certain point, it seems in some of those examples—particularly in the Balkans—the solution comes with separation.

11-00:27:07

Goldman:

Right. What's happening in Israel right now?

11-00:27:10

Meeker:

The wall.

11-00:27:11

Goldman:

The wall's being built.

11-00:27:12

Meeker:

Yeah. Does that seem to you like a solution?

11-00:27:17

Goldman:

You know, it's interesting you bring it up because I was thinking about it when I was coming to the session. I remember my dad saying five years ago, "It would be great if there were peace, but there's going to have to be a wall." And the wall, I think, unlike the Berlin Wall, is not to keep people in but to keep people out. [laughter] It's a very big difference. And I know there's controversy, but actually it's out of necessity. I think everybody in Israel says it would be great not to have it, but we need to have it. So, yeah, it is a matter of separation. The bigger issue is what's going to happen with the Israeli Arabs, and we talked about that for some period of time—you know, what's going to happen there. As long as they're not being treated equally with all the rights of any other citizen in the State of Israel, then you have the ingredients for an explosive situation. And if that is not addressed, another example of not

dealing with the internal issues that the state has to deal with, it's a powder keg.

11-00:28:47

Meeker: Now, I guess when you visited Israel during this period of time, it was about the same time that Barak's government started to fall apart? Is that correct?

11-00:28:57

Goldman: Iraq's government was falling—

11-00:28:58

Meeker: Barak. Ehud Barak.

11-00:28:59

Goldman: Barak, yes. Excuse me. I thought you said Iraq. Yes, actually, it was. It was.

11-00:29:07

Meeker: And I think this was a comment—

11-00:29:09

Goldman: That was actually the spring and I think it was in the fall, because it was right before Clinton's—. I'm trying to remember the timing, because it was the end of his term that he made the one last effort.

11-00:29:25

Meeker: Yeah, I think that you were there in the fall.

11-00:29:28

Goldman: We probably were. I can't remember. Yeah, I think we were. That's right. You're right.

11-00:29:35

Meeker: According to the notes, I think this is a comment you made. If not, just comment on it. But it said that, you know, during this period of time of internal change, people were switching their alliances, like, four times a day.

11-00:29:49

Goldman: Did I say that?

11-00:29:51

Meeker: You know, it read like you said that. It could have been someone else. You could have been reporting on someone else that said that. But—

11-00:30:01

Goldman: With the government of Israel?

11-00:30:01

Meeker: Yeah, within Israel. You know, like, where do your allegiances fall?

11-00:30:06

Goldman: No, actually I think you're right. I probably did say it. Because I remember we were not at the King David for this trip. We were at the other hotel. It was

very nice. And it was amazing because, you know, everything was up in the air and you didn't know who was going to end up in power. But that really destroyed the—where was it? I'm trying to remember where the discussions were.

11-00:30:35

Meeker:

Oh, the Dayton Peace Accords?

11-00:30:36

Goldman:

Yeah, but it was actually in Egypt, right on the border. Not Sharm el Sheikh. I don't think I remember where it was. Anyway, the Camp David situation, obviously, of trying to provide something in which Barak said 95%, 97% of the land that was held by Israel was going to be going back. East Jerusalem was going to have its own government and its own identity, on and on and on and on. To this day, I am still shocked—

11-00:31:14

Meeker:

That that wasn't accepted?

11-00:31:15

Goldman:

—that that wasn't accepted, until you realize that Arafat also realized that to have that peace proposal accepted would have been the end of his presence. What else was there for him to do? Because we all know the Palestinian Authority was and is one of the most corrupt governments around, and it's all coming out now. But it was pretty awful that none of the money was really getting to the people. But there was such control because our enemy's right around the corner.

11-00:31:51

Meeker:

You know, one of the things that's kind of interesting is, you know, being a United States citizen and one who thinks about politics, your allegiances do sort of—you know, they may be on one side or the other, but they will change and shift. To what extent do you keep up with political changes in Israel? And do you feel a personal interest in and investment in the changes that are happening there politically?

11-00:32:32

Goldman:

If you mean by "investment" that I would support—

11-00:32:38

Meeker:

Something more than an intellectual interest.

11-00:32:40

Goldman:

Not financial support, because that's not allowed.

11-00:32:41

Meeker:

Not financial support. Yeah. Yeah, I guess I have to make that distinction. As opposed to simply, like, objectively following what's written in the newspapers—

11-00:32:53
Goldman:

Oh, is there a vested interest in—

11-00:32:54
Meeker:

An emotional interest, or—

11-00:32:55
Goldman:

—who gets in involved? Oh, yeah. Oh, sure. I think everybody in the Jewish community probably has a vested interest in who they think should be in power at the time. I mean, people were stunned that Sharon became the head. And then there was sort of this sense, “Well, maybe it would be like Nixon going to China. Maybe he’s the one that can bring the Palestinians to the table.” And actually, he was the one that made the decision about getting out of Lebanon. Ehud Barak could never make that happen. So is there a vested interest, and is there an interest in what Olmert’s going to do? Absolutely. There’s a conservative bent, but it’s sort of like, to some degree, what’s happening here. Will we feel safer and more protected with somebody who’s more conservative versus somebody who’s more a liberal? I would say that many in the country obviously felt that way. So, sure. Is there a constant interest in what’s happening politically? You bet.

11-00:34:04
Meeker:

Yeah, and this is kind of related—from what it appears is that you met with Barak while he was in Chicago. What were the circumstances of that meeting? And what do you suppose he went into the meeting seeking, and what did you go into the meeting seeking?

11-00:34:22
Goldman:

Well, this was the General Assembly, otherwise known as the GA. And it’s one of the things one does when they’re Federation president, is they go to GAs. And there’s a lot of people who go. There are GA groupies. They’re just big, cumbersome, thousands and thousands and thousands of people with various agendas and, whatever. And bringing in the Prime Minister of Israel is one of the high points, clearly. I was invited along with other Federation presidents to be there; it was not just San Francisco by any stretch of the imagination. What I do remember was he was really, really sick and could barely talk. Had a horrible head cold, or flu, or something like that. But he came, and we were frankly surprised and delighted that he did. And he spoke about the usual connection with American Jewry and how important it was, and how important it was to support Israel. There really wasn’t anything earth-shattering in that visit, nor would one expect it to be. But he was very nice and very cordial, and spent as much time as he could with us. And it was a nice thing.

11-00:35:42
Meeker:

So it was more of a meet-and-greet, rather than a real kind of policy meeting?

11-00:35:45

Goldman:

I think there was some discussion, as I recall. I don't remember that very well. I think it was intended to be mostly meet-and-greet. I know he did field some questions, but there were no hardballs thrown. So, I mean, it was out of deference, and also the fact that he looked terrible—[laughter]—because he was feeling so bad.

