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Oral History Center
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Anne Halsted:
A Leading Community Advocate

Interviews conducted by
Shanna Farrell
in 2018

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Anne Halsted, 2018

Anne Halsted is a longtime leading community advocate in the Bay Area. She was born in West Virginia, was raised in Cleveland, Ohio and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and attended Duke University. She moved to San Francisco in 1964, where she began a career in Human Resources. She has also had a long career in civic engagement, and served on numerous boards both local and nationally, which have had a significant impact on the Bay Area. In this interview, Halsted discusses her early life, her education, her time abroad, settling in the Bay Area, becoming involved with community organizations, getting involved with local politics, her time on multiple boards, her reflections of a changing city and her career, both professional and extracurricular, and her hopes for the future of San Francisco.

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Introduction to Interview of Anne Halsted, by Jim Chappell

What a pleasure to read this chronicle of Anne Halsted's long involvement as a community advocate and leader. I have been personally most familiar of course with her decades as an important board member and board chair of SPUR, the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association, and have had the privilege of seeing her in action both there and in the broader community for the last twenty-five years. But this oral history opens a window on much more...it pulls together a number of threads into a comprehensive story of feminism, social equity, and community, all in the broadest senses.

What emerges is the picture of a gentle giant, an individual so committed to social, economic and environmental justice but so modest and common-sensible...a mentor to so many others, young women especially, a catalyst who leads by example without an ounce of command or control or ego. And while Anne thinks of herself as a facilitator and connector rather than a leader, it is her ability to self-empower others, to recognize commonality and build alliances, and to inspire others through example that in fact define her as a true leader.

In reflecting on the broad swathe of Anne's community involvement I am reminded of the epitaph of the prolific architect Christopher Wren, "*si monumentum requiris, circumspice*"—if you are searching for his monument, look around. Both physical and institutional changes spurred by Anne Halsted's gentle leadership abound. This story of Anne Halsted's community involvement also provides a first-hand look at an array of important local and national issues, movements and organizations.

If you are looking for Anne Halsted's impact on San Francisco, go to any neighborhood park, and you can appreciate what committed neighbors have done to improve and help maintain it, aided and abetted for many years by Anne's sage advice on the board of the Neighborhood Parks Council. And a number of those parks even owe their existence to her work as a charter member of the Open Space Committee, where Anne was appointed by then-Mayor Feinstein. Parks, street trees, open space...one important part, but just one part, of this remarkable individual.

As we appreciate and wonder at the breadth and depth of Bay Area female elected leadership, consider Anne's early support and skilled fundraising on their behalves, including her years on the national Women's Campaign Fund board. And it's not difficult to see how this evolved out of her professional career in Human Resources, where her core sense of equity and integrity worked to change corporate American culture from within, gently and gradually, but with clear purpose and intent.

As we stroll along the northern waterfront promenade, and look down the shoreline, know that Anne Halsted was there, as the President of the Port Commission, as a member of the Northeast Waterfront Advisory Group (NWAG), on the board of the San Francisco Maritime National Park Association, today a Metropolitan Transportation Commissioner and Vice Chair of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and as an early imagineer of the Blue Greenway. We all can enjoy the gracious Embarcadero Boulevard, fish from Pier 7, shop and then linger over a sandwich at the magnificent restored Ferry Building, stroll Herb Caen Way, and reflect on her bridge building, both literally and figuratively.

And depending on where you have intersected with Anne, social, racial, and economic equity have been key objectives of her work for the Legal Aid Society, Tel Hi Neighborhood Center, Potrero Hill Neighborhood Association, the Institute on Aging, North Beach Citizens, Chinatown Community Development Corporation, and the International Institute, among others.

And who knew about her formal education in political science and economics, and long-term board work on Business Executives for National Security, seeking to empower ordinary citizens in getting a handle on the military industrial complex? And there are many other organizations, too many to mention, that have benefited from her insight, integrity and intelligence.

Reflecting on Anne's public life provides important windows on navigating the ups and downs of any organization, and this history provides a wonderful guide to both the young person looking to get involved, and others with decades of experience looking for new ways to contribute. What makes a good board member? A good board chair? How to work with executive staff? It's also a story of personal growth, from neighborhood action on-the-ground to far-reaching national policy guidance. From the Telegraph Hill Dwellers and San Francisco Tomorrow to SPUR and Greenbelt Alliance.

It's oft been said that San Francisco is a magical place...our geography, our climate, our bedrock sense of social equity and progress...but Anne Halsted's life demonstrates that at the core, it is individuals like her that make the real difference. I commend this oral history to all who would learn from this extraordinary life of an extraordinary community volunteer.

Introduction to Oral History of Anne Halsted, by Anne Halsted

First I am honored and grateful that people have thought it useful to record my oral history! I wish I were a better storyteller, but I hope this record will be useful and that it will encourage me to write my recollections of my life!

Second, I know my life has been one of privilege, from beginning to now, with parents and family who were constant in their love of me, with opportunities for education and self-advancement that exceeded those available to most, and with colleagues, friends and a life partner who has supported me. I hope I have used that privilege to the benefit of those with less.

Overall I know myself more as a facilitator and a connector of people than as a leader. The themes I've pursued to improve community include:

- finding issues that bring people together in the public interest
- maximizing diversity in work and in problem-solving
- building alliances within community

Dicta which I find important include, in no particular order.

- Integrity means being the same person in all aspects of one's life.
- Knowing oneself and being honest with oneself are most important.
- Righteousness can be an indication of arrogance – beware!
- Live near where you work; live where you can walk.
- Choose activities that bring people together and don't divide.
- Life is better when individuals are valued and encouraged to be strong.
- Intelligence comes in many forms in addition to IQ.
- People in jobs may need direction but should be given the freedom to succeed or fail.
- Change will bring opportunities.
- Gradual change is better for most people than dramatic change.
- When someone asks for help, listen!
- Aesthetic beauty raises our sights is important.
- Financial stability (not great wealth) is important to social stability.
- Exercise, good food, and fun are important for happiness and health.
- Continual intellectual stimulation is needed.
- Friends and family are my lifeline.

This history is centered around my work in organizations which have solicited my participation and have provided fertile ground for my ideas. I hope I have contributed to the well-being of the larger community and encouraged citizens to act on their responsibility to themselves and their society in a positive way and encouraged collaboration, respect, and civility at all levels.

While this history covers much of my life, many parts are not included. I must express my thanks to my husband, Wells, my family, and my friends, particularly those who have been supportive of my work described herein – Dianne Feinstein, Jeanne Milligan, Ellen Tauscher, Barbara Schrage, Jim Chappell, Isabel Wade, Stanley Weiss, Lauren Post, Peter Mezey, and Dave Hudnut, to mention only a few! Without the confidence of them and many others, I would not have had these opportunities to nudge society in the directions I chose.

Interview 1: March 29, 2018

01-00:00:04

Farrell: Okay. This is Shanna Farrell with Anne Halsted on Thursday, March 29, 2018 and we're in North Beach, San Francisco, California. Anne, can you start by telling me where and when you were born and a little bit about your early life?

01-00:00:19

Halsted: I will do my best. I was born in Charleston, West Virginia. Should I be looking at the camera?

01-00:00:24

Farrell: No, you can look at me.

01-00:00:25

Halsted: Okay, in Charleston, West Virginia, in November of 1942, in the war, wartime. My parents lived there. My father had been from Chicago and he had met my mother in West Virginia. He was working as a mechanical engineer selling equipment to coal mines, and she was a legal secretary in her father's justice of the peace office in Charleston. I think they had a car accident or something. He came in to get help. My mother was there. Anyway, I was born two years later during the war and lived there until I was six. I had a younger sister who was born there as well, and when I was six my family was transferred to Cleveland.

My time in Charleston, I had a bunch of cousins and aunts and uncles there. All of my mother's family was there. It was an interesting period to be there because during the Second World War, Charleston, West Virginia was sort of like Bhopal, India. It was a chemical production facility, and the environment was absolutely terrible. The river, which had been beautiful when my mother was young, was unswimmable. The air had this incredible stink. At nighttime, the sky lit up with burning chemicals everywhere and the soot on everything was incredible. I remember that very distinctly.

Charleston, as you may know, West Virginia, it was on the Mason-Dixon Line. It was both south and north. There was not much racial divide there because there were not many blacks there, but there was still a lot of prejudice. I remember growing up around that. My mother was quite liberal and encouraged us to be as liberal as we could be. But, there was still a lot of prejudice there.

I remember my great-aunt was the head of the English department at Charleston High. I think she even maybe had Charles Manson as a student or something like that. I remember that when she retired, my aunt wouldn't give a retirement party for her because it had since then integrated, and she didn't allow blacks in her home.

When I was growing up, we had twins across the street who were white. They came to our house, and they started singing a song referring to niggers. I told

them they couldn't sing that in my house, and they bit me. So, that's my recollection of learning about discrimination. It wasn't that I was ever really part of it. But I was very much aware of it even when I was really young.

01-00:03:13

Farrell:

Do you have memories of how your mother would talk to you about being open-minded and racism, essentially?

01-00:03:21

Halsted:

I don't really. I just know that she set a standard that that wasn't okay. I don't really remember what she said about it. But it was very clear to me that that was not acceptable.

01-00:03:32

Farrell:

As far as having the sensory memories of how polluted the area was, when you were growing up and seeing that and having memories of it, did you have a sense that there was something wrong about that?

01-00:03:44

Halsted:

I think it just didn't smell good, and it was dirty, and I can recall. But, you know how odors are one of the strongest memories? I can recall that odor in a minute. I can't recreate it. It was a very strong recollection, and, it's not there anymore.

01-00:04:06

Farrell:

And your mother is from Charleston?

01-00:04:08

Halsted:

She moved there with her family when she was two, I think.

01-00:04:11

Farrell:

Oh, when she was two? Okay. Did she have family members who were in the coal mining industry?

01-00:04:16

Halsted:

No. They moved from Virginia. They were lower middle class and in the retail business, I think. I think they moved because they were looking for more work in West Virginia. But they never lived in the country. They lived in town, and they weren't involved in the coal mining industry. However, my father later was involved in some aspects of selling to the coal industry.

01-00:04:40

Farrell:

Do you have any sense of whether he had to go down into the mines to do that?

01-00:04:44

Halsted:

I think he did occasionally. I actually ended up being on the board of a company he helped start, much later, around 2000. I kept asking them to let me go down below ground, but they wouldn't. It was sort of, we don't want you to see that.

01-00:05:01

Farrell: Interesting. Did your dad ever talk about what that was like growing up?

01-00:05:05

Halsted: I don't remember him talking about that. He was more involved in the equipment. What this company, what he was involved in, was safety equipment. So he felt it wasn't a negative aspect of it.

01-00:05:19

Farrell: Okay. You moved to Cleveland when you were six. What prompted your family's move to Cleveland?

01-00:05:25

Halsted: My father worked for Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company, and he was transferred there. That was at a time in corporate America where you could turn down so many transfers. But you couldn't keep turning them down if you wanted to stay working for a company. So, he did move there. We lived in a suburb called Rocky River, pretty much an all-white suburb, really nice. What I remember most about living there was that it was on Lake Erie. My father and all of his family were sailors, so that's where I really learned to sail. I competed a lot. It was a great place to live from that perspective.

01-00:06:03

Farrell: Do you have a sense of what other families did for work or how they were employed in the community that you were living in?

01-00:06:10

Halsted: In that community? I think it was probably more corporate than not. This was 1948 to 1956. That was when, after the war, corporate jobs were growing, and families were sort of typical fifties Dick and Jane kind of world that we lived in. As I recall, most people we knew were involved in one. Maybe in that part of the world it was more heavy industries—Bucyrus Erie, lots of manufacturing companies, but more executives or management where we were, rather than something else.

01-00:06:52

Farrell: Do you have any memories of what it was like to be young during the war, during that period of time?

01-00:07:02

Halsted: I don't really remember during the war except for people growing vegetables in Charleston.

01-00:07:08

Farrell: Oh, like victory gardens?

01-00:07:09

Halsted: Yes, that kind of thing. I remember my uncle coming home from the war and wanting to have French fries. But then, that was in Charleston. Cleveland was after the war.

01-00:07:23

Farrell: I guess after that, too, was a big sort of manufacturing boom, the second Industrial Revolution.

01-00:07:28

Halsted: Yes. All of those war industries were converted into non-war industries. So, there was lots of production and I think it was a boom town.

01-00:07:38

Farrell: Especially being in the Rust Belt, too, yeah. Can you tell me what your sister's name is and some of your early memories of her?

01-00:07:45

Halsted: My sister's name was Mary Halsted. Her married name was Lonergan. She died about five years ago. I really miss her. But anyway, I was four when she was born. We were not best friends growing up because I was always in a different school from her. But we became really best friends when we were older, living here in San Francisco. She has two kids, one who's here. One's in Seattle. I'm very close to them, which is great.

01-00:08:18

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about developing your interest in sailing?

01-00:08:23

Halsted: Oh, that's interesting. Well, I think being the oldest in the family, and my father didn't have a son, I probably tried to relate to him the way many older children do to their father, older girls do to their fathers. He loved to sail, so I learned to sail with him. There was a sailing camp in the summer. We went out, and we started out rowing dinghies. And then we went to sailing dinghies. We went to the other slightly larger sailing boats and competed every day, raced every day in the summer. That was really great training.

I think it was really good education because I had to learn to be the boss on a boat, to be a skipper, with boys in my boat, which was not an easy thing to do. I remember my mother helping me put together job descriptions for the other people on the boat. I didn't have to boss them as much because I was shy about doing that. They knew what their job was.

01-00:09:16

Farrell: Yeah, I was actually going to ask you if it was a coed team.

01-00:09:19

Halsted: Yes.

01-00:09:20

Farrell: Were there other girls who were on the team as well?

01-00:09:23

Halsted: I don't think so. I think I had all boys in mine.

- 01-00:09:26
Farrell: When you were twelve you moved to Milwaukee [Wisconsin]?
- 01-00:09:31
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 01-00:09:31
Farrell: Okay. What prompted the move?
- 01-00:09:32
Halsted: Another transfer.
- 01-00:09:33
Farrell: Okay. Was your father still working for the same company at that point?
- 01-00:09:36
Halsted: Mm-hmm, he was.
- 01-00:09:37
Farrell: Okay. Can you tell me about some of your early memories of Milwaukee?
- 01-00:09:41
Halsted: Well, we moved when I was in eighth grade. Let me see. Does that compute? This was twelve or thirteen?
- 01-00:09:47
Farrell: That sounds about right.
- 01-00:09:48
Halsted: So, I went to the first three months of eighth grade in Cleveland, the second three months in one school in Milwaukee, and the third three months in another school in Milwaukee. It was a very transitional year. Milwaukee was different from Cleveland. It was not as much just white Christian families. It was much more mixed. The high school I went to was probably 70 percent Jewish. I had really not known Jewish people before then. That was a big plus, to have a more open or more educational kind of situation.
- Milwaukee is colder, more snow. It's a great place to live for outdoor activities, for skating and skiing and sailing. It was a fun place to be. The school I went to was very new. It had just been built in Milwaukee, I went to. It had, I guess, maybe 350 students in my class—not huge. Several people from here went to that school later that I know now. Let me think. What else is there to say about it? It was a fun place to live.
- 01-00:11:09
Farrell: Did you continue sailing in Milwaukee?
- 01-00:11:11
Halsted: Not in the same racing every day. My father had a boat, which he kept actually in Racine [Wisconsin], which was about fifty miles away. We had a summer place in northern Michigan, which my grandfather had built in 1910. I think we had another boat up there so I sailed more there.

- 01-00:11:37
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about the community or the neighborhood that you were living in in Milwaukee?
- 01-00:11:42
Halsted: In Milwaukee? Well, again, it was pretty much a suburb with corporate and professional types.
- 01-00:11:52
Farrell: At that point, so you're a little bit older. You're moving into high school. What were some of your early interests or some of the things that you gravitated towards?
- 01-00:12:03
Halsted: Academically or just in anything?
- 01-00:12:05
Farrell: Either.
- 01-00:12:06
Halsted: Like most kids in ninth and tenth grade I was very conscious of who the in kids were and who the out kids were and wanted to be part of the in kids. But I wasn't really. Anyways, so I still have some good friends from that period of time. Most of them were kind of people on the edge, slightly more intellectual than some of the others. I would have loved to have been a cheerleader. I was a junior cheerleader for a little while, but I was terribly uncoordinated. I didn't quite make the grade with that. But we loved skiing. Academically, when I think about it I was always considered one of the smart ones. I don't know why. But anyway, I just had luck in academics more than some people.
- I liked math a lot. I liked literature, too. I do remember I had a literature teacher who thought that, because I was trying to be a cheerleader, that I was too influenced by social things. I remember that very well.
- 01-00:13:11
Farrell: What was that conversation like?
- 01-00:13:13
Halsted: It wasn't very happy.
- 01-00:13:17
Farrell: Did you have any teachers who you saw as influential or mentors?
- 01-00:13:24
Halsted: You know, when I think about it, I think I had a social science teacher in high school that I thought was really terrific. His name was Mr. Bakalars. I don't remember anything except that I thought he was a good teacher, and he was more motivating. I remember the math teacher I had was not very motivating. He was very critical and kind of [growls]. And, as I said, the English Literature teacher, who was really a good teacher, simply thought I was maybe not the right person.

- 01-00:13:52
Farrell: With the math teacher, he sounds curmudgeonly.
- 01-00:13:56
Halsted: Yeah. I was good in math. That wasn't the issue.
- 01-00:13:58
Farrell: Did his attitude affect the way that you felt about math?
- 01-00:14:01
Halsted: It didn't at that time, interestingly enough. When I was in college, and I thought I might even major in math, I took integral calculus my freshman year, I think. It was a different experience.
- 01-00:14:15
Farrell: I know sometimes, especially with women in high school, if it's—
- 01-00:14:20
Halsted: Nerves?
- 01-00:14:20
Farrell: Yeah.
- 01-00:14:21
Halsted: No, I still had plenty of confidence then. When I got to college and there were all boys in the class and this male teacher that didn't think I should be there, that was a little different. And maybe I wasn't quite good enough at it also. You never know.
- 01-00:14:35
Farrell: At that point, in thinking about going to college or some of your early career aspirations, what were you thinking that you were going to do after high school?
- 01-00:14:48
Halsted: Well, when I was thinking about going to college, I applied to a number of schools. My father got a big demotion that year. I went to the cheapest school I'd applied to, which was Duke [University], which is hard to believe. Duke at that time was quite cheap because it wasn't integrated. That's my theory, because they had all this very low-paid help. That may not be true.
- 01-00:15:11
Farrell: Yeah, no, but it would make sense.
- 01-00:15:14
Halsted: I wanted to go to a coed school. At that point the only things in my mind about career had to do with math and physics, I think, which I didn't pursue very much after that.
- 01-00:15:26
Farrell: What about math and physics did you like?

01-00:15:30

Halsted: I liked problem solving, I think. I think I liked being able to figure out formulas. But when I got into college, that wasn't what appealed to me.

01-00:15:43

Farrell: And, when you got to Duke, you majored in political science?

01-00:15:47

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

01-00:15:48

Farrell: Did you immediately pick that major?

01-00:15:50

Halsted: No. That was after that year when I had the integral calculus teacher.

01-00:15:56

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about that experience?

01-00:15:57

Halsted: Yeah. Duke is completely integrated now, I guess. But it had a women's campus and a men's campus. It was all the same degree you got. But, so the women's campus had most of the classes that were more for women. A class like math was on the other campus. I think I was the only woman in the class. It was pretty clear that the teacher thought that I was taking the class because there were all boys in it. I think in fact I didn't do very well in it, but almost no one did very well. I think he didn't stay very long after that.

01-00:16:40

Farrell: Oh, that's interesting and also too bad.

01-00:16:42

Halsted: You never knew how many real potential people lost out. I doubt that I had that much potential in math. I'm not unhappy that I changed my interest because I have always been much more interested since then in the social sciences.

01-00:17:02

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about the kind of classes you took or why you decided to choose political science after calculus?

01-00:17:13

Halsted: Yeah, good question. I remember some of the things I found most interesting were comparative religion, comparative politics, learning about how different societies organized themselves and how people made a decision as to whether or not to participate and control their own lives. That's sort of the thing that I remember most what compelled me to be involved in politics. I was ostensibly more interested in international relations than in national politics.

Interest group politics were just surfacing as a reality then. It was the time of the CORE [Congress of Racial Equality] demonstrations in North Carolina.

When I went to Duke, of course, it was not integrated. The first three years I was there, it was not integrated, which was really pretty weird. I had one of only three or four jobs one could have on campus, and I worked in the kitchen and the faculty dining room with the all-black help. I was making fifty cents an hour, and they were making thirty cents an hour but working very long hours. It was really an interesting experience because they lived in quite a different society.

01-00:18:38

Farrell: Were they also students?

01-00:18:40

Halsted: No. They were from town.

01-00:18:42

Farrell: Okay. So, this is 1960 when you start.

01-00:18:47

Halsted: I started in '60. Duke admitted its first blacks in '63.

01-00:18:53

Farrell: In '63? Were you working in the dining hall prior to the integration?

01-00:18:57

Halsted: Yes.

01-00:19:00

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about that experience, about working with basically an all-black staff in a non-integrated school?

01-00:19:06

Halsted: Well, I found it really interesting. I enjoyed it. I think I was naïve about it. I think I thought I could relate to people as people and just override this difference. I couldn't understand a lot of the patois when they were talking among themselves. But, I did make friends. I valued it.

01-00:19:30

Farrell: Do you remember any of the conversations that they would have at that point?

01-00:19:34

Halsted: I don't.

01-00:19:34

Farrell: Okay, that's fine. It was a long time ago. I just thought I'd ask.

01-00:19:37

Halsted: I do remember on a summer job, those things. I had a summer job after my senior year in high school, before I went to Duke, in northern Michigan, working as a waitress. All of the help in the kitchen was black, and all the waitresses were white. I remember that a black dishwasher asked me out, and I just didn't know what to do with myself. I was afraid to say no to him. I

remember going to church and praying and saying, what do I do about this? I didn't go out with him. It was not a good idea.

01-00:20:13

Farrell: Do you remember why you were afraid to say no?

01-00:20:16

Halsted: Because I thought he was a nice person. And I didn't want to just reject him based on apparent racial reasons.

01-00:20:23

Farrell: Oh, and you were afraid the optics would look like?

01-00:20:24

Halsted: Yes.

01-00:20:25

Farrell: Oh, I see. Okay. And, being a waitress, was this after working in the dining hall?

01-00:20:32

Halsted: No. It was before.

01-00:20:33

Farrell: It was before?

01-00:20:33

Halsted: In fact, you know, my mother thought that I was going to go to Duke and get out and become a waitress because I had done so much waitressing.

01-00:20:39

Farrell: That's interesting. Actually, what attracted you to waiting tables?

01-00:20:45

Halsted: It was the only job available at Duke. I could either count the people coming through the line, or I could be a waitress.

01-00:20:54

Farrell: Oh, interesting.

01-00:20:55

Halsted: As I said, there were only, like, four jobs that students could have, that women students could have.

01-00:21:00

Farrell: Do you remember the other two?

01-00:21:02

Halsted: No.

01-00:21:03

Farrell: Okay. Since a lot of the civil rights activities took place at restaurants, did you have any sense of that or experience or witness any of that?

- 01-00:21:15
Halsted: I remember driving from Durham [North Carolina] to Washington on that road where all the incidents were, and being aware of that. But I don't remember participating. I remember going to some lunch counters. I wasn't active in any demonstrations. I think we were all kind of removed but aware.
- 01-00:21:40
Farrell: Especially since the restaurant spaces were integrated—you had black and white staff—do you have a sense of if the staff was active in any of those activities?
- 01-00:21:53
Halsted: I don't think so. I think it was really, other than the few activists, pretty much people stayed in their place.
- 01-00:22:04
Farrell: Okay. Do you have a sense of how customers or students who would go into the dining hall would react to the black staff?
- 01-00:22:14
Halsted: Not really. I think that they were just accustomed to the way it was.
- 01-00:22:19
Farrell: Okay, that makes sense.
- 01-00:22:23
Halsted: There weren't as many Northerners at Duke as there are now.
- 01-00:22:27
Farrell: Okay.
- 01-00:22:28
Halsted: There were probably more Southerners.
- 01-00:22:30
Farrell: Actually, on that note, can you tell me a little bit about your first impressions about moving to the South for college?
- 01-00:22:39
Halsted: Well, I felt like I'd gone backwards, and not just racially. But the customs were so much more formal. I wasn't used to having to wait for a man to hold a door for me to walk through it, that kind of thing. We couldn't walk across campus in pants, as I recall. My freshman year, we had to be in our dorms at 7:30 at night. It was not like that in the northern Midwest. It was a lot more open than that.
- 01-00:23:13
Farrell: Did you ever question your choice to go to Duke?
- 01-00:23:15
Halsted: Oh, I did, I did. I didn't change it. My junior year I went to Florence for a semester. That was a really good awakening to experience another society.

01-00:23:31

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about what you were studying in Florence?

01-00:23:34

Halsted: Well, I just took a regular course in Italian and Italian history and political science and learned to speak pretty good Italian, lived with an Italian family, had an Italian boyfriend, all those things that kids do. But it was a real awakening because I had not experienced any societies other than the Midwest and the South.

01-00:24:01

Farrell: What were some of the things that you liked about that culture?

01-00:24:05

Halsted: I loved the traditions of it. In fact, I remember thinking at that time I could probably become an Italian and become an Italian mama. Well, there's no way I could have done that. But it's interesting how one is influenced at different ages of looking at things. It was a really nice way of life. I loved the fact that when you walked down the street everybody knew the history of the arts and the opera. It was such a lively cultural place. Florence at that time was pretty livable. I don't know if it is right now. But, I remember having a bicycle there. I could bike everywhere. I could run around, and I just had a great time.

01-00:24:47

Farrell: When you were studying political science there, did you also start learning about the political history of Italy?

01-00:25:08

Halsted: Oh yes.

01-00:25:10

Farrell: Did that change your perspective?

01-00:25:11

Halsted: Oh, it did. It really did because Italians were not as involved in their local politics as we are here, or we were. They were sort of cynical about it. But I also studied Machiavelli. I studied lots of the history of politics in Italy. So, that was good. I do think that my living in Florence really stimulated my interest in cities because it was such a wonderful place to live compared to living in the suburbs.

01-00:25:46

Farrell: At that point, what were your impressions or sort of the things that you liked about living in a city?

01-00:25:51

Halsted: Well, the walkability, access to everything, being able to encounter people who were different from you easily, those things, and the beauty of it. Actually, just the beauty of it's amazing.

01-00:26:04

Farrell:

Yeah, it's an incredible city, and access to mountains sort of similar to here. Were there things that you brought back with you, principles or outlooks that you were able to bring back to North Carolina?

01-00:26:19

Halsted:

Good question. I came back and I was probably ready to move on. I got through my senior year fine. But I was ready to move on to something different. In fact, I came back, and my senior year I had worked on common market studies and had arranged a job to work at the common market after my senior year. But, my parents were afraid I was going to go to Europe and stay there forever. They flew in to my graduation and brought me bodily to San Francisco.

01-00:26:53

Farrell:

That's funny. In college, did you have any professors or mentors that stuck out to you?

01-00:27:00

Halsted:

Mm-hmm. Let me think about that for a minute. I think my Italian professor was one. He was very supportive and very helpful. This fellow who worked with me on the common market studies was another one. Those are the two that come to mind right now. When I was at Duke I thought about going to law school. My counselor advised me that they had decided they weren't going to accept any more women. I didn't pursue that. I said, oh, okay. It's amazing.

01-00:27:38

Farrell:

Did you have a lot of other women in your classes?

01-00:27:41

Halsted:

Yes, and mostly, depending on the subject matter, as long as it wasn't math or science.

01-00:27:45

Farrell:

Okay. And then otherwise it was—

01-00:27:47

Halsted:

Yes.

01-00:27:50

Farrell:

Aside from law school and not being encouraged to apply because they weren't accepting women?

01-00:27:56

Halsted:

At that point, yes.

01-00:27:59

Farrell:

Were there any other careers that you saw the university or your counselors kind of steering you towards?

01-00:28:04

Halsted: Not really. I think the only direction they steered women towards were education. Many of my friends later went back to school, medical school and law school, but after five or six years out of college.

01-00:28:28

Farrell: What were your career aspirations at this point?

01-00:28:35

Halsted: I think I was really interested in international affairs. I had thought about the state department. The CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] did recruit at Duke. I know some of my friends did go to the CIA. They came from Washington and recruited at Duke, and I don't think I wanted to do that for some reason. I don't know why. But, there wasn't a lot of encouragement. Really people were looking for the MRS degree. I wasn't particularly interested in that. I wasn't pursuing that at that point. I didn't feel like I knew myself at all.

01-00:29:10

Farrell: Yeah. What were you thinking? What were your plans for after graduation?

01-00:29:14

Halsted: Well, as I said, I had lined up this job in Luxembourg with the common market. But my parents flew in and brought me to San Francisco where I had to find a job.

01-00:29:23

Farrell: Actually before we get to that, can you tell me a little bit more about the common market project, about that?

01-00:29:30

Halsted: Well, I just had studied economics and politics. I was very interested. I mean, I developed an idea early on that nationalism was not a particularly constructive idea. The results of the war, the Second World War and the First World War, resulting in the coal and steel community and the EC were a good thing. That was building in the right direction. It's amazing to look back now and see what's happened. I think it was still a good thing. I'm still associated with friends that I have. I did eventually go work in Luxembourg after a year here.

But, so I think it was still a good direction. I'm hoping that the common market or the European community can pull itself out of the morass that is Brexit.

01-00:30:20

Farrell: Do you feel like growing up, spending your first six years in Charleston and then your six years in Cleveland in the Rust Belt, do you feel like that influenced your perspective at all and your firsthand experience with the coal industry?

01-00:30:40

Halsted: With the coal industry?

- 01-00:30:42
Farrell: Because when you had just mentioned moving in the direction of coal and steel?
- 01-00:30:47
Halsted: The common market's first economic unit was called the coal and steel community, something like that.
- 01-00:30:54
Farrell: Okay. But do you feel like that sort of influenced your interest in that at all?
- 01-00:30:59
Halsted: No. Just those were the industries that they were working first to bring together after World War II, I think.
- 01-00:31:06
Farrell: Yeah, okay. That makes sense. I just didn't know if maybe because you had that experience growing up.
- 01-00:31:12
Halsted: No, I didn't feel at all connected with the coal and steel communities growing up.
- 01-00:31:15
Farrell: Okay. How did you go about—I know that you weren't able to take it—but arrange the job in Luxembourg?
- 01-00:31:25
Halsted: Through my professor at Duke, who was an economics professor. He knew people who were in Luxembourg. He helped me arrange that.
- 01-00:31:36
Farrell: Before we get into San Francisco I do kind of want to back up to the last year you spent at Duke when there was integration happening. What are your memories of when they started to integrate the school?
- 01-00:31:47
Halsted: I don't have very many memories. There were only two or three people.
- 01-00:31:51
Farrell: Oh, interesting.
- 01-00:31:52
Halsted: Oh yeah. They would have been freshmen, and I was a senior. It was not an overnight kind of change. But it happened. I think there had been a trustee on the board at Duke who precluded integration. He died, and then they started to integrate.
- 01-00:32:15
Farrell: Okay. It also was a little bit surface-level, the integration, initially.
- 01-00:32:22
Halsted: Oh yeah. There was no overnight change.

- 01-00:32:25
Farrell: Was there any sort of pushback that you remember happening?
- 01-00:32:28
Halsted: No, because it was so minor. When I went to Durham as a freshman, everything was segregated. I think by the time I got out of college, the movie theaters were integrated, et cetera. But that first year was a real shock.
- 01-00:32:49
Farrell: Yeah. Everything was interested in Milwaukee?
- 01-00:32:53
Halsted: Yes, as far as I know. Oprah did go to the same high school that I went to later. But I don't think there were any blacks in my high school when I was there. It wasn't very integrated. It was geographically segregated but not by rules.
- 01-00:33:14
Farrell: I know that your parents moved to San Francisco in 1964. What prompted their move there?
- 01-00:33:21
Halsted: Another transfer. I guess my parents became aware that my sister and I were not going to move back to Milwaukee. He accepted a transfer to San Francisco thinking that we would be happier being here and that they could be here.
- 01-00:33:38
Farrell: At this point, too, your sister is probably about to go to college?
- 01-00:33:41
Halsted: Yeah. She went to Mills [College].
- 01-00:33:43
Farrell: She went to Mills? Okay, so she was coming to San Francisco. Did she go to Mills because your family was moving out here?
- 01-00:33:49
Halsted: I think so, yeah.
- 01-00:33:52
Farrell: What was it like for you to have your parents come to graduation and promptly—?
- 01-00:33:56
Halsted: Terrible. It was really weird. I guess they just didn't know that they knew who I was. It made them very frightened to think I would take off. I actually didn't have enough money to go anywhere. I had to borrow money from them to go somewhere.
- 01-00:34:16
Farrell: How did that feel for you? You had this plan that didn't work.

- 01-00:34:21
Halsted: It was really annoying. It made you feel childish. My mother was pretty strict. She said as long as you're living with us, I'm in control of your life. That's the way it is.
- 01-00:34:37
Farrell: When you moved to San Francisco, did you have to move in with them?
- 01-00:34:39
Halsted: Yes. I ended up getting a job as a receptionist. I don't know if you want to go into this yet.
- 01-00:34:46
Farrell: Yeah, we can. We're moving through.
- 01-00:34:47
Halsted: Are we speeding along?
- 01-00:34:48
Farrell: Yeah. We'll have more time to talk about other stuff later.
- 01-00:34:57
Halsted: I hadn't ever learned typing very well. I couldn't be a secretary. Actually, my senior year at Duke I came out to San Francisco at Easter vacation and looked around for job opportunities. I discovered that there really weren't any except for secretarial jobs. That was when I decided that I would pursue this opportunity in Luxembourg.
- 01-00:35:23
Farrell: Okay. Oh, interesting.
- 01-00:35:25
Halsted: And then that disappeared.
- 01-00:35:29
Farrell: Can you tell me about some of your first impressions of San Francisco?
- 01-00:35:34
Halsted: Well, I remember it as being a really lovely place. My parents first thought they would move down the peninsula to a suburb. I sort of persuaded them to move to the city, which I'm glad of and they were glad of, too. I remember it as people wore hats and gloves, and there were flowers on the street. They have flower stands on the street. It was really much prettier than other cities and a really very livable place.
- 01-00:36:01
Farrell: Did you find it walkable?
- 01-00:36:02
Halsted: Oh yeah. I don't think I walked as much as I do now.

01-00:36:09

Farrell: At this point, too, when your parents started moving here, could you see yourself living here?

01-00:36:14

Halsted: Mm-hmm, yeah. That was the other thing that was very apparent. It was a good place to be and be a single person. Since I wasn't looking for my MRS degree it was a very comfortable place to be. It was right at the time of the free speech movement in Berkeley. I used to go over to Berkeley and hang out there and take classes there. I didn't feel uncomfortable, even though I was working in kind of an irrelevant job.

01-00:36:36

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about the cultural climate, especially because you're moving from the South, which is struggling with integration, and all the things are starting. You move to San Francisco and the free speech movement. It's also very different. Demographics were different here.

01-00:36:55

Halsted: I loved the openness. And of course, I immediately liked North Beach because I was an Italophile. My first job at this engineering company had a lot of young engineers who were from all over the world. I had friends from all over. That was a much more comfortable environment for me than the South was.

01-00:37:19

Farrell: Were your parents living in North Beach when they moved here?

01-00:37:22

Halsted: No. They lived in Presidio Heights.

01-00:37:26

Farrell: Okay. You just kind of gravitated towards North Beach?

01-00:37:29

Halsted: Mm-hmm, right.

01-00:37:33

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about, when you would come to North Beach, some of the places you would visit or where you would find yourself?

01-00:37:44

Halsted: Well, I think the Caffé Trieste existed, and the New Pisa Restaurant. Those are the two things I remember. The Trieste was really occupied by Italians, not by beatniks, as I recall. It didn't open until 9:00 in the morning. New Pisa was across the street where there's a Thai restaurant right now. What else do I remember about that particular time? Grant Avenue was still semi-beatnik. A lot of areas much more the same than the rest of San Francisco is. I can go through store by store and tell you what was there then, or in some cases, over the years.

- 01-00:38:29
Farrell: Did you go to City Lights Bookstore at all?
- 01-00:38:33
Halsted: I don't think until later.
- 01-00:38:35
Farrell: I know that North Beach Leather was a big thing.
- 01-00:38:38
Halsted: Right. I think that was in the '70s.
- 01-00:38:40
Farrell: Oh, that was the '70s?
- 01-00:38:40
Halsted: Or '60s maybe, or I think the beginning of the '70s. Yeah, I'm pretty sure, because it was on Grant Avenue at Grant and Green for a while, where there's a jewelry store right now.
- 01-00:39:00
Farrell: Were you able to practice Italian?
- 01-00:39:03
Halsted: Some.
- 01-00:39:07
Farrell: You'd had this experience waiting tables. Was that something that you had ever, kind of in the interim, that you were thinking about doing?
- 01-00:39:16
Halsted: No. I don't think I did. Let me think about it. I might have thought about it. But I was trying to move on. I instead went into reception.
- 01-00:39:26
Farrell: You said you weren't great at typing. Was it difficult for you to get a receptionist job?
- 01-00:39:35
Halsted: Well, no, because I operated the PBX [private branch exchange].
- 01-00:39:39
Farrell: Oh, that's right. You had mentioned that. Can you tell me a little bit about your job search?
- 01-00:39:45
Halsted: I think I went to an employment agency. I think it probably was Hansel Employment Agency. I later went back there and worked there when I was looking, trying to find another kind of work. I think that Jean Dibble, who's married to Bruce Brugmann, was the person I worked with there.
- 01-00:40:05
Farrell: Oh, interesting.

01-00:40:07

Halsted: She was from Milwaukee, too. Bruce was from Milwaukee. Or I think maybe he was from Milwaukee or had worked there.

01-00:40:15

Farrell: What were some of your impressions of her?

01-00:40:17

Halsted: Oh, she was great. He was just starting the Bay Guardian. That was '65 or '66. Maybe I'm getting my times mixed up a bit. But in that period between '65 and '68, sometime, he started the Bay Guardian. I know he interviewed Bill Graham to be the manager. Bill Graham had worked for my father and had been fired by Allis-Chalmers. He had a different name then, of course. What was Bill Graham's original name? But my father thought he was a great guy. But he had violated some company policies or something. He had an affair with his secretary, I think.

01-00:41:09

Farrell: So, with the Bay Guardian, I don't know if you would have a sense of this. But, the employment agency, were they sending people over to work there as typists or anything?

01-00:41:18

Halsted: I don't think so. I think it was just that Jean, Bruce's wife, worked there at this agency. I don't think there was any particular relationship with the Guardian other than their marriage.

01-00:41:32

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about the function of a PBX operator and learning how to do that?

01-00:41:39

Halsted: Well, it was sitting at the front desk. When people come in the door you have to play the part, receive people. When the phone rings, you plug your little thing in and open a key and say hello and then connect that with another line and then close the key.

01-00:42:01

Farrell: Oh, so basically when you closed the key it would stop you from listening?

01-00:42:04

Halsted: You can't hear, yes.

01-00:42:06

Farrell: How did you know where to put the plugs, the wires?

01-00:42:10

Halsted: They had extension numbers. I'm sure that that was it. Pretty simple job, but it did create an opportunity to hear lots of conversations.

01-00:42:21

Farrell: Were there any memorable ones?

01-00:42:22

Halsted: I really can't remember. The other thing, it's just one of those silly places, but it was on Maiden Lane downtown. The best thing about the job from my perspective was that Maiden Lane had a Maiden Lane day every year where they put daffodils all over. I got to do all the flowers. That was the best part of it.

01-00:42:44

Farrell: How did you get to be able to do that?

01-00:42:46

Halsted: Well, the guy who hired me was an ex-military colonel. He let me do it, I guess.

01-00:42:53

Farrell: Were you responsible for going to the store to pick up the daffodils or pick them out?

01-00:42:58

Halsted: Yeah. But this was huge, like doing floats. But it was fun. I got to do flowers all the time, and he was very supportive of me. But he was an old-fashioned guy. That's how I got into HR work, actually, because over time I did learn to type and take shorthand. And then I worked for him. He didn't do such a great job of HR work as things were changing in the world. I got to kind of take over the hiring process. It was before there was a lot of complaints, before complaints about discrimination. But he would have had a hard time surviving through that.

01-00:43:44

Farrell: What company was this?

01-00:43:46

Halsted: Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade and Douglas, PBQ&D. It still exists. They've been bought by someone else. But they still exist.

01-00:43:54

Farrell: Okay. How long did you work as a PBX operator?

01-00:43:59

Halsted: Probably a year.

01-00:44:00

Farrell: Okay. Is that when you went back to Luxembourg, after that?

01-00:44:04

Halsted: Yes. During that year, though, I thought about being a teacher. I applied to Berkeley through the education school and got accepted. I decided I didn't want to do it. I knew I didn't want to do it. But it was the one thing. I applied to the Peace Corps and kept turning them down because they were going to send me to places I didn't want to be, I guess.

- 01-00:44:30
Farrell: I want to talk about that. But, with UC [University of California] Berkeley and the education school, did you apply there because you felt like you should or you had to?
- 01-00:44:39
Halsted: Yeah. I didn't want to be a PBX operator all my life.
- 01-00:44:42
Farrell: Was it hard for you to turn down the acceptance?
- 01-00:44:46
Halsted: No, because I really never wanted to be a teacher.
- 01-00:44:50
Farrell: Were your parents upset about that decision?
- 01-00:44:52
Halsted: I don't think so. I don't remember that they were.
- 01-00:44:57
Farrell: Did your interest in international politics make you want to go into the Peace Corps?
- 01-00:45:02
Halsted: Yes. That was harder for me because I really wanted to do that. But first I was accepted for a program in Rio in the favelas. I didn't think my character was strong enough to hang out in the favelas with a bunch of Latin men. I actually felt the same way about Afghanistan when they wanted to send me there. I could see myself wanting to ride a bike in Afghanistan. I read Caravans. I read various books and thought this is not going to be a successful place for my personality to thrive.
- 01-00:45:38
Farrell: When you had initially applied to the Peace Corps, was there a role that you had wanted to do?
- 01-00:45:43
Halsted: No.
- 01-00:45:43
Farrell: Or just be a part of it?
- 01-00:45:45
Halsted: Yeah.
- 01-00:45:46
Farrell: At that point, what was the application process for the Peace Corps like? Do you remember at all?
- 01-00:45:53
Halsted: Good question. I don't really remember.

01-00:45:55

Farrell: Because I know now they kind of do that, where they will give you an assignment. But they'll defer you and defer you and defer you just to make sure that you're committed and you won't back out.

01-00:46:06

Halsted: I don't remember about that.

01-00:46:08

Farrell: Okay. Do you remember the kind of work in general that the Peace Corps was doing at that point?

01-00:46:13

Halsted: Well, I think it was more like helping people in schools and in agriculture. I have friends who went in the Peace Corps. It depended on where they went, building latrines or whatever it was that people were required to.

01-00:46:31

Farrell: The more infrastructural side?

01-00:46:32

Halsted: Right.

01-00:46:34

Farrell: You had also mentioned that you were going over to UC Berkeley and participating in some of the free speech movement activities.

01-00:46:42

Halsted: Well, or at least hanging around.

01-00:46:45

Farrell: What were some of your memories of campus at that point or things, activities that you would be present for?

01-00:46:51

Halsted: I thought it was a lot of fun. I thought it was really interesting and very active. I think I took a couple of courses at night, too.

01-00:46:58

Farrell: Did you find, especially just being out of college, that there was a community there for you?

01-00:47:04

Halsted: To some degree, and partly, I think, probably because I was working with a lot of people who had gone to Berkeley in this engineering firm. They were not much older than I. They were probably about the same age. In fact, when I think about it, there were some people in city planning who were there and connected me with people there.

01-00:47:26

Farrell: Did you find that there was a big cultural difference between the East Bay and San Francisco?

01-00:47:32

Halsted: I wasn't aware that there was. I wasn't as connected with San Francisco culture as I would have been if I had grown up there.

01-00:47:40

Farrell: Were there any memorable free speech movement activities that you were present for?

01-00:47:48

Halsted: I wasn't involved in any major demonstrations. I do remember being around some. I think I heard Mario Savio once.

01-00:48:01

Farrell: Did you have a sense that that was like there was something bigger happening there, that the cultural tide was changing?

01-00:48:11

Halsted: Right. It seemed like it was a step beyond where we were in North Carolina, that students were taking activities more seriously and taking control of their lives, and pretty exciting.

01-00:48:24

Farrell: At this point were you adapting to life in California? Or were you thinking you might go somewhere else?

01-00:48:30

Halsted: I hadn't really decided. But I liked it. As I said, it was a comfortable place for me to be. But, I did go back to Luxembourg for, I guess, probably not that long, maybe six months. It was a time when the French walked out of the agricultural talks with the common market because they were upset with Americans participating. There was really not much interest in having Americans working there. That's one of the reasons I stopped working there.

01-00:49:04

Farrell: Oh, interesting. How did you get back involved? Did you contact your professor again and try to get the job that you?

01-00:49:15

Halsted: I had connected with the people in Luxembourg that I was going to work with. Actually, when I didn't take that job, I got one of my sorority sisters to take it, and she went and did it for six months and came back. I think I did it, though, directly through the person in Luxembourg that I had originally planned to work for.

01-00:49:37

Farrell: How did your parents feel about you going?

01-00:49:40

Halsted: I don't remember them having a problem with it at that point. I think that they just had no idea who I was when I was just getting out of college.

- 01-00:49:48
Farrell: That whole year that you were here as a PBX, were you living with them in Presidio Heights?
- 01-00:49:52
Halsted: I was.
- 01-00:49:54
Farrell: What kind of neighborhood was Presidio Heights like at that point?
- 01-00:49:56
Halsted: It was pretty fancy. It was pretty nice. They were renting.
- 01-00:50:00
Farrell: I guess it was still an active post then, too.
- 01-00:50:03
Halsted: Yes.
- 01-00:50:07
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about your move to Luxembourg and about what your role was when you working for the common market?
- 01-00:50:14
Halsted: Well, I was just working for a magazine, an English-language magazine. England had not yet affiliated. They had a magazine that they sent back to England about what was going on in the common market. I was writing articles about changes in bureaucratic things in the common market.
- 01-00:50:33
Farrell: Do you remember what maybe some of the articles you wrote that you were the most interested in or most proud of during that period?
- 01-00:50:38
Halsted: I don't really. I made a lot of friends there. Some of them are still friends, so that's good. It was interesting to see because people from different countries associated differently with each other there.
- 01-00:50:53
Farrell: What were some of the differences there between here or even Florence?
- 01-00:50:58
Halsted: In Luxembourg?
- 01-00:51:00
Farrell: Yeah.
- 01-00:51:01
Halsted: Well, Luxembourg is a somewhat industrial city. During the war, it had been very industrial. It's very pretty. But, the communities that came in to work there, the young people were very idealistic. They tended to stay with their Italian friends or with their English friends. There were groups of people that socialized. I kind of went between them, to some degree. But it was fun.

- 01-00:51:29
Farrell: Were you learning from them at that point?
- 01-00:51:31
Halsted: Yeah.
- 01-00:51:35
Farrell: Were you interested in writing at that point when you were doing those articles?
- 01-00:51:40
Halsted: I think I was more interested in the politics than in the writing and the economics.
- 01-00:51:50
Farrell: What particularly about the economics were you interested in?
- 01-00:51:54
Halsted: Well, in figuring out how different systems find a way to meld and come to agreement. It's more about diplomacy or about connecting different cultures and persuading people to abandon old practices and adopt new ones, which obviously hasn't worked terribly well.
- 01-00:52:16
Farrell: When you were thinking about that and you were there, given the backdrop of what was happening in the US, and I guess in '68, too, I mean there's a cultural revolution that's coming. Do you see those tides start to change?
- 01-00:52:37
Halsted: I did feel like change was happening everywhere. The civil rights movement got to be extremely volatile. [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy died in '63. [Robert Francis] Kennedy, the other Kennedy, was here. There was Martin Luther King.
- 01-00:52:57
Farrell: Yeah, that's right. And then it was Bobby Kennedy.
- 01-00:53:00
Halsted: Yeah. I'm sorry. I should remember.
- 01-00:53:04
Farrell: We can fill that in.
- 01-00:53:07
Halsted: Anyway, it was a time of tumult and a lot of change. I'd never really gotten involved in the flower child movement in San Francisco. I was too busy trying to earn a living. But, I didn't have any complaints. But my sister, who was younger, she and her friends went there right from school. I had already been working for several years when that happened.
- 01-00:53:32
Farrell: Could you feel the change also happening in Europe at that point, too?

- 01-00:53:39
Halsted: You could feel some change, but not as much. The change of the common market, people coming together for that, yes, I could feel that. But it hadn't become part of the everyday experience of people at that point.
- 01-00:53:56
Farrell: Were you there when they decided they weren't interested in working with Americans or they were upset and walked out of the talks?
- 01-00:54:05
Halsted: Mm-hmm. But it was just they didn't want to have any Americans on the payroll because it undermined their ability to connect. It was de Gaulle who walked out of the agricultural talks and didn't want to be influenced by Americans.
- 01-00:54:21
Farrell: Interesting. How did you leave the job? Was your position terminated, or you chose to come back?
- 01-00:54:30
Halsted: It was a stage for the most part. It was like an internship more than a real job.
- 01-00:54:37
Farrell: Then your time was done? You were ready to come back?
- 01-00:54:38
Halsted: Yes, right.
- 01-00:54:41
Farrell: Were you thinking at that point that you wanted to stay somewhere else in Europe?
- 01-00:54:45
Halsted: I don't think I had decided. I could have. I actually thought about Foreign Service when I was there. I remember going, talking to some people in the State Department. But, that didn't seem to go very far, so I didn't. I came back.
- 01-00:55:01
Farrell: Were there other women there when you were there?
- 01-00:55:03
Halsted: In secretarial positions, yeah.
- 01-00:55:06
Farrell: When you came back, was there any sort of change that happened in San Francisco when you were gone? Did you see any of that or feel any of that?
- 01-00:55:17
Halsted: I don't remember that there was. When I came back it was still '65, I think.

01-00:55:24
Farrell: Yeah. It's relatively short. It's not like you left for ten years and came. When you came back, where did you start working?

01-00:55:34
Halsted: I went back to Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade and Douglas and went back and studied shorthand so I could become a secretary.

01-00:55:42
Farrell: They were okay with you coming back? That wasn't any sort of an issue?

01-00:55:44
Halsted: Yes.

01-00:55:47
Farrell: How long when you were there did it take you to move into HR [human resources]?

01-00:55:53
Halsted: Well, HR was personnel at that time. It was created by the military as a role. I guess it probably took me a year or two of being a secretary. Actually, I'm not sure whether I ever had a different job title when I worked there other than administrative assistant, which was secretary. But I did the work of my boss, which is not uncommon. When I left that job and came back to another one, I went into one that was actually a personnel job.

01-00:56:35
Farrell: At that point, what were some of the functions or responsibilities of personnel?

01-00:56:39
Halsted: At the point when I actually took a personnel job?

01-00:56:43
Farrell: Mm-hmm.

01-00:56:45
Halsted: Hiring all the administrative staff and managing benefits and managing payroll, and employee relations. It was a really busy job.

01-00:57:01
Farrell: Were you finding fulfillment in that? Or were you still thinking you kind of want to do something else?

01-00:57:08
Halsted: I was still thinking I might want to do something else. I started that job in 1969. I left out a piece of my background. When I was working at the other firm in personnel, or as a secretary, I met a fellow, a Scot, at a conference on the common market at a seminar that the World Affairs Council ran. I fell in love with him and nearly married him in Scotland but decided to come back and not. And that's when I took this other job. Now, he's a good friend still.

- 01-00:57:51
Farrell: You had moved to Scotland, right?
- 01-00:57:53
Halsted: Yeah, just for part of a year.
- 01-00:57:57
Farrell: Oh, okay. What were some of your impressions of Scotland, or even Scotland versus Luxembourg versus Florence versus the US?
- 01-00:58:08
Halsted: When I first went to Scotland it was Glasgow which was, at that time, a very dirty, kind of difficult place to live. Edinburgh was lovely, cold. But still there was not central heating anywhere. It was a different life, and it was a really lovely place. My friend was very involved. He was captain of the British Olympic team. He was a very well-recognized person. But I never kind of developed enough sense of myself there, living there in the community, to feel confident that I could make that work. I finally just decided to come back.
- 01-00:58:56
Farrell: Were you working while you were there?
- 01-00:58:58
Halsted: No. I took a summer school course.
- 01-00:59:03
Farrell: So, you were there for about a year? Okay. And that was around what period of time?
- 01-00:59:09
Halsted: '68, '69.
- 01-00:59:12
Farrell: Okay. Just so I'm getting this correct chronologically, you graduated from Duke in '64. That's the year you moved to San Francisco until about '65. And then you were in Luxembourg for '65.
- 01-00:59:30
Halsted: Yeah, and then came back here '66, '67, '68.
- 01-00:59:34
Farrell: Okay. And then you were there?
- 01-00:59:35
Halsted: Yeah.
- 01-00:59:36
Farrell: Okay. So, you had about two years before you moved to Scotland?
- 01-00:59:41
Halsted: Mm-hmm, at least.

- 01-00:59:43
Farrell: During that period of time, is that when you moved into the personnel role? Or was that after you came back from Scotland?
- 01-00:59:52
Halsted: The actual personnel job was after I moved back from Scotland.
- 01-00:59:58
Farrell: All right, thank you. I just want to clarify.
- 01-01:00:00
Halsted: I'm sorry.
- 01-01:00:01
Farrell: No, it's totally fine.
- 01-01:00:07
Halsted: You asked about responsibilities there. One of the ones that was just developing was affirmative action. We hadn't really started then. It didn't really develop until the early seventies, I'd say.
- 01-01:00:24
Farrell: All right, great. We'll talk about that probably next time, because I want to talk about that a little bit more in depth. In that period of a couple of years between Luxembourg and Scotland, at that point what were you thinking that you had wanted to do?
- 01-01:00:42
Halsted: I really hadn't figured it out because I had struggled with the Peace Corps, the State Department. I applied with the State Department later after I had been working for a while. I thought about law school. Actually, that was later as well. I think I was just trying to figure out who I was. I don't think that we were raised with expectations of having a career. It was like how can I support myself?
- 01-01:01:16
Farrell: Were your parents allowing you enough space to be able to figure that out?
- 01-01:01:23
Halsted: I think they would have except for money. They didn't really want to help me go to graduate school. They thought that was not a good idea.
- 01-01:01:35
Farrell: When you moved back after Luxembourg, were you living with them again?
- 01-01:01:39
Halsted: No. I moved in with some girls.
- 01-01:01:42
Farrell: What part of town were you living in?
- 01-01:01:43
Halsted: In Pacific Heights.

- 01-01:01:44
Farrell: Okay. How did you like living in Pacific Heights versus Presidio Heights?
- 01-01:01:50
Halsted: They're all much the same.
- 01-01:01:52
Farrell: As soon as I said that out loud I was like, no, they're close.
- 01-01:01:55
Halsted: It's hard to find a difference.
- 01-01:02:00
Farrell: After you came back from Scotland, is that when you started working for United Leasing International?
- 01-01:02:06
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 01-01:02:07
Farrell: Okay. What changed for you when you came back? Because I know you kind of settled into the HR career after that.
- 01-01:02:15
Halsted: Right. Well, I went through this great catharsis of trying to get married to this fellow I was in love with and deciding not to. I think that's what caused me to try to settle into something, because I just can't work that hard at trying to get married if it's not going to work.
- 01-01:02:34
Farrell: When you came back, were you like, okay, I'm here in San Francisco?
- 01-01:02:38
Halsted: Yeah, exactly. And I like being here.
- 01-01:02:41
Farrell: Okay. I actually think that this may be a good place to stop for today and then kind of move into more of that. Or is there anything else you want to add to this one?
- 01-01:02:51
Halsted: No, not at all.
- 01-01:02:54
Farrell: Okay. Thank you.

Interview 2: April 18, 2018

02-00:00:03

Farrell:

Okay, this is Shanna Farrell with Anne Halsted on Wednesday, April 18, 2017 [*sic*] and this is our second interview for her interview series. We're in San Francisco, California. Anne, last time we left off we were talking a little bit about your career in HR [human resources] and, I'm wondering if you could start off today by telling me a little bit about how you came to work at United States Leasing International?

02-00:00:29

Halsted:

I will give a shot at that. I had just returned from Scotland, where I was struggling to try to decide to marry a wonderful man but couldn't decide to do that. And, my parents had just moved to West Virginia. My sister had moved to Palo Alto [California]. I came back, first stayed with my parents in West Virginia. But they were terribly upset that I couldn't decide to get married, and came back to San Francisco and stayed on my sister's couch in Palo Alto for a bit while I looked for a job.

I interviewed for a few and found this opportunity at US Leasing, which was an interesting and challenging opportunity but not really at the center of my interest because equipment finance was not something I knew anything about and not that compelling. But, it was a good job. The responsibilities were immense, given the situation, because the job had responsibility for all the hiring and firing and paying and training and development of all of the employees. I think there were only 250 then. But still it was a heavy-duty job. There was a lot of turnover because there were a lot of administrative jobs that were not particularly well paid.

It was a challenging place to be. I would go to work at 8:00 in the morning, and there would be, you know, ten people lined up for interviews. My phone would ring every twenty seconds, I think, with employment agencies trying to get me. I had no support staff. I was doing that, plus then I did have someone doing payroll, managing her. It was really a tough job.

02-00:02:08

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about what United States Leasing International does and what type of company they are?

02-00:02:14

Halsted:

It was an equipment leasing or equipment finance company. The concept really developed in San Francisco in the late fifties. It sort of led that industry, which is still alive but not in the same way because tax laws have changed. It doesn't work quite the same; it was a matter of providing a vehicle for financing equipment for businesses. Different subsidiaries were designed around different kinds of industries and different equipment. We leased a lot of Pitney Bowes postage meters, which are tiny. They were not huge pieces of equipment. We also leased ships and railroad cars and planes. There were different divisions handling each of those. The industry where we were doing

small equipment, the billing and collection of money was really what a lot of the staff was involved in.

The executives were involved in putting together the deals and the administrative people were involved in billing, collecting and all that operation. It was more of a financial operation than anything else.

02-00:03:26

Farrell:

Okay. It was more sort of industrial business equipment then?

02-00:03:30

Halsted:

It was all commercial.

02-00:03:31

Farrell:

Commercial, okay, because sometimes I think about business and I think about offices, like a Xerox copy machine.

02-00:03:39

Halsted:

Oh, sure. We did a lot of that.

02-00:03:41

Farrell:

Okay, so it was both?

02-00:03:42

Halsted:

Right. It was just another way. Instead of getting a loan from a bank, you have an equipment lease which finances the purchase of that equipment. But it was all for business, not for individuals.

02-00:03:55

Farrell:

Okay. When you had to deal with vendors or people who owned, did the company have to deal with the people who owned?

02-00:04:05

Halsted:

Sure. We had arrangements, affiliations with Pitney Bowes so that all of their salesmen had a US Leasing lease when they went to sell their equipment.

02-00:04:14

Farrell:

Okay. Were you involved in any of the vendor management?

02-00:04:17

Halsted:

No, not really.

02-00:04:20

Farrell:

What were some of the other roles in the organization? The people that you had to hire, what kind of jobs were you hiring for or sort of facilitating the hiring for?

02-00:04:30

Halsted:

Well, as I said, there were a lot of administrative people, people doing accounting and collections and finance and all of that. That was probably the biggest number of people—file clerks, receptionists, secretaries, and then people who were involved in selling. They were all over the country, so I

wasn't involved in the actual hiring of each one of them. The sales manager would be doing that.

02-00:04:57

Farrell: What kind of learning curve did you experience when you first got hired?

02-00:05:02

Halsted: I guess it was pretty intense. It was such a different world because I'd worked in a consulting engineering firm where academic background was really relevant. In this field it was not as relevant. Anyway, I don't want to demean anyone's sense of it. It was challenging and a different cultural world.

02-00:05:29

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

02-00:05:31

Halsted: Well, as I said, in the more standard professions, I think I understood better who was qualified or who wasn't or what their perspective was. But this organization was a newer industry, one that had fewer relationships to academia or to things that you might learn about in school, and more free-wheeling. I mean, I remember when I first started work. This is a little silly. But, I sat with my other person who was leaving for a week or two. I swear, she gave me the sexual history of everyone in the company. I mean, it was a little odd. It was freewheeling, and it was the beginning of the seventies. It was the sexual revolution, the flower child period. It was pretty crazy.

02-00:06:29

Farrell: When I think of the late sixties, early seventies, I feel like there's sort of two narratives. It's the beginning of the flower children and sexual liberation. And then there's also people who are just putting their head down and working, and it's not as romantic. Were you finding that there were any cultural clashes in terms of that? Were people more free or open? I don't know. I guess I'm just trying to get a sense.

02-00:07:02

Halsted: I'm not really sure. I think more the former.

02-00:07:11

Farrell: Okay. Were you seeing that with other companies around San Francisco as well, just sort of a looser work environment?

02-00:07:17

Halsted: Oh, absolutely. It changed dramatically from the mid-sixties to 1970. There was a cultural shift.

02-00:07:24

Farrell: Aside from when you were getting the sexual history of a lot of people you were working for, or the person who you were replacing, can you give me another example about how you saw the culture shift?

02-00:07:36

Halsted:

Well, it was the time of the beginning of transcendental meditation, TM, and then Werner Erhard and EST and all that stuff. All these feel-good movements were happening, changing people's way they approach life.

02-00:07:54

Farrell:

Was that finding its way into the workplace?

02-00:07:56

Halsted:

Oh, absolutely. There was a period when almost every interview I had with someone, they'd just been through Erhard Seminar Training. They wouldn't give you any answers. You'd talk to them, and oh, everything is going to be wonderful. You know, life is an opportunity, kind of very glossy.

02-00:08:15

Farrell:

Yeah, just positive affirmations?

02-00:08:18

Halsted:

Yeah.

02-00:08:20

Farrell:

How did you manage that?

02-00:08:23

Halsted:

Well, it was interesting. I'm not quite sure how I did. But I never was quite caught up in it, so it was not really my favorite in talking to people to talk about that experience.

02-00:08:38

Farrell:

Were you working with a lot of other women in the office?

02-00:08:41

Halsted:

Oh yes, there were lots of women, not so many in management, but some. The leadership of the company was really progressive and really helpful to me. That's what really made the difference in staying in the job. The top people in the company were very respectful, very concerned about being a good employer, very caring about the employees and very supportive of my efforts to make things more fair and give more opportunity to more people.

02-00:09:19

Farrell:

One thing that you had mentioned that's important to you is working for the advancement of people of color and you were just mentioning giving more people opportunity. How did you try to do that in your position?

02-00:09:33

Halsted:

Well, just by systematizing the way that people could get a job and then advance through the jobs in the company so that rather than everything being a negotiation, finding who had something and whatever, we managed to get a system where all jobs were posted and everyone had an opportunity to apply. In-house people had a better opportunity than outside people. But all of those things were a big negotiation because it was shifting from individual

managers controlling exactly what they wanted to a system whereby they had to live with the results of the system.

02-00:10:10

Farrell:

I think that's still a problem today, especially where jobs were posted, and using different mediums. Do you remember where job openings were posted before you tried to put these systems, or you did put these systems in place?

02-00:10:24

Halsted:

I don't think they were posted.

02-00:10:25

Farrell:

Oh, so it was all sort of internally circulated?

02-00:10:27

Halsted:

Yeah, and not even circulated. Just, go to the employment agency and find me someone for this job.

02-00:10:37

Farrell:

Were you seeing a certain demographic move through those employment agencies?

02-00:10:42

Halsted:

A little different from what it became later because the minority community didn't have as comfortable access to those employment agencies. Actually the employment agencies drove me crazy, so I was happy not to deal with them so much, so I started dealing with the California Department of Employment more than had been before. That didn't make middle managers very happy because it changed their whole—

02-00:11:07

Farrell:

Yeah, change can be uncomfortable. Why didn't you get along with the employment agencies?

02-00:11:13

Halsted:

Oh, just they were very aggressive. They were sales-oriented. They would demand your time.

02-00:11:20

Farrell:

How was the California Department of Employment different from the employment agencies?

02-00:11:25

Halsted:

Well, they were a bureaucratic agency. But they also had a responsibility to the public to list jobs and bring people in in a different way.

02-00:11:35

Farrell:

Did they have a broader reach in terms of where they were posting jobs?

02-00:11:39

Halsted: I guess so. I mean, this was not the day of the internet. Everything was pretty much paper, so it would be limited to the geographic place where those were posted.

02-00:11:50

Farrell: Did you work with them at all to get the jobs physically posted in a variety of places?

02-00:11:57

Halsted: I think so. But I don't know. I'm not sure about that. But, it did change the nature of people coming to apply for jobs.

02-00:12:04

Farrell: When those systems started to change, and you started to implement them, can you tell me about the demographics of people that started to apply?

02-00:12:14

Halsted: I don't really have any figures or recollection. But I know that it changed management's reaction. I had to fight really hard to keep those things in place.

02-00:12:25

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about those negotiations that you had with middle management?

02-00:12:29

Halsted: Yeah. Well, as in any organization, people who have standing in the organization use their power to continue what power they have. This was a challenge to the power of some people and their decisions about hiring. They tried to embarrass me and make me cry at a meeting or do those kinds of things. I pretty much held my ground. But, as I said, I had support from the most senior level of management, which really was very, very critical.

02-00:13:05

Farrell: How did you rise above that?

02-00:13:08

Halsted: Well, the one thing I think that I did, which was we had eight subsidiaries within one corporate unit. I realized that in order to make change I really needed the support of the leadership of each of those subsidiaries. I created a committee of them to review changes to personnel policies or HR policies. And, that really worked very effectively for me because then I got buy-in and got closer to the middle management. It was really effective and most of those people were younger as well.

02-00:13:42

Farrell: Was your approach to sort of write those policies and then present them? It basically didn't give them an opportunity to say no because it was already done?

- 02-00:13:52
Halsted: Well, no, you can always change things. But that was really my responsibility, was developing policies and procedures as well as doing the hiring. That's what made the difference, I think.
- 02-00:14:05
Farrell: Did that extend to hiring more women as well? Because I know that was a priority for you as well, to make sure that there was advancement of women.
- 02-00:14:11
Halsted: Right, right. Yeah, absolutely.
- 02-00:14:15
Farrell: Once there were more women and people of color that had been hired, did you start to think about their advancement in the organization at all?
- 02-00:14:27
Halsted: Oh, sure. That's part of the job posting thing, part of training people, and then also, getting in the way of people who wanted to push them out. You know, making sure that firings were not done without reason, setting standards for letting people go, and helping to manage performance, because, you know, cultural differences could be relayed in different appearance of performance.
- 02-00:14:57
Farrell: Were there any equal employment opportunity laws being passed at this point?
- 02-00:15:02
Halsted: Oh yeah, definitely. And that helped, too.
- 02-00:15:06
Farrell: Can you tell me about some of the laws that were passed then?
- 02-00:15:10
Halsted: Oh, golly. I don't think I remember. If I go back, some of the numbers of the laws will occur to me. But, it was in the late '70s that those laws became important in employment.
- 02-00:15:23
Farrell: So, you were kind of on the early end of trying to put these systems in?
- 02-00:15:25
Halsted: Yeah.
- 02-00:15:28
Farrell: When those laws started to become more present, did that make you feel validated at all?
- 02-00:15:36
Halsted: Yeah. It was challenging because sometimes you would think you were doing a great job in helping someone. But you didn't do enough. It did really help that those laws were behind the change that was happening.

- 02-00:15:52
Farrell: There's also a lot of civil rights things that are happening during this period of time. How were you seeing that affect your work?
- 02-00:16:06
Halsted: Well, I think women and minorities felt empowered. From time to time different groups would try to organize to have sort of support groups. I tried to work with those. They never became an official part of the organization.
- 02-00:16:27
Farrell: How did you grow your career within the company?
- 02-00:16:32
Halsted: How did I? Well, the company grew. I guess I developed relationships that were sufficient to the cause. I think that's about it. I just stuck with it despite the fact that I was never quite sure that it was the right place for me.
- 02-00:16:51
Farrell: How did you reconcile that during your time there?
- 02-00:16:55
Halsted: Well, it was a better opportunity than others I had. I did think about a number of other careers while I was there. I applied to the Foreign Service. I was accepted in the Foreign Service. I went in and resigned and said I'm going to Washington and the CEO said, "Well, I hope you can replace yourself." I went back to my desk and I just didn't know what to do. I was kind of like, I guess I don't have time to replace myself. I'll just keep working.
- 02-00:17:24
Farrell: Oh, and so you had to give up that opportunity because of that?
- 02-00:17:26
Halsted: Well, I did. I didn't have to. I could have walked out. But I guess I didn't have the guts to.
- 02-00:17:32
Farrell: What were some of the other jobs that you were thinking about while you were there?
- 02-00:17:36
Halsted: Well, I did think about going to law school. At the point where I was accepted in law school I realized that I was making more money than I would have been once I'd gotten out of law school. But that's really not a good reason. I think I was in my early thirties. It would have been a good thing to do.
- 02-00:17:56
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about how you saw things change in San Francisco during that period of time in the early '70s?
- 02-00:18:07
Halsted: Well, as I said, there was this dominance of these feel-good movements. That was remarkable. Of course, that all continued until the end of the seventies

when we had Jim Jones and other things happening in San Francisco. I was always somewhat involved in civic activities. This is really getting to a different part of the interview, but in the beginning of the seventies we had the forty-foot height limit in Alvin Duskin's campaign against Manhattanization in San Francisco. I got involved in that and got to know the politics of San Francisco pretty totally through that effort and then my efforts in doing some rezoning. We should save that for later, though.

Anyway, the community, because the seventies began to see an expansion of the downtown and develop new buildings, the neighborhood movement became stronger. And it was a lot of activity that I was involved in as a result of that.

02-00:19:17

Farrell: Were you living in North Beach [San Francisco, California] at this point?

02-00:19:18

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

02-00:19:19

Farrell: Okay. Were you seeing that neighborhood organizations were present? Or did they even exist before that period?

02-00:19:31

Halsted: They did. I mean, the one in this neighborhood started in the mid-'50s. But, and to some degree it was in reaction to the same thing because Joe Alioto had wanted to do redevelopment in North Beach. It was kind of in reaction to that.

02-00:19:47

Farrell: Did you have an awareness? Was that Telegraph Hill Dwellers?

02-00:19:53

Halsted: Mm-hmm, yeah.

02-00:19:54

Farrell: Did you have an awareness that they existed before the campaign against Manhattanization?

02-00:20:01

Halsted: Not really. I think just about the same time, I became aware that they existed. But I had no idea where they were. I didn't know who ran them.

02-00:20:09

Farrell: How did you go about finding that out?

02-00:20:11

Halsted: It's funny. I have a friend who just passed away last year. She and I were exploring things. We were looking for them. We found them meeting in the basement of someone's store. It wasn't that they weren't public. They were just kind of a private nonprofit running their own thing. But they were not in the middle of our awareness.

02-00:20:33

Farrell: Do you have any recollection of that first meeting that you went to?

02-00:20:37

Halsted: A little bit. I remember Peter Macchiarini, the jeweler on Grant Avenue, being there and a bunch of old fogies. It's still that.

02-00:20:46

Farrell: Do you remember if they were excited that you were there, being a younger woman?

02-00:20:51

Halsted: Oh, I don't think so. I mean, that's never the reaction. No, I don't think so.

02-00:20:58

Farrell: Did you feel like they were skeptical of you at all or like this will be a fleeting thing?

02-00:21:02

Halsted: Oh, sure, yeah. For one thing, I then was associated with them for ten years or so. It's sort of hard to go back to the beginning. But my perspective was always a little less focused on the neighborhood. It was a little more general than some of the advocates. I was always just slightly more business-oriented than many of the activists in the neighborhood, because I always felt like I wanted to look at both my economic and my residential interests.

02-00:21:42

Farrell: Were they just focused on residential interests?

02-00:21:43

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

02-00:21:44

Farrell: And not changing the neighborhood?

02-00:21:46

Halsted: Right.

02-00:21:48

Farrell: Okay. Were you thinking about growth and progress?

02-00:21:51

Halsted: Yeah, and thinking, you know, that everyone has to have jobs, and jobs need to prosper as well as the neighborhood. The neighborhood prospers when people have economic access.

02-00:22:04

Farrell: What was it about Manhattanization that you didn't want?

02-00:22:08

Halsted: Good question. I think it really was the sense of being part, being an individual that's part of a community, whereas in very large buildings, people are often removed from the community. At least it feels that way.

02-00:22:29

Farrell: So, sort of shorter buildings promotes more—?

02-00:22:32

Halsted: Yeah, I think your human scale feels greater in a smaller, in something you can see the top of. You know where it is. It's not a remote or abstract kind of presence.

02-00:22:52

Farrell: At that point there were a lot of developers who were coming in who wanted to build high-rises?

02-00:22:58

Halsted: Yes.

02-00:22:59

Farrell: Do you have a sense of whether the city was supportive of that?

02-00:23:03

Halsted: Certainly the establishment was. There was a big movement in city hall when Allan Jacobs came in, in city planning, to develop plans that are more comprehensive so that we had an idea of where we were going and put the high rises in places where it was strategically beneficial to more people. I think that the people coming out of the fifties really sensed the need for economic prosperity and redevelopment and that kind of thing.

02-00:23:34

Farrell: With the redevelopment, was this connected at all, that you remember, to urban renewal and changing the landscape of different neighborhoods?

02-00:23:44

Halsted: Well, it was. I wasn't very close to that because that was more in the Western Addition or in South of Market. But people in this neighborhood had observed that and were definitely dead set against it.

02-00:23:57

Farrell: Okay. There were people who were just not interested in it?

02-00:24:01

Halsted: Yeah. I was not in favor of urban renewal that just demolished neighborhoods and started again. It just made no sense.

02-00:24:09

Farrell: Yeah. It's pretty brutal.

02-00:24:11

Halsted: Yeah, it was an interesting idea someone had. Maybe in post-war Germany when things had already been destroyed it worked.

- 02-00:24:18
Farrell: Right, not one with existing neighborhoods across the country. How did you see the campaign against Manhattanization play out? Because, obviously, it didn't happen. There's a height limit with buildings that can be built.
- 02-00:24:40
Halsted: Well, it started off as a really much more radical campaign. Have you ever seen Alvin Duskin's coloring book?
- 02-00:24:48
Farrell: Yes.
- 02-00:24:49
Halsted: We passed out these coloring books. It really engaged people because as the supermarket they were handing them out. People colored their city. But it was advocating for a forty-foot height limit all over city, which was insane, just nuts. That made no sense. It didn't pass. It actually never quite passed, but it did create an energy behind new height limits in the neighborhoods.
- 02-00:25:18
Farrell: Do you have a sense that that forty feet was basically—you know, a lot of times in negotiation, especially if you're negotiating a salary, you say something much higher, expecting it's going to go lower.
- 02-00:25:30
Halsted: No, I think really it reflected the pattern of the city and the neighborhoods. This building is about forty feet. This building, the third floor was added in the twenties. And, to add more floors with this kind of structure probably isn't very feasible, so most of the Victorians and things are about thirty-five to forty feet. I think that that number actually reflected that.
- 02-00:25:58
Farrell: So, it was more practical?
- 02-00:25:59
Halsted: Right. I might be wrong, but that's the way I see it.
- 02-00:26:05
Farrell: What kind of people were you seeing get behind the campaign against Manhattanization?
- 02-00:26:11
Halsted: Well, lots of young people, people who were working. Gee, there's so many people I think of, but people all over the city who loved the city.
- 02-00:26:28
Farrell: Did you work with any other community or neighborhood groups during that period of time?
- 02-00:26:33
Halsted: Oh, yeah. It was before I'd gotten involved in the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. I think it was a citywide effort.

- 02-00:26:43
Farrell: When you're campaigning, I'm interested in the city's reaction and what that process was like, negotiating with them.
- 02-00:26:49
Halsted: Well, it's interesting because I think when Dianne Feinstein was elected first to the board of supervisors, I think, in '68, it was about that time. She ran as a candidate of the neighborhoods, for the most part, not totally. And, prior to that, people had not been running on those issues as far as I know. Jack Shelley, people like that, got involved in a few issues but not really as advocates of individual neighborhoods. Of course, at that point every supervisor was elected at large from the whole city. They had to have a citywide base.
- 02-00:27:37
Farrell: So, you were finding that the people that were in city hall were more interested in their constituents' interests? I guess they were supporting their voting base?
- 02-00:27:56
Halsted: You're thinking of the supervisors, you mean?
- 02-00:27:57
Farrell: Yeah.
- 02-00:27:57
Halsted: Or people in city hall?
- 02-00:27:58
Farrell: Yeah.
- 02-00:28:02
Halsted: Right, generally. That's what politicians do.
- 02-00:28:07
Farrell: Yes. I feel like sometimes they do. They say they do, and then they don't.
- 02-00:28:11
Halsted: They try.
- 02-00:28:13
Farrell: Were you seeing any involvement with the Coastal Commission as well or the Save the Bay?
- 02-00:28:19
Halsted: Not really.
- 02-00:28:21
Farrell: Even during your time leading up to the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, were you finding that there were a lot of other young people who were interested in this?

- 02-00:28:30
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 02-00:28:32
Farrell: Were you finding a community of other people who were involved or engaged?
- 02-00:28:38
Halsted: Yeah, not everybody I knew, but quite a few, yeah.
- 02-00:28:43
Farrell: Okay. What was the time commitment like with this? How were you balancing work?
- 02-00:28:49
Halsted: At that point I didn't have any official responsibilities doing this. It was weekend, campaigning on the weekends.
- 02-00:28:57
Farrell: Can you tell me about some of your campaigns? Aside from the coloring book, what some of your methods were?
- 02-00:29:02
Halsted: It was just walking around and handing things out and talking to people. There wasn't anything.
- 02-00:29:06
Farrell: Were people, when you approached them on the street, receptive to what you were saying? Did they want to stop and listen?
- 02-00:29:10
Halsted: I think so. I think it was a fairly populist kind of campaign.
- 02-00:29:17
Farrell: Now, that's changed a lot where you see somebody on the street with a clipboard and automatically [assume they are asking for money].
- 02-00:29:22
Halsted: Right. There wasn't so much of it then.
- 02-00:29:26
Farrell: We'll circle back to the Dwellers in a couple of minutes. I know that you start to move up the ladder in the United States Leasing International Company. What did you do after your sort of entry-level job? What was the next?
- 02-00:29:49
Halsted: It was the same job. It just grew.
- 02-00:29:51
Farrell: It just grew? Okay.

02-00:29:52

Halsted: I had more people working for me. The organization grew from 250 to 3,000 at one point. The scale of the job and the nature of the job changed.

02-00:30:05

Farrell: Were you also seeing that correspond with business development around the country?

02-00:30:12

Halsted: Business development?

02-00:30:14

Farrell: The reason I'm asking this is thinking about how San Francisco has kind of changed from a port city. That's sort of been exported across the bay. I'm wondering if the business grew because things were changing or there were more post-World War II?

02-00:30:36

Halsted: No. This was a business that went wherever business went. It just was a matter of financing whatever business wanted to buy. There were those changes happening. The change from Port of San Francisco to Oakland really depended on the dredging that went on in Oakland. It became not really practical to ship to San Francisco once you could ship to Oakland.

02-00:31:05

Farrell: Oh, that's interesting, because I always thought that that had to do with the Save the Bay—well, that is tied to that. But I thought it was more of a sort of keep the coastline pretty.

02-00:31:16

Halsted: The economics of shipping were changed by the Army Corps of Engineers dredging the Oakland port and making it so that if you came through the Golden Gate and you wanted to go to Chicago, you wouldn't stop in San Francisco and go around the bay then afterwards, if you see what I mean.

02-00:31:35

Farrell: Yeah. That's interesting. Okay, we'll put a pin in that and then come back to that. Yeah, so your job title didn't change at all then?

02-00:31:50

Halsted: Oh, it did, but I don't have that history right here. It's changed from administrative assistant to HR assistant to assistant vice president to vice president or something, but all the same.

02-00:32:03

Farrell: You said at one point that you didn't have any support?

02-00:32:05

Halsted: In the very good beginning.

02-00:32:06

Farrell: Did you start to have support?

02-00:32:07

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

02-00:32:08

Farrell: Okay. What were the support roles like for you? I mean, who was your support? What were those roles?

02-00:32:14

Halsted: Well, I had a secretary eventually, or an administrative assistant. I had someone who's in charge of benefits and someone in charge of payroll and someone in charge of hiring and all those different activities, and compliance.