11-00:36:09

Meeker:

There was something called the Israel Emergency Campaign. Can you describe what that was and why it was an emergency?

11-00:36:17

Goldman:

It was a secondary campaign. A lot of it was to help specifically those who were affected by the Intifada. It turned out, the more and more we learned, was that there were kids who couldn't go to camps, there were security issues, there were health issues, there were food issues. This was an interesting sort of dynamic. The State of Israel did not ask for extra aid. Whether it was pride, or stubbornness, or just making a point of strength saying, "We can handle our people just fine"—but it was becoming more and more obvious, especially through the Israel and Overseas Committee, that there were some pretty severe unmet needs for people affected by the Intifada. Adults and children. There were job losses, there wasn't government support for a lot of activities that were formerly funded; things had been cut down in a huge way because the defense budget was soaring. So we formed a second-line campaign and asked for additional monies and I think it was pretty successful, actually. I think a lot of people gravitated towards it. But we made it clear: this is for emergency needs as they stand today. At this point in time, things are much better in Israel from a financial point of view because—I mean, you look at the amount of industry that has invested in Israel, it's enormous. I mean, Intel, two years ago I think, built a huge plant in Israel. And the head of Intel said, "It's the place to be. We've got great, great brains, and great skill sets, and reasonable labor costs in a place that we know is going to be the heart of the technological revolution for many, many years to come."

11-00:38:42

Meeker:

Why will Israel be the heart of the technological revolution?

11-00:38:44

Goldman:

There's a lot of brains, and there's a lot of skill sets, and there's some fairly inexpensive labor.

11-00:38:50

Meeker:

Is it a regional question? Or is it focused primarily on Israel?

11-00:38:53

Goldman:

The sense that I think there is out there is that you have some of the best talent in the world concentrated in a very small space. And so being able to bring all the best minds and all these people with great talent is so easy. You're not spread out like you are in the United States. The way that it was explained to

me is that from a high-tech and biotech point of view, there is no place better in the world. And this is the future. So it's really quite something. And people have a work ethic that just is unmatched, and a bent towards creativity that just isn't found. Again, because it's so concentrated is what makes it attractive. You can really pull the talent together and that's what this guy from Intel made very clear. Because I asked why it's ideal for us.

11-00:39:44

Meeker:

Interesting. Back on the home front, I think particularly in relation to JCF-funded programs that assisted Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs, there was some controversy that developed.

11-00:40:17

Goldman:

[laughter] Yes, there was.

11-00:40:19

Meeker:

The Committee for Jewish Concerns.

11-00:40:22

Goldman:

Yes. Gerardo Joffe, as I recall.

11-00:40:27

Meeker:

OK. In the Executive Committee it was reported that the majority of people who wrote in favor of this committee, or signed on as part of this committee, had Russian surnames or were self-identified former Soviet Union émigrés. Which kind of goes back to this question that I asked in the context of Israel about former Soviet Union citizens or residents moving to Israel and influencing the social climate there. How did this influence the way in which you managed your presidency? And how did they influence the work of the JCF?

11-00:41:16

Goldman:

Well, I don't think it really changed what we did. I think there was a need for dialogue. The good news was that during my term one of the things I wanted to do was bring more people under the tent. As I said, that included Orthodox, Israeli representatives, and representatives of the Russian community. And we were able to do that, so we already had people who had their feet, if you will, in both places. So that was quite helpful to have people who could help in our communication. I think the position—people have a right to different opinions—was that, “Wait a minute. We're at war with the Arabs. Why are we supporting Arabs? You know, they pledged to destroy the State of Israel. This is ridiculous.” And our response was, “We've been there and we see what's happening. This is a crisis.” As I said, the powder keg issue. “If we don't do something about it now we're in trouble.” Are we imposing our value system? To some extent, yes, but that comes with the money, you know? So we sat down and had, I guess, several forums in which we met, talked about this. I guess we agreed to disagree when all was said and done. It was a moment in time where I think there was some angst. But it wasn't something that went on and on forever.

11-00:43:08
Meeker: Did this committee disband, then, after they felt like their conservatives were—?

11-00:43:11
Goldman: No, I think they still exist.

11-00:43:13
Meeker: So they kind of posit themselves as a watchdog?

11-00:43:15
Goldman: Well, as I said, I brought up Gerardo Joffe because I respect him a great deal. He operates an organization called FLAME, which is to— If you look at The J, which was the Bulletin, there's always an article about trying to be factual. What is really going on in the Middle East? And, you know, what is really being said? What is really being done? And he's done a great job of getting a different point of view. I know he was involved in this because he talked to me about it. [laughter] And said, "I want you to know there's a large part of the community who feels really strongly that this is absolutely the worst thing the Federation can do. This is all wrong. Why are we helping the enemy?" I tried to explain it to him. I think he's done great work, but we just happened to disagree on this point.

11-00:44:09
Meeker: So the policy within JCF hasn't changed because of this pressure?

11-00:44:13
Goldman: Not at all.

11-00:44:14
Meeker: Mmm-hmm. Do you anticipate that it will at some point?

11-00:44:17
Goldman: I have no idea. That's like asking me if we're going to have a peaceful situation. I have no idea. [laughter]

11-00:44:24
Meeker: So I think that last time, just looking back upon it, we did touch on 9/11 a little bit. And it's such a huge question, I'm not really quite sure—

11-00:44:37
Goldman: Yeah, I don't know where to go on this one.

11-00:44:38
Meeker: Where do we begin? Because I remember we did talk a little bit about, for instance, changing security at the building and so forth. There is this one point that the Israeli Consul brought up in October of 2001 in a meeting with the full board, I think, in which he described what was going on as "the same old war." I'm wondering, what do you think he meant by that?

11-00:45:20
Goldman:

I don't know. If I were to hazard a guess, I think—and trying to go back to that; that's five years ago. Your memory fades a little bit. I think what he was trying to say is that there has always been terrorism; it's only now come to the United States. Because there is, to this day—and we can see it in Iraq—the use of suicide bombers as being used as a terrorist activity as a constant presence to try to keep pushing the point. And 9/11 was certainly the biggest suicide bombing ever, if you think about it. So I think in that context, that's what the Consulate General was suggesting. It is kind of the same.

11-00:46:21
Meeker:

I'm just asking you to think about this—more something in particular about the existence of terrorism as evidenced by terrorist methods?

11-00:46:42
Goldman:

No, this is clearly political.

11-00:46:44
Meeker:

OK, so something larger. Perhaps in Islam versus the West, or something along those lines, do you think?