02-00:32:32

Farrell: What was it like for you to move into a management role and oversee that?

02-00:32:38

Halsted: I enjoyed it. I liked that. As I said, when I first started, the job was so intense that you could barely breathe. It really was crazy.

02-00:32:48

Farrell: Can you describe your management style?

02-00:32:52

Halsted: You'd better talk to someone I managed. I've always felt like people thrive on getting leadership but not interfering leadership. I've tried to make sure people had full charge of their work and support and guidance but not interfering with the way they did it.

02-00:33:18

Farrell: How did benefits change over time?

02-00:33:22

Halsted: Well, health care changed a lot. When I first started, health care was just on the verge of being what it's become. When I was growing up, you paid the doctor. You might have insurance that paid you, to reimburse you for your doctor's expenses. But somewhere in the '60s it went otherwise so that now everything is paid directly to the doctor by insurance coverage. The individual never has any role in managing expenses. That was a big change. It affected the way health care is delivered.

02-00:34:04

Farrell: Was Kaiser present at that point?

02-00:34:06

Halsted: It was, but not nearly as big. Kaiser came out of the Second World War and the ship workers.

02-00:34:13

Farrell: Yeah, that's true. How did the quality of care change?

02-00:34:21

Halsted: Gee, I don't think I have a clear perspective on that.

02-00:34:27

Farrell: Yeah, that's kind of a—

02-00:34:28

Halsted: I wasn't in the business of getting a lot of health care myself at that period and, certainly, Kaiser has improved a lot since then.

02-00:34:39

Farrell: Were you seeing that people were asking, new hires or people who were moving into different roles, were asking more questions about benefits or sort of just accepting what they [were offered]?

02-00:34:51

Halsted: I think they were more accepting. I don't think they asked as many questions as I thought they should.

02-00:35:00

Farrell: And then, at one point you became the vice president of HR.

02-00:35:05

Halsted: At some point, yeah. I don't remember exactly when.

02-00:35:10

Farrell: What was the transition like? Or was it just sort of a natural progression?

02-00:35:13

Halsted: It was just—

02-00:35:14

Farrell: Okay. When you were changing jobs, did you have to interview for those jobs or apply for them?

02-00:35:20

Halsted: No. They were promotions in the jobs that I had, elevating the job.

02-00:35:26

Farrell: Did your responsibilities change at all?

02-00:35:30

Halsted: They continuously changed, to some degree, but I don't think there were big additions. When we bought a new company in England, I had to go work on that or things like that.

02-00:35:49

Farrell: Did the job involve much travel then?

02-00:35:53

Halsted: Not so much, a little bit. When an office in New York was having a lot of disruption and turnover or something that seemed out of line, I would have to go and try to interview people and figure out what's wrong and figure out how to change the management structure to make it work better. Or, when someone had decided they needed to lay off ten people, I'd have to go do that.

- 02-00:36:18
Farrell: What was that like, to have to lay off people?
- 02-00:36:21
Halsted: I became fairly expert at it, but it was hard. It was not easy.
- 02-00:36:25
Farrell: Was there a certain approach that you took to try to talk to them about it or let them know?
- 02-00:36:30
Halsted: Yeah. If we were actually eliminating jobs or moving the jobs or whatever it was, it becomes a little easier because it doesn't involve someone's performance. But we did try to provide support and outplacement and all of those things.
- 02-00:36:54
Farrell: I'm interested in work-life balance. Did you find that this was a more-than-forty-hour-a-week job?
- 02-00:37:03
Halsted: Oh yeah, it was, because I worked most Saturdays just because I didn't have time to do paperwork during the week.
- 02-00:37:14
Farrell: Did that impact your personal life?
- 02-00:37:16
Halsted: I don't think my personal life was terribly exciting either.
- 02-00:37:23
Farrell: When you started to sort of, for lack of a better word, move up the ranks or sort of progress in the company, what impact did that have on your career or the way that you felt about your career?
- 02-00:37:38
Halsted: It certainly gave me more confidence and I felt supported. I got a lot of outside support as well because, strangely enough, there weren't even that many women in senior HR roles in the early '70s. I remember even going to personnel group, professional group, for lunches. I think I was the only woman. It was kind of amazing.
- 02-00:38:05
Farrell: Did you find that you were accepted when you were the only woman?
- 02-00:38:07
Halsted: Eventually, yeah. I think I assumed I would be accepted, but the odd person coming in always takes a bit to be accepted.
- 02-00:38:20
Farrell: Did you have any mentors?

02-00:38:23

Halsted: Within the organization, yeah, two in particular.

02-00:38:26

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about them?

02-00:38:27

Halsted: Peter Mezey, who was the general counsel and a wonderful guy who actually ran for the Board of Education and served on the San Francisco Board of Education. He died just last year, but he was a great support and always was a great person to work with on ideas and very involved in San Francisco politics as well. He was a great support.

Another man that I reported to for a while, Dave Hudnut, who was not a lawyer. I'm trying to think of what his role was. He ran one of the subsidiaries, but a very supportive guy and very, very helpful. That whole senior management group turned out to be a very supportive group for me.

02-00:39:13

Farrell: What did you learn from both of those men?

02-00:39:16

Halsted: Well, those are the people with whom I could argue. I learned it's so beneficial to have people with whom you can actually have a discussion and try to work out issues. They were really very meaningful relationships for me.

02-00:39:34

Farrell: Who were some of the leaders in the company that you admired?

02-00:39:38

Halsted: Well, Brooks Walker was the chairman of the board. He is the guy who set the standard for kind of good civic behavior and really made a huge difference to the lives of many people, I think, because of that.

02-00:39:53

Farrell: Did you try to draw on what you saw or how you saw them as leaders at all and pull that into your own work?

02-00:40:02

Halsted: Mm-hmm, to some degree. Brooks had developed a relationship somehow with the Potrero Hill Neighborhood Association. I don't know how that developed. But anyway, I set up a program whereby we hired young people from Potrero Hill as interns and then hired them to work at US Leasing. We had kind of an ongoing support relationship with kids from the projects there.

02-00:40:32

Farrell: That sounds like a really interesting program. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

02-00:40:36

Halsted:

It was just a matter of keeping in touch with the guy who ran the recreation program there. He would refer people to me. I would find places for them and then work with them on the job and then make sure they were kind of—you know, kind of a nurturing situation.

02-00:40:49

Farrell:

What kind of internships were they? What were they doing?

02-00:40:51

Halsted:

Clerical work.

02-00:40:54

Farrell:

In any particular areas, or just sort of where they were needed?

02-00:40:57

Halsted:

Yeah, right. It's always important in those situations to have a supervisor who can do that. It's a matter of finding people who are good enough to be able to work with someone coming in from another environment.

02-00:41:11

Farrell:

Did you find that a lot of the people who went through that program ended up being hired into the company?

02-00:41:15

Halsted:

Mm-hmm.

02-00:41:15

Farrell:

Oh, so you had a good retention rate?

02-00:41:17

Halsted:

Yeah. I still see some of them.

02-00:41:18

Farrell:

Oh, that's fantastic. That's exciting. Did you do any professional development? Were there conferences that you went to or trainings?

02-00:41:27

Halsted:

I did some of that, not too much. There really wasn't too much time for that. Oh, I wanted to mention one other thing I did in the first year or two that I was at US Leasing. We developed a clerical skills training program which we ran out of the California State Department of Employment in the Fillmore. I got a bunch of my colleagues from US Leasing to be teachers. We did this, like, three nights a week for, I think, a year and a half or so. It was really an interesting program.

02-00:41:54

Farrell:

What kind of things were you teaching?

02-00:41:57

Halsted:

How to behave at work, how to show up in time, how to dress, accounting skills, interviewing skills, things like that.

- 02-00:42:06
Farrell: Those programs are really important, I think.
- 02-00:42:08
Halsted: Yeah. It was an education for me as much as for them, I'm sure.
- 02-00:42:12
Farrell: Did you find doing that kind of work fulfilling?
- 02-00:42:14
Halsted: Oh, yeah. I loved that.
- 02-00:42:17
Farrell: Was there a point in time where you reconciled working for that company having thought about doing other jobs?
- 02-00:42:26
Halsted: I always kept in my mind I wasn't going to stay. I wasn't looking for other work, but I just wasn't ever convinced it was something that I was meant to be. I loved the employee relations part of it.
- 02-00:42:48
Farrell: What about that did you like?
- 02-00:42:49
Halsted: Just trying to help people work through and negotiate and mediate, try to find the best place for people. I guess that's what I liked the best.
- 02-00:43:01
Farrell: Do you think that you stayed there for much of your career because you were involved in other activities on the side?
- 02-00:43:10
Halsted: Mm-hmm. I think that made a big difference, although I think the job was challenging. It did engage most of my personal skills to be able to do it as well as I could.
- 02-00:43:25
Farrell: I kind of want to move to your other activities unless, is there anything else that you want to say about US Leasing?
- 02-00:43:33
Halsted: I'm trying to think if there's something else I wanted to say. No, that's fine.
- 02-00:43:46
Farrell: Okay, so before you're involved with the Telegraph Hill Dwellers you kind of get involved with the campaign against Manhattanization. Can you tell me about your moving into working with the Dwellers?
- 02-00:43:59
Halsted: Before I do that, though, let me mention, after I did this Alvin Duskin forty-foot height limit thing, I became aware of the zoning rules, et cetera. I lived on Francisco and Grant, right above the North Point Sewage Plant. Somehow, I

was down at the planning department and realized that it was zoned commercial, whereas there was a zoning designation which was called public for public facilities. Why is it zoned commercial? Well, apparently the Alioto administration had their eyes on developing this six-acre parcel and didn't want it to be zone as it should be.

So, I decided that I should rezone it. I spent two years getting that rezoned and took it to the Planning Commission. I was turned down and had to get the Board of Supervisors to overturn the Planning Commission's decision. So that's why it took two years. During that period I got to know every politician in San Francisco.

02-00:44:59

Farrell: How did you originally find out that it was commercially zoned?

02-00:45:02

Halsted: I looked at the map, and it said C.

02-00:45:05

Farrell: Where did you find the map?

02-00:45:06

Halsted: In the Planning Department. I was in the Planning Department for some reason. Oh, I know what it was. Just before that, I lived on Francisco Street, as I said. There was an alley that connected to Bay Street which was two ways. People would, in the morning, come down the hill and then speed around the corner and then go out that way. It was dangerous from our neighborhood's perspective. I organized the neighborhood to make the street one way, make that alley one way, so that people could not go out that way. They could only come in. I got to know people in Planning. I was down there and looked at this map.

02-00:45:44

Farrell: Oh, that's so interesting. Okay, so it kind of came out of just safety. How did you originally, when you were making Bay Street one way?

02-00:45:54

Halsted: Not Bay Street, just the little alley that connected.

02-00:45:57

Farrell: When you were making the alley one way, how did you go about organizing your neighbors?

02-00:46:04

Halsted: It was a pretty close little neighborhood, a lot of old Italians. They were very friendly, and it wasn't too hard.

02-00:46:12

Farrell: Do you remember how many people there were?

- 02-00:46:15
Halsted: No, I don't; probably fifty, sixty people on that block.
- 02-00:46:21
Farrell: Did you have to do petitions or anything? I mean, what was that process like?
- 02-00:46:23
Halsted: I'm sure I did. I don't really remember. I'm sure I did have to do that.
- 02-00:46:28
Farrell: Where was the zoning, the Planning Commission building at that point?
- 02-00:46:36
Halsted: I think it was at 100 Larkin, sort of where the public library is now.
- 02-00:46:45
Farrell: Okay. Those zoning maps were all public information? You could go in there and just look at that?
- 02-00:46:48
Halsted: Yeah.
- 02-00:46:51
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about your work to get that area rezoned? I mean, it's a two-year process.
- 02-00:46:57
Halsted: Well, it was six acres. You had to get all the property owners within a certain owner of feet of it. A lot of those property owners were really big businesses. I remember having to get Otis Elevator to sign the petition, and getting Southern Pacific Railroad or something, all these big businesses, which took some effort. It was a long process. It got turned down by the Planning Commission, which was following the direction of the Mayor.
- 02-00:47:28
Farrell: When you were originally working with people from Otis or Southern Pacific, did your work in HR kind of help you navigate their corporate structures and find the right person to talk to?
- 02-00:47:39
Halsted: Probably. I didn't have any fear of them, I guess.
- 02-00:47:45
Farrell: Was it hard to find out the right person to talk to?
- 02-00:47:48
Halsted: I think it was. It's always a matter of talking to one person and then talking to the next person and figuring it out. The nice part of it, it was sort of an apple pie issue. I mean, it was just improperly zoned. The only change that resulted from having it being public in designation was that they would have to go through a hearing if they wanted to have a commercial development there.

They would have to rezone it again, but the city can do that more easily than an individual can.

02-00:48:18

Farrell: Why did the Commission turn it down?

02-00:48:26

Halsted: The Real Estate Department wanted more flexibility in their land.

02-00:48:34

Farrell: What did that work mean to you, like organizing and knowing that you could do this and getting to know the politicians?

02-00:48:43

Halsted: Well, it showed me what it takes to move the establishment. It's not always easy, even in a completely non-threatening, non-personal kind of issue.

02-00:48:53

Farrell: At any point did you want to give up? Or did you start questioning your work?

02-00:48:57

Halsted: I don't think so, but fortunately, my superiors didn't stop me either because it was a fairly public thing to do.

02-00:49:08

Farrell: The other people in that six acres aside from the commercial people, the residential people, they were all in support of this?

02-00:49:17

Halsted: Right. There were not too many residential people adjacent.

02-00:49:22

Farrell: Were you living in an apartment building?

02-00:49:25

Halsted: A three-unit building.

02-00:49:26

Farrell: Three-unit building? Okay. Were all your other two neighbors in support of that as well?

02-00:49:31

Halsted: Mm-hmm. It was a really hard thing to oppose, actually, except if you were part of the establishment trying to keep it as a—

02-00:49:39

Farrell: Who were some of the politicians that you got to know through that process?

02-00:49:42

Halsted: Well, I met Dianne [Feinstein] through that process.

02-00:49:44

Farrell: Oh, okay. That's how you met her.

- 02-00:49:45
Halsted: Uh-huh, and all those supervisors. I got to know Phillip Burton, lots of people.
- 02-00:49:53
Farrell: Was Dianne Feinstein in support of this as well?
- 02-00:49:56
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 02-00:50:02
Farrell: So, you have that experience. How did you take that with you as you started to get involved in some other organizations?
- 02-00:50:08
Halsted: Well, I think that people might have noticed me because it got a fair amount of publicity. When I showed up at the Telegraph Hill Dwellers I had something of a portfolio.
- 02-00:50:21
Farrell: You worked with them from 1973 to 1982. Is that correct?
- 02-00:50:26
Halsted: Yeah.
- 02-00:50:27
Farrell: Okay. What were some of the early issues that the Dwellers were working on in the early seventies?
- 02-00:50:35
Halsted: Well, they were always parking, zoning, sometimes parks, protecting the environment, protecting the neighborhood and environment and, to some degree, balancing the commercial activities, the touristic nature of the neighborhood with the residential.
- 02-00:50:59
Farrell: Yeah, this has always been sort of a touristy neighborhood. Especially historically, when you hear about San Francisco, you hear so much about North Beach. How did people in the Dwellers feel about balancing the economic interests and the residential interests?
- 02-00:51:16
Halsted: Well, their general instincts were to protect the residential interests. But, at that period, when I first got involved, there was a lot of controversy. One thing we did in the early period with the Hill Dwellers was we created the first residential parking program. One other woman and I kind of did that on our own. It was very controversial. Of course, businesses were not very happy about it because it limited their employees' ability to park on streets, etc.
- 02-00:51:49
Farrell: What sparked your interest in creating a residential parking zone?

02-00:51:52

Halsted: It wasn't really mine. It was really her drive, but commuters parking in the neighborhood, taking the streets away from other people.

02-00:52:07

Farrell: There were no other residential parking zones?

02-00:52:09

Halsted: No. This was the first one in San Francisco. It was thought to be unconstitutional. There weren't any others in California.

02-00:52:19

Farrell: So this was the first in the state?

02-00:52:20

Halsted: I think so.

02-00:52:22

Farrell: Why was it thought to be unconstitutional?

02-00:52:25

Halsted: I don't know. They say that when you want to change law.

02-00:52:31

Farrell: Blanket statement?

02-00:52:34

Halsted: Yeah. You're taking away my God-given right to park on the street.

02-00:52:37

Farrell: Now, I feel like residential parking is ubiquitous. It's in every city everywhere.

02-00:52:43

Halsted: I know.

02-00:52:45

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about how it was conceived or what the early thoughts around it were, how it would work, practically?

02-00:52:55

Halsted: Well, you know, it was just a matter of we have very limited parking. There are many streets that don't even have parking here, the steps. If the parking is taken up by people commuting from Marin to the Financial District, it really makes it difficult for people to live here. At a certain point Nancy Katz, who was really the person behind it, and I was her sidekick, I had developed all the political relationships. I was very helpful in that way.

But, we went around and we petitioned. We went to the Golden Gate Bridge. I remember her checking hoods to see whether they were hot in the morning to see whether people had just driven in and parked. But anyway, we worked with the city to establish the program. There was a lot of suspicion that it

might just become another tax, which it kind of has become, because I think the first permits were like fifteen dollars. Now they're a couple hundred.

02-00:53:58

Farrell: Yeah, I have one.

02-00:54:04

Halsted: That's kind of interesting.

02-00:54:06

Farrell: In the early conception of that, were you thinking that there would be time limits like there are now so you could park there for two hours?

02-00:54:14

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

02-00:54:15

Farrell: Okay. Was it two hours, or was it an hour? Was it four?

02-00:54:18

Halsted: I can't remember. I think it was two. I don't think it's changed that much.

02-00:54:21

Farrell: Okay. Some neighborhoods are different. Some neighborhoods it's an hour. Some spots are thirty minutes. I know over in the East Bay you can do six hours in certain neighborhoods that are actually being developed right now. It sounds like something neighbors would be in support of.

02-00:54:44

Halsted: Yeah, neighbors were in favor of it. I think the businesses had a harder time with it. Then I went to work with Nancy trying to help some of the businesses with their issues. We tried to do some of that.

02-00:54:58

Farrell: Was that simultaneously?

02-00:54:59

Halsted: I think it was more or less, and not easy in North Beach because we had a lot of volatile business owners.

02-00:55:11

Farrell: Were there compromises that you remember happening, like some areas will be for meters?

02-00:55:18

Halsted: Yeah. Meters were existing anyway. Where there were meters, that didn't pertain.

02-00:55:26

Farrell: Were the commercial businesses mostly buying meters?

- 02-00:55:30
Halsted: Mm-hmm, but employees had previously parked on the residential streets to avoid the meters.
- 02-00:55:38
Farrell: Were there conversations that you had to have with those employees about why, like how things might change?
- 02-00:55:44
Halsted: I don't remember that.
- 02-00:55:47
Farrell: Do you remember how long it took for that to get passed?
- 02-00:55:51
Halsted: I think it was not as long as one might imagine. I think it was maybe a year, a year and a half.
- 02-00:55:57
Farrell: Okay. That's not like ten years.
- 02-00:55:58
Halsted: No.
- 02-00:55:59
Farrell: At what point after did you start to see other neighborhoods pick up on that?
- 02-00:56:04
Halsted: I don't know. I remember right after we passed it, someone in Monterey or in Carmel called me to come down and talk to them about how to do it. And I did. But I don't remember exactly when it started to move in San Francisco.
- 02-00:56:16
Farrell: You had also mentioned that some of the issues that the Dwellers were interested in was parks. Can you tell me a little bit about what it was about parks that they were interested in?
- 02-00:56:29
Halsted: Well, parks, in my view, have always been one of the things that bring communities together better than others. So, I tried to, and I still try from time to time, to get the neighborhood involved in maintaining the parks, Coit Tower and Washington Square in particular.
- 02-00:56:48
Farrell: Even on my way here this morning, there's a lot of people in Washington Square using it.
- 02-00:56:53
Halsted: Yeah.
- 02-00:56:54
Farrell: Did you find that you got a lot of buy-in from other neighbors who were interested in maintaining?

02-00:56:58

Halsted: Mostly, yeah. Actually, one of the first things that I was appointed to was the open space committee. I was going to mention that before because, prior to that, Dorothy Erskine—have you heard of Dorothy?

02-00:57:12

Farrell: I have, yes.

02-00:57:13

Halsted: She was instrumental in starting SPUR [San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association]. But anyway, she lived up the hill from me. When I did that North Point sewage plant rezoning, she became aware of me. She invited me to join a committee that met at her house to think about how to expand the parks in San Francisco. That was a pretty heady committee from my viewpoint, the head of the chamber of commerce and head of SPUR and Ron Pelosi and some labor leaders. Anyway, so I got involved with her in trying to pass that measure, which would have created, I think, it was ten cents per hundred dollars of assessed valuation to go into a fund.

It didn't pass the first time. We passed it the second time. When it passed, then I was appointed by Dianne to be on the advisory committee to decide how that money would be spent. I was involved in parks all over the city for a while then.

02-00:58:07

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about working with Dorothy Erskine?

02-00:58:11

Halsted: She was great. She was really a mensch. She would call me every morning when I was at work. She would call me and say, what are we doing for parks today? There was nothing like having someone just go, come on. Let's do something.

02-00:58:27

Farrell: Yeah, just that squeaky wheel.

02-00:58:28

Halsted: Yeah, very positive person. And, of course, she was involved in the reinvigoration of SPUR in the mid-'50s. She also started People for Open Space, which became Greenbelt Alliance. I was on that board in the early '70s. I'm back on it again now in a completely different iteration.

02-00:58:48

Farrell: What were some of the things that you learned from Dorothy and her leadership?

02-00:58:52

Halsted: I think just determination and positive. She convened people. She brought people together. She was never narrow-minded in her kind of approach to the way things had to be. But she was focused and caring, very much an old-fashioned leader-like woman.

- 02-00:59:11
Farrell: Who were some of her closest allies?
- 02-00:59:15
Halsted: I'm not sure I really know. I know she worked with John Jacobs a lot. I'm not sure I really know the answer to that question. I have read her biography. I should know.
- 02-00:59:26
Farrell: That's okay.
- 02-00:59:26
Halsted: Bill Evers.
- 02-00:59:30
Farrell: What were some of the early functions of the open space committee?
- 02-00:59:34
Halsted: Well, the main function was to decide how the money should be spent. We convened hearings and asked neighborhoods to present their ideas about if they needed new parks or they needed the parks to be improved. We toured around to see all the different neighborhoods in the city. It was really a fun thing to do.
- 02-00:59:53
Farrell: What were some of the things that you would look for in those proposals from the neighbors about how to spend the money?
- 02-00:59:59
Halsted: Well, if it served an unmet need, because it's an unmet need, and how it served the neighborhood, and whether it was affordable, and whether you could make it happen, and whether people supported it.
- 02-01:00:18
Farrell: Were there any proposals that were just preposterous, that were just unaffordable, unattainable?
- 02-01:00:23
Halsted: Oh, I'm sure there were. I'm sure there were. I can't remember off the top of my head. We did get a lot done, though.
- 02-01:00:29
Farrell: Were there any projects that you were most proud of that happened during your time on that committee at that point?
- 02-01:00:35
Halsted: I haven't thought about it. But there were a lot that I think made a big difference.
- 02-01:00:39
Farrell: Were you finding that the parks were being utilized pretty well at that point?

- 02-01:00:45
Halsted: Oh yeah. People came together around improving parks in a very positive way.
- 02-01:00:50
Farrell: I guess maybe this is being from New York. But, sometimes there's stigma around certain parks or some certain parks you're not supposed to be in after dark or anything.
- 02-01:01:03
Halsted: We had some of those.
- 02-01:01:05
Farrell: Was there any work around those and sort of making them a little bit safer or a little bit more accessible?
- 02-01:01:09
Halsted: Oh yeah. I don't know. Boeddeker Park in the Tenderloin.
- 02-01:01:16
Farrell: I know where you're talking about.
- 02-01:01:17
Halsted: That's just been redone. We redid that also. It worked for a while, and then it didn't work. Now it's been redone again. I'll think of the name of it. Anyway, so there are several of those and some fights over whether you should kick the winos out of parks or not, that kind of thing.
- 02-01:01:38
Farrell: Did you get support from the city at all, because the municipal—?
- 02-01:01:41
Halsted: It was a city function. It was a city tax on property to pay for parks.
- 02-01:01:49
Farrell: But I guess on the committee were there also people from the city who were—
?
- 02-01:01:53
Halsted: The staff was rec park staff.
- 02-01:01:56
Farrell: It's rec park staff? Okay.
- 02-01:01:59
Halsted: And some planning department.
- 02-01:02:00
Farrell: Okay. Did they have the final say on everything?
- 02-01:02:05
Halsted: I don't think so. I think that the committee actually had the say on the actually distribution. I think that the General Manager of Rec & Park could override a

few things and choose to use funds how he wanted sometimes. I'm not sure you could legally, though, thank you.

02-01:02:23

Farrell: Were there times where you had to make sure that Rec & Park made the changes or the city made the changes?

02-01:02:30

Halsted: Oh, absolutely, yeah.

02-01:02:33

Farrell: Were you finding that that would sort of ebb and flow with who was in office or staff?

02-01:02:39

Halsted: I think there's always a stress, I mean, the stress of budgets and finance, in a city department, cause managers to feel they have a right to get as much money as they can for whatever they think they need. And, labor obviously did not want to have more parks without having more people and didn't want to stretch their jobs. There are all those contentions. Management often ended up taking money and using it for operations when that was not the intent of the committee.

02-01:03:13

Farrell: Yeah. Well, it's good then that you were overseeing that. What was it like to be appointed to the new committee by Dianne Feinstein?

02-01:03:24

Halsted: It was interesting. It was a whole new world for me to be with a bunch of—there were twenty-three people. Working with people you didn't know and from different parts of the city, it was a very interesting time.

02-01:03:35

Farrell: What kind of things did you learn about the city through that involvement?

02-01:03:39

Halsted: Oh, lots. I mean, just having a sense of the culture of different neighborhoods, that's really a big difference, all over, from the Ingleside to whatever.

02-01:03:52

Farrell: Knowing that you're sort of at that point relatively new to the city, you're not from here, did that affect your involvement or your curiosity level?

02-01:04:08

Halsted: Thinking back, it probably does. If you're less familiar, and you have this interesting sort of abstract opportunity, it's very stimulating.

02-01:04:18

Farrell: Do you feel like it benefited you at all? Because, I think if you grow up in a neighborhood it can be really emotional. But do you think because you're relatively newer to the city it benefited you because you didn't have that?

- 02-01:04:31
Halsted: Mm-hmm, I think so. But, many people were in the same situation. The number of young people who came to San Francisco in the sixties and seventies, most people were not from here.
- 02-01:04:44
Farrell: Yeah, that was in droves. Can you tell me a little bit about some of the twenty-three other people that were on that committee?
- 02-01:04:54
Halsted: A lot of them were people who were involved in neighborhood work because each supervisor got to appoint two people, I think. Was that it? Must have been, and the mayor one, so eleven, one, twenty-three. Supervisors were elected at large. They didn't have to be from their neighborhood. But they represented people they worked with.
- 02-01:05:22
Farrell: Were there any people that you found to be allies or people you could rely on?
- 02-01:05:27
Halsted: Yeah. I became friendly with a number of people who were on that committee.
- 02-01:05:30
Farrell: Can you tell me about some of them?
- 02-01:05:33
Halsted: I remember Claire Pilcher. She was a lawyer. They were women, for the most part. Claire Pilcher was a lawyer. She was active. She may have run for office even. Diane Hunter was in the Public Health Department. Dorothy Erskine was on the committee. Let me think, who else? I should go back and reconstruct this.
- 02-01:05:58
Farrell: We can always add things in later, too.
- 02-01:06:00
Halsted: It was a good committee, though.
- 02-01:06:03
Farrell: Were there any projects on that committee that you were most proud of?
- 02-01:06:08
Halsted: If I think about it, I'll figure that out.
- 02-01:06:15
Farrell: Let's see. Oh, how are you seeing different issues or different changes that the city was facing manifest in those different neighborhoods that you were kind of learning through that committee?
- 02-01:06:31
Halsted: How am I seeing changes in the city manifested through—?

02-01:06:34

Farrell: Maybe we should back up and start with, what were some of the biggest issues that you were dealing with on that committee?

02-01:06:42

Halsted: Well, I guess when a neighborhood comes up with an idea about what to do, how to improve its parks, there are always a few people who object. There are always the issues of dogs, of trees dropping their leaves and being annoying to some neighbors, all those kinds of things that neighbors argue about. This has become a longer-term issue. People would use the opportunity to take a piece of land that might be developed and decide that would be a good place for a park in order to preclude the development.

02-01:07:23

Farrell: Oh, yeah. With the tree issue, were sidewalks that surround the park ever an issue with roots growing?

02-01:07:32

Halsted: They probably were because they are on all the sidewalks. But I don't remember that. More, the neighbors thought it was annoying to have people come from the outside or have trees dropping things in their neighborhood.

02-01:07:47

Farrell: Okay. These are pretty sort of mundane, innocuous issues that aren't really reflective?

02-01:07:53

Halsted: Right.

02-01:07:55

Farrell: Okay. I rescind the previous question.

02-01:07:59

Halsted: There were some places where some of the artwork in parks brought forth Ruth Asawa's work and other things like that.

02-01:08:09

Farrell: Yeah. Were you learning about the way that people were interacting with parks in different neighborhoods to that community? Like, more for sort of leisure, more for sort of gatherings.

02-01:08:20

Halsted: Mm-hmm, or for soccer or for whatever, different things. They have bocce ball courts out in The Mission that the old Italians ran and didn't let any women use. If they wanted to improve, they had to admit women.

02-01:08:34

Farrell: That's interesting. Did you see that become an issue?

02-01:08:38

Halsted: Yeah, it was a little issue.

- 02-01:08:40
Farrell: Can you tell me about some of your memories of having that resolved?
- 02-01:08:44
Halsted: I didn't have to be involved in actually executing it. But, people get angry about things like that.
- 02-01:08:52
Farrell: Do you remember where some of those bocce courts were?
- 02-01:08:57
Halsted: If I try, I will. But I don't remember right now. We have bocce courts, two sets here. But I don't think that's ever really been true here. But, I don't know.
- 02-01:09:06
Farrell: That they were gender-segregated?
- 02-01:09:07
Halsted: Yeah. Maybe the games were.
- 02-01:09:13
Farrell: I guess I hadn't thought about bocce courts for a while, because I had known about those for a while. But, were there more bocce courts around the city at that point?
- 02-01:09:21
Halsted: Mm-hmm. Out in The Mission, the old Italian community had been in many different parts of the city.
- 02-01:09:29
Farrell: Were they kind of out in The Sunset at one point?
- 02-01:09:31
Halsted: No, not in The Sunset. I'm trying to think. Closer in.
- 02-01:09:38
Farrell: Okay. I know that environmental issues were important to you. How did you become interested in environmental issues? What were the biggest things that you were thinking about?
- 02-01:09:54
Halsted: Good question. Well, environment, you know, if you look at issues of parks, people think of that as part of the environment. That's part of it. The other part as far as the bay goes, I grew up as a sailor. I sailed on the bay and raced on the bay for years. I was very attentive to the nature of the bay and wanting to preserve it. But, I've never been scientifically involved in the environment.
- 02-01:10:22
Farrell: Yeah, more sort of—
- 02-01:10:24
Halsted: Aesthetically or use-wise or—

- 02-01:10:26
Farrell: Recreationally?
- 02-01:10:28
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 02-01:10:32
Farrell: This is also the '70s. It's the environmental decade where all the environmental regulations, acts, were being passed.
- 02-01:10:38
Halsted: Right, exactly.
- 02-01:10:40
Farrell: How were you seeing that? Were you aware of those things being passed?
- 02-01:10:45
Halsted: Yeah, I was. But I'm not terribly knowledgeable. I mean, my biggest contact was over things like parks and trees. I remember Isabel Wade, when she started Friends of the Urban Forest, got me to be on her board because we had connected over some open space issues. She's still a very close friend. She's been very involved in environmental issues in a very serious way.
- 02-01:11:07
Farrell: What were some of the other environmental issues that you saw being addressed in the city, whether or not you were involved with them? I guess I'm just sort of thinking about, like, how did the environmental, that stuff, that awareness, just manifest in other ways around San Francisco?
- 02-01:11:22
Halsted: Well, Earth Day changed things. What year did that start? Didn't they just have an anniversary?
- 02-01:11:30
Farrell: Yeah, we did.
- 02-01:11:33
Halsted: Anyway, I think it began to change everyone's environment. The first Governor Brown's environmental secretary was very prominent.
- 02-01:11:52
Farrell: Was that the first time there was an environmental secretary?
- 02-01:11:54
Halsted: I don't know that for sure.
- 02-01:12:04
Farrell: In the grand scheme of things, California has always been sort of like, well, if the federal standards are here, we're going to have them higher. That was also the year where the Clean Water Act was passed, the Clean Air Act was passed. Did you see that affect San Francisco or the Bay Area at all?

- 02-01:12:23
Halsted: I think it generally raised our standards. People were aware of it. I mean, most people like me are not technically aware of it. But, clean air and the different agencies that protect the air and the water are very important and are recognized to me. Only occasionally have they been seen as being overly regulatory, I think.
- 02-01:12:47
Farrell: There are also some places like Bayview-Hunters Point where there was a lot of pollution and have become super-fun sites. Were people aware of that kind of thing then, especially because the Clean Water Act, things have to start to be regulated?
- 02-01:13:07
Halsted: Well, I was aware. I mean, there are other sites. The site that comes to mind is the one where the Giants are doing their new development, which was an incredibly toxic place which people capped, I think. I don't think the toxins have been removed there. But anyway, there was industry, including Treasure Island or Alameda. There was the residue.
- 02-01:13:37
Farrell: Were there people around San Francisco that kind of took that on as their cause, cleaning that stuff up?
- 02-01:13:43
Halsted: Not that I'm aware of. I mean, maybe.
- 02-01:13:49
Farrell: What value do you feel like open space and parks and greenery bring to a community?
- 02-01:13:59
Halsted: Well, I really believe people thrive on being connected to the earth and that if you lose total access, if you're surrounded by only concrete and don't have any sense of what is under, your humanity is diminished. I think, you know, everyone should have a park or an open space within a couple of blocks of where they live.
- 02-01:14:24
Farrell: I think that San Francisco now has the most parks per square foot.
- 02-01:14:33
Halsted: I think there might be a big argument about that.
- 02-01:14:35
Farrell: Oh, really? Okay. Were you seeing more parks be created around this point?
- 02-01:14:44
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 02-01:14:46
Farrell: What was the process like to get a park created?

- 02-01:14:50
Halsted: Well, it depended on the competing interests. I mean, for instance, we did create a new park in Chinatown. But, it took probably fifteen years because there was a funeral home located there, and it had to be relocated and bought. It's very costly and lawsuits.
- 02-01:15:09
Farrell: Why that location then?
- 02-01:15:11
Halsted: Well, it started off in another location. The community preferred it—it started off on the north side of Broadway, opposite the police station. The North Beach community didn't like the idea of having a Chinese park in its neighborhood. So, they advocated for a parking garage there instead. Then we moved further south on Powell to this other location. I was supporting the park all along.
- 02-01:15:47
Farrell: I know that it was a second choice location, but what made that? Was it the size of the lot?
- 02-01:15:52
Halsted: Yeah, and the access.
- 02-01:15:58
Farrell: Was there support for the second location?
- 02-01:16:03
Halsted: There was, although the owners of the funeral home sued to keep it from happening.
- 02-01:16:09
Farrell: Would that have been an eminent domain situation?
- 02-01:16:11
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 02-01:16:13
Farrell: Were there other parks around town that were created by eminent domain?
- 02-01:16:18
Halsted: Oh yeah, quite a few.
- 02-01:16:20
Farrell: Any when you were working with the open space committee?
- 02-01:16:23
Halsted: Uh-huh. But I don't know, not off the top of my head. Not a pleasant process.
- 02-01:16:29
Farrell: Yeah.

- 02-01:16:33
Halsted: But it enhances the value of property. If you have a commercial use, there can be some legal interest in forcing the city to use eminent domain.
- 02-01:16:51
Farrell: With the open space committee, were you always just a committee member?
- 02-01:16:55
Halsted: I was chair for a while, a couple of years.
- 02-01:16:56
Farrell: What did your responsibilities as chair include?
- 02-01:17:00
Halsted: Setting the agendas, working with the department staff to plan the meetings and those kinds of things.
- 02-01:17:07
Farrell: Did you have to negotiate with people about agendas? Or were you just sort of like people came to you and you wrote them?
- 02-01:17:16
Halsted: Oh, I'm sure we had to negotiate with them.
- 02-01:17:20
Farrell: I'm just wondering, because that can sometimes be you're a bit of a gatekeeper in that position. Were you able in that position to sort of move the needle forward, push the needle forward?
- 02-01:17:33
Halsted: I think so. I didn't find it to be a difficult position. Most of my role in life has been in connecting people rather than in actually moving issues ahead. That's one of the things I probably do better than some.
- 02-01:17:50
Farrell: Were you also on the open space committee while you were with the Dwellers?
- 02-01:18:00
Halsted: I'm trying to remember. Yeah, I must have been. I must have been, yeah, because it was like '75 to '82 I was on the open space committee and that encompassed those years.
- 02-01:18:15
Farrell: Oh yeah. Was there worked that overlapped?
- 02-01:18:20
Halsted: No, not really.
- 02-01:18:21
Farrell: Okay. With the Dwellers you got the residential parking passed. You were working on parks. What was the neighborhood environment like at that point?

- 02-01:18:35
Halsted: The neighborhood, you mean the physical environment or people?
- 02-01:18:39
Farrell: The people, sort of the cultural environment.
- 02-01:18:47
Halsted: The culture of the organization is very protective and very residential-oriented. That hasn't changed. It's really amazing how consistent it is.
- 02-01:18:58
Farrell: How about the makeup of the neighborhood?
- 02-01:18:59
Halsted: The neighborhood itself, well, I think that there were more young people. That was before rent control. Now the people who came here then are still in their apartments, which are rent controlled. There are no young people moving in. There were more of the old Italians, but not so very many. Most of them had left in the '50s and '60s.
- 02-01:19:26
Farrell: Do you have a sense of where they moved to?
- 02-01:19:29
Halsted: Well, the Marina, Marin. Earlier they went to the Outer Mission or places like that.
- 02-01:19:37
Farrell: How did rent control change things in North Beach? I mean, I know the demographics are changing.
- 02-01:19:42
Halsted: Well, as I said, it made it possible for people to change. We have many old people who've been here and are living in really comfortable, rent-controlled apartments.
- 02-01:19:51
Farrell: Were you finding that the cost of living was rising at that point?
- 02-01:19:57
Halsted: Oh, sure, yeah.
- 02-01:19:59
Farrell: How did it compare to today?
- 02-01:20:02
Halsted: What, the cost of living?
- 02-01:20:03
Farrell: The cost of living and, I guess, maybe rent prices.

- 02-01:20:11
Halsted: From 2008 to now, it's just gone crazy. It's completely unaffordable on wages, as far as I can see.
- 02-01:20:20
Farrell: So, it was still then, it was still like rent was still a smaller percentage?
- 02-01:20:23
Halsted: Oh yeah.
- 02-01:20:25
Farrell: I'm just thinking about proportionally how things—
- 02-01:20:27
Halsted: Compared to the Midwest or something it was still very expensive. But, people could live here on wages. I could live here on wages.
- 02-01:20:41
Farrell: I know we're kind of running out of time a little bit. I do want to ask you a couple of reflective questions and then we'll work on the other stuff in the next session. But, what did it mean to you to be on those committees and have that civic community involvement?
- 02-01:21:01
Halsted: I think I really thrived on that. I think I really have always enjoyed being part of a community and trying to move beyond myself and connect with people who are in the larger community. I think I really enjoyed that. I definitely have always enjoyed trying to lead groups.
- 02-01:21:22
Farrell: Did it make you feel like part of the community?
- 02-01:21:24
Halsted: Oh, absolutely. And I was. I have been. I feel very much that I'm a San Franciscan.
- 02-01:21:36
Farrell: What greater impact do you feel like your work had on the city during that point, like the early seventies?
- 02-01:21:44
Halsted: Well, I think, as I said, most of my work has been simply bringing people together and reaching out to people who might not otherwise be included. That's a little difficult to describe, but I think that that's what I've really done the best at.
- 02-01:21:59
Farrell: How did that inspire you later, all that work? How did that impact you?
- 02-01:22:06
Halsted: Well, I've continued doing things like that. I must say that I don't think I reach out as much because I had so many different roles. I got to know an

awful lot of people. I'm not extending my reach the way I used to, which is kind of frustrating.

02-01:22:24

Farrell:

Did it sort of empower you that you could make change and that you could see the fruits of your labor in action?

02-01:22:30

Halsted:

Right. I think that that open space committee was very empowering because you could see it. It affected neighbors all over the city and improved the lives of families and old people.

02-01:22:44

Farrell:

That may be a good place to leave it because I feel like the next questions I want to ask you are going to lead into other topics. But do you have anything else that you want to add today about what we talked about?

02-01:22:52

Halsted:

I don't think so.

02-01:22:54

Farrell:

Okay. Well, thank you so much.

02-01:22:55

Halsted:

Thank you. You're very tolerant, and I appreciate it.

Interview 3: April 24, 2018

03-00:00:04

Farrell:

Okay, this is Shanna Farrell with Anne Halsted on Tuesday, April 24, 2018. This is our third interview and we are in San Francisco, California. Anne, last time we talked we were discussing your time on the open space advisory committee and how they function as part of the Rec & Park department, and how that committee was a consequence of the ballot measure that was passed. You also served as the co-chair from 1978 to 1979. I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about the responsibility of the chairs on that committee?

03-00:00:45

Halsted:

Well, it's a little hard to remember exactly going back that far, but it was to organize the committee and organize the public hearings we had and to run those public hearings and then bring the committee to a consensus on the projects it would support for that year. So, we had a fairly large budget. I can't remember how many million dollars. I should. It's changed dramatically as numbers have grown. But, a fairly large allocation of money to allocate to parks around the city, whether they were high need or hilltops or renovations or new acquisitions.

03-00:01:23

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of how often new parks would be acquired?

03-00:01:29

Halsted:

I think in the beginning there were quite a few because the master plan for open space from the planning department had actually designated a number that needed to be acquired. In the measure that was passed, part of the money was for acquisition. That was spent on that and then, over time, there were more acquired.

03-00:01:53

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of why the San Francisco city government wanted to make acquiring parks part of their procedures?

03-00:02:05

Halsted:

Well, I think that there were areas where there were not parks accessible to people and where there was high density and we called those high-need areas. There were areas where there were particular geographic conditions that made it important to keep areas not developed, a few of those. I think those were the primary areas. But, to make sure there was enough access to parks for families throughout the city and where there's the greatest density. Of course, the highest real estate values it's the hardest to keep parks or to get new parks.

03-00:02:42

Farrell:

Because nobody wants to part with their land?

03-00:02:44

Halsted:

Well, they're hard to afford. We can't buy the land.

- 03-00:02:50
Farrell: Do you remember what some of the high-need areas were around that time?
- 03-00:02:52
Halsted: I think Chinatown, Hunters Point, places where there were fewer parks per individual.
- 03-00:02:59
Farrell: Okay, so it had less to do with socioeconomics and more to do with just how many open space areas were around?
- 03-00:03:08
Halsted: It also had to do with socioeconomics. I don't remember the exact measure. But it did have to do with looking at the socioeconomic status of the people who were there and their options for recreation.
- 03-00:03:24
Farrell: Was that ever designated by population density?
- 03-00:03:28
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 03-00:03:29
Farrell: So, the more people, the more need?
- 03-00:03:30
Halsted: All those factors were considered, yeah.
- 03-00:03:33
Farrell: Do you remember sort of what the bylaws were or what the mission statement was?
- 03-00:03:41
Halsted: It was in the ballot measure. The ballot measure created the mission statement.
- 03-00:03:49
Farrell: Were there any principles that the committee added to that that they wanted?
- 03-00:03:53
Halsted: There probably were. We tried not to use eminent domain, but we did when necessary. I can't think of anything.
- 03-00:04:07
Farrell: When you were using eminent domain, can you tell me a little bit about how that process worked, specifically for the committee? I know sometimes individually it can work differently or sometimes it's easy. Sometimes it's not.
- 03-00:04:22
Halsted: Usually when it was necessary to use it, it was because the property owner was trying to get the maximum price. It was really a negotiation between the real estate department and the owner but the owner also could sue the city for not enough. They might come back to us and try to question the decision.

- 03-00:04:42
Farrell: So, it was, what, ten cents per dollar?
- 03-00:04:48
Halsted: Per hundred dollars at assessed valuation in the first place.
- 03-00:04:53
Farrell: So, that pot of money, would you be paying for the real estate via that?
- 03-00:04:58
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 03-00:05:00
Farrell: Do you remember how many members were on the committee?
- 03-00:05:04
Halsted: I think it was twenty-three. There were eleven supervisors. I could be wrong, but I think there were two appointed by each supervisor and one by the mayor.
- 03-00:05:16
Farrell: That would also be how people joined as well.
- 03-00:05:22
Halsted: Exactly, by appointment.
- 03-00:05:24
Farrell: Did everybody have voting rights?
- 03-00:05:25
Halsted: Yeah, everybody on that committee.
- 03-00:05:29
Farrell: Were there other city agencies that you worked closely with aside from park and rec? Meaning, like, did you work with the fire department at all or the police department?
- 03-00:05:37
Halsted: Oh, sure, with public works. The fire and police department is just making sure it worked with them. Planning department and Rec & Park department being primary, public works next, and then other agencies like fire and police that were more involved in public safety.
- 03-00:06:00
Farrell: Why did you step down from being chair?
- 03-00:06:06
Halsted: I think we had a two-year rotation.
- 03-00:06:08
Farrell: Oh, that was a term limit?
- 03-00:06:09
Halsted: Yeah. I mean, I think that was our general intention.

03-00:06:16

Farrell:

What are you most proud of from your time on that committee?

03-00:06:23

Halsted:

Well, it was really fun. I go around the city now and can see parks that we bought and improved and have a sense of them in a way I wouldn't otherwise. I don't think even if you grew up here you would have the same sense because you just don't get out of your own neighborhood enough to really know what's going on in other neighborhoods and see the difference it made in people's lives.

03-00:06:45

Farrell:

Is that one of those things when you're going through a neighborhood you automatically notice parks?

03-00:06:50

Halsted:

Yeah, absolutely.

03-00:06:51

Farrell:

It's like once you turn it on, you can't turn it off.

03-00:06:53

Halsted:

Right.

03-00:06:55

Farrell:

You were also involved in some other committees including the International Institute of San Francisco. They work with people who have emigrated here, providing legal services, education, civic engagement opportunities. They help them sort of join and contribute to their community. Can you tell me about how you initially became interested in the organization enough to be on the board?

03-00:07:23

Halsted:

Well, my sister lived in San Francisco. I was working at US Leasing and she had just married and moved to San Francisco and had decided she wasn't going to seek a teaching job because she really wanted to get pregnant and have a family. She worked as a volunteer English in Action tutor at the International Institute. She had spent time in Japan, so there were a lot of Japanese executives who had wives here and they needed to learn English. So she did some of that but then she got involved in the institute, and that's really how I got involved. I also referred people to her.

In my job I was recruiting people from a number of immigrant communities to work at US Leasing and, obviously, as always they were some of the most highly qualified and less compensated people. They were a great resource for us. I felt that the immigrant advocacy groups were a really important part of San Francisco. The International Institute had been kind of the original. It's now 100 years old. It started off advocating for Italian immigrants back 100 years ago, in 1918 or whatever, and then moved on from immigrant group to immigrant group.

When I first was involved was more engaged in the Vietnamese community because that was the mid-seventies, and there was a huge influx of Vietnamese immigrants. Many of those immigrant groups came through the Institute and then went to create their own ethnic or nationalistically-oriented groups. They kind of devolved through the Institute generally tried to encourage that. Then we had a bunch of Ethiopian immigrants; we had this, and we had that. Each one of those required a different set of language skills and social skills. In fact, the agency is more involved in legal advocacy for immigrants than anything else.

03-00:09:27

Farrell: Has that always been the case? Have they always been more active legally?

03-00:09:28

Halsted: I think so.

03-00:09:32

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about what your sister's involvement was?

03-00:09:36

Halsted: I think she started off doing tutoring in English. She went on to the board and helped with fundraising. She was a really great cook. A friend of hers and she did an annual gala, a gourmet gala, which I think in the '50s and '60s had been kind of a socially prominent event, but it kind of fell below that. When we came in it wasn't so socially prominent.

03-00:10:01

Farrell: Was she cooking a lot of the dishes that the people she was working with?

03-00:10:04

Halsted: I don't know with the people she was working with, for the event.

03-00:10:07

Farrell: Oh, so she was doing a lot of cooking for the event?

03-00:10:09

Halsted: Right.

03-00:10:10

Farrell: Oh, that's amazing. Do you remember some of the things that she had cooked?

03-00:10:14

Halsted: She actually created a cookbook and I was just trying to get a copy of it today because they were having their 100th anniversary event this weekend. My family and I are giving some money in her name because she died about five years ago, so just to honor her.

03-00:10:30

Farrell: What was the name of her cookbook?

- 03-00:10:32
Halsted: I think it was just called the *Gourmet Gala Cookbook*. It was for the Institute.
- 03-00:10:37
Farrell: That's fantastic. I always find that food is a really great vehicle to understanding other cultures.
- 03-00:10:42
Halsted: Me too.
- 03-00:10:45
Farrell: You had mentioned the English in Action program. Can you tell me a little bit about that program?
- 03-00:10:51
Halsted: I wasn't doing that myself. I was never a volunteer within the program of the Institute. I was always on the board, but that's a fiduciary overview, managing finances and looking at what's happening and guiding the executive director, et cetera. I think that the English in Action was a one-on-one tutoring program that anyone could help with.
- 03-00:11:14
Farrell: Did any of the people that you were recruiting at US Leasing go through that program?
- 03-00:11:20
Halsted: I don't remember. I do remember a funny story, which I may have mentioned before. We had a guy working in the mailroom at US Leasing who was retired military. Did I tell you this?
- 03-00:11:32
Farrell: Mm-mm.
- 03-00:11:34
Halsted: He had just brought his Korean bride to San Francisco when he came in to me and said, "I have this wonderful bride. But I can't let her out of her room in the Tenderloin. She can't speak any English." So, I referred her to my sister. She really learned English going to the Institute and she's still a close friend. She's wonderful.
- 03-00:11:57
Farrell: You got involved with the board because your sister was on the board. Can you tell me a little bit about the makeup of the board and what the function was?
- 03-00:12:08
Halsted: It was a really good board. They had an executive director. I think it was Audrey Doughty and I remember her taking me to lunch. I think it was actually the first real nonprofit board I'd served on. I remember her going through, talking about the responsibilities of being on a board and trying to educate me as to what's required. She had some good people on that board. Marilyn Patel, who was a federal judge, and her husband, Magan Patel, and let

me think back. George Yamasaki, who's a wonderful fellow, Milt Simmons, my brother-in-law, my sister—it was a good board.

At a certain point we got into an unpleasant fight with the release of the executive director. That kind of made it a lot harder for all of us. Not a good thing to ever happen.

03-00:12:58

Farrell: How often would you meet?

03-00:13:00

Halsted: I think there were monthly meetings.

03-00:13:02

Farrell: What were some of the things that you would discuss at the board meetings?

03-00:13:06

Halsted: It was mostly oversight over programs and often the executive director would want to expand the program. We would have to evaluate whether that was in the purview of the organization. We tried once or twice. At this point it was the International Institute of San Francisco. There was one in the East Bay. We tried to merge and we couldn't quite make that happen at that point. Years later, when my husband was on the board, they did acquire the International Institute of the East Bay, and it became one. Now it's a regional agency. When I was on it we had an office in Redwood City. And I think we had one in Half Moon Bay.

03-00:13:42

Farrell: Yeah. When I was on their website yesterday I saw that, how it had only been a couple of locations and it expanded.

03-00:13:48

Halsted: Yes, and there is Sonoma.

03-00:13:50

Farrell: Yeah. So, the Redwood City office was open when you were on the board?

03-00:13:55

Halsted: I think so.

03-00:13:57

Farrell: Do you have a sense of why the East Bay and San Francisco couldn't merge?

03-00:14:03

Halsted: I think we just started off in different directions. I don't think the finances worked in the first place. I really don't remember the details of that.

03-00:14:11

Farrell: Yeah, I was wondering if there was maybe some issues if there were different immigrant groups that were coming in.

03-00:14:20

Halsted:

It could be, but that shouldn't be a reason because the immigrant groups changed all the time here, too. But, I don't remember. I think it was probably more likely finances.

03-00:14:31

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about the leadership of the organization and some of the strengths that were there?

03-00:14:41

Halsted:

Well, as I said, the executive director was a wonderful woman named Audrey Doughty. She was very strong. At a certain point she lost the support of part of the board by trying to move into directions that we weren't sure we were ready to do and then she resigned. She decided she wanted her job back and that's what created that lawsuit. That was really unpleasant. But her legacy lived on as a leader of the effort. A woman who worked for her as deputy director was not the next executive director. We hired a guy who was not so great. He did okay but wasn't great. When he left, we hired the woman who had been her deputy, who did a great job for, I think, 15 years. Now we have another one, or they have another one, I guess.

03-00:15:28

Farrell:

How did you see programs expand under her leadership?

03-00:15:36

Halsted:

Well, I think that immigration continued to develop and I think she probably was the one. I don't want to surmise because I don't remember the details. She probably was the one who reached out to Redwood City. But, let me not pretend I remember.

03-00:15:56

Farrell:

There were also, and you had sort of mentioned this, the job placement services that were a part of it. Did that program exist?

03-00:16:01

Halsted:

There were no job placement services directly part of the Institute as far as I recall.

03-00:16:06

Farrell:

I think there are now, so I just didn't have a sense of—

03-00:16:07

Halsted:

There probably are, but I don't think there were then. It was mostly helping people through immigration processes.

03-00:16:15

Farrell:

What do you think that that did for San Francisco and people moving here and coming through that program?

03-00:16:22

Halsted:

Well, I think it was a great thing over the long run because it brought diverse communities together in one house to work together and then move out on their own or come back. It provided a resource for people from whatever their background. So, it's been a good thing.

03-00:16:40

Farrell:

Do you feel like it helped people with cultural competency, like people who are not foreign-born, were born in America, helped relate to immigration populations?

03-00:16:54

Halsted:

Oh, I think so. I think so. I don't know how far that outreach went, but I do think it did.

03-00:16:59

Farrell:

I just think about, like, San Francisco is a sanctuary city, so if this planted the seeds for that kind of thing.

03-00:17:07

Halsted:

Right.

03-00:17:09

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about what you learned from being on that board that you were able to take with you to your work on other boards in the future?

03-00:17:19

Halsted:

Well, one thing is the importance of not getting into a board fight over the employment of the executive director. It's a very, very bad thing to happen to a nonprofit organization and to keep it mission-focused and keep people communicating about the mission in a regular way that doesn't create conflict.

03-00:17:39

Farrell:

What was it like to work with your sister on that board?

03-00:17:41

Halsted:

I think we worked together really well. We were very different. She was a housewife and had two kids after a while, and I had this job. So, our constituencies were different. We brought different things to the table, so it was good.

03-00:17:57

Farrell:

What are some of the things that you learned from her when you were on the board?

03-00:18:01

Halsted:

Oh, good. Well, she had more contacts with women at home than I did. That was something that is important for people to understand, for me to understand, to value, because I certainly had the same interest in advancing society, making the world better.

- 03-00:18:21
Farrell: Did she live in North Beach also?
- 03-00:18:23
Halsted: No. She lived in Cow Hollow and then Pacific Heights and then Sea Cliff.
- 03-00:18:32
Farrell: So you also had different senses of community?
- 03-00:18:35
Halsted: Right. She was in the junior league. I just did volunteer work.
- 03-00:18:40
Farrell: What was that time commitment like for you, balancing work with this board and your other commitments?
- 03-00:18:47
Halsted: Well, I think if I had a family it probably would have been impossible. But, all those years I really didn't have a family, so I didn't have to worry about kids or husband or cooking dinner. My family was really doing outside work. It was a good balance. It was better to have something other than just work.
- 03-00:19:08
Farrell: And being on that board with someone like Marilyn Patel, did that also help you build your networks or your sense of community?
- 03-00:19:15
Halsted: Oh, sure, absolutely.
- 03-00:19:21
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about how that changed your relationship with San Francisco, doing that board work?
- 03-00:19:30
Halsted: Well, it connected with everything else I did, which worked for me. I would say Dianne Feinstein had been on that board in the '50s and '60s and many different aspects of life came together in that work. It was sort of a connection with old-time San Francisco as well as what was happening in the future. It didn't seem like a stretch. It seemed like a really good match for who I was and what I was doing.
- 03-00:20:03
Farrell: On that note, during that time period, so this is the '70s, how are you seeing San Francisco change, not just the demographics but culturally, too?
- 03-00:20:14
Halsted: Well, as we talked before, it was the time of the sexual revolution, eventually the flower children and the Haight Ashbury. We had Jim Jones, and we had Moscone and Milk being shot. It was a tumultuous time. It was a time of a great deal of change in San Francisco. I would say property values, it's interesting because I used to try to figure out what I could have bought if I'd done that. Property values really rose from, say, the mid-60s, well, to now.

They rose a lot in the '70s and then in the '80s, but the change was dramatic. It went from being a place you could buy a house on wages to one where you couldn't.

03-00:21:03

Farrell: How did you see that affect people?

03-00:21:05

Halsted: I don't think people understood. Well, it affected people because we passed rent control. That's one thing. It became necessary, too, because landlords were trying to pay for their costs. I think it's disaffecting. It makes it much harder for people to sense being part of the same community if they feel a great economic gulf.

03-00:21:29

Farrell: Did you see people start to leave the city like they are now?

03-00:21:34

Halsted: I think that story has been going on for a long time. I think my greatest recollection of people leaving the city came after we passed the busing. What year was that? Was that '75, '76?

03-00:21:49

Farrell: Something like that, yeah.

03-00:21:51

Halsted: So, that meant that people couldn't predict where their kids would go to school and which school to be involved in. A lot of people found it difficult to know that their kids' education would be what they expected. Many, many of the wealthier people dropped out of the public school system.

03-00:22:14

Farrell: Yeah, I want to talk about that a little bit more. Was that a big topic of discussion in San Francisco, the busing issue?

03-00:22:22

Halsted: Oh, absolutely.

03-00:22:23

Farrell: How did that play out? Can you tell me about some of your memories of that?

03-00:22:30

Halsted: I worked at US Leasing with Peter Mezey, who was on the board of education. He was very involved in the integration and busing. He was a lawyer, too, so he was a big advocate. I think that my perception is that Joe Alioto, who was the mayor when it happened, implemented a busing system which was way too severe. To get a solution, he cut a deal, but it impacted way too many. I kept saying, you know, you can't lose education for integration. You've got to have your education preserved when you've got integration. I really feel like it did undermine the commitment to the public schools, which is still going on.

- 03-00:23:13
Farrell: What was severe about the deal?
- 03-00:23:17
Halsted: I'm trying to remember the details of it. I think if you look back at the newspapers to review it, I think he tried to make it happen faster than it could. Now, who knows whether I'm right on that? That's what I recall.
- 03-00:23:35
Farrell: I think that that would make a lot of sense because sometimes these programs, they need to be thoughtful.
- 03-00:23:47
Halsted: And social change, it's a huge change for people. Unfortunately, it undermined the schools. It didn't support the kids.
- 03-00:24:02
Farrell: Did you see people start moving to different neighborhoods?
- 03-00:24:08
Halsted: I think more people just moved out of the city or put their kids in private schools. That would be the bigger problem.
- 03-00:24:14
Farrell: At that point did you see more private schools starting?
- 03-00:24:18
Halsted: I don't remember that. I don't remember that. It is interesting, though, because I do think, really, finding the balance between immediate individual gratification that parents need, for instance, for their kids to get the right education and the longer-term social need is just a huge challenge. We're seeing it right now in the housing. Nobody wants dense housing next to their house, but everybody wants more housing. Reconciliation of those things is just really tough. We get desperate sometimes. I think Alioto needed a solution, and he got a solution, but it had other impacts.
- 03-00:24:57
Farrell: Did that ripple out and affect other areas of the city? You had mentioned other impacts. I guess I'm wondering what the other impacts were.
- 03-00:25:14
Halsted: Of the busing?
- 03-00:25:16
Farrell: Yeah.
- 03-00:25:22
Halsted: I don't think property values dropped. I think they continued to rise. I think that just the fact that families no longer were engaged in the public schools created a terrible situation for the city, or were less engaged.

- 03-00:25:42
Farrell: Yeah, that's interesting. Somebody you worked with was on the board of education. Did you hear conversations from him about that?
- 03-00:25:49
Halsted: Oh yeah, we argued about it all the time.
- 03-00:25:51
Farrell: Oh, you did? Okay. What points were you arguing?
- 03-00:25:55
Halsted: I was arguing that you just have to do it [integrate schools] so that you understand the impacts while you're doing it because you're likely to create a long-term gap in the system.
- 03-00:26:10
Farrell: That's ultimately going to be harder to change.
- 03-00:26:16
Halsted: But he was really committed and really good at his commitment. The commitment was terribly important.
- 03-00:26:23
Farrell: You had also mentioned that the 70s is a time of great change. There were a lot of things happening in the government. What were some of the other things that you saw coming up as part of the bigger issues in San Francisco at that time?
- 03-00:26:37
Halsted: That we were involved in?
- 03-00:26:38
Farrell: Or just that were happening, I guess.
- 03-00:26:40
Halsted: There was a lot of development going on. You read, I think, in some of the material I gave you about Pier 39. That was a big deal here in Telegraph Hill. And, as the president of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers I got to be the one leading the fight against it. It was really charged. People in the rest of the city did want the waterfront preserved but didn't see the need to interfere with the Pier 39 project.
- 03-00:27:08
Farrell: I want to talk about that a little bit more in-depth, but in a little bit.
- 03-00:27:13
Halsted: But there was, you know, Bank of America. There were many large buildings that hadn't been here, sort of like the kind of growth we've had in the last ten years or five years, another spurt.
- 03-00:27:26
Farrell: Yeah. Do you have a sense of why that spurt was happening then?

03-00:27:30

Halsted:

Well, I guess the financial industry was concentrating here. There was a lot of money. There was a demand for real estate. Prices went higher, and demand for more offices. People like me moved from other places here, lots of people.

03-00:27:49

Farrell:

Back to your board work or your civic engagement, you were also on the Legal Aid Society of San Francisco board. They have four main functions—free clinics and help lines, free legal info, litigation and policy advocacy. Were those its main functions when you were on the board?

03-00:28:08

Halsted:

I think so. It was mostly involved in employment law. I think it had been the Legal Aid Society and advocated for indigents earlier, but sometime before I went on the board it converted to being mostly employment law-oriented.

03-00:28:28

Farrell:

Yeah, and I know in the 1970s that they shifted their focus to the workplace and they worked to break down barriers of discrimination for women and minorities under Title IX. You joined the board in 1979—can you tell me about how you came to be on that board?

03-00:28:48

Halsted:

Good question. In my work at US Leasing, I really enjoyed working on the legal cases that I did and I got to know a number of lawyers in the employment law area. That may be how I got there. I'm not really sure. Joan Graf became a friend. She was the executive director. It was a fun board for me to be on because I was one of the few non-lawyers. I got to deal with things from a different perspective. It could have been someone on the institute board who suggested my participation. Or it could have been Peter Mezey. I don't know.

03-00:29:23

Farrell:

What made you interested in being on the board there?

03-00:29:26

Halsted:

They were sort of leading the fight for employment rights. I was interested in that as well. I did have to represent my company in cases where I was involved but I really wanted to be on the right side of the issues for people and wanted the company to be, too. So, it was a good place to be engaged.

03-00:29:50

Farrell:

Did that create any conflict of interest?

03-00:29:52

Halsted:

Not that I remember. I don't think there were any lawsuits. It would have been an individual lawsuit that would have been a conflict.

03-00:30:01

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of when you had started on the board what, I guess, maybe some specific program areas?

- 03-00:30:07
Halsted: I don't remember. I remember rights for inmates. I remember that as a program that they were working on. It was sort of separate from the employment law.
- 03-00:30:20
Farrell: What kind of employment laws were being passed around this time? I mean, I know Title IX is a big one, but were there any in addition to that?
- 03-00:30:29
Halsted: Oh yeah, there were a lot. But I don't think I can tell you. All that affirmative action stuff, all the things about open access to jobs, but I can't remember what they were. There was a lot of change in employment law then.
- 03-00:30:47
Farrell: Did your work on the Legal Aid Society help you in your job at US Leasing?
- 03-00:30:52
Halsted: I think so, staying ahead of it, and understanding the perspective of the people who might suffer from things you don't understand.
- 03-00:31:03
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about that, about how some of the discrimination affected people or how you saw that affect people?
- 03-00:31:15
Halsted: People would just lose their jobs if they weren't protected from discrimination. We had a lot of fairly low-skill clerical jobs and those people were very vulnerable. They were the ones I thought who needed probably the most protection, and without the laws protecting them and people advocating for them, they were much more likely to lose their jobs for inconsequential reasons or the whim of someone who didn't understand why they dressed the way they dressed or whatever.
- 03-00:31:56
Farrell: Was it just women and people of color who were seeing that discrimination?
- 03-00:32:03
Halsted: I think so, and gays, although US Leasing was pretty good about gays.
- 03-00:32:10
Farrell: What types of discrimination were there at that time, or did you see? What were some of those instances?
- 03-00:32:18
Halsted: What were the most blatant?
- 03-00:32:19
Farrell: Yeah.

03-00:32:22

Halsted: Just like today, just like our president. I had guys who said, "I have to hire a secretary. I need someone with big boobs." Sure, yeah. They were serious about it, but you just have to ignore them. Or, "Fire this person because they're fat," but completely openly saying stuff like that, not trying to be—

03-00:32:49

Farrell: Were there instances of that that you remember at US Leasing?

03-00:32:54

Halsted: Oh, yeah.

03-00:32:55

Farrell: Especially being in HR, how did you address that?

03-00:32:59

Halsted: Well, by ignoring them in the first place, that's not within the rules. We don't do things that way, but sometimes if the person's at a high enough level you just have to ignore it.

03-00:33:12

Farrell: Were you ever at a point in your career where if you had said something about it or confronted especially somebody who was higher up than you, that you would be worried about losing your job yourself?

03-00:33:23

Halsted: Oh, sure. Oh yeah, because I had at that point advanced beyond where anyone expected me to and had pushed a lot of issues.

03-00:33:36

Farrell: Did your time, especially working on the Legal Aid Society board where you're talking about discrimination and employment law, make you question whether or not you wanted to be at US Leasing, especially because you're [involved in local politics]?

03-00:33:47

Halsted: No, actually, that made it more interesting. I felt like I was in a position to make change. As I said, I think I was not so compelled by the financial industry itself, but being in that position to have management support for having a strong workforce and a strong commitment to its employees, and then trying to make that happen and make those employees more successful was a really empowering place to be.

03-00:34:17

Farrell: Can you tell me about some of the other people who were on the board with you?

03-00:34:22

Halsted: On that board? Well, mostly there were lawyers. I know some of them still, but I don't know what I have to say of them. They were just a good group of mostly progressive lawyers, a few not.

- 03-00:34:37
Farrell: What were some of the things that they brought to the board?
- 03-00:34:40
Halsted: Well, as in any oversight, it generally is the fiduciary, the finances, the fundraising, the rules, and then occasionally an issue but mostly not issues. Right now I can't remember what issues.
- 03-00:34:56
Farrell: That's okay. A lot of that employment law was one of the issues, and Title IX, making those changes. Also, the work with the San Francisco Fire Department on the consent decree and integrating the department in the eighties, I know that that was something. Were you involved in that at all?
- 03-00:35:17
Halsted: Not in a direct way. Let me see. You're bringing something back to my memory. Someone I knew was, and I was involved with that, but I don't remember what it was.
- 03-00:35:26
Farrell: Marilyn Patel is the one who was the judge.
- 03-00:35:28
Halsted: Right. But on the other end of that, there was someone in that consent decree that I was involved with and right now I can't remember the details of it.
- 03-00:35:37
Farrell: One of the lawyers?
- 03-00:35:38
Halsted: No, one of the persons who was being protected or who had filed a complaint.
- 03-00:35:46
Farrell: Yeah, I know Robert Demmons, he wasn't the fire chief then, but he's the one who sort of moved all that forward. So, that wasn't really an issue that you [were engaged in].
- 03-00:36:00
Halsted: It wasn't one that I was particularly engaged in.
- 03-00:36:03
Farrell: There was also issues around HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and the AIDS [acquired immunodeficiency syndrome] epidemic in the early '80s. Was that something that you were involved in at all?
- 03-00:36:10
Halsted: I was a little involved. I knew Merv Silverman, who was the head of the health department, quite well. I tried to advance the issue of protecting AIDS victims in employment, but that's probably it. At that period in the early '80s, which is when that was happening, which was a little later, I had become more of a known civic leader and was called in to a lot of meetings dealing with many things like employment.

03-00:36:44

Farrell: Can you tell a little about some of those and what had happened with that?

03-00:36:48

Halsted: Well, Dianne [Feinstein] was a leader who led from the middle. She often, when brought to a problem, would convene a bunch of people that she thought might add to the solution by just gathering around the same table and connecting and talking. That's the kind of environment I remember.

03-00:37:05

Farrell: Who else was at that table?

03-00:37:09

Halsted: Well, Cecil Williams, Jim Harvey from Transamerica. It was a big table. There were lots of different people, but people did engage on that AIDS issue, people from the San Francisco Foundation, as I said, the health department.

03-00:37:26

Farrell: Okay, so maybe when we get to more of the '80s we'll talk more about that. Can you tell me about some of the things that you learned from being on that board that you took with you?

03-00:37:47

Halsted: I think Joan Graf was a very able executive director. She managed, with a bunch of attorneys who all competed with each other for work, to keep the organization functioning in a very congenial and effective way, and engaged them on issues just enough but not too much, because you can't get too far into issues when you've got lawyers from all sides there on the board. She was a very effective executive director in managing that. The reality is that, for the most part, other than the overall vision and direction, boards don't get involved in the general operation, or generally shouldn't too much.

03-00:38:29

Farrell: On that note, so I know boards, it's a lot about fundraising and it's about money. Was that one of your functions on this board, was to fundraise?

03-00:38:39

Halsted: I'm sure it was, but I don't remember how much. They did an annual fundraiser. On almost every board there is a fundraising obligation.

03-00:38:50

Farrell: Were you called on to help with that at any point?

03-00:38:52

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

03-00:38:54

Farrell: How did you strategize going out and raising money?

- 03-00:39:02
Halsted: Well, it's not uncommon. It's really finding a commonality of interest, creating an opportunity for somebody to give to something that they really want to anyway.
- 03-00:39:12
Farrell: Did you draw on the network of people that you had already that you knew might be interested in donating?
- 03-00:39:18
Halsted: Mm-hmm, some, although I think the funding for the Legal Aid Society had a formula of getting a certain amount from law firms. US Leasing was not that, but we had a certain amount of charitable money that was given away. I could advocate for that if I was involved in the organization. I don't think it was so much individual gifts, some but not so much.
- 03-00:39:43
Farrell: Your work on these boards, was it seen as an extension of your job at US Leasing?
- 03-00:39:53
Halsted: It depends on who you asked. Someone who thought it was a good idea might think that. But then not everyone did. I had to defend it a lot. I had to confine it and defend it a lot.
- 03-00:40:07
Farrell: Did you ever have to leave work to go to board meetings?
- 03-00:40:09
Halsted: Yeah, from time to time but I tried very hard not to do that. There were definitely organizations and boards that I turned down because they would have conflicted with my working.
- 03-00:40:23
Farrell: How often did the board meet, like once a month?
- 03-00:40:25
Halsted: That board, I think that was once a month. It could have been less than that.
- 03-00:40:31
Farrell: Can you tell me about what a board meeting might look like for the Legal Aid Society?
- 03-00:40:38
Halsted: It was a big board. They were in legal offices' board rooms. It would be thirty men and a couple of women.
- 03-00:40:52
Farrell: Would the meeting start with somebody reading an agenda and then going through those?

- 03-00:40:56
Halsted: Right. The executive director and the chair of the board would run the meeting and there would be reports, nothing unusual as I recall.
- 03-00:41:08
Farrell: How did you negotiate or handle being one of only a few women on such a giant board that was mostly men?
- 03-00:41:18
Halsted: That was the condition in almost every organization, so that wasn't unusual.
- 03-00:41:25
Farrell: Were there any people of color on the board?
- 03-00:41:28
Halsted: I don't remember. There probably were, but not as many as you would expect today.
- 03-00:41:34
Farrell: As one of the few women on that board or other boards, do you feel like you were treated fairly in that?
- 03-00:41:45
Halsted: Oh, in that environment, yes. I think that Joan was a real advocate of women and minorities and she made sure that if there were any kind of sleight, that was corrected. She had to suffer from some of that herself because law firms are fairly traditional. She had to fight her way through being a fully accepted professional.
- 03-00:42:13
Farrell: What did you learn from her in terms of that?
- 03-00:42:17
Halsted: I think she held her own, and she did very well. She did occasionally share her issues with me, but I didn't see her become discouraged with her work.
- 03-00:42:32
Farrell: What are some of the things that you're most proud of from your time on that board?
- 03-00:42:38
Halsted: Golly. I was proud that I managed to contribute and was valued and could add the perspective of an employer without being a reactive person. I don't think I remember any particular achievement, but I did establish good relationships with a lot of people, which were valuable to me.
- 03-00:42:57
Farrell: Can you tell me about some of those relationships that you created there?

- 03-00:43:01
Halsted: Just people that I enjoyed working with. When I worked with them in other things later, we had that background of understanding that we had a progressive orientation towards employment going forward.
- 03-00:43:13
Farrell: Was there anyone in particular that stands out to you?
- 03-00:43:16
Halsted: Not right now. Sorry.
- 03-00:43:28
Farrell: You were also on San Francisco Tomorrow [SFT], which was founded in 1970. That was founded after Proposition P was passed about height limits to new buildings and its mission was to protect the urban environment. I know that you were involved in the building heights.
- 03-00:43:55
Halsted: Height limits, yes.
- 03-00:43:58
Farrell: Yeah, but why you decided to join that board?
- 03-00:44:02
Halsted: I had worked with many of the people who were involved in it. I think I thought that I could be a force for good within the group. The group was a little more conservative on the side of preservation than I was and a number of people I knew were there. We did make some progress, but then it didn't hold. I didn't last very long on that board. I was an advocate for preserving the quality of life but not preserving every building. It's hard to go back and remember, but the forces of preservation dominated everything, from what I saw. I ended up thinking of it as San Francisco Backward rather than Forward.
- 03-00:45:05
Farrell: So they had a real desire to not raze any buildings, just keep everything there?
- 03-00:45:12
Halsted: Right.
- 03-00:45:13
Farrell: Were they also trying to get things landmarked?
- 03-00:45:16
Halsted: Oh yeah, but that wasn't their main drive. San Francisco Beautiful did more of that.
- 03-00:45:27
Farrell: Can you tell me about your philosophy on that, the preserving versus building smart?

03-00:45:37

Halsted:

Well, I like both. I really am an advocate of preservation. I actually initiated the historic district here in Telegraph Hill, which was a little hard because there's such inconsistent architecture, and was very supportive of historic districts. But I did not intend to say that there shouldn't be change elsewhere. I think we had plenty of places with really inferior architecture and buildings that are falling apart that don't deserve to be preserved. The problem, of course, is, if they're in use, finding ways to accommodate the people who are using them. We have such a demand for housing. We have a lot of what I would consider slum housing that needs either to be upgraded or replaced and it's not happening.

03-00:46:31

Farrell:

Why do you think it doesn't happen?

03-00:46:33

Halsted:

Because it's very expensive. Every one of us wants to protect people who are living here, but protecting them permanently in a house that's inferior is not the right solution, in my mind.

03-00:46:49

Farrell:

In terms of preserving certain buildings over others, what makes, for you, a building an ideal candidate for preservation?

03-00:46:59

Halsted:

For me, I still would say architectural merit and history. I think that those are the main things I would stick with.

03-00:47:10

Farrell:

Are you a fan of architecture or certain architects?

03-00:47:13

Halsted:

Mm-hmm. Oh, I like many different kinds of architecture, actually.

03-00:47:19

Farrell:

What are some of your favorites?

03-00:47:21

Halsted:

Some of my favorite architects? Well, I live in a Victorian. I would not call this my favorite style of architecture, but I do like living in a house that has some character and has some architectural merit to it. I really enjoy contemporary architecture. I've never lived in a contemporary building, but I would like to. I don't think I will. I like openness. Some people like coziness. I like openness. But, I think that it's just a matter of good artistic talent being applied to any space so that it feels better.

03-00:48:04

Farrell:

What are some of your favorite buildings around San Francisco or North Beach?

03-00:48:11

Halsted:

Good question. Or North Beach? Well, I think the Sheraton Palace is one of my favorites. It's really a wonderful landmark and it's been very well preserved. I think that's a great one. I'm really happy with the way the Ferry Building restoration came out. It wasn't such a great building before it was restored. But it really is now. I was involved in that at a number of different levels. Other buildings? Well, of course, I love the de Young, even though that's a contemporary building. I love that replacement of that building. There are many buildings I really like, so I hate to get started. I'll leave out all the ones I didn't think of.

03-00:48:49

Farrell:

Are there any houses that you particularly like?

03-00:48:52

Halsted:

Houses? Oh yeah, I love looking at houses.

03-00:48:55

Farrell:

It's fun. It's really fun.

03-00:48:59

Halsted:

Sure, but I can't think of what they are right now. There's lots of them.

03-00:49:06

Farrell:

So, I guess, going back to San Francisco Tomorrow, can you tell me a little bit about what your role as a board member was?

03-00:49:15

Halsted:

Let me think about that. I wasn't on the board very long. I think it was a year or two and I remember there being a big issue over a development at Pier 45. You know where Pier 45 is, yeah?

03-00:49:34

Farrell:

Mm-hmm.

03-00:49:36

Halsted:

There had been a proposal for, I think, a hotel, a small hotel on Pier 45 and my friend Jim Augustino, I think, was advocating for it. SFT first said they were in favor—it was a low-rise—but then changed their minds. I remember feeling that they had kind of double-crossed him. I don't remember. It's hard to remember those details going back that far. John Elberling was on that board with us, too. We were all buddies. Do you know John Elberling from TODCO?

03-00:50:07

Farrell:

Mm-mm.

03-00:50:09

Halsted:

Anyway, now we're at very different parts of the political arena. We were headed in that direction, but now we are. But, he's been an active force for good in San Francisco, as was Jim Augustino.

- 03-00:50:24
Farrell: What were some of the projects? Were there any others that you hadn't mentioned that you were a part of?
- 03-00:50:33
Halsted: At San Francisco Tomorrow?
- 03-00:50:33
Farrell: Yeah.
- 03-00:50:34
Halsted: I don't remember. I'm sorry.
- 03-00:50:36
Farrell: That's okay. Do you feel like it was a community organization?
- 03-00:50:40
Halsted: Mm-hmm, it was a community organization.
- 03-00:50:44
Farrell: Did you have to work at all to recruit community members? I know you had done that in the past. But is that something that you kind of had to continue with them?
- 03-00:50:52
Halsted: I don't remember. Sorry.
- 03-00:50:57
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about the reason that you stepped away, about the issues that had come up?
- 03-00:51:04
Halsted: I just felt that I was more interested in supporting change than they were.
- 03-00:51:10
Farrell: Were there other organizations where you felt like you could do that?
- 03-00:51:14
Halsted: Well, I ended up feeling that SPUR [San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association] was one of those.
- 03-00:51:20
Farrell: At that point, what was your familiarity with SPUR?
- 03-00:51:27
Halsted: When did I go off the board of SFT? It was about '81 or '82. It was about the same time I went on the board of SPUR.
- 03-00:51:34
Farrell: Yeah, you went off the board, I think, in '82.

03-00:51:36

Halsted:

Yeah, it was about when I went on the board with SPUR, so I think there is a correlation there. I had been aware of SPUR much earlier when I was working as a receptionist and went to events at SPUR when it was tiny, down on Post Street, I think, but I became more aware of SPUR when I met John Jacobs through Dorothy Erskine, and later, when SPUR was looking to make sure it was more grounded in the neighborhood community, and I had been involved in SFT and Telegraph Hill Dwellers, and was a little bit tired of the NIMBY [Not In My Back Yard]-ish view. SPUR became a place where I felt much more comfortable to advocate my general interest for both economic development and neighborhood preservation.