11-00:46:50
Goldman:

I don't know if it's Islam versus the West, but I think that if we go back to where Osama bin Laden's first issues were centered on, they were about western presence in Saudi Arabia, especially when it came to oil. So, I mean, that's the historical context. Then Israel was thrown in along the way because it was an easy target. OK? Osama bin Laden never had an issue with Israel that was part of the al-Qaeda message until later, until clearly after the Intifada started. And suddenly the poster-child for terrorism became Israel. So it is part of the same thing, and it is Islam versus the West if one looks at Saudi Arabia essentially, which it is, an Islamically guided state. And having Western presence there which, you know, from a fundamentalist point of view means that the infidels are controlling our affairs. That is the same thing. I don't think the Palestinian/Israeli situation is one that's steeped in Islam at all, to be honest. But it does fall into the rubric of Western influence over what is felt to be Middle Eastern policies, that it should be controlled by those who control the Middle East, which are clearly Islamic forces.

11-00:48:27
Meeker:

So how do you suppose this historical context, particularly 9/11—I guess it was less than a year that you had your presidency after that, so you didn't go into the invasion of Iraq—

11-00:48:44
Goldman:

Nine months. Ten months.

11-00:48:49
Meeker:

Actually, I don't think the invasion of Afghanistan had started yet either, had it?

11-00:48:54
Goldman:

Not until after 9/11.

11-00:48:55
Meeker:

Not until after. Well, not until after your presidency.

11-00:48:58
Goldman:

That was in May. So it was right near the end.

11-00:49:04
Meeker:

In that period of time between 9/11 and the invasion of Afghanistan, how do you suppose that tumult influenced your presidency? Perhaps—

11-00:49:20
Goldman:

You know, it's hard to differentiate how it affected all of us as Americans from how it affected all of us as Jews. And I think it's really a difficult thing to separate.

11-00:49:34
Meeker:

Well, maybe talk about that a little bit, about how that might have brought those two identities together in a way that maybe they had been a little more separated in the past, if that in fact is what you're saying.

11-00:49:51
Goldman:

Well, obviously there was a sense of fear for everybody. I mean, fear, and anger, and to some extent maybe even retaliation. It's sort of like, you know, this is our home; you don't invade our home. And I think, as far as I know, most everybody in the community said, "We are Americans and we're going to defend ourselves." There was a real concern about Jewish enterprises, Jewish organizations being likely targets. Over, and over, and over again. We heard it from the FBI, we heard it from various other sources, and we saw it in Los Angeles. So there was certainly a huge concern that I think galvanized people, saying, "We've got to do something," which is where the emergency funds from endowment went for security. And it was scary going to temple on high holy days, too. You know, it was sort of like, "OK, we could be attacked any moment, now. There could be a bomb sitting right out there, and destroy 2,500 people, including some very influential people." But there was a lot of security then. So, you know, there was a real shift. Our lives have changed rather dramatically since 9/11. You don't go on an airplane without being screened, you don't go into office buildings without checking in. You don't do a lot of things. And how that separates from being Jewish versus being American in this new age, this new paradigm—it's really hard to separate out.

11-00:52:03
Meeker:

Well, you know, it's funny because I think about what was—you know, on the basis, I suppose, of FBI information—a real fear of going to synagogue on high holy days, versus the rampant paranoid fear amongst a lot of Americans that resulted in the duct tape and creating the plastic safe room in your house, which my parents did do in rural California, right?

11-00:52:39

Goldman: Yeah, likely target. [laughter]

11-00:52:40

Meeker: Yeah, likely target. And if there was something that happened it would have been no use whatsoever.

11-00:52:44

Goldman: Exactly, which we've realized real fast.

11-00:52:48

Meeker: How did you, as the leader in the community, in your own mind, I guess, or perhaps amongst your family, attempt to sort of parse out the paranoid threats with the authentic ways in which you just needed to be safer?

11-00:53:08

Goldman: Well, I think that first of all we had to trust—obviously an example, the Congregation of Emanu-El—that the people in charge at Emanu-El were going to make sure that everybody was as safe as possible. So you had to have a certain degree of faith. The second thing is—and this is something where I agree with our president—that we had to get on with our daily lives. That if we did not—and this is as Americans and as Jews—then the terrorists would have won. That's exactly what was the intent, was to disrupt what we do and who we are. And probably one of the finest attributes of Americans is that we're fiercely independent and have a sense of strength about who we are, period. And I've always felt that way. So part of me was absolute resolve saying, "You know what? It's not going to change a damn thing." You know, I'm not going to be walking around saying, "If somebody looks like a terrorist, turn him over to the police." I mean, come on. Some of it is maybe fatalistic. It is going to be what it's going to be. You know, we've got two bridges here that are probable targets on everybody's list, right? Who knows, it could be happening today. But who knows when the next earthquake's going to happen? So living where we are, I mean, the one thing that we did do is look again at our 72 hours worth of supply—[laughter]—because it's the same thing. It's the same thing. So, yeah, we didn't do any duct tape, though.

11-00:54:54

Meeker: No duct tape?

11-00:54:54

Goldman: No. So this is stupid.

11-00:54:57

Meeker: Did you actually have face-to-face interactions with FBI?

11-00:55:03

Goldman: I don't think so. I know that Sam did. And JCRC has been—you know, Doug Kahn was in constant communication with the FBI.

Begin Audio File 12

12-00:00:13

Meeker:

All right. Let's get moving on then. Another international issue. I don't know how much you want to cover this, but there were a few other things that were going on besides 9-11 and the Intifada at this point. One was the question of Ethiopia and absorption into the State of Israel or the citizenry, I guess. How did you, as JCF President, approach that issue?

12-00:00:42

Goldman:

Well I think, when the Ethiopian immigration first started there was something called Project Rescue that was there to assist their movement and making Aliyah to Israel. What we found was that they too, in an interesting kind of way, were looked at as lower class and weren't being given the same opportunities for advancement. Their knowledge of Hebrew was highly limited. They were looked at as a source of menial labor in a lot of cases. The high, high, high unemployment rates, and we kind of pushed that agenda a bit. We were careful not to be dictating policy but there were situations where we did provide funding, as did individual funders and foundations, because they were made aware of this as well.

12-00:01:46

Meeker:

Was there still a question floating about of whether this group was really Jews or not?

12-00:01:51

Goldman:

No. Absolutely not. There was no question and part of it was when DNA analysis was made available. I mean, that was, if you'll recall, one of the forces that brought these people to Israel. Well, they're Jewish all right. So if you go back, it's pretty interesting.

12-00:02:17

Meeker:

Yeah, that is. The DNA analysis, I think will change a lot of things about that. JCF was also providing some assistance to Jews in South America?

12-00:02:27

Goldman:

Yes, in Argentina in particular.

12-00:02:27

Meeker:

What was the context of that?

12-00:02:31

Goldman:

It was a rather tough situation in Buenos Aires. What was happening particularly in Buenos Aires but not exclusively, there was a large Jewish population in Argentina. As the Argentinean economy was going south, what was happening was the middle and upper class Jewish population in Argentina was becoming destitute. We became aware of this in working with the JDC, the Joint Distribution Committee, where we had always had a close relationship but what happened was, a group from Federation had a mission to go to Argentina. Marcia and I were actually ready to go and I was leaning

over the briefcase repacking and my back went out, and I could not go. Ever since then, I've been heartbroken that I couldn't go on this trip. It was awful. I was very sad about it. But that group went ahead, had a wonderful trip and saw firsthand what was happening. I think Harold Zlot and Alan Rothenberg, my predecessors, really took up the ball, picked up the ball and said we've got to do something, and raised a pretty good amount of money. As you will recall, there was also a bombing of a synagogue in cultural center, probably at that time some four years before, and there was a question whether the police were implicated in this as well. It was a pretty scary thing, pretty bad, really nasty act of anti-Semitism that looked like the government was trying to cover over, and the court was trying to move in a direction of not exactly moving forcefully in this. So, it became a hot, hot issue in a lot of respects.

12-00:04:44

Meeker:

What sort of work did the JCF do to help remedy the situation there?

12-00:04:48

Goldman:

Well I mean, there were monies that were raised. We got, as I recall, Jewish Vocational Services heavily involved to provide retraining, and that worked great. I remember Abby Snay telling that was one of the most exciting things she's ever done in her life was, to go down there and build, if you will, sort of an interim JVS kind of service for the Jewish population. I mean, there was no way you could touch everybody, but she and JVS touched a lot of people. Now, the Argentinean economy has reversed itself, so the need is not as acute.

12-00:05:32

Meeker:

What sort of retraining was being done, do you know?

12-00:05:35

Goldman:

I think that things like computer skills. A lot of people had a certain, you know, were working in these neighborhood stores that had done very, very well and suddenly there was no money. So they had to find a new job and they didn't have the skill sets. That's what JVC does very, very well.

12-00:05:57

Meeker:

At the end of 2001, there was the establishment of an LGBT alliance and JCF. I wonder, you know, there are many subgroups that are served by the JCF. How was it that this organization was deemed necessary? Creating an organization is one thing but from what I understand, this also meant the dedication of one FTE.

12-00:06:27

Goldman:

Right.

12-00:06:27

Meeker:

Which is an entirely different thing when it comes to creating a, you know.

12-00:06:31

Goldman:

It becomes real when you have workforce.

12-00:06:32

Meeker: It becomes real when there's money involved.

12-00:06:35

Goldman: That's right.

12-00:06:37

Meeker: How was it that this came about and how was it that this separate kind of alliance was deemed necessary?

12-00:06:45

Goldman: Well you know, we've had a variety of alliances. We've had a women's alliance, which is a very strong element, business, real estate, etc. We've had physicians, we've had various, various, groups. The South Peninsula had its own regional offices as well as, if you will, presence. The credit I give for this was really Al Baum, a then long-time member of the Board, very involved with the LGBT community. I think that he brought it to the forefront. Again, Alan Rothenberg was involved in that as well, as I recall, but he made the point that we have a rather underserved community here and one that he felt would resonate. As it turns out, it's been tremendously successful, not too far akin from the work we've been doing with the Russian community as well. So, it was kind of at a point where wait a minute, this is a community that deserves to be part, again, of being under the tent, and so we said let's go for it, and I think it's worked out really well.

12-00:08:09

Meeker: In what ways was the community underserved?

12-00:08:13

Goldman: I don't think the Federation paid a lot of attention to the LGBT population at all and here you have a rather robust congregation that was doing well, and a lot of people who were saying you know, we'd like to be part of this but they really weren't part of it. I think that Al saw this as a way of making a connection to the Jewishness of the LGBT individuals who really didn't have an opportunity to express themselves other than religiously. They were not involved in Federation activities to any great extent. It wasn't like we were focused on anything and I think the culmination of all this was the mission that he led to Israel that really opened a lot of people's eyes. I thought it was terrific and I've said to him many times what a debt of gratitude I had and I think the community has for bringing everybody together. That was kind of a theme, as I've said over and over and over again. It's like, there are desperate populations that identify themselves as Jewish but have their own second identity, whether it's primary or secondary, I'm not going to judge at all. I think that's the way we operate now. You know, that's the way the world is and saying you are welcome, as we would say to those who are intermarried and haven't done a very job of. Another group that needs to be served and has been—

12-00:09:57

Meeker:

I wonder, you know, this metaphor of the tent and in my conversations with Uri Hersher, that's extremely important. It's like the foundation of his understanding of—

12-00:10:06

Goldman:

I'm glad we think the same way.

12-00:10:08

Meeker:

It's the foundation of his understanding of Judaism, I think. It's kind of interesting when you carry that metaphor into this group associated with Shahar Zahav, you know, kind of establishing their own little tent.

12-00:10:27

Goldman:

Right. Not so little. It started out little but it's not so little now.

12-00:10:33

Meeker:

And then kind of looking at the larger tent and saying well, you know, we really want to participate in that. Just kind of like, what does that mean? Is it sort of merely a voice of acceptance saying yes, we recognize you and yes, you're welcome or does it have further implications?

12-00:10:52

Goldman:

It's much more the voice of acceptance. We're saying that we're part of this as well. I think it also embraces the desire to be involved. It's not just saying we're here. We want to be known to be part of the community. We're saying back, we want you to be part of our tent, of the Federation family, and we want your input and we want your ideas and we want you to be involved because that's where it works. My point of view is I could care less about anybody's background or belief. If they want to be involved in the Jewish community, I personally have always welcomed it. I think diversity of view is critical to being robust and exciting and a sense of welcoming. So it's more than just saying you're part of it, but then just saying but you're not involved, I think then, it's self defeating.

12-00:11:58

Meeker:

So, with the LGBT group but also the other groups, how do they then change the organization?

12-00:12:10

Goldman:

Now that's a toughie. How did it change the organization? I don't know if it's changed the organization or it's changing the organization because I think this is a work in progress. I hope—I am fearful that that area of emphasis, of being more inclusionary, has been lost over time. I don't think it is as high on the agenda today but it's necessary for it to get to be back on the priority list because otherwise, it's easy to accuse Federation of being elitist and only for a certain group, and that bothers me a lot because that's not what the Federation is about. If we're supposed to be the central address of the community, then we have to be representative for all the communities and the community at large. If we don't do that, then we're not successful.