03-00:52:23

Farrell:

Yeah, and thinking about a city as a system.

03-00:52:28

Halsted:

Right, and including people from all different backgrounds.

03-00:52:34

Farrell:

Another board that you were on for just a short period of time was the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Commission, and that was from 1983 to 1984. That's a city and county agency whose priority is housing and economic development. You have to be appointed to the commission. Do you remember how you were appointed or who appointed you?

03-00:52:57

Halsted:

Yes, Dianne Feinstein appointed me. I'm pretty sure, I would guess, that she knew me, but my friend David Jenkins was a labor leader in San Francisco. He was very involved in the Redevelopment Agency. I would guess that he might have suggested my name to Dianne for that. But in any case, Dianne knew me and appointed me to that. I very much enjoyed it. Wilbur Hamilton was the executive director. It was a very lively board to be on, and redevelopment was very active then in Yerba Buena, with many projects around the city. It was a very interesting place to be engaged.

As you said, I served there for a year and a half or two. And then Dianne called me. She was hoping to recruit my boss, Brooks Walker, to come to the Redevelopment Agency because she needed a financial mind there. She asked me if I would be willing to shift to the Port Commission and let Brooks take over the Redevelopment Agency Commission. I said, "Well, I don't think you'll get Brooks, but I would be happy to move to the Port Commission because I've always loved the subject matter and the nature of the Ports work." So, that's what happened. He didn't take the job at Redevelopment because he wasn't interested. He was willing to advise but not take a job as a commissioner, and then I moved to Port Commission.

03-00:54:43

Farrell:

I wanted to spend our next session talking about the waterfront and that, because I think that's a whole rich area. Can you tell me about when you first met Dianne Feinstein?

03-00:54:55

Halsted:

I think it was when I was advocating for rezoning the North Point sewage plant.

03-00:54:59

Farrell:

Oh, that's right, yeah. How did some of your early impressions of her sort of match up to when you were working with her a little bit more, or she's kind of rising in power a little bit more?

03-00:55:15

Halsted:

Well, she's always had a presence beyond what most people have. I mean, she walks into the room and, without any intention, people notice her. She has an ability to communicate. She has an ability to connect with people. And she remembers people. She's a very commanding presence and I was always amazed at how effective she could be at just moving through a crowd and making sure people knew what she wanted to happen.

03-00:55:44

Farrell:

I think she's still pretty good at that.

03-00:55:44

Halsted:

Yeah, she is. She's really good at it. She's a great hostess. She just really has a sense of people and her ability to help them.

03-00:55:55

Farrell:

When you were on the redevelopment agency commission, do you remember what some of the projects that they were working on?

03-00:56:04

Halsted:

What I remember mostly was working on Yerba Buena Gardens. That was very lively then, but there were plenty of things coming through for the Western Addition, even the Golden Gateway and other places.

03-00:56:22

Farrell:

Yeah, that's true. Was this also around the same time that they were talking about putting in the freeway by the waterfront?

03-00:56:31

Halsted:

No, the freeway had been there since the late '50s. This is when we were talking about taking it down.

03-00:56:37

Farrell:

Oh, that's right. I had it the other way in my head. Yes, okay. With Yerba Buena they were talking about redeveloping it and kind of turning it into what it is now?

- 03-00:56:52
Halsted: A convention center.
- 03-00:56:55
Farrell: Yeah. Were you in support of that?
- 03-00:56:58
Halsted: I was at that point because it was already underway, but it was a matter of how it was going to get done.
- 03-00:57:03
Farrell: In a perfect world, how would you have had that rolled out? Or what would that look like?
- 03-00:57:12
Halsted: Well, I guess the initial part was really not so good, when they evicted people. I wasn't present for that. Urban renewal in its own was not a really good process. I think we've improved on that process, but we don't have redevelopment anymore.
- 03-00:57:31
Farrell: What about Western Addition? What was the changes there?
- 03-00:57:35
Halsted: Well, the whole Fillmore Center had not been done. There's a lot that still remained to be done in Western Addition, so there were projects. There were even projects that have come through in the last couple of years since redevelopment that were a consequence of that, so there was affordable housing. There were developments up and down Fillmore that had to be approved and benefited from redevelopment.
- 03-00:58:00
Farrell: With the development, I know that you have a love for parks and open space. How do you balance that with developing the urban environment?
- 03-00:58:14
Halsted: Well, my view has been always to try to, before you even develop the urban environment, decide where the parks are going to be. We were able to do that one place, in South Beach, because that was a redevelopment area as well. That started at the time when I was engaged there, but the South Beach Marina and the park around it were the things that got developed first, before the housing and replacement of the warehouses. That became an attraction for the development that followed.
- 03-00:58:50
Farrell: In your perfect world, you start with the park and the open space and then you figure out around it?
- 03-00:58:54
Halsted: Right. That would be my perfect world. I have a hard time selling that one.

03-00:58:59

Farrell: Yeah, I was just about to ask you, do you have allies in that?

03-00:59:01

Halsted: I do in the world of parks but not so much in the world of development. But, once you've got development, the value of the real estate increases, so you can never assemble the land for the park.

03-00:59:16

Farrell: Do you have a sense of how well the Planning Department and the Rec and Park department work together?

03-00:59:22

Halsted: Pretty well. Their roles are quite different. The Recreation and Park is an operating function that has more to do with employees going out and working in the parks. But, that open space plan that I talked to you about earlier came from the Planning Department to the Recreation and Park Department, so it wouldn't have happened without the Planning Department leading. The Planning Department would always review the proposed improvements to see whether they conformed with the plan that was intended.

03-00:59:58

Farrell: Has that relationship evolved over time or improved?

03-01:00:02

Halsted: I'm sure it has. I'm not really intimate with the relationship at this point. But it was pretty good then. In fact, the head of Rec & Park when I started on the Open Space Committee had come from the planning department.

03-01:00:15

Farrell: Oh, that helps. That helps a lot. So when you were working on the redevelopment agency, was there any pushback from citizens about what you were doing?

03-01:00:29

Halsted: Redevelopment had the ability to be a heavy hand, so there was always the fear that it would be heavy-handed. In Yerba Buena, we did have a measure on the ballot that the convention center would be underground. When I look at it, every time I see that, I think it didn't really get to be underground. There's a lot that's underground, but it's not exactly underground. I think the balance that has resulted is pretty good. You do have a sense of land there. You don't feel overwhelmed by it. It's kind of an oasis surrounded by big buildings, so that's good.

03-01:01:12

Farrell: Yeah, I would agree with that. How did you sell these ideas to the people of San Francisco?

03-01:01:28

Halsted: Well, I don't know that I was so involved in selling them. Most of them had been pretty well advocated for and put together. I guess the only one I was

really involved in selling was the South Beach redevelopment area and that was mostly industrial warehouses and could have gone to office development. I think people I knew wanted to advocate for more housing, and people in the industry thought that was an inappropriate use of redevelopment, I think, so that was a bit of a contest.

03-01:02:05

Farrell: What did you learn from being on that board?

03-01:02:07

Halsted: On the Redevelopment Agency board?

03-01:02:08

Farrell: Yeah.

03-01:02:09

Halsted: Well, it really enhanced my connections in the African-American community because it was the dominant force there. I loved that aspect because it just enhanced my life a lot.

03-01:02:21

Farrell: How did it enhance your life?

03-01:02:22

Halsted: Just knowing people I hadn't known and being part of that community.

03-01:02:26

Farrell: Did you learn from them about how different people experience San Francisco?

03-01:02:33

Halsted: To some degree. I think I just really became more familiar with the culture and more comfortable with the culture in a different way from my growing up.

03-01:02:44

Farrell: When you would go into the Bayview or historically black neighborhoods, what was that process of getting comfortable there like for you?

03-01:02:56

Halsted: Well, one thing is, working with redevelopment, because I was involved with labor and people who were part of that community, being part of that aspect of it made it much easier than coming in as a white person from outside.

03-01:03:12

Farrell: Did you ever have to explain that to people, like you walk both lines?

03-01:03:18

Halsted: Not too much. You're sort of known by the company you keep, so that's part of it. Dave Jenkins was a big part of my life at that period of time.

03-01:03:30

Farrell: What did you learn from him?

03-01:03:32

Halsted:

Well, he was a big talker. He was a wonderful guy. His daughter, Margaret Jenkins, is exactly my age, and we're good friends still. David and Edith, her mother and father, were also very close friends of both my husband and me. The things he taught me were it's all right to exaggerate. He said the most outlandish things sometimes to try to raise people's profile or make people feel better, but they did work. It's something I didn't grow up with, that ability to overstate things. But, he did it in the interest of things he thought were important, so it was good.

03-01:04:12

Farrell:

At any point during this period of time where your profile is rising, you're getting more involved with city politics, city government, that network of people. Are you ever questioning you career at US Leasing? Are you ever wanting to move into city government?

03-01:04:33

Halsted:

I never really wanted to move into city government. Occasionally it crossed my mind that I should think about running for office, but then when I thought about talking in front of people I decided I wasn't going to. I'm just not cut out for it, but I really enjoyed being part of the process and part of the governance as an individual, being able to share my ideas and work through that. I think I've always enjoyed that. Several times I was asked to take jobs in city government and just said I didn't want to.

03-01:05:08

Farrell:

Do you remember what some of those jobs were?

03-01:05:12

Halsted:

No, I don't think I'll say.

03-01:05:14

Farrell:

Did you feel like you were able to participate in city government on your own terms?

03-01:05:24

Halsted:

Right, exactly. I was more independent and more effective, or more comfortable with myself, not reporting to someone.

03-01:05:36

Farrell:

One of the things that I wanted to ask you about was that you received an award from SF Tomorrow in 1978. It was the environmentalist award. Can you tell me a little bit about that award?

03-01:05:53

Halsted:

I think it was a consequence of my rezoning the North Point sewage plant. I think that's what that was about.

03-01:06:01

Farrell:

They didn't ever actually tell you what it was about?

- 03-01:06:03
Halsted: That's what I recall. I could probably find some documents on it.
- 03-01:06:08
Farrell: What did it mean to you, to win that award?
- 03-01:06:10
Halsted: Well, I felt I was very pleased. I was sorry that in the long run my relationship with the organization wasn't better, but I was very honored, really honored.
- 03-01:06:35
Farrell: Did that help raise your profile?
- 03-01:06:38
Halsted: It did, that and a number of things that were happening around then. I was president of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. I wasn't on the Redevelopment Agency board, but something else. Should I remove you? [says to her dog, Nelson]
- 03-01:06:55
Farrell: He looks so comfortable.
- 03-01:06:55
Halsted: He doesn't normally get on the furniture, but he felt a need to almost get on the furniture.
- 03-01:07:03
Farrell: Yeah. Looking back on some of these board memberships, especially the earlier ones, what impact do you think that that had on your life? How did it enrich your life?
- 03-01:07:20
Halsted: Oh, tremendously. It gave me much broader reach and a sense of participation. As I said, I didn't feel that my job had to be everything, and I had an ability to affect people's lives elsewhere and had a role in the community beyond my individual life, really.
- 03-01:07:44
Farrell: Sorry. I don't mean to laugh when you're answering, but those [dog] eyes.
- 03-01:07:49
Halsted: Well, the dog is really important in my life, too. Nelson, go away. Wells, would you call Nelson? Thank you. Go on.
- 03-01:08:08
Farrell: Did that make you feel like more part of the community?
- 03-01:08:14
Halsted: Oh, absolutely. It really gave me standing to feel like I was someone who mattered in the community and that I had a place here.
- 03-01:08:22
Farrell: At what point did San Francisco start to feel like home for you?

03-01:08:26

Halsted: I think long before that because I hadn't actually lived anywhere growing up so very long, and so it became home to me, I would say, by 1970, '71.

03-01:08:42

Farrell: And you had no desire to go anywhere else?

03-01:08:45

Halsted: No. I might have mentioned in something I wrote to you that I thought about joining the state department but couldn't quite find the guts to do that.

03-01:08:55

Farrell: Well, is there anything that you want to add more for today before we move more into SPUR and the port commission and waterfront?

03-01:09:03

Halsted: I'm trying to think. No, there are things that overlap. When I was involved in the Hill Dwellers we did have a whole committee to take down the Embarcadero Freeway. That didn't happen until much later. Lots of things like that that were going on over time and don't kind of fit in to any category.

03-01:09:22

Farrell: Yeah, and I figured that next time, too, we'll talk more. We'll talk a little bit about that. There's those big things.

03-01:09:29

Halsted: I think that's fine.

03-01:09:30

Farrell: Thank you.

03-01:09:30

Halsted: Thank you.

Interview 4: May 2, 2018

04-00:00:01

Farrell: Okay, this is Shanna Farrell back with Anne Halsted on Wednesday, May 2nd, 2018 and this is our fourth interview session. We are in North Beach, San Francisco. Okay, Anne, so when we left off last time we had talked a little bit about your involvement with the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. One of the things that we didn't talk about that you were involved in was issue around Pier 39, which is one of the piers on The Embarcadero. It was developed by a man named Warren Simmons, who is the owner of the Chevy's restaurant fortune, or company?

04-00:00:43

Halsted: Or was, right.

04-00:00:44

Farrell: He began the permitting process to develop that in 1973, but in 1977 it kind of became known that he planned to use a steam train to take people from the foot of Market Street up to Embarcadero to the Pier 39 complex. There was some opposition to that, some concern around that. Can you tell me about that?

04-00:01:12

Halsted: You know, I don't even remember about a steam train.

04-00:01:15

Farrell: Oh, really?

04-00:01:16

Halsted: I don't. What I remember, and I know that you're right that he started the project earlier, was that I think it was the year before, in '76 or '77, Pier 37 burned down. It was a huge fire and that whole pier shed burned down. I lived down at Francisco and Grant, and so I saw the fire. It was a really spectacular fire, and then, within a year, Warren Simmons was proposing this development. It was kind of an odd thing that the fire eliminated what was in his way, but he proposed this development. I was president of the Hill Dwellers then, so I had the responsibility to figure out a position and then carrying forward what our position was. So, that was really my role.

It was a tough time. Mayor Feinstein supported the project. She wasn't mayor then. She was supervisor, but just after the opening of Pier 39 in October '78 was when Dan White, who had a shop at Pier 39, shot the mayor and Supervisor Milk. Diane [Feinstein] became mayor.

[Narrator Redacted]

04-00:03:15

Farrell: Well, with Pier 39, what was your position? What was the Telegraph Hill Dwellers' position?

04-00:03:21

Halsted:

Well, I don't have it in front of me as to the exact words. We just thought it was way too much development, just too much of a tourist attraction in one place, too many restaurants, the kind of inauthentic development that we hoped wouldn't happen. Better than some, obviously, better than, say, big box retail or something, but still it seemed to, and it did, in fact, create a huge traffic problem when it first opened, for the first year or so. We were particularly opposed to the garage, as I recall, which is a huge garage. It attracted more cars than it solved parking problems.

04-00:04:03

Farrell:

Yeah, and that complex, when it opened in 1978, was forty-five acres. It had 110 businesses with twenty-three sit-down restaurants, which some have closed since.

04-00:04:14

Halsted:

Right. It just overwhelmed the whole area.

04-00:04:16

Farrell:

That's insane. That's like a mall, essentially. I know that you have interest in both preserving areas but also you're realistic about economic development that also supports neighborhoods. In your perfect world, how would you have reconciled that project?

04-00:04:41

Halsted:

Well, I would have put some more public purpose along with some retail and maybe a better marina. That was another thing. He put in the marina to begin with to sort of advance the cause and it was a very poorly built marina. It had to be rebuilt not long after that because it was really done on the cheap. I would have done something that had more at least water-oriented recreation. Actually, one of the best things that happened was after the earthquake in 1989 the sea lions came in and created water-oriented recreation there. It's not the worst thing that could ever happen, but as one of the first big new developments to happen along the waterfront it seemed like better than the US Steel building but not as good as we should have had, not as good as the Exploratorium or the Ferry Building or some of the other things that have come along since.

04-00:05:34

Farrell:

Yeah, which are also spaced out along the waterfront, too, so it's not all congested and clogged.

04-00:05:39

Halsted:

Right, and that's all intentional. We did manage to preserve the open space along the water's edge. BCDC monitors that very carefully.

04-00:05:52

Farrell:

When you were campaigning against the build-out of Pier 39, I had read in some articles that you spent a lot of time writing letters to members and to

different people. Do you remember what messages you were trying to convey or sort of what the narratives of the letters were?

04-00:06:10

Halsted:

I don't. Maybe you could refresh my mind. I just remember thinking that it was just way too touristic. San Francisco's economy needed to be developed in other directions as well. It has obviously become quite a touristic economy. I don't think that the forces of the economy were probably shifted by that then. It probably was what was happening.

04-00:06:32

Farrell:

Were there a lot of people in North Beach that supported your position?

04-00:06:38

Halsted:

Oh, right, mostly.

04-00:06:41

Farrell:

What were the arguments for the development of Pier 39?

04-00:06:46

Halsted:

Well, strangely enough, I remember George Moscone calling me on the phone and talking about it. I remember having this discussion where he said the waterfront is dying. It needs new life and I don't know that he was advocating particularly for this. But I remember having the discussion with him. Can there ever be too much development on the waterfront? I thought there could be. But at that point he didn't really think there could be. There was a need for restoration of the old sheds and all those things, and there were fires. There was a fire at Pier 30/32 a year or two later, I think. It was sort of the instinct to get rid of the things that were falling apart and replace them with something that people could enjoy.

04-00:07:34

Farrell:

What were those conversations like when you're talking to people like George Moscone?

04-00:07:40

Halsted:

They were not very long conversations, but I felt honored that he'd even discuss it with me. They were a little bit older than I was and they were more involved in the need for development than I was.

04-00:07:55

Farrell:

Did you feel like, because you didn't have a job in city politics, that wasn't how you earned your income, that the stakes were a little bit lower for you, that you were able to argue your position?

04-00:08:05

Halsted:

Probably. Strangely enough, the architect for Pier 39 was the brother of the guy who was the CEO of US Leasing, the company I worked for. But, I never had any complaints from anybody.

04-00:08:19

Farrell:

From what I read, Telegraph Hill Dwellers had about four or five hundred members, but there's a lot more people that live in the neighborhood than that. Did you, in times of campaigns when the stuff was happening, see membership grow at all?

04-00:08:34

Halsted:

I think we did, but I don't remember. I think we did, but I don't remember specifically.

04-00:08:40

Farrell:

Were there public hearings or anything that would happen?

04-00:08:42

Halsted:

Oh, lots, yeah.

04-00:08:43

Farrell:

Do you have any memories of what those meetings were like?

04-00:08:47

Halsted:

I have some painful memories of how hard they were, how hard it is to get your point across to the establishment when you have a different position. The press covering it and always feeling the press was slanted towards the establishment.

04-00:09:06

Farrell:

Oh, interesting. Can you tell me how you developed your relationship with the media? Were there any reporters that you felt like you trusted?

04-00:09:19

Halsted:

I think I don't really remember specifically, but Jerry Adams from the Chronicle or the Examiner—I don't know which he was with then—was always pretty favorable towards the neighborhoods. I remember that a fellow who's now a good friend of mine, Rick Laubscher, was a TV reporter. That's how I met him and he was definitely a fan of Warren Simmons. I just thought he was evil at that time, but we're very good friends now. He's the one who actually has led the whole historic railway.

04-00:09:50

Farrell:

The Market Railway?

04-00:09:53

Halsted:

All of it. He's really the brains behind it.

04-00:09:55

Farrell:

Or, not Third Street but the Market, yeah. On that note, can you tell me a little bit about Warren Simmons and what your impressions of him were and maybe about some of the interactions you had with him?

04-00:10:10

Halsted:

He was very cordial. I think he was used to getting his way. He'd been a Pan Am pilot and some of my Pan Am flight attendant friends told me stories

about him and how successful he was with women. He still was. He played tennis and he challenged people who worked for him to play tennis with him and tried to beat them. He was a typical kind of successful entrepreneur. And, he was a Cal [University of California, Berkeley] graduate.

04-00:10:43

Farrell:

So he was pretty well connected around the city?

04-00:10:45

Halsted:

Oh yeah. I think he went to Lowell. I don't know what else.

04-00:10:50

Farrell:

What was it like being on opposing sides from him?

04-00:10:56

Halsted:

I was pretty junior. I just wasn't as sophisticated as he in order to have the power that he had and not being an organized activist, per se, I didn't have those tools, nor was I probably very interested in developing them. I probably wasn't as effective as I could have been if I had been that.

04-00:11:18

Farrell:

I did read in one article you saying that you would have hired him if you could afford him. What was it about him that you admired?

04-00:11:27

Halsted:

Well, he was a good salesman, obviously. He sold the bill of goods and we did hire salespeople, so I could spot that.

04-00:11:40

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about your memories of what Pier 39 was like before it was redeveloped?

04-00:11:47

Halsted:

I don't really remember right now. I remember what Pier 37 was because there was a restaurant there and Pier 37 was the one that burned down and Pier 39 was adjacent to it. It was one of these regular finger piers.

04-00:11:59

Farrell:

But it wasn't memorable at that point?

04-00:12:02

Halsted:

Not that I remember.

04-00:12:06

Farrell:

When it ended up opening, Dianne Feinstein ended up presiding over the grand opening. She had also promised Warren Simmons that she would wear a bikini if he met his opening deadline. Instead, she appeared in a one-piece bathing suit because it wasn't quite complete. It was like the compromise there. Were you at the grand opening?

04-00:12:30

Halsted:

I don't think so.

04-00:12:31

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about how—you had mentioned a little bit traffic got more congested—but about how things changed once that complex opened?

04-00:12:40

Halsted: Well, the traffic was really appalling because it just blocked everything on Sansome and Battery and The Embarcadero, particularly on weekends. There was no movement. So they had to reroute and change the direction of streets, reroute them to accommodate people getting into the garage. I think for the most part people who live in this neighborhood have never gone there much. We never went to the wharf that much in the first place—some. I was down there last night, actually, not at Pier 39, for some jazz, but at that point I don't think many people who lived in North Beach and Telegraph Hill spent much time at the wharf.

04-00:13:33

Farrell: Did parking change in this neighborhood, people parking up here and walking down there at all?

04-00:13:42

Halsted: I think I mentioned before we had instituted the residential parking program. The parking problem was always greater, I think, during the week than on weekends in this particular neighborhood at the top of the hill. People who don't live around are accustomed to walking up and down the hill to park. I don't remember that parking for Pier 39 was a problem here. It probably was down on Francisco and some of the streets that are closer.

04-00:14:13

Farrell: But it wasn't an obvious thing?

04-00:14:14

Halsted: It probably was, but I don't remember. I just remember the congestion.

04-00:14:19

Farrell: Who was in charge of changing the flow of traffic if you had to change the direction of a street or from two lanes to one lane?

04-00:14:28

Halsted: It had to be Department of Parking and Traffic. That's been reorganized since then so it's not the same as it was then.

04-00:14:35

Farrell: I didn't know if it was a concert of SPUR's work and the city.

04-00:14:38

Halsted: No.

04-00:14:45

Farrell: What would bring you to Pier 39 if you had to go there?

04-00:14:53

Halsted: Some group has a dinner there that I have to go to, not because the restaurants are so great, but that's where they've chosen to have it. Or, let me see, visitors from out of town who want to go see the sea lions, the sea lions are really fun. Those are probably the main things.

04-00:15:11

Farrell: So nothing went in there that was a necessity to life?

04-00:15:16

Halsted: No. They moved the Eagle Café from the ground up to the top floor there and that was pretty nice for a while. I think it's gotten pretty touristic since then.

04-00:15:29

Farrell: In 1979, a group of literal clowns filed a million-dollar lawsuit against Warren Simmons. They had a balloon company and had been evicted because Pier 39 had intended to start a balloon company itself. Do you have any memories of this lawsuit?

04-00:15:49

Halsted: It sounds vaguely familiar, but I don't remember it now.

04-00:15:53

Farrell: I had read that, and I was like, that's interesting.

04-00:15:55

Halsted: It's pretty silly.

04-00:15:57

Farrell: Simmons went on to sell Pier 39 in 1981. Can you tell me about if that changed anything, if that was noticeable?

04-00:16:06

Halsted: I don't really know. I know that Fritz Arko was the CEO for a long time. I guess he represented the Texas interest that bought it and then they tried to develop the aquarium and had competition from the cannery. That never happened, but finally an aquarium was developed. There was always a lot of controversy around it.

04-00:16:27

Farrell: Have your feelings changed about Pier 39 at all since then?

04-00:16:32

Halsted: Well, I don't think it's the devil. I was down at Castagnola's to hear Mike Greensill play piano last night and I was looking out at the old Alioto's and those old restaurants. They are really not very attractive, although they are pretty funky, and just trying to think to myself, is Pier 39 better or worse than that? I don't really know. I think that what the heart of Fisherman's Wharf has is the authenticity of having some fishing boats and some fishing industry. That makes the restaurants around that seem a little bit more authentic. It's all about the same. The important things now really are that the ferry service to

Alcatraz and the red and white ferry both provide access to the Bay. I think that's really important, and that that people when they're down there have access to some local fish, which is not a lot, but some.

04-00:17:38

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of if Pier 39 affected the fishing industry, the local fishing industry, when it was developed, if it displaced any fishers?

04-00:17:46

Halsted:

I don't think so, because I think fishing industry had always been over towards Pier 45. It needed a breakwater to protect it, and the breakwater was built in the 70s, early 80s there.

04-00:18:03

Farrell:

So it would offset that?

04-00:18:04

Halsted:

Yeah, right, but my history isn't complete on that either.

04-00:18:09

Farrell:

That's okay. Another project that you were involved in was the Embarcadero Freeway. Can you describe what the waterfront used to look like when there was a freeway over The Embarcadero?

04-00:18:27

Halsted:

Well, the double-deck freeway came to the foot of Broadway. That's as far as they got. Before my time, people in this neighborhood stopped it from going any further. It was meant to go all the way around. It was a huge concrete structure that blocked sun and light and access. It was a dividing wall between the city and the bay. I have a good drawing of it over there done by Stanley Saitowitz which shows you how—I'll have to show you on here.

04-00:18:56

Farrell:

How obstructive it was?

04-00:18:57

Halsted:

Very.

04-00:18:59

Farrell:

Was there more traffic and noise and air quality issues when it was up?

04-00:19:08

Halsted:

I haven't measured it. I don't know, probably. There certainly was more traffic getting onto the Bay Bridge that came through North Beach. It affected Broadway. It's what brought the nightlife crowd to Broadway. I remember working on the committee to have it removed. One of the people who was very engaged in it was Enrico Banducci, who had Enrico's on Broadway. He really wanted to have that freeway removed because it created a freeway down Broadway and brought what he would consider not North Beach types into North Beach.

04-00:19:47

Farrell: Yeah. It was Enrico's Sidewalk Café so he had a lot of outside.

04-00:19:51

Halsted: Exactly.

04-00:19:55

Farrell: How did you get involved with the campaign to remove the Embarcadero Freeway?

04-00:19:59

Halsted: Well, there was a campaign going on. A bunch of us who were involved in the neighborhood got involved and I, having been so active, joined that in I don't know what year. I do remember very well that when Carter was in office, one of the last things he did in office was sign the bill to authorize the transfer of the money for the connection of I-280 to the Bay Bridge, bringing it down to the roadway and rebuilding the roadway. We had that money and the plan in place. In the mid-'80s there was a campaign on the radio to change San Francisco's policy, because San Francisco's policy had been to remove it. The board of supervisors had a policy to have it removed. One or two supervisors and a radio campaign changed that, so by the mid-'80s our policy in San Francisco had been reversed so that we were not planning to take the freeway down. The earthquake came along and that gave us an opportunity to reestablish our policy.

04-00:21:09

Farrell: How did you go about raising money? Or maybe not you specifically, but how was money raised to redirect the freeway?

04-00:21:18

Halsted: It was money that was set aside in the highway trust fund, as I recall. It was an interstate highway, I-280, which was supposed to connect with the Bay Bridge. Rather than connecting with the Bay Bridge it came down to ground level and the money that was set aside for that connection was reallocated for the surface road. That's what I recall.

04-00:21:42

Farrell: Were there any other reasons besides the obstruction and the traffic congestion, the obstructed view and the traffic congestion, that made you oppose the freeway, that made you want to bring it down?

04-00:21:56

Halsted: You mean the existing freeway?

04-00:21:57

Farrell: Yeah.

04-00:22:03

Halsted: I've always preferred local streets to freeways when possible, but that's a personal view. I think that the sentiment was that our responsibility in San

Francisco was not so much to get people to come through San Francisco but to make it possible for people to be in San Francisco.

04-00:22:27

Farrell: Did it affect property values at all?

04-00:22:29

Halsted: Oh, I'm sure it did, although it was unpredictable. People couldn't count on it going one way or the other. I remember down along Stuart Street where the YMCA was, which became a Kimpton hotel, that the decision to put a hotel in and take over the YMCA was a pretty risky thing because there was no real promise that the freeway was going to come down.

04-00:23:04

Farrell: What was that process like? You had described the radio ads changing the position.

04-00:23:12

Halsted: That happened long before. That was, I don't know, '82, '83, something like that.

04-00:23:19

Farrell: But then all of a sudden it was going to stay up?

04-00:23:22

Halsted: Yes.

04-00:23:22

Farrell: So it seemed like it was going to come down, and then it was going to stay up. How did that affect dynamics in the city, in your work?

04-00:23:31

Halsted: Well, I think that we didn't give up hope but there was little hope for a while. I don't think that the plans were all in place. I don't think that we gave up on that. The city had a plan but couldn't act on it.

04-00:23:48

Farrell: I've heard a lot about how traffic was a lot different in the Bay Area a long time ago. Now it's congested all the time. But, do you have any memories of the Embarcadero Freeway being particularly clogged? Or did the traffic flow pretty well?

04-00:24:02

Halsted: Oh yeah. Every night it would just be stopped, like a holding pattern. It was a place to get the traffic off the streets and wait there to get on the bridge. It wasn't a particularly effective, from my viewpoint, conductor of traffic. Traffic has been really interesting. In 2008 we had almost no congestion here.

04-00:24:27

Farrell: During the recession?

04-00:24:27

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

04-00:24:29

Farrell: Interesting. That's really interesting. Did that also affect the development of the waterfront, having that there? The Ferry Building wasn't there before.

04-00:24:45

Halsted: The Ferry Building was there.

04-00:24:46

Farrell: Sorry, the redevelopment of the Ferry Building hadn't happened yet.

04-00:24:49

Halsted: Right, no, it tremendously enhanced that opportunity. We had had a program for redeveloping the Ferry Building underway in the '80s. It fell apart, but it wouldn't have been anywhere near as good as what we got.

04-00:25:04

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about the earthquake? Being here and seeing a lot of that happen, can you tell me a little bit about your memories of that day?

04-00:25:21

Halsted: I worked right down on Front Street. The company I worked for had been bought by Ford and so these people came out from Detroit to run the company. I was in the office of the CEO with the general counsel. I was looking out at the Bay Bridge when it happened. I remember the CEO was sitting at his desk and Peter and I were standing up and felt this earthquake. Peter and I walked over and stood in the doorjamb, under the door. He looked at us like we were misbehaving or something. But anyway, we couldn't see anything happening on the Bay Bridge but fairly quickly we knew that. I came home and nothing had happened here. I think one bottle of liquor had fallen over or something. We had a corner store and most of the people who had come out to work for US Leasing from Detroit had bought in the East Bay so they couldn't go home. I bought up all the hamburger and had a barbecue and had a big barbecue in the backyard.

04-00:26:28

Farrell: Oh, that's nice.

04-00:26:29

Halsted: And then had everybody stay overnight wherever they could. I do remember that. The power went out then and the next week, I think, was without power.

04-00:26:44

Farrell: Did the people from Detroit realize it was an earthquake as it was happening?

04-00:26:48

Halsted: The CEO didn't at first. Fairly quickly, though.

- 04-00:26:52
Farrell: Being an East Coaster, sometimes I don't always realize earthquakes are happening.
- 04-00:26:56
Halsted: I'm just shaking.
- 04-00:26:59
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about how the earthquake impacted the Embarcadero Freeway and what happened after that?
- 04-00:27:08
Halsted: Well, I think it became clear that it was not a stable structure. There was a committee. I don't remember exactly how it was constituted, a technical engineering committee, that had the responsibility for evaluating it. Some of those same people had been involved in the idea of the removal originally so they had some history with it and were able to persuade people that it was less safe and it should be removed.
- 04-00:27:45
Farrell: Did it close immediately after the earthquake?
- 04-00:27:48
Halsted: I don't remember.
- 04-00:27:50
Farrell: I'm just wondering because if it wasn't structurally sound if they had to—
- 04-00:27:53
Halsted: Yeah, I'm not sure.
- 04-00:27:56
Farrell: How long did it take for it to be removed?
- 04-00:27:59
Halsted: Good question. It took a while, but I don't remember. I know it was there for a while because we used to run every morning. There was a run on the freeway before they started taking it down. I do remember that, but I don't remember how long it was.
- 04-00:28:17
Farrell: You used to run on the closed freeway, the elevated freeway?
- 04-00:28:20
Halsted: They had a special run just before they took it down.
- 04-00:28:23
Farrell: Oh, it was one time?
- 04-00:28:24
Halsted: Right.

04-00:28:28

Farrell: What was the process of removal like for you as a resident?

04-00:28:32

Halsted: I don't remember it being troublesome. It probably was. You know how pain goes away.

04-00:28:40

Farrell: That's true. What was it like for you after having fought for this removal for over ten years for it to come down?

04-00:28:49

Halsted: It was really fortunate. I felt very thankful that it was the silver lining of the earthquake.

04-00:28:59

Farrell: How did it change the neighborhood traffic?

04-00:29:03

Halsted: I think it really has over time. I mean, we don't have the commuter traffic coming on Broadway the way we did now. The ownership and the uses on Broadway have taken a long time to change. There still are strip clubs, or the remains of strip clubs and people have similar uses to what they had before, but it's gradually changing. More housing and more habitable places.

04-00:29:33

Farrell: How does it feel now to have an unobstructed view of the bay?

04-00:29:37

Halsted: As you know from Justin Herman Plaza or from anywhere down there, it just makes a tremendous difference. The whole Promenade of The Embarcadero, Herb Caen Way, attracts tons of people. When I was first involved in the port, there were very few people that walked down there because there were trucks, and it was very dangerous. Even when I first was working in San Francisco I used to ride my bike to work on The Embarcadero, but there were railroad tracks. I remember that a young woman was run over by a semi along there and I decided it's just too risky. I can't be riding my bike when semis are there and looking at the railroad tracks and in fact the port has always had a lot of lawsuits from bicyclists who were injured because of the railroad tracks, which are mostly gone now.

04-00:30:36

Farrell: We'll talk about more the redevelopment or sort of the new life of The Embarcadero, especially with the Ferry Building, a little bit when we get to that. When you were working on the removal of the freeway, were there any contacts you made or people who became part of your network that stayed in your life for a while?

04-00:30:59

Halsted: Oh, lots, yeah. Who they were, they're people I've known for many years. It's sort of hard for me to go back and construct who was involved in which

movement. But, many of the people that I worked with in that are still good friends.

04-00:31:16

Farrell:

Moving to some of your other engagement activities, you were also part of the Business Executives for National Security, which is also known as BENS. Can you tell me a little bit about what BENS is and what they do?

04-00:31:34

Halsted:

Well, it's a nonprofit, or I guess it's a trade association, which sought to engage business people in defense policy. It's sort of interesting looking back on it and looking at where we are politically now because it seems like that's probably not very necessary. It did seem at that point like the military was run by people who had little sense of the world outside defense, and so the whole BRAC process, the base closure process, was one that was dreamed up by BENS. Without the impetus of business people, many of those bases that we had just held open would have stayed as military bases. It was an interesting time and it allowed people in business to get engaged in military, in defense policy.

04-00:32:42

Farrell:

I'm confused and interested in the idea of national security because I feel like that is such a broad, vague term. What in particular, when you were involved, did that mean?

04-00:32:58

Halsted:

Well, it meant a lot of different things. When I was first acquainted with it, I think it just was an entrée or a window into dealing with national policy in a field that interested me, in foreign affairs and how real people might intersect with that rather than abandoning it to experts all the time. It dealt with cybersecurity. Barbara Boxer was an active participant. It was not right wing or left wing. It was both.

04-00:33:43

Farrell:

One thing that they focused on initially was restraining the proliferation of nuclear arms. Was that one of their big campaigns, was after the nuclear winter, making sure that nuclear power didn't affect things too much?

04-00:34:00

Halsted:

I think it was more emphasis on nuclear weapons than nuclear power.

04-00:34:05

Farrell:

Oh, right, sorry, yeah. Was that something that had initially attracted you to working with BENS?

04-00:34:13

Halsted:

I don't think that was my primary attraction. My primary attraction was just feeling that people who were engaged as citizens should be equally able to voice their opinions on matters of defense and international relations.

04-00:34:33

Farrell: When you're talking about the closure of military bases, does that mean on Treasure Island and The Presidio or even the Oakland Army Base?

04-00:34:41

Halsted: All over the country, yes. Those were all a result of the BRAC process.

04-00:34:46

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about the BRAC process and how that works or what your recollection of that is?

04-00:34:51

Halsted: Yeah. Well, I don't remember exactly how it got started, but BENS was primary in getting it started. Congress, they set up a special committee of, I think, both houses of Congress to come up with a recommendation for bases to be closed. It was not debatable. I don't remember exactly how, but anyway they had to come up with these recommendations by a certain time. It was not something that could be killed. It just moved along once it was started and without that we'd still be housing people on these military bases all over the country. It was controversial because they were job sources in many places. It had to have an energy behind it that would be irreversible, I guess.

04-00:35:41

Farrell: Were you involved in any of the military base closures, maybe not directly but tangentially? Did they come up at board meetings?

04-00:35:50

Halsted: I was on the Treasure Island base closure committee in the '90s, but that was later.

04-00:36:00

Farrell: I guess all the base closures really started in the nineties because Oakland Army Base and Presidio was the same time. Before the base closed, those bases closed, was the culture or the dynamics of San Francisco or the Bay Area different than it is now?

04-00:36:19

Halsted: I'm sure it was in certain places. Certainly Mare Island or Alameda or some of those places were very different. It didn't affect me very much. The biggest effect for many of us has been the Presidio but that all was a result of the GGNRA [Golden Gate National Recreation Area] taking it over, which was very different from most bases closing, which just went to commercial development or some kind of other development.

04-00:36:43

Farrell: Yeah, which is interesting, because you were involved in BENS until 2005. Is that correct?

04-00:36:50

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

04-00:36:51

Farrell:

When we get to the '90s we'll talk a little bit more about that because I'm really interested in that. Over in Alameda, there's been redevelopment now but that hasn't always been the case. Some of those buildings, including the commissary, just are still dormant.

04-00:37:07

Halsted:

Well, same with Treasure Island.

04-00:37:09

Farrell:

Exactly, and now it's starting to be redeveloped a little bit.

04-00:37:11

Halsted:

Yeah. It's just a long process.

04-00:37:15

Farrell:

What was your role on the BENS board? How did you get involved with them?

04-00:37:20

Halsted:

The founder, Stanley Weiss, came to San Francisco and gave a lunch. I was invited to come by someone, I think Brooks Walker, who was the chairman of US Leasing. I went, and I asked a question. Stanley invited me to be on the board. That's how that worked. He was just forming it. There weren't very many women executives. He didn't have any other women who were asking questions.

04-00:37:49

Farrell:

Were you asking questions?

04-00:37:51

Halsted:

Mm-hmm, at this meeting that I went to.

04-00:37:54

Farrell:

What kind of questions were you asking? Do you remember?

04-00:37:55

Halsted:

I don't remember.

04-00:37:58

Farrell:

Do you remember the nature of them? Were they challenging ideas or concepts or just more sort of how does this work, how does this run? I don't know if you remember that.

04-00:38:07

Halsted:

I don't remember. I'm sorry.

04-00:38:09

Farrell:

That's fine. It's a specific question.

04-00:38:11

Halsted:

But he was just developing the organization, so I couldn't have been challenging him too much.

04-00:38:18

Farrell: Having been on a number of boards, they all have a similar pattern. But what was the same, and what was different, about being on the BENS board?

04-00:38:27

Halsted: Well, very different from the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. After I was president of Telegraph Hill Dwellers I swore I would never run another board where there was no staff because it was really, really a lot of work. BENS, for instance, has staff and organizes things. You as board members get material. You don't have to create it all yourself, so it's a very different kind of operations. It's not grassroots like that. It was interesting to be able to deal at a national level and look at national issues, to some degree.