- 12-00:13:16
Meeker: This, what might be described as retrenchment, what do you suppose that—
- 12-00:13:21
Goldman: I don't know if it's retrenchment. I just think other things have become more important—maybe.
- 12-00:13:24
Meeker: OK. So is it perhaps a result of the increase in polarization as a result of—?
- 12-00:13:31
Goldman: No. I don't think that at all. I think it is—I think you're leading me down a path that's not true. I think there are some fiscal and operational realities that came into play that were much more important. I hope those get resolved fast so we can go back to the way it was.
- 12-00:13:52
Meeker: What are those fiscal and financial realities?
- 12-00:13:55
Goldman: Well, I think the Federation was not in good shape fiscally. I don't think, I know it was not in good shape and it took a lot of work, and we had to get a new Executive Director.
- 12-00:14:04
Meeker: Well, we spent some time talking about that.
- 12-00:14:05
Goldman: We did spend some time talking about that. From an operational point of view, now that we have a new executive and one who I think is going to be very dynamic and will turn the place around quickly, I'm hoping we're going to now come back to some of the things that I hoped would have happened. I think I mentioned, when I began my term, I did not have a two year plan. I didn't want to have a two year plan. I wanted to start something that would change the dynamic of the Federation, and I'm hoping that that will happen as we go forward.
- 12-00:14:50
Meeker: Well, when you completed your term as President, how then did you envision your continuing participation with the organization?
- 12-00:15:06
Goldman: I had another job that I had to do too at the Symphony.
- 12-00:15:12
Meeker: We'll talk about—I want to talk about that and a couple of other things as well.
- 12-00:15:18
Goldman: But remember, I had that seven month overlap and I was pretty burned out. In the short-term, I needed a break. As far as my continuing role, I served on the

Executive Committee for a couple of years with Adele Corvin. Adele and I talked regularly. I hope I was very supportive. I really intended to be very, supportive. I thought that she did a terrific job and that David [Steirman] did a terrific job. Now John Pritzker is coming in and I know he'll do a terrific job. I realize I also had served almost 25 years with Federation and that's way too long to be involved with an organization. I mean, it's great to have the honorific side and there have been events, and there have been special efforts like the Campus for Jewish Life, that I'm still involved in even though I swore to my wife I was not going to get involved. I didn't have a choice on that. I chaired a committee that looked at the implementation of changing the way that we fund and allocate much more pragmatically. So we developed a strategic approach and then it was somebody else's job to do the implementation. I was very clear on this. This is time-limited, I'm not going to do anything more than that. I'm really at the point, as much as I support the Federation and am happy to—I keep being asked to be pulled in on things and I keep saying you know, it's really time to let me go. It really is because you know, I really think that it's wonderful to be an elder statesman at 56 years old but it's like, come on, guys. You've got a whole generation of people who want to be involved. Don't use my place at the table as a way of excluding them from being there. I've done plenty and I still always will care about Federation because it's such a large part of my life but it's also—there's a point where you just say enough. It doesn't mean I don't care.

12-00:17:55

Meeker:

That's a good rounding up of that. I think one thing that I maybe forgot to ask about in JCF, and I'm not quite sure if you were involved in this to any extent, is the Jewish Museum of San Francisco.

12-00:18:09

Goldman:

I was very involved with that. That was a tough one. It was interesting because when there was a change in the professional leadership, I saw an important opportunity to bring the Magnus Museum and the Jewish Museum together. We had a lot of discussions about whether that was possible and there was a sense to be able to keep their separate identity but be more efficient in their fundraising and their back room activities and all the core demands that may be administrative, operational, managerial, but continue to see how they could help each other. I thought the synergies were going to be fantastic. I would have to say that unfortunately, and I don't mind this being public, the people who got involved in effecting the merger were looking for a short-term fix and a quick solution, and not understanding that process, when it comes to any Jewish organization, is its middle name and you have to work through a process to get that and get all parties to the table, and see where there are commonalities rather than differences and keep working on that. Unfortunately, that didn't happen.

12-00:19:39

Meeker:

At the time, I heard some friends of mine who were involved in museums and archives talk about this division between the East Bay and the West Bay.

- 12-00:19:55
Goldman: Of course.
- 12-00:19:55
Meeker: Is that real?
- 12-00:19:56
Goldman: Yes, it is real.
- 12-00:19:58
Meeker: How did that affect this process?
- 12-00:20:01
Goldman: Well, I think there was a real fear that the Jewish Museum being headquartered here and San Francisco as the big bully on the street, would take over and that would be it for the Magnus. They would be, you know, sort of subject to the whims of what happens in San Francisco and I kept saying, absolutely not. The idea is that you're equal partners to this table, and they looked at it as an acquisition rather than a merger. So you bet that had a lot to play with it, more in a sense of a lack of trust that this was going to work out.
- 12-00:20:28
Meeker: To what extent were these fears justified?
- 12-00:20:45
Goldman: To some extent but not that much. I think that when we were going through this exercise, there was a clear appreciation of this issue. As I said, I was not pleased with the people who were there to effect this from a lay leadership point of view.
- 12-00:21:15
Meeker: When you talk about the quick fix and that process being important, what was the motivation for the quick fix? These things, often times the longer they take, the more expensive they become. Was that an issue?
- 12-00:21:31
Goldman: I don't think it had anything to do with expense. I think the person who didn't allow this to really run its course just didn't want to spend the time, and that person threw up his hands when he saw that there were issues that had to be dealt with and that this wasn't just going to happen magically, so he could be able to ride on his white and run away.
- 12-00:21:58
Meeker: Issues that had to be addressed meaning?
- 12-00:22:01
Goldman: You bet. Issues about representation and who's going to be in charge and all of this stuff that has to be vetted to get people together. There wasn't the focus of saying, let's start with the one thing we share and work from there. If you're going to merge organizations that are suspicious of whether it will happen in the first place, you've got to find a common ground to start from

and keep coming back to that and say well, we agree, we can do this. OK, what else can we agree to and just build from there. That's what process is all about if you're going to be trying to be positive rather than negative, and this ended up just being well, they're too different, they're never going to want to get together. That's it, I'm walking away.

12-00:22:55

Meeker:

So it was a failure of community building rather than a failure to raise sufficient funds.

12-00:23:03

Goldman:

It had nothing to do with money.

12-00:23:04

Meeker:

OK.

12-00:23:05

Goldman:

It had nothing to do with money at the time. Sure, they had a project that they wanted to move to the location on Shattuck and, talking about Yerba Buena for the Jewish Museum—forever but there will a ground breaking very soon. So that's a pretty exciting thing. I think it wasn't a failure of community building. I think it was a failure of recognition of what it took to make it successful.

12-00:23:34

Meeker:

Apparently, the project is going ahead now.

12-00:23:36

Goldman:

It is.

12-00:23:27

Meeker:

With the San Francisco site, not including the Magnus.

12-00:23:39

Goldman:

That's right.

12-00:23:41

Meeker:

Was divorce the only solution in this case?

12-00:23:44

Goldman:

Yes.

12-00:23:46

Meeker:

OK.

12-00:23:46

Goldman:

I wish it weren't but things have gotten so raw and contentious, which was another failure, that there was no way to think of any interim steps, alternative solutions, or anything like that. It just wasn't going to happen.

12-00:24:08

Meeker:

Do you have anything else to say about that?

12-00:24:08
Goldman:

An unfortunate chapter. No, because I'll get in trouble.

12-00:24:12
Meeker:

We could always seal this tape.

12-00:24:14
Goldman:

I'm not naming names.

12-00:24:15
Meeker:

OK. We'll make the historians who want to look at this do the hard work.

12-00:24:19
Goldman:

They'll figure it out in no time.

12-00:24:23
Meeker:

Let's talk about your work with the San Francisco Symphony. When did that first initiate? I know that your mother was involved with it very closely.

12-00:24:32
Goldman:

Yes. She died ten and a half years ago about and so, shortly after she died, my eventual predecessor, Nancy Bechtle, asked if she could see me and then have lunch with me. As things evolved, she asked if I would join the Board not just to honor the legacy of my mom but in my own right, and I thought about it. I said, this was really important to my mom, and it would be great to have something that brought her memory to life regularly, and so I said yes as a board member. So that's how it started.

12-00:25:24
Meeker:

Did you have an abiding interest in symphonic music at this point?

12-00:25:30
Goldman:

I feel like I've said this so many times, it's weird to constantly say it but I don't think I've ever said it to you or for this purpose. I've always loved music and I've always loved all forms of music. I will admit right out front, I'm a rock and roll guy at heart, given where I grew up and what I listened to, and the impact that that had on my life. My folks, and my mom in particular, used to take us to various classical performances, whether it was opera, which is not my favorite but if it's good, I'll enjoy it, ballet, and the symphony. She used to take us to performances pretty frequently for the hope of exposing us to this and not making us totally worthless. I used to listen to symphonic music when I was young. The *1812 Overture* is still—I mean, that's the thing that I absolutely loved. [A portion of the interview is sealed until 2018.] *West Side Story*, I just adored. I mean, I just thought that was just fantastic music and for my Bar Mitzvah that's what I wanted. That's all I wanted to do, was go see *West Side Story*, which was wonderful, a special, special time. It was something I won't forget.

12-00:27:22
Meeker:

Where was it being staged?

12-00:27:23

Goldman:

No, no, this was the movie. It was playing at the Coronet, which is going to be the Institute on Aging one of these days. Anyway, then I started getting into other things like [Gustav] Holtz's *The Planets*, and then I started discovering [George] Gershwin, and I loved Gershwin. I just thought, this is great stuff. I don't know if that was because of *Porgy and Bess* or what, it might have been. Then I discovered [Aaron] Copland and I loved Copland. This was all when I was a kid, and there was other classical music I'd pick up and just play. The good old days of eight tracks and stuff like that you know, I had a nice, big collection.

12-00:28:11

Meeker:

[Arturo] Toscanini and stuff.

12-00:28:12

Goldman:

No. No Toscanini. A little bit [Piotr] Tchaikovsky. My repertoire was fairly limited. I did my two years of required piano lessons and never got to play an instrument and never really picked it up, but we have musicians in our family so I'm happy about that, starting with my wife, though she won't admit to it, and our son, who will admit to it. He's definitely the musician in our family.

12-00:28:41

Meeker:

What instruments?

12-00:28:43

Goldman:

You can almost name it, and he can play it. He can pick up an instrument and learn it on his own pretty darn well. He started out with piano and then went to acoustic guitar, then electric guitar, and then really found his calling with saxophone. He got into a jazz band and played all three saxes; tenor, alto, soprano. Then he picked up the clarinet along the way, and then he started playing in a band when he was in college, and then after that started playing electric bass. I mean, he just plays. He's pretty good.

12-00:29:22

Meeker:

So how did your role on the Symphony Board evolve?

12-00:29:30

Goldman:

Not with my concurrence, let's start with that. I have no idea what happened but at one point, Nancy asked if I would head this ad hoc committee to look at the operations of the symphony and try to make sense of the operational and fiscal condition, see where we're really losing money, frankly, and what we're being good at. As it turns out, one could make the suggestion that we only play at Davies Hall, and we would be in much better shape than we are today. All the education efforts, all the outreach efforts, and all this other stuff cost us an arm and a leg. Playing outside of Davies.

12-00:30:13

Meeker:

So the Stern Grove concerts and the tours and all that kind of stuff.

- 12-00:30:116
Goldman: Everything else is a money loser but, you know, much more so of a money loser, if you will.
- 12-00:30:21
Meeker: But the notion of those is that they promote so more people come to Davies.
- 12-00:30:24
Goldman: Of course. I know.
- 12-00:30:25
Meeker: But you find that it's not the case?
- 12-00:30:27
Goldman: No, it does, but if you're looking strictly at the analysis, it's like oh my goodness. So this was called Project Soar, a strategic and operational analysis and research. I chaired it and reported out on it, worked with some people on the Board and got to know the Board a little better. I guess it was about 1998, Nancy and I had lunch, and we were just sort of catching up and she says, "Well, I'd like you to succeed me as President." I said, "What are you talking about? I can't be President of the Symphony." She said, "Well, I've been serving it way too long. It's time for me to turn it over and you're the one who can do it." I was sort of like in shock. I had no idea this was coming. I said, "But I can't. I've got teenage kids and besides which, I've committed to the Federation through 2002." And she said, "I knew there was a reason I didn't like the Federation." So I sort of thought about it and I said look, if we can defer it one more year from when you want to leave so that I'd come on in December of 2001, so I only have a small window of overlap, maybe I can manage that. I'm sorry I ever suggested that, only from the overlap point of view. She reluctantly agreed, and that's what happened.
- 12-00:32:02
Meeker: Can you describe the position of President at the Symphony. How does it compare, for instance, to JCF?
- 12-00:32:10
Goldman: First of all, according to the bylaws, the President of the Symphony is the CEO.
- 12-00:32:15
Meeker: OK. So it was a staff position more or less.
- 12-00:32:16
Goldman: No, it's not a staff position. It's Chief Executive Office of an organization whereby the Music Director and the Executive Director report to the CEO. That's the structural element.
- 12-00:32:30
Meeker: Whereas at JCF, there's a CEO and a President.

12-00:32:33
Goldman:

Right. And that is a direct, one to one relationship, but the Board really is responsible for the hiring and firing and policymaking. At JCF, the President is really, more than anything else, Board Chair. At the Symphony, while you're Board Chair as President, you're also a heck of a lot more because of the uniqueness of that position. You are at the top of the organization, period. So you are the one that everybody looks to, more than I ever could have imagined, for guidance and decision-making. So it's a pretty constant thing. Yes, there's a lot of involvement with the Board. There is a lot of fundraising but there's a lot of interaction with a disparate number of communities. The constituencies are the Board, are the staff, the musicians, the donors, the volunteers, the audiences, and the general community, including the public in all facets, governmental and otherwise. So it's broad.