04-00:39:05

Farrell: Aside from the BRAC process and that program, what were some of the other issues that they were focusing on during your time with them?

04-00:39:14

Halsted: Well, all kinds of things about purchasing, about how the military goes about purchasing and whether they get competitive bids. Almost all of the practices of the military were kind of the subject for questions and studies.

04-00:39:33

Farrell: How did that work? And did it change at all?

04-00:39:37

Halsted: Oh yeah. Lots of things were changed, but I don't think I can give you too many specifics. I would have to go back and pull that together. But Stanley Weiss has lots of material written on it.

04-00:39:47

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about him and your first meeting with him at the luncheon?

04-00:39:51

Halsted: He's an interesting guy. Actually, his wife was from San Francisco. He was an entrepreneur. I'm trying to remember. I think he grew up in Pennsylvania and went to Mexico and found some rare metal and made some money and then decided he was going to work on this continuing the work of Eisenhower and slowing down the military industrial complex from running the world. That's how he saw his role, I think.

04-00:40:23

Farrell: More of a watchdog kind of thing?

04-00:40:24

Halsted: Right, and engaging business people in trying to be in that activity.

04-00:40:29

Farrell: More buy-in?

- 04-00:40:30
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 04-00:40:32
Farrell: What were some of the things that you liked about his leadership of the organization?
- 04-00:40:37
Halsted: Well, he was always reaching out. He was very determined and very intellectual. He seemed to always be bringing new people in, a good salesman.
- 04-00:40:53
Farrell: Were there a lot of people on the board from San Francisco?
- 04-00:40:58
Halsted: Several, not a lot.
- 04-00:40:59
Farrell: Aside from Brooks, who were some of the other people on the board?
- 04-00:41:02
Halsted: Brooks wasn't on the board.
- 04-00:41:03
Farrell: Oh, he wasn't?
- 04-00:41:04
Halsted: No. Don Carlson from the East Bay, I don't know if you knew of him. He was with Continental Development. I can't remember. Who else was there? Bernard Petrie, a good friend of Stanley's, whose family owned department stores around the world. Harry Hunt, who lives up here on Telegraph Hill.
- 04-00:41:35
Farrell: Were there other board members from different places around the country?
- 04-00:41:39
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 04-00:41:39
Farrell: What other cities were represented?
- 04-00:41:42
Halsted: All over the country.
- 04-00:41:45
Farrell: Did every state have a representative?
- 04-00:41:48
Halsted: No.
- 04-00:41:50
Farrell: Do you remember the major ones, if it was like New York, Chicago?

- 04-00:41:53
Halsted: Yeah, the centers of industry, I'd say. But there were Kansas City.
- 04-00:42:04
Farrell: How did the interests based on geography affect priorities of the board? Or did it?
- 04-00:42:15
Halsted: Well, I don't really know. I'm not really sure. I think that there was a lot of priority setting done jointly by the board and probably the staff. Washington was most engaged. Most of the time, after Stanley stepped down, the CEO has been a former military person. They were very knowledgeable about the military.
- 04-00:42:40
Farrell: When you were on the board, how did the meetings work given people from different cities were on the board? Did you have just different chapter meetings?
- 04-00:42:52
Halsted: No, we went to Washington.
- 04-00:42:53
Farrell: Oh, so you traveled for this?
- 04-00:42:55
Halsted: Yeah.
- 04-00:42:56
Farrell: How often would you have meetings?
- 04-00:42:58
Halsted: Probably quarterly. I don't remember. I was on two boards in Washington, the Women's Campaign Fund and that one, at the same time.
- 04-00:43:05
Farrell: So you would just travel for that?
- 04-00:43:06
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 04-00:43:07
Farrell: Did they cover your travel expenses? So you would have to pay out of pocket to participate?
- 04-00:43:12
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 04-00:43:13
Farrell: What kept you committed to that board for so long?

04-00:43:16

Halsted: Just learning, interesting, getting to know people. It was an interesting experience. I got to know lots of interesting people and learned a lot.

04-00:43:31

Farrell: Anybody in particular that stands out that you were able to connect with?

04-00:43:37

Halsted: Well, Jim Fellows, an awful lot of people I met.

04-00:43:45

Farrell: There was a memo that I saw that you, I think, had asked permission to continue with the board work from US Leasing. What prompted you to write that memo? And how was it received? Basically saying, this is the time it's taking. I'd like to continue this. Can I have permission to do that?

04-00:44:07

Halsted: Well, I felt I needed to clear things with my employer because it did take some time away, and my job was a more than full-time job. I always had a lot of outside activities. I was creating change at US Leasing, too. People would always be after me, to a certain degree. You really need to cover yourself when you were doing outside work as to whether you're doing your job as well as you can.

04-00:44:43

Farrell: How was the memo responded to?

04-00:44:45

Halsted: I don't remember ever having any complaints about that or about any other activity I had, although I'm sure there were people who complained.

04-00:44:55

Farrell: What was some of the things that you were most proud of from your time on that board?

04-00:45:05

Halsted: Well, they gave me an award, their Eisenhower Award. That was really quite remarkable, for being a novice and a layperson involved in defense policy and trying to encourage other people to become more knowledgeable in defense policy so they could at least have an opinion rather than just pro-nuke or anti-nuke.

04-00:45:34

Farrell: What were some of the challenges of being on that board?

04-00:45:37

Halsted: Well, most of the people on the board were very wealthy, so being able to participate at a level that was equal was a little bit hard.

04-00:45:49

Farrell: Was there anybody who tried to manage that, sort of the money, the socioeconomic issues, to level the playing field?

- 04-00:46:01
Halsted: I think Stanley was always very fair about that. He never expected me to do what the guy who was head of ADP or someone did. He was very reasonable about that.
- 04-00:46:12
Farrell: Was any of your responsibility to raise money as a part of that board?
- 04-00:46:16
Halsted: Yes, I think almost every board.
- 04-00:46:19
Farrell: Yeah. How did you go about doing that specifically for this board?
- 04-00:46:24
Halsted: Well, it would be trying to get other people in business to come to events or that kind of thing, and to understand the relevance of participating in it.
- 04-00:46:35
Farrell: Did you ever pull from people you knew through US Leasing?
- 04-00:46:37
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 04-00:46:38
Farrell: Was that seen as a conflict of interest at all?
- 04-00:46:40
Halsted: No.
- 04-00:46:43
Farrell: At this time, too, I know you have a lot of civic engagement. Was Brooks also on boards? Was that something that he understood?
- 04-00:46:54
Halsted: He was. I'm sure he was, but he seemed to understand that. He was chairman. Ned Mundell was the president. I reported to other people. There was a fair amount of support for that.
- 04-00:47:15
Farrell: Another big part of your engagement also had to do with the Port Commission. Last time you had mentioned that because you were on the open space committee Dianne Feinstein had appointed you to the Port Commission. You had been on the open space committee for about a year and then moved to the port commission.
- 04-00:47:41
Halsted: No. I was on the Redevelopment Agency Commission.
- 04-00:47:44
Farrell: Redevelopment, sorry. I'm mixing up. You were appointed in 1984. There were five members on the commission and you were the first female?

04-00:47:58

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

04-00:48:00

Farrell: What was that like you for you, to get appointed, especially by Dianne Feinstein?

04-00:48:04

Halsted: It was very exciting. It was a commission whose work was so much more obvious and so much less abstract that it was interesting to be involved in. In a time when the maritime industry was flagging, and the need for change of resources was clear to me, not to everybody.

04-00:48:28

Farrell: Can you talk a little bit about that, about how the maritime industry was changing in the early eighties?

04-00:48:34

Halsted: Well, it really happened before that. But it started to become apparent. The whole switch to containerized shipping, I think, started in the '70s and these finger piers couldn't accommodate containers. I should know the date. but it was sometime in the '70s, I believe, when the Oakland Channel was dredged. That became a much quicker route to get cargo from the Pacific to the center of the country. If you just went directly to Oakland, you didn't have to come to San Francisco and go around the South Bay. It just became economically logical to go to Oakland rather than San Francisco, which slowly undermined the freight business in San Francisco.

04-00:49:26

Farrell: When the freight business in San Francisco was dipping, was there anything coming in to take its place, whether that was the fishing industry, whether that was the cruise ships?

04-00:49:36

Halsted: Well, the cruise ships were coming in. They were going to Pier 35. No, there wasn't much because these pier buildings are limited in their scale, et cetera. We had a scrap iron operation down where the cruise ship is right now. I remember that's one of the first ways I was actually ever connected with the port, because at that time I was president of the Hill Dwellers, I think. They would come. These scrap iron ships would come and dump the scrap iron in the middle of the night. It'd just go crash-crash-crash all night. The neighbors were not happy about that. I remember calling up the port director and talking to him about what we could do. The ships would come in so the back of the boat, the rear of the boat, was on the outside. The sound would bounce against that and then come up. I finally suggested to the port director that he get the ships to turn around so the sound would at least bounce out. That really made a huge difference. It was a really good way to start my relationship with the port because it seemed like a really constructive way rather than just saying no.

04-00:50:52

Farrell: And easy, too.

04-00:50:53

Halsted: Right. So, the shipping uses down here were not important ones. Scrap iron is an important use, but it didn't make a lot of money for anyone. Down where the Exploratorium is now, they had a cotton warehouse for a long time. It seems strange that they would want to store cotton right on the water. One of the reasons they do is so the cotton will be heavier and then it's worth more. Anyway, so there were a few particular uses. There was a foreign trade zone, but not intense uses like you have in Oakland. What we had in San Francisco were down at Pier 80 and Pier 96. But again, they suffered from the problem of not having easy rail access to the East Bay. Did that answer your question?

04-00:51:47

Farrell: Yes. When you were appointed, what were some of the issues that were on the forefront at the time in '84, early eighties?

04-00:51:55

Halsted: Good question. I should go get my notes out. Well, there was always this problem of what to do with these piers and how to figure out what was worthwhile. There was always the problem of the restaurants at the Fisherman's Wharf. Were we getting our share of money from them? How to plan for the future because most of the energy of the port at that time was still dedicated to trying to retrieve that maritime business and it was pretty obvious to me that that wasn't coming back.

04-00:52:28

Farrell: When you say people were concerned that you weren't getting your share of the money from the restaurants, can you explain that a little bit more, like what the restaurants would owe the city, the community?

04-00:52:43

Halsted: They were leasing from the port. They had sixty-year leases. The restaurants at the Wharf had sixty-year leases with the port. They had to pay a percentage of their revenues to the port. Whether or not we could track that and make sure they were accurate or how all those things worked is very complicated.

04-00:53:07

Farrell: Interesting. So it was through the lease agreements?

04-00:53:10

Halsted: Right.

04-00:53:13

Farrell: Very, very long lease agreements. Sixty years is a long time.

04-00:53:16

Halsted: Yes.

- 04-00:53:17
Farrell: Do you have any sense of, with those lease agreements, if it was built in that there would be price increases? Or it was sort of like rent controlled?
- 04-00:53:26
Halsted: I don't think you'd say it was rent controlled, but if you have a percentage of your revenues, it will go up if revenues go up, you see?
- 04-00:53:33
Farrell: Oh, so it was a sliding scale kind of thing?
- 04-00:53:34
Halsted: But then you have to figure out what the credits you get for improvements and things are. It's complicated auditing stuff.
- 04-00:53:41
Farrell: Were the restaurants at all responsible for maintenance?
- 04-00:53:47
Halsted: Not major maintenance.
- 04-00:53:50
Farrell: Just of their space and that was kind of it?
- 04-00:53:51
Halsted: Not the underpinnings.
- 04-00:53:56
Farrell: You were one of five members on the commission. Do you remember who the other five members were at the time?
- 04-00:54:02
Halsted: If I think about it, I will. [Narrator Addendum: Gene Gartland, Jerry Herman, Arthur Coleman, Jim Ruddin]
- 04-00:54:05
Farrell: We can always add that in later, too. You were the first female on the commission. Can you tell me a little bit about what your experience was as the first female in that space?
- 04-00:54:16
Halsted: Well, it was like being a first anywhere. You're looked at as a different commodity. You're not quite treated the same. And, the rules aren't totally apparent until you're participating. I think Arthur Coleman may have. It was Jim Rudden, Arthur Coleman, Jimmy Herman, me, Gene Gartland. It changed over time, of course. So, again, most of those people were older than I. They were part of the maritime industry construct in one way or another. Their perspective was different from mine.
- 04-00:55:02
Farrell: How did their perspectives differ?

- 04-00:55:05
Halsted: Because they were part of that maritime industry construct. They were looking to grow the maritime role of the port. I came from a neighborhood background, basically.
- 04-00:55:17
Farrell: Were there times where you had conflicts and you were arguing different sides?
- 04-00:55:24
Halsted: Yes.
- 04-00:55:26
Farrell: How did you resolve that?
- 04-00:55:28
Halsted: Sometimes well, sometimes poorly. It's resolved by a vote, basically.
- 04-00:55:39
Farrell: Did you ever feel like you kind of had to work twice as hard to be heard because you are a female?
- 04-00:55:48
Halsted: I think it's a matter of how well you can articulate and express. That's probably the biggest challenge.
- 04-00:55:58
Farrell: How did you develop that over time, your ability to articulate and express your opinions?
- 04-00:56:03
Halsted: Well, I found it a reasonably comfortable place to be and the environment was not alien. As I recall it wasn't terrible. The only thing I remember that was difficult was trying to get an opportunity to be an officer of the commission because they didn't have any rules for changing it. They just kept it in place until it changed.
- 04-00:56:30
Farrell: Yeah, I read that it was a little bit vague. You could have anywhere from one to four appointments for four years. That's such a varying degree of time. Or is that just for presidents?
- 04-00:56:46
Halsted: It's not the way I remember it.
- 04-00:56:49
Farrell: Okay, so maybe I was wrong.
- 04-00:56:52
Halsted: They just didn't turn over presidents. There was no opportunity to suggest someone else become.

- 04-00:57:00
Farrell: Oh, I see. Well, in terms of that, you did become president. You were elected in 1988. How did that election, especially given that sometimes you just mentioned there wasn't opportunities.
- 04-00:57:16
Halsted: Well, I forced them to change the rules.
- 04-00:57:18
Farrell: How did you force them to do that?
- 04-00:57:20
Halsted: Just by talking to them and saying it's reasonable. I think it was a very hard argument to oppose, I think, except for politically.
- 04-00:57:29
Farrell: Who was the president at the time?
- 04-00:57:31
Halsted: I think it was Arthur Coleman—very nice man, black doctor.
- 04-00:57:38
Farrell: What was the election process like?
- 04-00:57:42
Halsted: I'm sure there was a nomination and election.
- 04-00:57:47
Farrell: This was also a time, it came right after Mayor Agnos called for the mass resignation of all of the city commissioners. He called essentially for the resignation of 250 commissioners. That's a ton. That's a huge turnover, also, I think, creates chaos.
- 04-00:58:08
Halsted: Right. Plus, he didn't really have the authority to do that.
- 04-00:58:14
Farrell: Do you remember? I did read that it caused chaos. Do you remember that at all?
- 04-00:58:18
Halsted: I do. I thought he just made an error. It was an error in judgment.
- 04-00:58:23
Farrell: How did that affect things?
- 04-00:58:26
Halsted: Well, I don't know. It didn't cause me to do anything because I knew that I had a term, and he didn't have the right to remove me unless he had cause. He could ask for it. But I didn't have to.

04-00:58:40

Farrell: Do you remember what his reasoning for wanting to make these changes were?

04-00:58:46

Halsted: I think he just wanted a new administration. He came from Sacramento. He had not been in San Francisco. I don't think he paid as much attention to existing staff for advice. But, I might be wrong.

04-00:59:00

Farrell: Did many of the commissioners end up resigning? I mean, it's one thing to ask.

04-00:59:05

Halsted: Not on the port commission.

04-00:59:07

Farrell: But do you remember in San Francisco if a lot of them did?

04-00:59:09

Halsted: Yeah, I think so.

04-00:59:11

Farrell: Did that affect your ability to work with other agencies?

04-00:59:17

Halsted: I think there was a lot of upset at that time. But I don't remember that it was a major effect. Staffs run the organizations. And commissions are important. But they aren't really driving policy for the most part.

04-00:59:36

Farrell: Just kind of overseeing things and making sure it runs?

04-00:59:37

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

04-00:59:40

Farrell: I did read in an article that in response to being the first president you had said, "I guess I'm sort of attracted to that opportunity. I realize it's tough to be the best feminist and the best participant when you're first, but I like the challenge. The whole maritime industry and port institution are so mired in history that they tend to operate in patterns of the past. Women don't first-in so easily, but the change is going to come. I'm very happy to be part of that change." Can you tell me a little bit about what about that challenge you liked of being the first female president?

04-01:00:20

Halsted: I guess I had worked in enough male-dominated places that I didn't have any hesitation about trying that and then setting a pattern that would be okay for women and minorities in the future. That was a comfortable place to be. When I look now, people have been there for twenty years now. It really has changed dramatically, so it's great.

04-01:00:49

Farrell:

With some of the patterns of the past that you had mentioned, that institutions are mired in history, do you remember what some of the patterns were that you changed, aside from gender? Were there any ways of the board operating or the commission operating that you had helped shift?

04-01:01:09

Halsted:

I'm sure there were because those were subtle but important things, but right now I can't think of them. I think that making sure things are agendaed clearly, that meetings or those kinds of things are always important. The law requires most of that, too.

04-01:01:22

Farrell:

Yeah, so I had also read that you were quite good at setting agendas. I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about how you prioritized issues that would come up.

04-01:01:35

Halsted:

At the port?

04-01:01:36

Farrell:

Yeah.

04-01:01:36

Halsted:

Well, everything had to be prioritized before there was a meeting. It would be in a conversation with the people on the staff who were putting the agenda together.

04-01:01:47

Farrell:

But how would you decide what got more time or less time? Which issues were more important?

04-01:01:56

Halsted:

I don't think I have a good answer to that. Planning for the future is always more important for me than today's activities, but today's activities always get attention. For instance, when we had taken the freeway down and we were designing the roadway, and we had to decide about putting trees in The Embarcadero, we had huge issues with regards to spending millions of dollars for shipping. The one that kept everybody's attention was the palm trees on The Embarcadero. That issue went on for months and occupied everybody's attention, and it's still working.

04-01:02:41

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about the palm trees? What was the issue about the palm trees?

04-01:02:48

Halsted:

Well, in the first place, The Embarcadero is pretty much over salt water. It's not ground without salt in it. Originally the art commission had decided that we shouldn't have any trees along there because it was salt water and it wasn't appropriate. But then, when Mayor Agnos came in he said he really wanted a

tree-lined boulevard. We had to go back and try to find a tree that would work there. I think I put together a committee that existed in the city of the arborists to recommend trees and they recommended the Canary Island Palm, which is what we chose. Many people thought that a palm tree would be like LA in San Francisco. Well, as you know, all over Northern California there are Canary Island Palms. But anyway, it went on. There was another radio campaign to try to take a poll and all this stuff, all about the palm trees. Anyway, it was kind of an iconic, easy-to-relate-to issue. As I say, today's agenda may be set by something that the public's interested in, not what's most important in the longer run. Maybe it was important because it kind of coalesced people behind the whole idea of the Promenade.

04-01:04:15

Farrell:

Yeah. Do you remember what some of the other issues were that were coming up that you would try to prioritize?

04-01:04:26

Halsted:

I don't know how to respond to that. There was always business to be done by the port. There's always planning to be done. We had controversy over developments. We had to do a new waterfront land use plan. That was a big deal.

04-01:04:48

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about the land use plan? So, that was planning for the future?

04-01:04:54

Halsted:

Right. But the genesis of it really was that we had proposed a low-rise hotel right under the Bay Bridge at Pier 26, I think, four stories. At the same time the redevelopment agency was proposing a hotel on the water at Pier 40, so someone got the idea. Under state lands policy, you're not allowed to privatize the waterfront. You can't put any housing on the waterfront on state lands, but you can put navigation, fisheries and recreation. You can have hotels because they're public. We struggled for uses that would be revenue-producing along the port. This was a location that was actually right under the Bay Bridge, so not a really attractive location, and a low-rise hotel. It created an opportunity for people to run a campaign against it and precluded hotels on the waterfront. It was just essentially the same campaign as we had against 8 Washington a couple of years ago. It was No Wall on the Waterfront. Well, there was no wall proposed. But anyway, that's the way it was cast and it passed. It also required that the port come up with a land use plan for the waterfront. We created a community-based committee and spent the next, I think, almost ten years creating a land use plan.

04-01:06:34

Farrell:

Did that include the Ferry Building?

04-01:06:37

Halsted:

I don't think that was an issue in that plan.

- 04-01:06:41
Farrell: Do you remember some of the big things that you wanted in the land use plan?
- 04-01:06:49
Halsted: Well, to get community consensus behind uses that could actually sustain the port.
- 04-01:06:54
Farrell: What were some of the revenue-generating ideas that you had, since hotels couldn't go in now?
- 04-01:07:01
Halsted: Well, it's really tough. As you see, the Exploratorium does pay some rent but it's not a big rent payer. What we have now is Pier 70 and the new development of the Giants, across from the stadium, and of course the AT&T Park.
- 04-01:07:30
Farrell: It's interesting, though, because I know Pier 23 is the photography gallery.
- 04-01:07:35
Halsted: 24.
- 04-01:07:35
Farrell: Oh, Pier 24. But is that leased?
- 04-01:07:42
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 04-01:07:43
Farrell: It's a private collection so the person who owns it has a lease. Geolo Capital is on The Embarcadero, so does John Pritzker pay lease for that space even though it's a private business?
- 04-01:07:54
Halsted: Right.
- 04-01:07:56
Farrell: As long as you're leasing space, that's considered revenue generating?
- 04-01:08:02
Halsted: Right.
- 04-01:08:04
Farrell: The community-based committee didn't have any issues with that?
- 04-01:08:10
Halsted: Oh yeah, there are lots of issues. I mean, it took us ten years to come up with a land use plan. There were lots of issues and differences. Actually, we carved out a portion of the center of the waterfront. I think it goes from Pier 7 to I'm not sure where on the South End, maybe even to China Basin, where the same rules didn't pertain. If you were renovating a historic structure you had an

opportunity for a longer lease. There are so many rules in place that limit the ability to raise money.

04-01:08:46

Farrell: What were some of the community members' ideas for generating revenue?

04-01:08:54

Halsted: It's always been harder to get that answer. We'll have bike rentals.

04-01:09:02

Farrell: So, kind of small-potatoes stuff they're thinking of?

04-01:09:03

Halsted: Yeah, right. I mean, I think it's true. As much as I felt the same way, that what we'd really like to have is public space all along the water's edge, you need to have a revenue source to pay for that. One time many years ago I went to Phil Burton when he did the GGNRA and said can't you extend it around? He said, well, you know, the politics are just too difficult once you get past Fort Mason. So, yes, the politics are difficult, but I think we have done a pretty good job of improving the public space. Really the bargain was that the public space would be on the water side, for the most part. Now there are those trying to push that back.

04-01:09:48

Farrell: One thing in terms of budget that I had read, and these figures are from the '80s so they're not current, but in '86 the ports brought in \$2.5 million in revenue and then a net income of \$2.3 million dollars, essentially. The net income, where did that money go? How was it spent?

04-01:10:26

Halsted: I'm not sure about those numbers, but for the most part the income is spent on taking care of the facilities.

04-01:10:33

Farrell: So a lot of maintenance?

04-01:10:34

Halsted: Yeah, and funding bonds. Public finance is a big deal.

04-01:10:45

Farrell: There were a lot of permit requests. I did read a commission report where I very much enjoyed how you started the meeting. You were asking everybody to notice the herring boats that were outside of the window and then mentioning if you have time after the meeting you should go watch them, and talking about how the port is a tremendous resource for the city and the Bay Area, both economically and aesthetically. It's crucial because it drives employment in the maritime and tourist industries. I'm wondering, in terms of that being said, how you would go about deciding on permit requests. What kinds of permit requests were coming in, and how you would either yay or nay them.

- 04-01:11:34
Halsted: Permit requests such as leases?
- 04-01:11:37
Farrell: Leases or development.
- 04-01:11:39
Halsted: There were a lot of rules about how we considered it. We didn't have single-source developments at all. We would have competitive bidding for an opportunity. Most of them had rules attached to them to begin with. But, for instance, the hotel I just talked about, the developer that won the opportunity to propose was unsuccessful partly because he had not been able to get labor on his side. There are lots of things that go beyond even the rules.
- 04-01:12:13
Farrell: For you, what would make an ideal permit request?
- 04-01:12:18
Halsted: An ideal permit? It depends on what we're talking about. I mean, obviously something that has public support, has adequate financing, and I think will be an asset for the future.
- 04-01:12:32
Farrell: How about for people who were trying to lease? What makes an ideal lease tenant?
- 04-01:12:38
Halsted: Well, good credit and sound ideas for making money, I guess.
- 04-01:12:46
Farrell: What were some of those ideas? I know at least in parts of The Embarcadero, because I come from a restaurant background I automatically think about La Mar or The Slanted Door. There's also Starbucks on the pier, or on the waterfront. What makes one restaurant business more attractive? Is there anything?
- 04-01:13:13
Halsted: I think that in San Francisco we're always looking for authentic and original ideas rather than chains, but the port has had a hard time. We had a restaurant opportunity behind the Ferry Building, where that big space is that's part of the BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit] ventilation structure. A Chinese family had that lease. I think it was a thirty- or forty-year lease, it might have been longer than that, but was unable to make it really work. The longer they held on to the property the more they wanted for it. We couldn't get it back. What you really need is someone who's a good operator, has really strong ideas, has enough money and all those things, just like in any good business.
- 04-01:14:01
Farrell: Were there ever times that you took a risk on a new business owner, somebody who was more green?

04-01:14:07

Halsted:

Oh, I'm sure there were. But I can't right now think of them. Sometimes it was taking a risk on an old business owner. You mentioned Pier 23. Well, the Pier 23 Café down here is another iconic use. And that actually was a bar with music before. Two friends of mine, Peggy Knickerbocker and the one who owns it now, who's a good friend of mine, took it over. That was not long after I'd been on the port commission. They had history in the restaurant business. They were locals and reliable, so they made a good risk even though they were not old-time people. La Mar, the people, Simon Snellgrove, who was rejected for 8 Washington but actually did the development of Piers 1.5, 3 and 5, his partner was the one who found La Mar and recruited them and brought them in.

There's a lot of work that goes and the Ferry Building, recruiting all those retail spaces really required a developer who cared about the quality of those things. He hired a really great woman, Eleanor Bertino, to bring those retail spaces in. It's almost the character, the quality, the finances and the intent, sometimes hard to measure. You don't always get it from paper.

04-01:15:41

Farrell:

Yeah, that's very true. Yeah, that's very true.

04-01:15:44

Halsted:

But you need to.

04-01:15:47

Farrell:

What was it like working with some other city agencies when you were president of the port commission?

04-01:15:54

Halsted:

Well, there were lots of good things. When I was president, Rudy Nothenberg, who had been chief administrative officer, now I'm getting timing mixed up. Was that before or after he was CAO? Ran the Embarcadero reconstruction team. He was always great to work with. He had great respect and could bring city bodies together to make things happen despite jurisdictions being inappropriate.

04-01:16:28

Farrell:

Were there any other commissions that you worked with more closely than others?

04-01:16:36

Halsted:

On the port commission, I can't think of any.

04-01:16:42

Farrell:

One thing that you had mentioned in some of the materials that I had read was that you were always really interested in the strategic long-range plan. I know we had talked about the land use plan. But, you had posed the questions that you had been thinking about always, what are we trying to do, and what are our priorities? What were your priorities?

04-01:17:03

Halsted:

Well, my priorities were to create a sustainable port or waterfront for the future. I mean one that people enjoy being at and can sustain itself and be not profitable per se, profitable to the degree it needs to sustain itself.

04-01:17:35

Farrell:

Have there been any parts of the waterfront that have developed that you think have ideally met that in terms of model developments, whether that's a lease?

04-01:17:54

Halsted:

I think a lot of things have gone pretty well. I think that South Beach is pretty good with the marina and the yacht club there and then recreation-oriented facilities on Pier 40 sort of supporting the housing that developed around it.

04-01:18:19

Farrell:

How did you work with the Port Commission to decide what you were trying to do? One of the questions you had said was what are we trying to do? I'm just wondering how you came to a consensus with the commission to move that forward.

04-01:18:36

Halsted:

I don't think we really did much of that. I think it was more staff that did that, encouraging them to do that and then come to us with ideas.

04-01:18:48

Farrell:

What were some of your biggest challenges when you were part of the Port Commission?

04-01:18:58

Halsted:

Reconciling the desire of neighborhoods to have things be much as they were in the past to bring back the maritime history when that wasn't coming back, and to try to explain that new uses need to be found, and it's not easy.

04-01:19:25

Farrell:

What are some of your proudest moments from being part of that?

04-01:19:31

Halsted:

Well, one of the things that, when I think about it, I'm really proud of is Pier 7. It's a recreational pier that we actually got the funding. I was involved in that when I was on the open space committee. It actually happened when I was on the Port Commission. That was a welcome change. It had been just a regular pier that had been used for parking before that. It was taken out and replaced. The opening of The Embarcadero, with the Promenade along there, was really major.

04-01:20:07

Farrell:

Can you, in terms of Pier 7, describe what that looks like now?

04-01:20:14

Halsted:

Well, it's a fishing pier that extends long out into the bay so that when you get to the end of the pier you feel like you're almost on an island in the bay. It's got a wood surface. It's a very charming place. People enjoy it a lot.

04-01:20:39

Farrell:

One of the things you said that you were most proud of was opening of the Embarcadero Promenade. How has that shaped what the city is now or this area of the city is now?

04-01:20:54

Halsted:

Well, certainly the pedestrian and people traffic is very different from what it used to be. It used to be all cars and trucks. I don't know this for sure, but it used to be that the tourist traffic at Fisherman's Wharf was way in excess of what it was in this part of the waterfront. But I think that's probably reversed.

04-01:21:24

Farrell:

How do you see people interacting with this part of town differently than they did when it was more industrial?

04-01:21:37

Halsted:

You mean just people in general?

04-01:21:40

Farrell:

Yeah, because I think that this part of the city, it feels like a cultural part of the city now because it's the intersection of so many things.

04-01:21:52

Halsted:

Right. I think it's vastly improved. I think the Exploratorium was a great addition because we really needed a kind of educational attraction for families. Hard to do, hard to finance. The Ferry Building and the Exploratorium and then the cruise terminal, those three things along this part of the waterfront have really changed the nature of things. Having the Alcatraz Ferry not far up there makes it a really lovely place. I wouldn't mind if we had more places where you could see the water along the waterfront.

04-01:22:28

Farrell:

What has it meant to you to be a part of this, in sort of shaping San Francisco's identity in this way?

04-01:22:34

Halsted:

It's really been fun because it does seem like a lot of it's gone all right even though a lot of it hasn't. It is nice to be able to walk along and remember all the different activities you've been through. I forget about a lot of them. It's amazing. I really feel very fortunate.

04-01:22:52

Farrell:

What was it like for you to pass the torch when your time as president came to an end?

04-01:23:02

Halsted: I'm trying to remember who succeeded me. I had an idea of who should succeed me. But it was overridden by the mayor, or by John Burton. It was a little awkward. But it all worked out.

04-01:23:20

Farrell: Did you feel like you were losing anything by moving on from your presidency term?

04-01:23:26

Halsted: No. I thought I had served my time, and I enjoyed it.

04-01:23:30

Farrell: What are your hopes for how the Port or the waterfront continues to be used? Or what are your hopes for it in the future?

04-01:23:41

Halsted: Well, we have a big challenge, with sea level rise, trying to rebuild the understructure of the whole port. We have a big bond on the ballot in November that will be a first step. But it's going to be tumultuous. As you know, construction creates congestion and unhappiness and all that kind of thing. This is going to be a big challenge because the whole underpinnings, it's all infill, and it's all on a rock wall that's going to fall down in an earthquake. We really need to do that, and it's going to be tough, but it will be an opportunity for people to improve things. We'll see how that goes.

04-01:24:24

Farrell: How do you hope that people enjoy the waterfront in the future?

04-01:24:30

Halsted: Well, I love the fact that they can get to it and see it. Around the Ferry Building I think it's wonderful because you really can get your food and sit down at a picnic table and be right there and see whatever's happening, whether it's dirty or clean or whatever it is. We're going to have more ferries with the new ferry terminal there and more small boats stopping in, little taxis or water taxi service. I think that's all great. We don't know how we're going to protect from sea level rise yet. That's a big challenge in our future.

04-01:25:08

Farrell: Well, I think that this is probably a good place to leave it for today unless there's anything else that you want to add to that.

04-01:25:12

Halsted: No, that's fine. Sorry if I'm difficult. I can't find the answers to some of your questions.

04-01:25:18

Farrell: Oh, no. You're doing great.

Interview 5: May 15, 2018

05-00:00:02

Farrell: Okay, this is Shanna Farrell with Anne Halsted on Tuesday, May 15, 2018. This is our fifth interview and we are in San Francisco, California.

05-00:00:13

Halsted: Well, hello.

05-00:00:13

Farrell: Hello. We are continuing to talk about your civic engagement and your time on boards and different memberships you've been involved in. You were involved in the Women's Campaign Fund, which is a national nonpartisan organization dedicated to dramatically increasing the number of women in elected office, which I think is something that's pretty relevant still today. You got involved with them originally in 1986. I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about how you initially became interested in them.

05-00:00:50

Halsted: Well, as I recall, I had probably been to an event or two. A woman who was working in Washington who was from San Francisco, whom I really didn't know very well but became a good friend of mine later, called me and invited me to be on the board and came to talk to me about candidates and stuff and fundraising and then came back and invited me to join the board. There had been a couple of women from San Francisco on the board. I think they left and they replaced them with several of us here. Cissie Swig and me and Fran. I'll think of her name.

05-00:01:33

Farrell: Cissie Swig was on the board when you were?

05-00:01:35

Halsted: She joined the same time I did, and Fran Streets.

05-00:01:42

Farrell: Do you remember how big the board was?

05-00:01:44

Halsted: I don't remember exactly. I'd guess it was probably around fifteen or twenty, something like that, and from all over the country, more from New York and Washington than from anywhere else.

05-00:01:56

Farrell: Was it solely made up of women on the board?

05-00:01:58

Halsted: Mm-hmm, I think so. Now it might be that there was one or two men, but I don't remember for sure.

05-00:02:06

Farrell: Okay, but definitely majority women?

05-00:02:07

Halsted: Mostly women.

05-00:02:08

Farrell: How was that different from other boards you've been on?

05-00:02:12

Halsted: Well, it was different because most boards of had a predominance of men. It was fun because there were very powerful and very interesting women. They were very accomplished. Being East Coast-based, I'd say it was probably more traditional women than not. Maybe it was closer to being like a traditional male board than you might expect. That would be my perception, but it wasn't unusual or strange. There were very, very competent people.

05-00:02:47

Farrell: Did you find that the dynamics were different on the board?

05-00:02:52

Halsted: Not so much.

05-00:02:55

Farrell: How about the amount of work that you were able to get done?

05-00:03:00

Halsted: It was very well organized and run. I think it was pretty well efficient. I mean, board meetings were all in Washington so that one had to fly there. You had a limited time to work on whatever agenda they put together and then leave and then other work was done through fundraising or bringing women candidates around the country for fundraising exposure.

05-00:03:28

Farrell: You also had a small amount of time, so you had to be really productive when you were meeting?

05-00:03:32

Halsted: Right.

05-00:03:33

Farrell: That makes sense. What was it like flying in and working in DC? I mean, I know you had spent time in DC before, but to come from San Francisco and then work with people in a national way?

05-00:03:46

Halsted: It was fun. I was on another board, the BENS board. We talked about it last time. Both of them at the same time in Washington and that, so that was a good exposure. I had a lot of friends in Washington, so I really enjoyed that. Of course, that was during the Republican times, and then finally Clinton got elected. It was always nice to be connected with what was going on there. Times have changed.

05-00:04:15

Farrell:

Was it hard for you to represent San Francisco? Or how did you go about representing this part of the country when you were meeting with people from [there]?

05-00:04:26

Halsted:

Well, I think that the board would tend to defer to local people for opinions about local candidates, but not totally. I wasn't particularly sophisticated about national politics and how people get elected. I'm not sure my opinions were always so well developed because I had a knowledge of grassroots politics here but not of the fundraising people needed to get to the higher level.

05-00:04:51

Farrell:

What did you learn about what was different about fundraising for national campaigns?

05-00:04:56

Halsted:

Well, Nancy Pelosi is a good example because she had not been a grassroots politician here. She had worked on Democratic politics at a statewide level and on the convention. She had a big history in Washington because her father was mayor of Baltimore, I think. But she hadn't worked on local issues locally here as a candidate. She was unfamiliar to me from that perspective and that was kind of surprising that she was as successful as she was. But that was a great education. As soon as I got to know her, she was clearly head and shoulders above other candidates.

05-00:05:34

Farrell:

Were there different ways of fundraising for national campaigns versus local campaigns?

05-00:05:40

Halsted:

Right. I think most of WCF's support of candidates was for non-local offices. I think state and federal, but I could be wrong. I don't think we were engaged in any of the local elections but people running for state and federal office.

05-00:06:12

Farrell:

How did you go about selecting candidates that you wanted to endorse or aid?

05-00:06:19

Halsted:

The staff in Washington vetted them. They held training sessions. They had people running for office apply, fill out questionnaires, and then come and be interviewed. I don't think the board was as involved in interviewing them as giving input on those they knew. Basically, Women's Campaign Fund, three basic criteria was pro-choice, pro-ERA [Equal Rights Amendment], and also electable.

05-00:06:57

Farrell:

Yeah. I did read that there were three ways of dramatically increasing the number of women in office, that there was recruitment, empowering, and endorsing women who worked for common ground solutions, providing

candidates with services, networks, and resources, and then advocating for more women at all local levels. I'm wondering if you can explain what made a candidate electable, because it seems sort of vague to me.

05-00:07:24

Halsted: Well, it's a little hard to reconstruct that, but probably ability to raise money, ability to communicate with people, maybe polls.

05-00:07:36

Farrell: Yeah, did they already have a base established?

05-00:07:38

Halsted: I think they would have to have some generally, some kind of base, not just out of the blue.

05-00:07:44

Farrell: Would they have to have access to other donors?

05-00:07:48

Halsted: Well, before they got elected, yeah. Before they became endorsed? Probably they would have to have some. They'd have to be able to show they can attract donors. I don't remember specifically. It was not like taking people who were unskilled at all, or unschooled at all, but helping them to develop from a base that they've already started. It wouldn't be people right out of college or something.

05-00:08:20

Farrell: Also the word "empower" for women who work for common-ground solutions, aside from money?

05-00:08:33

Halsted: Training. They ran training.

05-00:08:35

Farrell: Do you know what the training included?

05-00:08:38

Halsted: I don't remember, but it was training about how to run for office and how to get donors. People had to qualify to a certain degree before they even got the training.

05-00:08:49

Farrell: What does common-ground solutions mean?

05-00:08:53

Halsted: I'm not sure right now. Is that something you got from a recent website?

05-00:08:56

Farrell: Yeah.

- 05-00:08:57
Halsted: That sounds like it might be more recent. I'm not sure. Common-ground solutions might mean bringing both sides, both parties together, getting people to work to things. I'm not sure.
- 05-00:09:10
Farrell: That makes sense, especially since it's nonpartisan.
- 05-00:09:16
Halsted: I think they used to call it bipartisan.
- 05-00:09:20
Farrell: Interesting. Yeah, now it's nonpartisan. So the services that they provided—training, campaign funds?
- 05-00:09:28
Halsted: Some polling, I think.
- 05-00:09:31
Farrell: How did the WCF's network help them?
- 05-00:09:38
Halsted: They would ask local people here, me and other board members here, to arrange fundraisers or just meet-and-greets for candidates when they went around the country. People who were running for Congress or for the Senate or for governor or whatever would get out to meet people around the country and raise money.
- 05-00:10:01
Farrell: You were saying that this was mostly non-local. I don't know if this is a newer thing because I did get it from their most recent website, but they advocate for women in government at all levels.
- 05-00:10:14
Halsted: Yeah, I think so, but I'm not quite sure. I don't think we did endorsements at the local level. But maybe we did. It would just be a lot to do that.
- 05-00:10:24
Farrell: When you would organize a meet and greet here, who were some of the people you would invite? Maybe where would you hold that meet and greet?
- 05-00:10:31
Halsted: We had a whole series of breakfasts at the City Club for candidates as they came through. We would have probably 100 women for a breakfast. They were great because they were easy to organize and easy for people to get to and not very expensive. They were just more exposure to candidates.
- 05-00:10:54
Farrell: Would the women who were invited to that have to be members of the City Club?