12-00:33:52
Meeker:

So, do you feel that JCF prepared you for this position or is it different enough that you've had to do more learning than benefiting from your—

12-00:34:02
Goldman:

I think the JCF role prepared me in a lot of ways for this because you're dealing with disparate groups there, too, obviously, and understanding the need to allow process to occur. When to step in as the leader, when to back off, and I think all of my organizational experience helped me. I've been involved with a lot of organizations as it turns out. Each of them brought their own flavor to the mix. The real difference, and I've said it many times, is that at a Federation, people can be very reluctant to help out, to take on tasks, and so on and so forth. You kind of have to beg and cajole and work them a little bit to agree to do something. At the Symphony, people are honored and flattered that you ask. So, it's a completely different dynamic. It really is amazing.

12-00:35:10
Meeker:

And this is across the board with the kinds of things that you're asking.

12-00:35:12
Goldman:

Almost across the board. I wouldn't say exclusively but yeah, in a large degree, it's amazing when you ask, you know. Then they give you a hard time saying well, you made me do this. How could I say no? I say, you could have said no, you're an adult. But I find it a different environment from a volunteerism point of view because people want very much to be involved with the symphony. They don't always really want to be involved with the Federation.

12-00:35:44
Meeker:

What kind of things are you asking of people? I'm guessing in both instances, for instance, it would be to be in charge of the annual campaign or something like that, right?

12-00:35:51
Goldman: Chair campaigns, yes. We also have a capital campaign going on right now at the symphony, which is in its quiet phase.

12-00:36:03
Meeker: What is the goal of that?

12-00:36:06
Goldman: When is this coming out? Probably a couple of years from now, right?

12-00:36:10
Meeker: Probably about a year.

12-00:36:12
Goldman: About a year. We'll be public by then. A hundred million.

12-00:36:16
Meeker: But what is the goal of it?

12-00:36:21
Goldman: It is purely an endowment and programmatic support effort. No bricks and mortar, at least not yet. It's by two times, the largest campaign we've ever had and we just had one finish five years ago. So, it's ramping it up and it's fascinating.

12-00:36:49
Meeker: And do you anticipate sticking it out there through the campaign?

12-00:36:54
Goldman: Yes, I do.

12-00:36:54
Meeker: OK. In addition to the future challenges, which clearly that will be one, what have been some of the more profound challenges you've faced at the symphony?

12-00:37:09
Goldman: The fiscal challenges are huge because we saw this happening, that we were going to be in a deficit position. Every long-term projection that we had said this year, last year, and the coming year were going to be a trough, and it was just sort of this confluence of impacts that made it clear that this was going to happen. That was one of the major reasons for saying we have to build our endowment. I know that there are those out there that look at the Symphony as being a huge organization full of money. It's got a big endowment already, why are you raising more money? And it's because of the way that we manage it. You know, if we're going to be true to ourselves and fiscally responsible, and we think we have a duty to be fiscally responsible, we have to build the endowment, because we're not getting additional money from the government, that's for sure, and we've really leaned on our donors a lot. So that's one, and the second thing, our contractual relationships with the musicians, which are an ongoing issue.

- 12-00:38:24
Meeker: And that's a difficult too, I imagine.
- 12-00:38:27
Goldman: It is. It can be difficult.
- 12-00:38:29
Meeker: I know that there was a musician's strike recently?
- 12-00:38:33
Goldman: We avoided a strike. There was a threat of a strike.
- 12-00:38:36
Meeker: That was one of the challenges that you faced.
- 12-00:38:38
Goldman: Yes.
- 12-00:38:40
Meeker: Do you have any insight into how that was avoided?
- 12-00:38:45
Goldman: I do but I'm not going to share them because negotiations are always an ongoing process. This comes out in a year, and we're going to be negotiating in two and a half years. So, I think I'll keep them to myself for now. That will be for the other autobiography.
- 12-00:39:03
Meeker: The question of development in comparison of JCF to the Symphony, from what I understand, the vast majority of the funds that come into the JCF are coming from individuals—
- 12-00:39:13
Goldman: Right.
- 12-00:39:14
Meeker: —and their legacies they established, which are the individual endowments, right?
- 12-00:39:21
Goldman: Individual gifts directly or through various foundations.
- 12-00:39:34
Meeker: How is that different in the Symphony?
- 12-00:39:36
Goldman: Well, the Federation doesn't have any revenue sources. The Symphony, approximately half of our revenue, only half, comes from earned income.
- 12-00:39:49
Meeker: Well, I understand that's fairly high, from what I understand about—

12-00:39:51
Goldman:

No, that's pretty typical.

12-00:39:53
Meeker:

OK. I thought it was about a third.

12-00:39:55
Goldman:

No, that's usually transit systems. I know that from back then, which is problematic in its own way. No, I would say about 45% comes from ticket revenues and there's about 5% from other earned income sources; fees, et cetera. Then the endowment kicks in 18%. So, that doesn't seem like an overly huge amount of money from this endowment, which is the point I make all the time, and the rest from annual contributions, contributed income. So, that's the way it works out on that.

12-00:40:38
Meeker:

I wonder what else you might have to add about the Symphony if you'd like to.

12-00:40:42
Goldman:

It's an amazing organization.

12-00:40:45
Meeker:

What are its strengths?

12-00:40:46
Goldman:

Its strengths are that, first of all, it is the most professionally run organization I've ever been involved in, without question.

12-00:40:56
Meeker:

Meaning?

12-00:40:57
Goldman:

The staff, the professional people that work there, are wedded to a philosophy that nothing short of excellence is permitted. So, you know, good enough isn't, that old saying is true. They believe it and do it day in and day out, and when they slip, it's not a good thing. They hold themselves to the highest standard possible. The second thing that makes the symphony unique is that people involved in any of the constituencies I described are passionate about it. They are really passionate about it. They really love it. They love the organization. They love the product. They just feel this is great, this is the model for everything. Third and probably should be first on the list is we have a Music Director who knows no peers as far as I'm concerned. I mean, Michael [Tilson Thomas] is nothing short of amazing. He is a genius. He is a visionary. He's an educator. He's a believer, and he touches people pretty easily. I mean, they connect with him because he's viewed as—well, I don't know if they connect with him, but he is our rock star, and I think people in the community recognize it. He's a big celeb. He has this drive to establish a presence, both for himself and for the orchestra in our world much more so than we are today. We are so lucky to have somebody like that.

12-00:42:36
Meeker: Well, the San Francisco Symphony is certainly in the top tier of U.S. and even international symphony orchestras. It's entirely possible that Michael Tilson Thomas could be swept away by somebody in the top two or three.

12-00:42:56
Goldman: He could.

12-00:42:58
Meeker: How then does the San Francisco Symphony keep someone of that stature happy?

12-00:43:06
Goldman: I think we're doing it.

12-00:43:08
Meeker: OK, but you don't want to reveal how?

12-00:43:10
Goldman: Oh, sure. I mean, there are lots of things that Michael sees as sort of efforts and activities he wants to undertake, and we support him. We want to support his vision.

12-00:43:23
Meeker: So appealing to his creativity.

12-00:43:25
Goldman: Absolutely, and we're so much better for it. I mean, there are some great projects we're undertaking right now that I think are going to be transformative, not just for us, but for the entire field, and are being recognized as that. I think it's like wow.

12-00:43:42
Meeker: Anything you want to talk about?

12-00:43:43
Goldman: Yeah. How much time do we have?

12-00:43:46
Meeker: We've got a few minutes.

12-00:43:47
Goldman: OK.

12-00:43:47
Meeker: We've got about 15 minutes.

12-00:43:48
Goldman: There are a couple of things. There's one in particular that I think will be recognized as a hallmark of the Symphony and for Michael's presence here, maybe in his career, and that's something called *Keeping Score*. The way I describe *Keeping Score* is perhaps, the contemporary iteration of the Young

People's Concerts that, you know, Leonard Bernstein provided to us when I was growing up and still are in existence, except that it is a multimedia project. So there are the TV segments, which are nothing short of brilliant. They are truly brilliant pieces of going into the lives of these composers and the pieces they were doing, and talking about why they wrote them and what was going on historically, contextually, in a way that just is mind blowing. I mean, to hear him talk and to hear the musicians then be part of it and then the filming of it, for which the quality is unbelievable, and I know only because we just launched the first series after the pilot was aired a couple years ago. You just sit there and say my God, this is unbelievable. This is so good it's scary. But coupled with that is one of the best websites I've ever seen. Just as an example, taking [Igor] Stravinsky's, "Rite of Spring," and having an inset with the orchestra playing it, another inset of the original ballet that was captured on film, and at the same time, seeing the score running across the page, item by item. You could learn music. You can actually learn to read music and play music if you wish, from this website. On top of that is a radio series that the old Minnesota Public Radio, now called America Public Media, is going to be putting out. And finally, an educational component with a curriculum that is already being tested in Fresno, Bakersfield, I think, and in Flagstaff, Arizona, which the teachers are, at this moment, this very date at Davies, being taught the curriculum and guided through it. This is huge. This is a huge project, a \$20 million plus project.

12-00:46:27

Meeker: Where does the funding for this come from?

12-00:46:28

Goldman: Private donors. We are hoping to get national foundations to be part of this. I think we have a very good shot because it's enormous.

12-00:46:37

Meeker: Because it's in the pilot phase now.

12-00:46:39

Goldman: No. We did the pilot. We're in Series 1 that's going to be aired in November on PBS, and then Series 2 will be 2008 and Series 3, 2010.

12-00:46:52

Meeker: How intimately is Michael Tilson Thomas involved in this?

12-00:46:56

Goldman: Enormously. I mean, it's his baby. This is what—his legacy to the classical world is this and maybe to arts in general. I mean, I think it's that significant, and I think we're going to look back five, ten years and say this put us on the map forever. This put him on the map. This is what he can hold up and say, this is my gift and we can say this is our gift. It's that big.

12-00:47:29

Meeker: Well, I'll have to go and look at it.

12-00:47:30
Goldman: You will.

12-00:47:30
Meeker: I'm not familiar with it. We just really have a few minutes left and I just have two very general questions that are maybe embarrassing.

12-00:47:45
Goldman: Go right ahead.

12-00:47:47
Meeker: You know, these are—what does it mean to be a philanthropist to you?

12-00:47:50
Goldman: That's not embarrassing.

12-00:47:52
Meeker: I see it as embarrassing because it's such a general kind of high school question almost. In essence, I'm soliciting from you really any sort of summing thoughts that you might have about a lot of the stuff that we've talked about.

12-00:48:15
Goldman: Why do this stuff?

12-00:48:18
Meeker: Yeah. At the beginning, I was sort of asking in the context of your family history and what your mother has done.

12-00:48:24
Goldman: Right, which is—I think I said it, that my mom, when talking to my wife about why you get involved with the community, said it's kind of like breathing. As you recall, I think I said that. It's part of what one should do every day and she also said, the important thing is to keep things in balance when you have the resources available. Enjoy life, but at the same time, give equal measure to giving back.

12-00:48:52
Meeker: Well there is the notion of I should participate and I will participate, and being on the board of a small, non-profit myself, I know that there is the motivation amongst probably half the board who has that sensibility.

12-00:49:10
Goldman: The guilt.

12-00:49:10
Meeker: That doesn't mean that they actually do anything, right? Like it's sort of showing up to meetings.

12-00:49:15
Goldman: Yeah, but why are they doing that?

12-00:49:18

Meeker:

Because they feel like they should participate. But then there's another level of saying, after I come home from a ten hour workday, I still have three hours of work to do. That's a different kind of motivation, that's a different kind of work. Or for instance, putting in your time at the JCF and then saying OK, I'll become President in a much more participatory perhaps capacity in another large organization, even piggybacking on one another. I see that as well beyond a family obligation.

12-00:49:55

Goldman:

Oh, it's not a family obligation, no. This is what I do well. I know that about myself. I'm not trying to brag. I just think that I do—you know, when I went through the evolution of having gone through work and then sort of taking stock of where I was in life and what I enjoyed doing and what I thought I did well, I realized working in leadership capacities in community organizations is something that I not only do well but I enjoy immensely. I really do. I like taking whatever talents that I've been able to garner and lessons I've learned over time and look at you know, can I help guide? Can I help move this organization forward in a good way? Can I deal with the crises that come up reasonably well? Do I interact well with people? Can I help them be part of this? Can I make for a more inclusionary type of existence? All that stuff. I mean, that's the kind of direction and activity that I enjoy and so, I get involved in this stuff. I don't get paid very well for this. You know, you have to pay to play, like I said before. It's an unfortunate part of the thing. You don't get a lot of perks other than more—Jerry Brown's words—the psychic income, which is pretty damn important. To me, philanthropy has two prongs to it. It's not just money, it's time, and the two together, whatever the balance may be. It might be 0 and 100 or 50/50 or whatever, they're the things that really demonstrate the passion for an organization somebody has, because you have to give of yourself, whatever that is. That's what philanthropy is. Not because you have to, but because you want to.

12-00:52:00

Meeker:

I'm tempted to ask more questions but I'm also thinking that that's a really good point to stop. How do you feel?

12-00:52:07

Goldman:

That's fine with me.