05-00:10:58

Halsted: No.

05-00:10:59

Farrell: How would you go about selecting the women who would be there?

05-00:11:04

Halsted: Well, we always were trying to develop our mailing list. That's been a lot of my life, is collecting mailing lists so that we have people of like minds. You might get people who are part of other women's organizations or professional organizations, just try to get rolodexes from many people.

05-00:11:24

Farrell: Did some of those breakfasts also double as fundraising opportunities for the candidates?

05-00:11:31

Halsted: Opportunities without a requirement for fundraising.

05-00:11:35

Farrell: Do you remember who some of the early candidates were when you were involved that the WCF supported?

05-00:11:44

Halsted: Yes. It was a really interesting time because between '86 and '95 or something the number of women in the House and the Senate changed dramatically. I don't know if you've looked at those statistics. I think it went from two or three women in the Senate to eight, I think, and the House, a similar kind. That's quadrupling. It's been sort of a steady, constant rise since then. In that one period in, say, 1990 to 1993, I think, there was a dramatic change. There were a lot of women candidates. I think Barbara Mikulski from Maryland was there when I started. She had just been elected. All the women senators in '92, which is Carol Moseley Braun and Dianne Feinstein and four others, three others, I think. I'll think of it. Barbara Boxer, of course, and a couple of others. I have them listed downstairs and in the House, all of the women in Congress, Anna Eshoo and Zoe Lofgren from San Jose and Nancy. Nancy came a little late. No, she came a little earlier. She was '87 or '86.

05-00:13:18

Farrell: I think something like that.

05-00:13:21

Halsted: Anyway, all the women in Congress. My friend Ellen Tauscher, she came a little later. I got to know all of them, all good friends.

05-00:13:31

Farrell: How did you see their election and their time in office impact politics?

05-00:13:40

Halsted: Well, I think we really had the mistaken impression we were on a steady rise of liberal policies that helped women and helped minorities as well. It's been

an interesting time now to look back and say we were headed in this direction. I think we're still increasing the number of women. But, policy-wise we're not holding as well. There was a huge reaction that took a long time to come to the surface, I guess.

05-00:14:12

Farrell: What was it like for you to move from grassroots politics, local politics, then to being involved in national politics?

05-00:14:19

Halsted: It was really much more interesting because of all the local issues getting so stultified. I guess they've gotten stultified in national politics, too. It was a new arena for me to be able to observe.

05-00:14:37

Farrell: Did you take anything that you learned at the national level and bring it back and apply it locally?

05-00:14:44

Halsted: Probably, but I can't think right now offhand.

05-00:14:48

Farrell: What were some of the things that maybe you liked about the way that national politics worked versus locally?

05-00:15:05

Halsted: I don't think I have a good answer to that question. Local politics seemed to be less party-based, less partisan, more ideology-based but less partisan. And, I found that attractive, but then, just the intensity of the partisanship locally became difficult, too. Just the bigger arena with many different ideas, the country is so vast. I had the fortune to have lived in several different parts of the country. I had some kind of understanding of the difference in people's approach and seeing that work out in national politics was very interesting, too.

05-00:15:49

Farrell: Yeah, and what was different about some of the priorities in San Francisco, in a more liberal city, a more progressive city, California, thinking about standards and policies?

05-00:15:59

Halsted: Always so different.

05-00:16:03

Farrell: How were you finding it was different at that period of time?

05-00:16:11

Halsted: We've just always been more progressive than the rest of the country. We've been seen as sort of an outpost. New York and Washington and Boston and San Francisco. Actually those were the cities most represented on the two boards that I served on in Washington, so they were fairly similar.

05-00:16:37

Farrell: For the cities that weren't as progressive, how did you see that handled?

05-00:16:47

Halsted: On women's issues, it didn't seem to be handled very differently. Women seemed to be persistently headed in the direction of being pro-choice and pro-women's rights, I guess, all over the country. We hadn't seen this bounce-back that actually probably was occurring.

05-00:17:09

Farrell: Were there things or were there qualities of candidates that you saw on the national level that when you came back, when you were applying them to local politics, in thinking about candidates on the national level, things that you liked that you kind of pushed forward for local candidates after that?

05-00:17:31

Halsted: I don't know. I don't think so.

05-00:17:33

Farrell: For the fundraising events, I know you had the breakfast, but that wasn't required that there was a donation. What were other ways that you would fundraise for the WCF?

05-00:17:46

Halsted: Well, when a candidate would ask for help at a fundraising event, try to bring people who you thought would be interested to that. It's really matching opportunity with opportunity.

05-00:18:00

Farrell: How did you go about becoming comfortable with reaching out to people and asking them to attend fundraising events?

05-00:18:07

Halsted: I think it's really what I said. If you can find people who have an interest, they'll feel left out if you don't ask them. You have to think of it as not begging them but giving them an opportunity. If you think it's begging them it's really hard.

05-00:18:23

Farrell: Was there a way that you went about asking? Was language something that you had to think about or approach?

05-00:18:30

Halsted: I guess. It does require getting in the right frame of mind. The more positive you are the better. I think you just can't feel guilty about it. You have to see it as giving people an opportunity.

05-00:18:46

Farrell: When you would go about reaching out to people, were you contacting them by phone or in person or by mail?

- 05-00:18:55
Halsted: Probably all three.
- 05-00:18:59
Farrell: Was that something that took you time to get comfortable with?
- 05-00:19:03
Halsted: Gradually I had done more of this for all kinds of organizations, so probably it did. I'm still not totally comfortable. I'm certainly not comfortable approaching people I think don't want to give money. It's something I've been doing for a long time. I can't remember where it started exactly, but I don't love asking people for money. I just like finding people I think want to give money and letting them do it to the right place.
- 05-00:19:30
Farrell: Yeah, which is I think a more manageable way of looking at it. You left the board in 1994. What was your reason for stepping down?
- 05-00:19:43
Halsted: I think there was a regular turnover of board members. I think our terms had expired. That's what I recall.
- 05-00:19:51
Farrell: Cissie Swig and Fran Streets also left at that time?
- 05-00:19:55
Halsted: I think so.
- 05-00:19:56
Farrell: Did you know them before you worked with them?
- 05-00:20:00
Halsted: Maybe I knew them a little bit. But we traveled together a lot, and I got to be very friendly with both of them.
- 05-00:20:06
Farrell: What did you admire about the strengths that they brought to the board?
- 05-00:20:11
Halsted: Well, they both are very well-educated, articulate and thoughtful people with not a narrow agenda and a broad base for fundraising. They were great people to work with. They were very good.
- 05-00:20:28
Farrell: Did working with them help open up new networks for you in San Francisco?
- 05-00:20:32
Halsted: Mm-hmm, absolutely.
- 05-00:20:35
Farrell: What are you most proud of from your time on the campaign fund?

05-00:20:41

Halsted: I think the 1992 election when all the senators got elected, that was the most exciting time.

05-00:20:49

Farrell: During that time, at the same time, you were also on the board of the City Club of San Francisco, which you still are, I believe, right?

05-00:20:57

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

05-00:20:59

Farrell: But you began working with them in 1988, or you started with them in 1987, I think.

05-00:21:06

Halsted: '87, and I think it opened in '88.

05-00:21:08

Farrell: That's right.

05-00:21:10

Halsted: It reopened. It had been the Stock Exchange Club.

05-00:21:13

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about that? I wasn't aware of that.

05-00:21:17

Halsted: Well, it was the Stock Exchange Club, which opened, I guess, around the beginning of the Depression or the end of the '20s, and full of art. Have you seen it? A huge Diego Rivera mural, beautiful art throughout the club. By the time that it closed, I think in '87, it had just died of its own weight because they weren't renewing the membership. They weren't renewing the place. They didn't have a women's bathroom, all those kinds of things, and so they closed. Friends of mine, Rick Laubscher particularly, became aware that the owner of the building had to figure out what to do with the premises. In order to maintain the art, which really is spectacular, they decided they should try to do another club there.

There were not many clubs there. I don't think there were any clubs downtown, business-oriented clubs, that admitted women and minorities at that point. It's hard to imagine. It's not that long ago, but it's true. He recruited a bunch of us and said we've got a club operator, which is a club organization from Texas, which is a little odd, and they'll run it. We'll bring in people from any background as long as they can pay the dues and aren't troublesome, I mean, don't break laws and do things. Then we'll have an open club, more or less. We put that together. It opened in '88 and still is open. It's not the hottest club to belong to. It's not the most expensive either. It's still a really pleasant place.

05-00:23:11

Farrell: That's interesting. So it was revitalized to preserve the artwork?

05-00:23:17

Halsted: Mm-hmm. I mean, that was the instinct of the people who first got involved in it and then realize there was a need for an open kind of place where people can meet.

05-00:23:29

Farrell: What was it like working with them to reformulate this club?

05-00:23:37

Halsted: Well, the only part that was a little bit difficult from my perspective was this organization from Texas, which was kind of a real estate operation, which did a good job of managing, but they were from a whole different cultural background and didn't understand. We had our opening night party. This was in the time of AIDS [acquired immunodeficiency syndrome], of course. In the bathrooms there was protection for sex in the bathrooms. The club didn't understand that it was going to be as open as it was.

05-00:24:18

Farrell: How did that tension manifest?

05-00:24:20

Halsted: Labor, that's another thing, trying to deal with labor. Obviously they didn't particularly want a union, which was understandable. They didn't really have any idea of how to approach that subject in San Francisco.

05-00:24:32

Farrell: How did that play out?

05-00:24:34

Halsted: Well, I think Rick and other people on the board got involved in communicating with them and had to keep them a little distant and not violating things that would be local norms.

05-00:24:46

Farrell: Did that company from Texas try to impose some of their values on the club?

05-00:24:50

Halsted: A little bit. But they would normally impose whatever their values were.

05-00:25:00

Farrell: The mission of the club, as it stands now, is to bring together business and community leaders to make valuable connections, socialize and relax.

05-00:25:09

Halsted: Mm-hmm. That's still the same.

05-00:25:10

Farrell: On the website it says advantages of membership are numerous and highly rewarding. Can you tell me a little bit about the advantages?

- 05-00:25:21
Halsted: Well, I guess clubs think it's highly rewarding to meet your fellow club members. It's a nice premise. It's a great place because you can have lunch or breakfast in a quiet environment and not have to worry about crowds.
- 05-00:25:40
Farrell: How were you going about recruiting members when you first opened?
- 05-00:25:45
Halsted: Well, you remember my role that I just mentioned? Looking through for the people you think would be interested, professional people particularly. They were people who worked downtown.
- 05-00:25:55
Farrell: What types of business and community leaders were there? What sectors did they represent?
- 05-00:26:01
Halsted: I think it's fair to say most any sector that was working downtown. That would be financial services or any kind of professional services. It wouldn't be industrial people particularly, but it was a place open for lunch and breakfast, not for dinner and those were the people working downtown who would use it.
- 05-00:26:25
Farrell: What types of events were happening when you first started?
- 05-00:26:29
Halsted: Well, I think we put together, as I said, these women's breakfasts. We put together a lot of things about city, what's happening with city government and elsewhere. I'd have to go back and look at the calendar, but there were a lot of events going on.
- 05-00:26:46
Farrell: How did people gain access to membership? I guess I'm thinking about the financial barrier there. I did look at the rates now. It is not the most expensive club, but there is still financially a barrier to entry. Was it kind of about the same when you first opened?
- 05-00:27:02
Halsted: I don't remember what it costs now.
- 05-00:27:04
Farrell: I could totally be getting this wrong, but now I think it's \$1,000 for the year. I think there's three tiers or something.
- 05-00:27:15
Halsted: Probably. I think there's a lot of flexibility in all that.
- 05-00:27:18
Farrell: Was it always flexible?

05-00:27:20

Halsted: Somewhat. There's always a cost, though. It's mostly professional people. They weren't so much people without means, but there were some nonprofit organizations who joined at a different level, as I recall.

05-00:27:36

Farrell: Were you finding that there were younger people that were there who were joining to perhaps build their own networks?

05-00:27:40

Halsted: Oh yeah.

05-00:27:42

Farrell: Did the club support that in any way by throwing any events for them that might promote that?

05-00:27:46

Halsted: Oh sure, yeah. We had a lot.

05-00:27:49

Farrell: You were the chair of the board from 1991 to 1992. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience as the chair?

05-00:28:00

Halsted: I had quit working two years before, so I had time to do that. As I remember, it was a fair amount of work but not difficult.

05-00:28:19

Farrell: Were there certain missions that you had as the chair, things that you wanted to see them do?

05-00:28:23

Halsted: I'm sure there was. I just can't remember. The same club organization owned a couple of other clubs in San Francisco. We were trying to get them to work together. You're always trying to do things that will be interesting to members and bring in new members and that kind of stuff.

05-00:28:46

Farrell: Do you remember who else was on the board?

05-00:28:49

Halsted: It was a big board. I know that Jim Hormel and Rick Laubscher and a whole lot of people I knew, Louise Renne. There were probably thirty people on the board at the beginning.

05-00:29:01

Farrell: What was the role of the City Club in local politics? If this is a place where people kind of network and come together, did you see anything grow out of networks at the City Club?

05-00:29:12

Halsted: A lot of events were convened there, but I don't know that that made a difference in the choice of who was successful.

05-00:29:20

Farrell: Yeah, I guess I'm just sort of thinking about it because I'm a member of a female-only co-working space for creative women. For me, I started a nonfiction writing group there. I wouldn't have had access to a lot of those people without being a member there. I guess I'm just wondering if something like that is applicable.

05-00:29:37

Halsted: Probably there is a lot of that, but I really don't think I have a good summary of how it's changed things. I mean, a lot of women I know in San Francisco would not have gotten involved in the women candidates that we had these events for and they did. I think that kind of thing has worked well, and there have been lots and lots of lunches and programs about local affairs. I can't really guess how that's impacted people's lives, but more access than there had been when there were no clubs available to women, none of the downtown clubs. There were women's clubs available to women, of course.

05-00:30:19

Farrell: Where do you see the future of the City Club going? What direction do you see it moving in?

05-00:30:24

Halsted: I think it's pretty constant. I think they're doing just fine. In the last ten years I think their bread and butter is doing weddings and things like that on the weekends. But they have a lot of events during the week. Whenever I'm there it seems like there's a fairly good mix of people. It's not your old white-haired men. It's a big mix. It's also not the techy industry as much. It's more of an old-fashioned San Francisco mix of industries but middle-aged and younger people.

05-00:31:00

Farrell: Have there been ways that you've tried to stay relevant and interesting to younger crowds?

05-00:31:07

Halsted: The club, you mean, or me?

05-00:31:09

Farrell: Yeah, I guess the club in terms of your participation with them.

05-00:31:15

Halsted: Well, I think just making sure that it wasn't too stuffy. There was a time when a lot of people thought you should always require ties and dresses and stuff like that. We're trying to relax that kind of thing.

05-00:31:28

Farrell:

You had mentioned two things that I think we should talk about, one of which was the AIDS crisis. Can you tell me a little bit about your experiences living in San Francisco and especially being so involved in local politics during this time?

05-00:31:48

Halsted:

It was a really challenging time. In fact, when I first bought this house and redid the downstairs apartment, a friend, who was gay, and his partner were going to move in. I'd known them for many years. They split up just before they were going to move in. The other one moved in. He ended up dying of a suicide, but he did have AIDS here very early, like 1982. I became quite aware of it at that point and had many friends, yes, who died. And, on the City Club board we lost some really wonderful board members. It was a really tough time.

I was very close friends with someone who worked at the department of health, a doctor who worked at the department of health and dealt with the crisis, and then also with the head of the department of public health. I was right in the middle of the discussions about policies and, of course, arguments between Feinstein and different people about whether the bathhouses should be closed and all that kind of thing. Trying to facilitate with employers doing the right thing for employees who had AIDS was an interesting time.

05-00:33:12

Farrell:

Did you find the tone of San Francisco shift?

05-00:33:23

Halsted:

I think for a while there was sort of a shift towards ignoring the bathhouses. That's sort of my impression, but then I think the community, when they became aware of the tragedy of this disease, really embraced coping with it. I don't remember seeing a reaction that went the other way.

05-00:33:53

Farrell:

Did you see people start to drop out of local politics or become less involved because of this?

05-00:34:01

Halsted:

I don't think so. I mean, a few people died who were really relevant.

05-00:34:07

Farrell:

I just mean not death-related but just because it's a tough time and people are being affected by this.

05-00:34:15

Halsted:

I don't remember that. Maybe I was unaware.

05-00:34:19

Farrell:

Did it affect your involvement with local politics at all, aside from knowing people that had passed away?

05-00:34:25

Halsted:

No. I mean, the loss of some really great leaders was kind of scary, but that didn't push you away. I don't think it sort of made you want to be there to help.

05-00:34:41

Farrell:

How did you see policies and things change, aside from the bathhouses, but in terms of health care and employment, especially since you were involved in employment?

05-00:34:55

Halsted:

Well, I think it was accommodated. I don't remember the details. I don't remember any experiences with employers who dealt in an unfair way. I think there's a lot of work to encourage people to do the right thing. San Francisco Foundation and other organizations were really engaged. Levi Strauss took a real leading role. I'm trying to remember.

05-00:35:27

Farrell:

How did you see things change even socially or politically after the crisis started to wane?

05-00:35:36

Halsted:

To some degree I think it helped facilitate the engagement of gays in the political world because it had become such an apparent tragedy and the losses were so great. It became more acceptable, I think, to be outwardly gay to the general community.

05-00:36:00

Farrell:

You also mentioned your retirement. Can you tell me about your reasons for retiring?

05-00:36:07

Halsted:

Or quitting? I really wasn't qualified for retirement. I wasn't old enough. I was working very hard. I'd gotten married a couple of years before. My mother died. I was very involved in these boards and in the port commission, all these things. I realized that I had just about enough money to be able to get by and the company I worked with was bought by Ford. My job had become very different. I didn't have as close a comfort level with the management of Ford. Whereas the company initially allowed me to develop policies and change, Ford's policies were developed primarily in Dearborn. They were not particularly interested in the local culture or understanding it. I felt like the bag man for the CEO [chief executive officer]. It didn't seem like a great place to stay. Having to fire people and having to do all those things for a culture you didn't think was as positive.

05-00:37:28

Farrell:

Were you thinking at this point that you may go on to have a career in something else?

05-00:37:33

Halsted:

No, I wasn't. I was just thinking I wanted to be on my own. Of course, at that point I was working weekends and doing all these other things at the same time. I was kind of overwhelmed with my responsibilities. I knew I had plenty of other things to do and as I said I thought through my retirement plan and some inheritance I had enough that I could get by on.

05-00:38:00

Farrell:

Were any of your subsequent board involvements or various roles, did they provide income for you?

05-00:38:07

Halsted:

No. I was on a board of a small company in West Virginia that I inherited from my father. That did provide some income.

05-00:38:21

Farrell:

Financially, was that a concern for you?

05-00:38:23

Halsted:

Oh yeah. I had to be cautious, but I could see that I had enough to keep going.

05-00:38:34

Farrell:

Did you feel like when you retired that some more doors opened for you or you were able to focus on things?

05-00:38:45

Halsted:

I just felt like I could spend time with family. For instance, when my mother was sick, I could barely have time to spend with her because they didn't give me time off. The law didn't provide for that then. Now it does. It just seemed kind of crazy. As they say, you won't be remembered for what you did at the office, that kind of thing. I thought if I can get by on what I have, and I had no trouble finding meaningful things to do because I was doing all this board work, which I really enjoyed. If I can do that, I should try it and that's what I've been doing ever since.

05-00:39:22

Farrell:

And no regrets?

05-00:39:24

Halsted:

I don't think so. The biggest losses were lack of a real focus and lack of collegiality, working as a part of a team on things, having people to share your goals and your stresses with.

05-00:39:43

Farrell:

Did you find that in other board positions later?

05-00:39:47

Halsted:

Some, but not as constant.

05-00:39:50

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about how you met your husband, Wells?

05-00:39:54

Halsted:

That's interesting, I guess. I had a friend, Janice Magee, who had been on the board of the American Society of Personnel Administrators with me. She was about ten years younger than I. So we got to be really good friends. She took on some of the policy stuff that I had advocated, whatever that was. She went on then to work several other places and get a degree, a business degree. She went to work for a company down in Menlo Park where she was working with my husband, and invited me over to a dinner. I didn't even know she was inviting someone over. I probably didn't respond very well to being set up. That's how we met, just at that dinner at Janice's house. We dated for about two years.

05-00:40:52

Farrell:

What does Wells do?

05-00:40:53

Halsted:

Wells is retired as well. He's eighty-five now. But, he was a scientist, a physicist, a product developer. He's a fun person and never been boring to be with.

05-00:41:07

Farrell:

What year did you officially get married?

05-00:41:10

Halsted:

'88.

05-00:41:12

Farrell:

You retired a couple of years after.

05-00:41:15

Halsted:

Yes, I retired in '90, end of '90, and my mother died in September of '90.

05-00:41:24

Farrell:

So it was around the same time?

05-00:41:25

Halsted:

Mm-hmm.

05-00:41:29

Farrell:

I guess we're starting to talk a little bit about SPUR, and I guess we're backing up in time again because you had a lot of concurrent positions, but you joined SPUR in 1983. I should say SPUR is the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal organization.

05-00:41:51

Halsted:

It had changed its name even then—Urban Research association.

05-00:41:55

Farrell:

Research? Okay.

05-00:41:57

Halsted:

Urban renewal was already a dirty word at the time.

- 05-00:42:00
Farrell: Yeah. When I had been doing, a while ago, a lot of research on that, it was really interesting.
- 05-00:42:07
Halsted: I think that they changed the name in the '60s maybe.
- 05-00:42:10
Farrell: When they had the shift?
- 05-00:42:11
Halsted: Yes.
- 05-00:42:13
Farrell: It's an organization with a long history, but there was a reorg at a certain point where the name changed and priorities also changed.
- 05-00:42:25
Halsted: In fact, originally it had been the San Francisco Housing Association in 1907 or '06.
- 05-00:42:32
Farrell: On that note, how familiar with SPUR were you before you joined?
- 05-00:42:37
Halsted: I was somewhat familiar. I didn't know all this history, but I did know that it had been a citywide organization. I'd been aware of it even when I was working as a receptionist. I went to meetings there because there were things that were interesting to learn.
- 05-00:42:51
Farrell: I know that right now they have a lot of public meetings on different topics related to local politics, planning, transportation even. They write ballot analysis. Were they doing that then as well?
- 05-00:43:05
Halsted: They were, even then.
- 05-00:43:08
Farrell: You had also worked with Dorothy Erskine prior to your involvement with SPUR.
- 05-00:43:15
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 05-00:43:16
Farrell: She was instrumental in the reorg, if I'm not mistaken about that, but, she was the former executive director. Was that right? I don't know if that's right.
- 05-00:43:26
Halsted: I don't think she was an executive director. I think she was instrumental in helping to create it in the late forties.

05-00:43:26

Farrell:

That's right, yeah. It's had a couple of lives over the course of time. Was she involved in your involvement?

05-00:43:47

Halsted:

Not particularly. She was very involved with me working for parks. She had been one of the founders of the current SPUR in the '50s. I knew of her, and she knew the people associated with SPUR. She probably advocated for me, but I didn't work with her on SPUR issues.

05-00:44:05

Farrell:

Oh, interesting. When you were on the port commission, was there overlap in anything that SPUR was doing?

05-00:44:15

Halsted:

Oh sure, some.

05-00:44:18

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about your early memories of joining the board?

05-00:44:25

Halsted:

Well, I was brought in, I think, primarily because I had neighborhood background and sensitivities but understood business perspectives, because it had been dominated by business interests. They realized there was a need for credibility to be able to have a neighborhood perspective as well. I think that was part of that intention.

05-00:44:52

Farrell:

Did you find that that clashed with some of the other business-minded people on the board?

05-00:45:00

Halsted:

I think there were tensions occasionally. One of the things that I've always valued about SPUR is that differences of opinion have been encouraged and articulated and worked out. I guess that's compromise, but it's been a good place from my perspective because of that conversation and willingness, people from various sides being willing to accommodate other ideas.

05-00:45:34

Farrell:

Do you remember, aside from what you had just mentioned, some of the other perspectives that were part of the board then?

05-00:45:44

Halsted:

Interesting to think back. In the early '80s, of course, we had many more San Francisco-based headquarters companies. Of course, the banks were headquartered here, Bank of America and Wells Fargo, which they are not anymore. Crown Zellerbach, all these big industrial companies were headquartered here. They dominated politics, to some degree. I think they had to learn to be quite progressive in San Francisco. That whole perspective is quite different now. We are much more populated by lawyers and account

professional people and tech. Tech has its own world and hasn't entered into the body politic as much.

05-00:46:34

Farrell: What were some of the other projects or priorities of SPUR at that time?

05-00:46:40

Halsted: Well, a big issue was the downtown plan, trying to figure out how to limit high-rise development. What a new subject, huh? I don't think we've figured it out entirely, but there was a compromise reached in the eighties which has endured, to some degree and that was a long time coming.

05-00:47:04

Farrell: How did SPUR align with some of your other public service duties, especially because when you were brought on a little bit more business-oriented? I'm sure for you it didn't seem like a conflict of interest. Did other people perceive it that way?

05-00:47:24

Halsted: I don't think so. I was not on the SPUR board when I was president of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. That was probably more of a difference. There's certainly no reason why one couldn't be because, as I said, there's so many different perspectives that come into SPUR.

05-00:47:41

Farrell: What was your role as commissioner like? You served in that position from '83 to '84.

05-00:47:52

Halsted: That's the redevelopment agency you're thinking of.

05-00:47:54

Farrell: Oh, okay. At that point, how often were SPUR meetings happening?

05-00:48:05

Halsted: SPUR has, as long as I can remember, had a monthly board meeting.

05-00:48:11

Farrell: Do you remember who was on the board at that point?

05-00:48:13

Halsted: At which point?

05-00:48:14

Farrell: When you first joined.

05-00:48:16

Halsted: I think that John Jacobs was the executive director. Bob Kirkwood was the chair of the board, I think.

- 05-00:48:34
Farrell: They had also supported the Ferry Building renovation, which I know you were involved in.
- 05-00:48:40
Halsted: The final one.
- 05-00:48:41
Farrell: Yes, in '83.
- 05-00:48:45
Halsted: That was an earlier one. That's one that didn't ever happen. That was with Continental Development, I think. Is that right? There were a number of tries to redo the Ferry Building that didn't succeed. The one that did succeed, it happened around the millennium.
- 05-00:49:04
Farrell: Okay, that makes sense. I'm looking at all the board note topics.
- 05-00:49:13
Halsted: Oh, good for you.
- 05-00:49:16
Farrell: SPUR's high-rise study with the downtown environment impact report?
- 05-00:49:20
Halsted: That was the big deal in the mid-eighties.
- 05-00:49:22
Farrell: Yeah. Do you remember anything specifically about that or what they were thinking, what happened? I mean, with the environmental impact report you have to do environmental studies and feasibility studies. There's a lot of third party involvement with making sure the tests are objective. Were there any sort of controversies or complications that came with that?
- 05-00:49:50
Halsted: There were, and I think I put them in the back of my mind. That was very contentious and very hard fought on all sides. I don't remember the deals that were put together, et cetera, but it was really an important fight. You'd have to talk to Dean Macris to get it all.
- 05-00:50:12
Farrell: The downtown plan took a long time. There were a few different components of that, including housing, transportation and jobs and workspace, so how you design more commercial buildings. Do you remember if there were other, aside from the high-rise issues, any other housing? I know right now that they are really interested in when new buildings are proposed that they have mixed use and that a certain percentage go to low-income housing. Was that something that was on the table then or being developed then?

05-00:50:54

Halsted:

Well, in redevelopment projects, yes. I should remember. I don't know when the set-asides for housing first came in. But that wasn't the primary focus. I think at SPUR we've always had a view that housing and office needed to be integrated to some degree, but I don't remember how well regulated it was at that point.

05-00:51:29

Farrell:

Were there other leaders who you were looking at or looking to who had involvement in this kind of thing in different parts of the Bay Area? Because I know it's been an issue in the East Bay for a long time. I'm just wondering if there were people you were communicating with.

05-00:51:44

Halsted:

I don't remember that we did. I don't think it was as big an issue in the East Bay as here. We did have a lot of local controversy around retaining housing in commercial buildings that were where people were trying to convert. We did a lot of work in that.

05-00:52:11

Farrell:

With transportation, I know that Muni was a big issue for SPUR for a long time and making sure Muni was more reliable, there were patterns. I know that there was a period of time where drivers were allowed to call in at any point. They could just not show up for work and that would cause problems.

05-00:52:35

Halsted:

It still may be going on.

05-00:52:35

Farrell:

I think that actually yeah. Do you remember any of your involvement with Muni issues?

05-00:52:45

Halsted:

I think that was a little bit later. I think it was in the late nineties. I could be wrong, but I remember convening a citywide grand table inviting everybody to the table to try to begin to restructure the way those agreements were put together, the labor agreements.

05-00:53:08

Farrell:

So then maybe we'll come back to that one. I guess with the broad strokes of transportation then, do you remember in the '80s what the transportation issues were?

05-00:53:19

Halsted:

Well, I remember the work that Rick Laubscher did on historic trolleys. That, I think, was more in the '80s, starting in the '80s. Right now I can't remember what other. I'm sure there was everything going on. Of course, we had the Embarcadero Freeway, the earthquake in '89, and then the period of time after that, and then redoing The Embarcadero, so that went on until '94 or so.

05-00:53:49

Farrell: With Rick Laubscher and the Market Street Railway, can you tell me a little bit about that project and about how that moved forward?

05-00:53:58

Halsted: I don't know if it was the Third Street Rail, but it was the historic trolleys.

05-00:54:01

Farrell: Sorry. I get them confused a lot.

05-00:54:05

Halsted: Third Street Rail had new Italian cars on it. Rick was just very involved with the Muni people who wanted to restore old cars. He's a great historian. You've worked with him, so you know. I don't remember how that exactly happened, but ever since I've known him, which was through the Pier 39 debacle, it's been a primary goal of his to restore the historic cars on the streetcar lines.

05-00:54:41

Farrell: What value did he see that adding to the city?

05-00:54:47

Halsted: Well, I think everyone acknowledged that the cable cars were a great attraction, both for locals and for tourists. I think this was, in a sense, an extension of that, a very kind of authentic way to actually use public transportation and attract people back to it.

05-00:55:03

Farrell: Did you see a rise in public transportation usership after those were installed?

05-00:55:08

Halsted: Certainly on those lines, yeah.

05-00:55:12

Farrell: Do you remember any of the challenges that he faced with trying to implement that?

05-00:55:18

Halsted: Raising money, getting agreement, a lot of determination and advocacy. After Mike McGill left SPUR as executive director, SPUR was really in bad shape, number one. Mike had sort of become convinced that SPUR couldn't sustain its operation because so many of the headquarter companies had left. The funding therefore decreased. He wasn't a fundraiser particularly. He just sort of cut back on the staff. The organization got smaller and smaller and smaller. Finally it was just Mike McGill and one other person, I think. He was writing the policies, and the other person was doing all the paperwork, maybe two people, but anyways, quite small. After he left, I was not chair of the board. Beverly Mills was.

There was some internal bickering about who should become the next executive director. The one who took it on was a former board member named

Chip Fussell who was very close to John Jacobs. That was not a happy solution for the board. It kind of divided the board, a lot of anger about that decision because it felt like an insider decision to many of the board members. I don't remember how it all worked out, but eventually Chip left. That was another very unpleasant situation. The board was kind of floundering. That's about when I got to be chair, something like that. We brought in another board member as acting ED. I think he was named Louis Loparnstein. He did that for about six months.

We worked through a search agency and hired Tom Nolan, who had been a supervisor in San Mateo County and then after SPUR was at Project Open Hand for a long time. Anyway, he was not so much an urban planner, but he was a very positive guy. I think he'd studied for the priesthood and then dropped out. He was someone who brought people together. There was this huge kind of rift in the organization that needed to be healed. He was very good for whatever period of time, maybe a year, in that role. After that period he got this offer from Open Hand which he couldn't resist because he was much more engaged in gay community issues and the things that Open Hand does than he was in SPUR. He did a good job of beginning to build the base for SPUR.

Again, we went through a recruitment to hire the executive director and that's when we found Jim Chappell. That was another interesting process because we were trying to find someone who would lead us into the future. Jim was gay, but he was quite conservative. We finally ended up with two final candidates. One was a Latino man who had been much more involved in minority issues, and Jim. Jim loved SPUR and did a great job. The other guy was good but not quite as good at the issues. They both presented to the board, and we voted on it. Jim was selected and really was the perfect change agent because he was someone who could connect with what had happened in the past and lead to the future, so though it was tempting to go further out, this is what really moved a kind of dying organization ahead with consistency but change in its mind. It was a fascinating kind of process.

05-00:59:16

Farrell:

Before even Tom Nolan was there, I know the board's divided. Did you have a sense that it was dying? Could you feel that?

05-00:59:23

Halsted:

Oh yeah. We had a budget of \$150,000. Lou Lowenstein was his name.

05-00:59:28

Farrell:

That's right. Okay, yeah. Did you see a lot of board members drop out during the divisive time?

05-00:59:37

Halsted:

Yeah. There was still a love of the role of SPUR as a citywide policy organization. People don't enjoy doing volunteer work when they have to fight. It's really not the way nonprofits can effectively work.

- 05-00:59:59
Farrell: When Chip was hired as the executive director, you mentioned it was seen as an inside hire. Was he effective, though, during his time? Or was it sort of just there was too much tension and he couldn't manage it?
- 05-01:00:14
Halsted: I don't really know. I don't really know. He wasn't effective at bringing the board together.
- 05-01:00:21
Farrell: That was really what needed to happen?
- 05-01:00:22
Halsted: Yeah.
- 05-01:00:23
Farrell: How did you as the chair of the board manage that tension?
- 05-01:00:29
Halsted: I guess I wasn't aligned with anyone in particular. That probably was helpful, and was able to talk to everybody.
- 05-01:00:40
Farrell: Were you able to retain membership while you were the chair?
- 05-01:00:43
Halsted: I think so, yeah. I think so. I don't think membership grew very much for a few years, though.
- 05-01:00:51
Farrell: Was being the chair something you wanted to do or something you felt like you had to do?
- 05-01:00:55
Halsted: Yeah. It was something that was interesting to me.
- 05-01:00:59
Farrell: Even though there was a lot of tension?
- 05-01:01:00
Halsted: Yeah, right.
- 05-01:01:04
Farrell: I guess you articulated pretty well what Tom Nolan, his strengths were, and what he brought to the board. When he was the executive director, did you start to feel hopeful about the future?
- 05-01:01:14
Halsted: Oh, absolutely.
- 05-01:01:16
Farrell: Did you start to see the membership grow as well?

05-01:01:18

Halsted:

I don't think it grew dramatically, but the board started working together. We didn't keep losing funding. We started to see new courses for funding and new directions for funding.

05-01:01:32

Farrell:

When you were going about that search, and when Jim Chappell was the candidate, do you remember what you were looking for in an ideal candidate at that point?

05-01:01:44

Halsted:

Well, we were looking for someone who could make SPUR into a more diverse organization, one more connected with the future than the past. It was interesting because when we first interviewed Jim he said this is my dream job. I thought that was the most ridiculous statement I'd ever heard. Here, this organization has barely enough money to pay its bills, not growing, but it's his dream. Well, actually, it turned out to be. He really knew he wanted it.

05-01:02:16

Farrell:

I think that may be a good place to leave it for today. When we pick up next time we'll kind of talk about the directions that Jim moved SPUR into. I think that's definitely worth talking about.

05-01:02:27

Halsted:

Okay.

05-01:02:28

Farrell:

Thank you.

05-01:02:28

Halsted:

Thank you.

Interview 6: May 22, 2018

06-00:00:04

Farrell: Okay. This is Shanna Farrell with Anne Halsted on Tuesday, May 22, 2018 and this is our sixth interview. We are in San Francisco, California.

06-00:00:16

Halsted: Hi, Shanna.

06-00:00:17

Farrell: Hi. Anne, last time when we left off, we were talking about SPUR and we were talking about the new directions in leadership and had started to talk about Jim Chappell. Jim was elected as the executive director in 1994. I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit more about some of the things that you saw in him as a reason why you selected him as your candidate for executive director?

06-00:00:50

Halsted: Well, there were a lot of reasons. Number one, his enthusiasm. He thought this would be the job of his life that he really wanted most of anything. He also had a great background in landscape architecture and planning and knew the city pretty well, knew people in the city, knew the landscape of the city. He had come from the Architectural Foundation, I think, most recently. One of the things that I found most compelling about him was that the students he was teaching at UC [University of California] were so enthusiastic about him. They really enjoyed his leadership in the class and they were very engaged in their subject because of him. I think it was a night class or something. I'm not sure, but I got great feedback about the way he related to the people he taught so I thought that was a great aspect of his energy.

06-00:01:43

Farrell: Did SPUR solicit recommendations from students? How did you know that they were [enthusiastic about him]?

06-00:01:47

Halsted: I don't remember how I got to know that, but I did. I mean, yes, I think we went around and got as many recommendations as we could. You go look at what someone's doing and then try to find someone who might have experienced something with him.

06-00:02:00

Farrell: Did you have a sense of what his vision for the future of SPUR was when you hired him?

06-00:02:08

Halsted: Not to the extent that it reflected what actually happened, but he certainly had a vision that SPUR should be successful and grow and should diversify.

06-00:02:23

Farrell: What were some of the things, if you can remember, in his early days that he was really interested in doing for SPUR?

06-00:02:31

Halsted:

Well, it's sort of hard to remember exactly when what happened, but he was very interested in working with other organizations, with the Museum of Modern Art, for instance, on competitions, architectural competitions. I thought it was really a good thing to affiliate with like organizations to increase our position and to increase what we did. He's an outgoing person, not overwhelming. But he connects pretty easily with everyone. He really did a good job of growing SPUR's connections with people. He could connect with the business community, also the political or the civic community.

06-00:03:25

Farrell:

Did SPUR have a lot of collaborative partnerships before Jim joined?

06-00:03:29

Halsted:

From time to time, yes, but not as many as we developed later, I think. The issue was, SPUR had been reasonably successful in the early '80s, mid-80s, and then it kind of went down in the late '80s. By the time Jim was starting, it was at a very fragile state.

06-00:03:49

Farrell:

Can you talk a little bit more about that, how it was fragile, or what made it fragile?

06-00:03:55

Halsted:

Well, we talked last time, I think, about the fight over the executive director previously. That was something that was not helpful to the organization because it made people less interested in supporting it if it can't manage itself. Through the late eighties, I think that there was a feeling, and I think I said this before, that the companies that had been centered in San Francisco, headquartered companies, had left. There wouldn't be the potential to fundraise. SPUR wouldn't be able to sustain itself, so people just kept cutting staff and cutting activities. It was left with very little staff and not very much money. The budget was, I think I said, \$150,000 a year.

06-00:04:40

Farrell:

How active were you with SPUR around the time that Jim got hired in 1994?

06-00:04:46

Halsted:

I was really active then. I had quit working, so I had some time on my hands and I really cared for SPUR because I thought it was a place where I could connect with the activities and the ideas and the people. It was a good place for me to work because I knew a lot of people already in the city and in city government. I think I was there most days just to go over what was going on, try to help make sure things moved ahead.

06-00:05:15

Farrell:

From Jim's oral history, he had said, "My first month here Anne Halsted and I decided we needed to have a community meeting of major SPUR supporters. There were business people, neighborhood people, government people. We asked, 'What do you want us to do? Here's our skill set. Here are the things

we know how to do. What are the most important things to you?" So, he had mentioned that you were really instrumental in on-ramping him and helping him get acclimated to SPUR and finding his footing. Do you remember some of those early days at all?

06-00:05:49

Halsted:

You know, my memory is not anywhere near as good as Jim's. I'm sure he's right when he says that, but I don't remember. I remember we worked together very collaboratively. I had a lot of connections he didn't have. I had been involved in city government, the corporate world, and the neighborhoods for many years. And I could bring those people to the table.

06-00:06:09

Farrell:

At that point, what did you see SPUR's skill set as being?

06-00:06:14

Halsted:

As bringing people together from various parts of city life to improve the way city government operated and improve the policies and to recommend policies. I guess to make San Francisco a more livable place for living and working.

06-00:06:41

Farrell:

One of the things that you had helped him with in his early days was gathering the SPUR supporters. Why were the SPUR supporters important?

06-00:06:56

Halsted:

Well, the credibility of an organization like this really depends on the people who support it. In other words, Jim Chappell or I could sit and write policy, and it might be really perfect, but if no one understood it and no one had bought into it, it really wouldn't make any difference. In fact, SPUR actually acted as almost a loyal opposition to the government fairly often. Mayors would call and ask for what is SPUR's position on this. This is my position. What's SPUR's position? How can I improve my position? That kind of credibility doesn't come from just being authentic and being good. It comes from everyone acknowledging that. Part of that acknowledgement has to do with being involved in creating the policy.

06-00:07:47

Farrell:

How many supporters contributed intellectually? How many contributed financially? Did they overlap?

06-00:07:59

Halsted:

Oh, of course they overlapped. I think one of the things that people have always liked about being on the SPUR board, which was much more true then than now, was because the board members worked on committees to create the policy. The executive director may or may have not written something, but it was often a board member who wrote the policy and then it was edited by the executive director. That's not true anymore. Now we have staff doing all those things. It was one of the ways that people really were engaged in helping create policy and felt ownership of it.

06-00:08:42

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of why certain people were invited to the board?

06-00:08:49

Halsted:

Well, I think we tried to create basic representation of neighborhoods and businesses and labor and all the pieces of city life that were important in planning and governance. We always had a fairly active and serious nominating process. I think that's one of the things that Jim and I changed. We made that a little more serious. We actually started requiring that the nominating committee interview candidates for the board, and gradually, as we started doing that, we had a waiting list of people applying for the board because they became something where they really wanted to be and be part of.

06-00:09:36

Farrell:

Do you remember what kinds of questions you would ask during the interviews?

06-00:09:41

Halsted:

Probably just the normal things. What are your interests? What would you like to achieve? What would you like SPUR to do in the future, that kind of thing.

06-00:09:50

Farrell:

Was there a financial qualification?

06-00:09:54

Halsted:

The only financial qualification I knew of ever at SPUR has been that you have a regular membership, which I think now is sixty-five dollars. Then it was probably thirty-five or thirty or something like that, and that you try to participate to the degree you can in other fundraising things. But it's not a 10,000. Well, for some companies it is. We have company memberships, corporate memberships, that are more, but for board members, they need to be individual members as well.

06-00:10:26

Farrell:

On that note, there was a real push to grow SPUR's budget. Last time we talked you had mentioned that their budget was only \$150,000 a year, which is really challenging to run an organization on really no money.

06-00:10:40

Halsted:

Right. It was one and a half people at that time, at the most.

06-00:10:45

Farrell:

How did you go about building the budget?

06-00:10:54

Halsted:

Well, I think it's just a matter of building credibility, and we did have a push on raising the level of contribution of corporations who participated. I don't know when that was. I think that was maybe four or five years later. But I remember going around to corporations and asking them to raise their contribution level to \$10,000 or something. That seemed like a huge amount at that time. Now it doesn't seem as huge.

06-00:11:21

Farrell:

You had also mentioned that a lot of the businesses that were headquartered here were leaving. Were you at all, or the board, identifying new businesses, especially as tech moves in in the 1990s, the tech bubble?

06-00:11:33

Halsted:

Oh, sure. I don't think we ever were very successful with the tech businesses at that point. They were so individually and entrepreneurially run that they were not much engaged in joining nonprofit organizations to advocate. Even now, it's just beginning to really happen in the tech business.

06-00:11:52

Farrell:

What were some of the other businesses that you identified, or the board identified?

06-00:11:56

Halsted:

Well, all the financial services businesses, I guess, and the architects and lawyers and accountants and all of those kinds of things.

06-00:12:07

Farrell:

It's interesting thinking about where tech is now and how they interact with San Francisco and the tensions that are there and especially bringing a lot of transplants who don't really have a sense of the history of San Francisco and the ways that city works and should be built out. Were you seeing something similar in the 1990s with tech companies, that they weren't as involved in city?

06-00:12:30

Halsted:

Yes, I think so. Well, that bubble that crashed in, what, 2001, I don't know when it really started, probably '96, something like that?

06-00:12:39

Farrell:

That makes sense.

06-00:12:41

Halsted:

It seems like a short period of time now. It was pretty amazing. There was so much money flying around. But it just seemed to be imaginary, like it wasn't real money and didn't seem like real business either. It turned out it wasn't, but people did make money.

06-00:13:01

Farrell:

Yeah. I'm wondering how that affected SPUR board priorities or the budget, because there is this essentially Monopoly money flying around.

06-00:13:14

Halsted:

I don't think that affected us too much, actually. The strange thing was, I think whenever we've had a recession like we did in 2001, the budget grew more than before. I think it's because people then were more worried about where their business would come from. They'd be out spending time working at other activities. I don't know. It's always been an odd thing.

06-00:13:38

Farrell: Yeah, that is interesting. I guess nonprofits, though, kind of, a lot of times, yeah. Do you remember what some of SPUR's funding priorities were in the early to mid-1990s?

06-00:13:52

Halsted: Well, I know we spent a lot of time working on charter reform. We spent a lot of time working on Muni reform. We were always involved in transportation and housing in different ways. What else? The downtown plan, but I think that was in the eighties.

06-00:14:13

Farrell: Do you remember what some of Jim's funding priorities were?

06-00:14:17

Halsted: No, I don't. We did do a whole park plan, but that was in the early 2000s, I think, which I was involved in.

06-00:14:26

Farrell: Was that the Presidio or just green space?

06-00:14:28

Halsted: No. It was just not green space. It was for how to run parks in San Francisco, management of parks in San Francisco.

06-00:14:38

Farrell: On that note, this is picking up on the Muni reform, I think one of Jim's earliest projects that he worked on were both the charter reform and Muni reform. He called those SPUR's marching orders, and I'm wondering what SPUR saw as Muni's role being, especially since San Francisco was kind of a hodgepodge of different and differently-owned public transportation outlets? What was the significance of Muni? Or what role did it play?

06-00:15:26

Halsted: It was the primary commute carrier. We have BART and we have Muni in San Francisco, but that's mostly it in San Francisco as far as I know. Other people, Uber and people have come since. Caltrain comes to San Francisco, but for the number of riders, the number of trips, BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit] and Muni are still far above in the number of what they contribute to transportation.

06-00:15:59

Farrell: What was it about Muni that SPUR thought needed to be reformed?

06-00:16:05

Halsted: Well, they had, over the years, passed many rules and regulations in their labor agreements and in other things that limited the way they can do business. It interrupted the service they could provide. They couldn't persuade drivers to accept timetables. There were all kinds of rules that made it hard for them to provide service.

- 06-00:16:33
Farrell: Why couldn't they provide timetables or get the drivers to adhere to timetables?
- 06-00:16:37
Halsted: Disciplinary issues, I think. Inside operations, people are resistant to changing the way they operate. They may have had timetables but didn't have to comply with them.
- 06-00:16:55
Farrell: Were there specific strategies that SPUR wanted to take to reform Muni?
- 06-00:17:01
Halsted: Well, as I recall, what we tried to do was to bring the riders, the labor management, and the public to the table at the same time and talk about the problems. We had a number of very large meetings where we tried to surface the issues and then create task forces to work on. My memory is not very exact as to what exactly happened, but I do remember that we convened these large meetings. One of the aspects we brought to the table that had never been at a table was riders. There was a newly-formed, I think, Muni Riders Union or something like that, that exerted some influence. The customers didn't have a place at the table until then.
- 06-00:17:47
Farrell: Was that successful?
- 06-00:17:49
Halsted: Reasonably successful. You'll get various responses from various parties. But I think it was successful.
- 06-00:17:58
Farrell: There was one story that Jim told. I think after the rider task force had been started where you could call Muni and complain if the train wasn't on time. In The Mission from where Jim was coming from to go downtown, I think every time the train was late he would call and complain, and so eventually they fixed that line. Do you know if there were other people that were doing that kind of thing?
- 06-00:18:23
Halsted: Oh yes.
- 06-00:18:25
Farrell: So that became sort of a rider?
- 06-00:18:30
Halsted: Way of calling attention to customer service, I mean getting attention to customer service.
- 06-00:18:35
Farrell: Something that kind of corresponds with Muni reform was the Geary Corridor study, which had happened in 1995. There were several findings that were

connected with that, but I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about what you remember of the genesis of that study, like why it happened?

06-00:18:56

Halsted: If you're talking about BRT [bus rapid transit] on Geary?

06-00:19:01

Farrell: I don't know.

06-00:19:01

Halsted: Anyway, I'm really not quite sure, but it's a long history of trying to get more transit on Geary. Way back in the sixties there was a BART line proposed for Geary which was rejected because it would create too much change in the neighborhood. SPUR's been an advocate of BRT on Geary, Bus Rapid Transit on Geary, for a long time. It hasn't happened yet, but it's in the works now. I heard Mark Leno say the other day that he opposes it. I think that the neighbors and the businesses out on Outer Geary, which is the most used transit line in the city, still don't want faster transit on that corridor because it will change the way people park, change the way people get to their businesses. There might be fewer stops, those kinds of things.

06-00:20:05

Farrell: Actually, that is my bus line. I've heard that it is the most widely used bus line west of the Mississippi.

06-00:20:11

Halsted: Yeah. It runs reasonably efficiently, I think. That's one of the other reasons. People say, well, why should we change it if it runs all right? But it really could be a lot better.

06-00:20:22

Farrell: Do you remember how that study was funded?

06-00:20:26

Halsted: No.

06-00:20:29

Farrell: Do you remember how long the study took?

06-00:20:30

Halsted: I'm not sure whether it was really a study or a task force. But honestly, I apologize for the fact that my memory is nothing like Jim Chappell's.

06-00:20:42

Farrell: It's okay. Some of the outcomes of the study did include service should significantly increase average speed and minimize traffic disruption. It should interconnect conveniently with existing transit, especially rail service. It should be designed so it doesn't permanently terminate in downtown. The city should plan for doing it right rather than settling for a less optimal solution for which financing might be immediately available. Do you have a sense that last one where I'm doing it right rather than something that's more affordable is

kind of a reason why it hasn't happened yet? Or is it just because of there's been opposing views on what should happen?

06-00:21:24

Halsted:

There hasn't been significant consensus on the project, I think. When I look at it now, and I've heard people recently say, well, Mark Leno said the other night we should just do BART, do a subway out there, well, that was turned down forty years ago. Maybe that's what we should have done. I would have preferred that. We don't really have the money to do it. We can barely do the Chinatown subway. So, anyway, it's interesting.

06-00:21:58

Farrell:

There were a couple of positions around that time that SPUR took on different propositions. And that's, I think, one thing that may be worth talking about a little bit. You had mentioned this, but SPUR often takes positions on things. Can you tell me a little bit about why it was important for SPUR to take positions on different measures and propositions?

06-00:22:24

Halsted:

Well, when I first was involved in SPUR, SPUR didn't take positions. SPUR, I believe, just wrote pros and cons. People really asked for SPUR's recommendation. I think we didn't take positions on everything. We took them on the things that we knew something about. That became a very popular product for SPUR. People really valued that sort of independent view without any money behind it and independent look at propositions, not at candidates, to see, make recommendations. We always presented pros and cons like the League of Women Voters but with a position on some of them.

06-00:23:08

Farrell:

Did that start before or after the position Jim was hired?

06-00:23:12

Halsted:

Before.

06-00:23:16

Farrell:

Did you see any sort of voter increase or more civic engagement after that happened?

06-00:23:24

Halsted:

I don't think I have any information about numbers on it, but I think people have always fed back to SPUR that they valued that. It seems to be useful.

06-00:23:37

Farrell:

What went into deciding on those positions?

06-00:23:43

Halsted:

Well, when we actually took positions on things, they were presented to the full board and the board voted. We set up some rules that you had to have more than a majority to take a position. I think we required 60% of the quorum present to approve a position. We weren't taking positions if there wasn't some reasonable consensus.

06-00:24:11

Farrell: Who would present their positions?

06-00:24:14

Halsted: Well, it's sort of hard to remember exactly when it started, but when I was first involved in SPUR there was a committee, but it was a committee of one, who wrote those positions and presented them to the board. He was a very, very loyal guy, a guy named Lee Munson, had been involved in city government for a long time. At a certain point, we, Jim and I and others, became clear that we needed a broader perspective. We needed more people to be involved in those. We had a committee that worked on that. Over time it's developed into a committee that is quite formalized and solicits supporters of each side of the propositions and has meetings to review them and then spends considerable time debating them and then recommending a position to the board and then it comes to the board to vote. It's an elaborate procedure.

06-00:25:05

Farrell: How long does that normally take?

06-00:25:08

Halsted: Well, like, four months. It's going on all the time because we have elections all the time.

06-00:25:15

Farrell: I'm sure that's a significant part of SPUR's daily operations.

06-00:25:20

Halsted: Yeah.

06-00:25:21

Farrell: How many people? Is it just the board that votes?

06-00:25:25

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

06-00:25:26

Farrell: Or is it staff as well?

06-00:25:27

Halsted: No.

06-00:25:27

Farrell: No staff? So, some of the positions in the mid-nineties that SPUR was kind of taking—SPUR opposed Prop J, which called for a Muni audit, because it would delay the needed changes that were already in process.

06-00:25:49

Halsted: I don't remember that, but often things are put on the ballot for reasons that are different from what they appear. Often an audit is used as a way to stop something.

- 06-00:26:01
Farrell: Interesting. That's helpful information.
- 06-00:26:06
Halsted: I don't know. I don't remember that that was the case in that, but I know that if you are a legislator and want to get in the way of something that you don't want to happen, asking for an audit of it is one way to slow it down.
- 06-00:26:20
Farrell: Another proposition that SPUR opposed was Prop H, which transferred parking and traffic to the police department. Do you have a sense of why SPUR opposed that one?
- 06-00:26:30
Halsted: I don't remember, but I believe we supported it when parking and traffic moved to the MTA. It was more of a matter of planning transportation and parking rather than being law enforcement. I don't remember it. That's what I would think, though.
- 06-00:27:05
Farrell: Were there any around that time positions on any issues that were particularly significant to you or that you felt strongly about?
- 06-00:27:14
Halsted: I wish I could remember. I should have a list of them, but I don't.
- 06-00:27:18
Farrell: That's okay. I just didn't know if there was anything that you kind of championed.
- 06-00:27:20
Halsted: Nothing stands out in my mind. The one that I talked about earlier was parks and open space. But that was, I think, in the early 2000s.
- 06-00:27:29
Farrell: Another thing that we kind of haven't talked about very much was the BCDC [Bay Conservation & Development Commission]. Is it the Bay Conservation?
- 06-00:27:49
Halsted: And Development Commission, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission.
- 06-00:27:53
Farrell: Thank you. I can only remember BCDC. Can you tell me a bit about what the overlap has been between SPUR and BCDC?
- 06-00:28:02
Halsted: I think many of the individuals involved in creating BCDC were SPUR board members. Bill Evers and Joe Bodovitz, and I don't remember who was when. They're probably sort of one generation older than me. I wasn't involved at that point in the mid-sixties in creating it, but they were extremely effective along with the three women who took it to the ballot.

- 06-00:28:36
Farrell: How did that overlap or that relationship between SPUR kind of develop over time or sort of manifest when you were involved with SPUR?
- 06-00:28:43
Halsted: I think it was people looking for preserving the Bay as a great asset but also planning for the assets around the Bay saw it as critical to the quality of life.
- 06-00:29:00
Farrell: Were you ever involved with BCDC?
- 06-00:29:02
Halsted: I'm the vice-chair of it now.
- 06-00:29:03
Farrell: Oh, okay. When did you become vice-chair?
- 06-00:29:07
Halsted: 2001, I think.
- 06-00:29:10
Farrell: Had you been involved in the '90s with them?
- 06-00:29:13
Halsted: No. In the '90s I was on the Port Commission. I went on the Treasure Island Development Authority. I was appointed to BCDC and resigned from the Treasure Island Development Authority.
- 06-00:29:27
Farrell: Maybe we'll pause that one until we get to that because I actually thought that was earlier. Sorry about that. Another thing that you worked on that was one of the initial priorities when Jim came on was the city charter reform. Can you tell me a little bit about what a charter city is?
- 06-00:29:52
Halsted: I guess a charter city is one that chooses to have more control over its fate by having its own charter rather than living under the state governmental rules. It has more local control of its governance.
- 06-00:30:08
Farrell: And it's a unique thing.
- 06-00:30:13
Halsted: Each one is created on its own and charter amendments are put on the ballot regularly. Over the years, what had happened was there had been so many charter amendments since it was first chartered, which I think was in the '20s or '30s, it became a compendium of charter amendments rather than a clear charter. Charter reform was about reforming that, taking out things that had become outdated, trying to integrate them. I don't remember how many silly rules that were there that couldn't be enforced, that didn't belong there, that kind of thing.

06-00:30:50

Farrell: Were you working with the city at all to do this?

06-00:30:54

Halsted: Mm-hmm, and with the city attorney, with the mayor, as I recall. Let me see. Who was the mayor then? It was before Willie. Just before Willie was Frank Jordan. It would be, I think, during Art Agnos and Frank Jordan, perhaps. I don't remember how it was structured, but there was a committee working on charter reform. Jim Haas was primary in that. Who else? Digging into my memory could be really hard. Barbara Kaufman, who was a supervisor then, was very active in helping with it. Jim was very involved with it.

06-00:31:40

Farrell: Do you remember what some of the things that SPUR wanted to reform in the charter were?

06-00:31:46

Halsted: Well, I think, one, that we were looking for more accountability of the allocations of power so that the mayor and the supervisors and the different commissions, you could see who was responsible for what. As it stood, my recollection is that there were lots of things that neither the mayor nor the board of supervisors could really interfere in. I think the next version of the charter gave more power to the mayor with the intent that the mayor could get more accomplished. The next mayor turned out to be Willie Brown, which many people thought he was too powerful. It kind of went beyond what people expected. He did get a lot of things done that hadn't been able to get done before then.

06-00:32:30

Farrell: Yeah, and made a lot of really progressive changes that were significant and meaningful.

06-00:32:34

Halsted: Mm-hmm. I think they will be remembered well over the long term.

06-00:32:38

Farrell: I think so, too, like hiring the first black fire chief. That was significant. Also, there was a position. The charter at the time was written so the mayor did not have power, as you mentioned. The board of supervisors didn't have power, but there was a position called the chief administrative officer. It was a lifetime appointment. The city controller was also a lifetime appointment. How did those positions keep progress from happening?

06-00:33:16

Halsted: I don't know that they kept progress from happening. I know that they were a force for stability. They probably were a force without any knowledge. They were probably a force for possible corruption because they had long-term power, but I don't know that.

06-00:33:35

Farrell: Do you know if SPUR wanted to change those and take away the lifetime?

06-00:33:38

Halsted: I think they were changed to ten-year. I don't know whether that was SPUR's direction or not.

06-00:33:46

Farrell: How long did the charter reform take to write?

06-00:33:52

Halsted: I think it took quite a while, but there were several attempts at it that failed. I think there were several that went on the ballot in the '80s and failed. The latest one that went through probably, I don't know, Jim could tell you.

06-00:34:07

Farrell: Was it a pretty laborious job to write that?

06-00:34:10

Halsted: Oh yeah.

06-00:34:12

Farrell: Do you remember what writing that involved, like, kind of what your process was?

06-00:34:16

Halsted: No. I'm sorry.

06-00:34:19

Farrell: After that charter reform was passed, do you have a sense of what the impact of that was, how things changed after that?

06-00:34:27

Halsted: My sense is the mayor did have more power. When Willie was elected he used it. He got City Hall redone fairly quickly after the earthquake. He got the ballpark done. He got Mission Bay going, all kinds of things that hadn't been moving for quite a while.

06-00:34:46

Farrell: Do you find now, having had, you know, that happened twenty years ago, that that was a successful effort on SPUR's part?

06-00:34:56

Halsted: It was, I think, yeah. Every movement has its counterbalance. When you start to move things, then people get disrupted some and don't like that much motion. It creates an equal reaction, so it motivates the neighbors who want to control things more to stop. There's that shifting all the time back and forth. That happened in reaction to Alioto in '70s and I think it happened in reaction to Brown.

06-00:35:28

Farrell: Do you feel like that charter needs an update again?

06-00:35:32

Halsted: I haven't been paying attention to it. I'm sorry.

06-00:35:37

Farrell:

Another initiative that SPUR was working on was the Presidio plan, so the Presidio had been an army base. In the '90s, they were demilitarizing it, essentially. There were plans to turn it into a park. There was a real concern that this be done correctly. If you go to the Presidio now, there's a lot of open space, but there's also a lot of buildings. There's a lot of shifting in what those do and who pays for them and who's in charge of them and who maintains them. I know that SPUR recommended that the roads and parking be removed from the waterfront. That also interacted with the Doyle Drive plan. I couldn't really find this, but do you have a sense of if SPUR's involvement with the Presidio plan was more than just the transportation?

06-00:36:36

Halsted:

Mm-hmm, I do, although I was not intimately involved in that. Of course, Amy Meyer was very involved in it. She had been involved in SPUR at an earlier time and was very close to John Jacobs, who had been executive director of SPUR. There was a continuing communication. Then, Michael Alexander from SPUR was on all the Presidio or the committees. Brian O'Neill, who was the first superintendent of the GGNRA [Golden Gate National Recreation Area], was on the SPUR board. And we were very involved in many aspects of both the GGNRA and the Presidio.

06-00:37:16

Farrell:

Do you remember if SPUR was trying to think about long-term planning for the Presidio?

06-00:37:20

Halsted:

Mm-hmm, I think so.

06-00:37:23

Farrell:

On that note, in what sense—usage, logistics?

06-00:37:30

Halsted:

Governance and financing and management. I don't know. I'm the wrong person to ask exactly what we did when. I do remember being involved, occasionally having to intervene when people went too far in one direction or another.

06-00:37:47

Farrell:

Now it's an interesting sort of mixture of things.

06-00:37:51

Halsted:

In fact the woman who's now the head of the Presidio trust, the executive, is a current SPUR board member just like Brian O'Neill was at GGNRA.

06-00:38:01

Farrell:

So there's overlaps with that as well?

06-00:38:01

Halsted:

Yeah, there are lots of overlap.

06-00:38:04

Farrell:

Aside from SPUR's position on things and their involvement in the Presidio plan, can you tell me a little bit about, this is your memories of San Francisco and the culture around here, with Presidio being an open army base? Do you have memories of Presidio as an active military base?

06-00:38:24

Halsted:

I remember that when you went down to, you know where the St. Francis Yacht Club is? There was a fence across there. You couldn't walk beyond there. It was in Alioto's time when they first opened up and created the Golden Gate Promenade. That gave people a sense of what could be as a park. It was very fortunate they fell for it and then, after that, put in legislation that if it should ever be closed that it would revert to the park, part of the Interior Department. When it was closed as part of the Base Realignment and Closures Act, there was no choice. I mean, it was done. But then we had to figure out how to finance it because it's a huge park.

06-00:39:15

Farrell:

There's a lot of staff members.

06-00:39:17

Halsted:

Well, it's just managing the land and managing the assets.

06-00:39:22

Farrell:

Do you feel like the culture in San Francisco shifted at all once it was closed, there being less of a military presence here?

06-00:39:31

Halsted:

Oh, I guess that's true, yeah. I've had sort of almost forgotten about that. But there was more of a military presence. I remember when Dianne was mayor that often she would call on people from the army or the navy to help on things. Other than the coast guard, the coast guard's the only remaining part of the military that's present in San Francisco as far as I'm aware.

06-00:39:57

Farrell:

Did you interact with the Presidio at all? Did you ever go there before it was a park?

06-00:40:09

Halsted:

Well, as I said, not in the '70s, but after it opened up, people then could use quite a bit of it. I don't remember how much, but yes.

06-00:40:20

Farrell:

Did you go there more once it became a park?

06-00:40:22

Halsted:

Oh, absolutely. It changed dramatically, but there wasn't a fence around all of it.

06-00:40:28

Farrell:

As far as the transportation goes, there's a lot of roads that are kind of winding that lead to the Presidio. There is just one main road kind of between the Presidio and Crissy Field that you can kind of get to. Do you have a sense that SPUR's transportation plan for the Presidio was successful?

06-00:40:52

Halsted:

I have that sense. I must say I wasn't involved with it. Michael Alexander and a number of other people were very involved in that. That's one of the things about being involved in SPUR. You can't cover the whole waterfront, but I do think it has been pretty successful. I'm looking forward to the upcoming completion of the landscaping that's underway with Doyle Drive.

06-00:41:16

Farrell:

Yeah, it's been a long time.

06-00:41:19

Halsted:

We just approved \$54 million for that at MTC the other day, so \$54 million for that's a big wow.

06-00:41:31

Farrell:

With the demilitarizing of different areas of San Francisco, you had mentioned that you were on the Treasure Island committee.

06-00:41:41

Halsted:

Part of the Base Realignment.

06-00:41:44

Farrell:

How did you get involved with that committee?

06-00:41:47

Halsted:

It was after I'd left the port commission, I think. No, maybe it was the same time. Frank Jordan invited me to join. I might have been on the port commission at that time and represented the port, because the port had some jurisdiction over part of that territory.

06-00:42:08

Farrell:

What were your feelings on Treasure Island being demilitarized?

06-00:42:13

Halsted:

My feelings on it? It didn't seem like an appropriate place for a military base. Right now, even now, they're beginning to compact it, but it's a very unstable, not piece of land. It's a piece of filth. It was originally made a military base to land Pan Am jets and then navy jets or navy planes in the Second World War. It's certainly not possible now. The whole function of it as a landing field was obviated years ago. It served to house Navy personnel. We no longer have those Navy personnel, for the most part, but we do use the housing.

06-00:42:59

Farrell:

Has the traffic in that area changed? I mean, you're able to see it from your window.

06-00:43:04

Halsted:

It's not intense as far as traffic. Of course, one of the obstacles to developing it is the Bay Bridge because it has a limited capacity. I think our intent is that there should be a congestion management charge for using that connection to the Bay Bridge in order to limit the number of cars going on the Bay Bridge and adding congestion.

06-00:43:29

Farrell:

What was the role of the committee in that whole process of demilitarizing the Treasure Island?

06-00:43:36

Halsted:

It was planning, trying to plan, for what should be there.

06-00:43:40

Farrell:

What were some of your thoughts on what should be there?

06-00:43:45

Halsted:

I think the consensus that we came up with in that original committee was really low density and a lot of open space. Then it came back to the city. The city thought it should be higher density. It now is going to be denser than it was originally when I was on the committee, but there's also a big marina. It's quite a lovely development if we get it to be strong enough to be able to last, which is, I guess, in the plan. They've got a really good plan for sea level rise.

06-00:44:18

Farrell:

Aside from sea level rise, there are polluted sites on Treasure Island. I believe that there's a Superfund site there.

06-00:44:23

Halsted:

Right.

06-00:44:24

Farrell:

Was that part of your consideration at all?

06-00:44:26

Halsted:

Mm-hmm, it was and there is a site there. It's nothing close to Hunters Point. Compared to most military bases, it's not very dirty.

06-00:44:38

Farrell:

Did that go into consideration of housing?

06-00:44:41

Halsted:

Mm-hmm, because at least when I was there it was all over on the east side of the island where the fire station was. At that point I don't think there was housing proposed anywhere near there. But it's all changed.

06-00:44:57

Farrell:

Are you happy with the way that Treasure Island has developed since it was demilitarized?

06-00:45:02

Halsted: It hasn't changed much yet because it's still the old housing and still the old facilities. The change is coming. It hasn't happened.

06-00:45:14

Farrell: There's definitely new businesses started there. There's a distillery that just opened there.

06-00:45:18

Halsted: I think it's not the new development that's being proposed yet. That first housing is going to be on Treasure Island, I think, I mean on Yerba Buena.

06-00:45:30

Farrell: Do you have a sense of how the committee wanted to roll out development, what sort of pace that would happen at in a perfect world?

06-00:45:38

Halsted: Oh back then, I'm talking in the beginning, like 1994. We anticipated it would be closed within five years. Well, it didn't close, as I recall, as a base, until 2015 or 2016. The navy kept control of it for that long.

06-00:46:01

Farrell: I did not know that. Okay. All right. I didn't realize that. That is also why a lot of things haven't changed.

06-00:46:11

Halsted: You'll see a lot of change in ten years.

06-00:46:13

Farrell: Okay. Interesting. Well, and then I guess moving back to SPUR, there were a couple of other things that happened. One thing that SPUR was trying to do, and particularly Jim Chappell, was to decrease the size of the board, because at one point it swelled to over seventy members.

06-00:46:48

Halsted: Well, both he and I thought that initially.

06-00:46:51

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about why you thought the board was too big and what effect that had?

06-00:46:55

Halsted: When the organization was not being very successful and people were losing interest, et cetera, it just seemed like we couldn't make decisions quickly enough. We couldn't organize things, but after working with it for six months or so, I think both Jim and I came to the awareness that the board was the strength of the organization. It was through the board that we could gain more funding. It was through the board that we had more strength to develop policies. The board was really, in essence, the strength of the organization.

We both walked away from the idea of cutting back the size. Both of us had had that instinct. But in fact, it remains sixty-five people on the San Francisco board. Now, SPUR has that many on the San Francisco board and twenty-five on the San Jose board and twenty-five on the Oakland board and then an executive board over the top of all three of them. It's still true that those boards are the strength of the organization for sustaining it. So, contrary to common wisdom, many boards of nonprofit organizations are fiduciary and have really the responsibility just for management. SPUR's board has much more responsibility for actual policy or what it does.

06-00:48:26

Farrell: When did the hierarchy sort of start to change where there was San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose?

06-00:48:34

Halsted: We decided to build the building following on the crash of 2001, as I recall, because during the boom it had become very difficult for nonprofits to hold on to their space. We decided that we should try to purchase our own building and do it. We did that with a lot of help and work. After getting into the building, I just don't remember when, we convened the board to envision the future of SPUR and came up with a vision that was regional. It was a complicated process. I think that that was in the period when Jim may have been transitioning out of the board.

06-00:49:34

Farrell: And Gabe was coming on?

06-00:49:34

Halsted: Yeah. Timing gets lost in my memory.

06-00:49:39

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about the need for the new building? You're renting the forum space. There's uncertainty whether your headquarters is going to be there in two years if rent is—?

06-00:49:53

Halsted: And really inferior office space, too, no ability to add staff, and limited meeting/convening space.

06-00:50:05

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about your memories of the work that was involved in the new building?

06-00:50:12

Halsted: Well, the biggest work was in raising the money to do it. Jim and I hired Diane Filippi to help. She was really instrumental in bringing in a lot of the funding. We got Oz Erickson to chair the board. He also was instrumental in raising the money to afford a new space. It was a long process. I think it must have been at least four years.

- 06-00:50:43
Farrell: Who were some of the people that you were approaching to invest in the new building?
- 06-00:50:50
Halsted: Everyone we could, certainly anyone associated at all with SPUR, but anyone associated with the future of the Bay Area and the foundations.
- 06-00:51:03
Farrell: How were you trying to sell the new building to potential investors or funders?
- 06-00:51:12
Halsted: I'd have to look back to see what we said. I think it would be security for SPUR's future to be able to rely upon a place to convene, to do business.
- 06-00:51:25
Farrell: How do you think that the new building has changed the way that SPUR has been a part of the city? I mean, now there's a coffee shop in the building. There's all these events that can happen. You can rent out space. You see a lot of young people in there.
- 06-00:51:41
Halsted: It's a much younger organization as a result. It's interesting because we were kind of hidden on the, what, fifth floor? I can't remember what floor, at 312 Sutter. There are a bunch of nonprofits there. They're still great nonprofits. But, it wasn't visible to the public. At the same time, Jim recommended bringing on Gabe as the executive director. He was younger. The whole direction of the organization became more focused on young professionals and young people working downtown. It's really very much more dynamic than it had been. There was a point when it was a lot of—I didn't have white hair then. But, most people did.
- 06-00:52:25
Farrell: That's funny. That's actually something that Jim mentioned in his oral history. There's a lot of those old rich white guys.
- 06-00:52:31
Halsted: Yeah, we used to have noontime forums. You'd look around and think the average age was seventy or something. Now it's probably twenty-seven, which is great. That's the saving grace of the organization, I think, that even though we have this huge board, we continue to evolve. I'm not on the board now, but I do help with things. We bring new young leaders on all the time.
- 06-00:53:01
Farrell: That investment and engagement with the city just changes completely and they're looking towards the future. Moving back to, because it's around the 2000s, is the interaction with the BCDC and SPUR. There was kind of a partnership between the two collaborative work environments. I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about how that partnership worked or the collaboration worked.

06-00:53:34

Halsted:

I'm not quite sure what you mean. There has been a relationship. I think SPUR supported the creation of BCDC. But the actual engagement over the years has been sporadic. I know Will Travis, who was an executive director of BCDC when I came on, I got him to come on the SPUR board. Joe Bodovitz, I think, had been on the board. Mike Wilmar also was an executive director of BCDC and then later came on the SPUR board. I think there was an affinity, if not a constant relationship.

06-00:54:21

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about working with Will Travis?

06-00:54:25

Halsted:

Oh yeah. I've always enjoyed working with him, for the most part. Occasionally I've had some differences. He has great wit and is a great communicator and has a profound knowledge of the work of BCDC. He was a very able executive director.

06-00:54:43

Farrell:

What was his vision for the waterfront?

06-00:54:45

Halsted:

For the waterfront? For the Bay?

06-00:54:47

Farrell:

For the Bay—sorry.

06-00:54:50

Halsted:

He was always quick to point out that the most important word in the name of the organization was “and.” It’s “conservation and development.” The point of BCDC is to not stop development but to stop it in a way that conserves the Bay, to allow it and permit it in a way that conserves the Bay.

06-00:55:14

Farrell:

Which I think very much aligns with how you have felt in the past, too, is that you should conserve but also have an eye towards how this becomes a usable, efficient part of the [process]?

06-00:55:24

Halsted:

Right, yeah.

06-00:55:28

Farrell:

I guess what do you think he sort of added to the organization?

06-00:55:35

Halsted:

Well, as I recall, I don't even know when he started. Do you have any idea when he started at BCDC? BCDC had kind of a negative reputation for a long time because they were seen as mean and regulatory and imposing little narrow rules. Will had an ability to communicate. I think it helped people become more comfortable with its role and understand the relevance of the regulation. When the threat of sea level rise became apparent, Will was very

effective at talking about it at BCDC and making people more aware of what they needed to think about in the future. He brought it kind of into the realm of the region where people could relate to it more than just a regulatory agency.

06-00:56:27

Farrell:

What did he bring to the board of SPUR when you brought him on?

06-00:56:33

Halsted:

Well, he brought a different perspective because, other than Mike Wilmar, who had been there sometime before, they brought the engagement with sea level rise and with the region in a way that hadn't been represented before.

06-00:56:54

Farrell:

You also worked with Michael Fischer?

06-00:56:59

Halsted:

Michael Painter? Michael Fischer?

06-00:57:01

Farrell:

I could be wrong. I thought it was Michael Fischer, but I could be wrong.

06-00:57:04

Halsted:

Oh, Michael Fischer from the Hewlett Foundation?

06-00:57:07

Farrell:

Oh, I thought it was BCDC. But maybe I have it wrong, which is totally possible. Okay, so maybe we'll leave that alone, because I think that I may be wrong. Sorry about that. One of the initiatives was the waterfront design plan. There was some thought about redesigning the waterfront for the public in the 1990s. The design plan was published in 1997. Were you involved with that?

06-00:57:43

Halsted:

Well, that actually is a Port plan.

06-00:57:44

Farrell:

A Port? Oh, okay.

06-00:57:45

Halsted:

I was involved with it because I was on the commission when it was started. I was part of the reason it had to get started, because we had proposed a hotel on Pier 24 or 26. That went to ballot and was defeated. That ballot measure required that the port develop a waterfront land use plan and that took, I think, ten years to get done.

06-00:58:11

Farrell:

I think that we had talked about that a little bit, but I didn't realize they were the same thing. You've mentioned sea level rise a couple times. I'm wondering if SPUR was thinking about sea level rise or if that was something BCDC or the port commission were talking about.

- 06-00:58:33
Halsted: I don't remember a discussion at the port commission when I was there, but I left in '96. I don't remember it being raised as a public issue until a couple years later.
- 06-00:58:48
Farrell: On the SPUR board or with BCDC?
- 06-00:58:50
Halsted: Mm-hmm. I don't remember it from either one. I didn't go on BCDC until 2001.
- 06-00:58:56
Farrell: Is that something that people are talking about now?
- 06-00:58:58
Halsted: Oh yeah. It's a matter of consideration with every decision.
- 06-00:59:04
Farrell: How does that get considered?
- 06-00:59:08
Halsted: Well, we build it into our policy guidelines. I think that it needs to be considered for every permit that comes before us.
- 06-00:59:18
Farrell: How was that built in to the permits?
- 06-00:59:26
Halsted: I don't think I can give you a really specific answer. On any permit there is a consideration of sea level rise in the future. They need to be reflecting the plans that they have made for covering sea level rise.
- 06-00:59:41
Farrell: Is there sort of a, like, if they're building on the waterfront, they have to have a contingency plan or they have to build within a certain amount of feet?
- 06-00:59:49
Halsted: There are all those things. In some cases they have to have a financing plan for it.
- 06-00:59:54
Farrell: Are they all subjected to the same sort of guidelines in dealing with it, so there's a cohesive?
- 06-00:59:59
Halsted: Yeah, but the guidelines are changing, though. I don't know if you know. The state just this year reissued their guidelines. Now they're saying twenty-four inches by 2050 and forty-eight inches by 2100, which is more than we had thought before.

06-01:00:14

Farrell:

Yeah. It's going to be interesting to see how that evolves over time and how something that's uniform like that is applied to businesses who have had things that were built way before that came out. Going back to Jim Chappell, he's been executive director for a little while. Can you tell me a little bit about how you saw his leadership evolve and develop over time?

06-01:00:57

Halsted:

Well, he came in as a very energetic, idealistic person. He became an extremely effective manager. People loved working for him. We never had any sort of discontent in the office. In fact, SPUR has been really fortunate with that for many, many years. It's been a very happy place to work. It wasn't because it was that they were so well paid. They're better paid now, but it's been a very collegial place for many years. Jim was always a good educator. He always kept making sure that people got out and got to understand and learn more, was not restrictive. He was a really good manager.

06-01:01:38

Farrell:

How did you see SPUR change under his leadership?

06-01:01:42

Halsted:

Well, I don't think he felt the need to control it as much as some earlier managers did. He was flexible and thoughtful with people. He was willing to consider changing course when necessary. Lots of things seemed to get developed over time and change rather than stuck in a rut.

06-01:02:04

Farrell:

How did you see SPUR grow with a lot of the changes that were happening in San Francisco?

06-01:02:12

Halsted:

Well, it has been kind of a continuous ramping up. I think, though, when he was still executive director, the board was still very involved in writing policy, et cetera. Over time, that's much less because we have a larger staff. The staff does most of the policy writing. The board is engaged in reviewing it and approving it but not so much in constructing it.

06-01:02:48

Farrell:

Where do you see that going in the future?

06-01:02:51

Halsted:

Good question. I don't think it'll go backwards. Given the fact that we're operating in three different cities and trying to operate to some degree regionally, it's a little unpredictable what the shape of the organization will be in ten years.

06-01:03:06

Farrell:

The budget as well, because I know that's a constant concern of how are we going to be able to keep making this, meeting our budget and our financial needs every year.

06-01:03:16

Halsted: Mm-hmm, and growing it. It's been growing. From \$150,000 to \$7 million, that's big growth.

06-01:03:23

Farrell: Yeah. What do you think the significance of SPUR's role in San Francisco has been over the years, or since your involvement?

06-01:03:39

Halsted: Rudy Nothenberg, the former CAO, used to call it sort of the truth teller, that we would try to be honest about policies rather than just be political about policies. Hopefully the organization is still in that role and mayors or citizens can rely upon it as being an honest broker, an honest evaluator of policies and directions. So, I hope that will continue.

06-01:04:17

Farrell: What has it meant to you to be involved with SPUR?

06-01:04:20

Halsted: It's allowed me to participate in so many different interests that I have and connect with so many different aspects of civic and political and business and all parts of life in San Francisco. It's been a really good place to be involved without having to run for public office.

06-01:04:54

Farrell: You get the perks of doing the job without the burdens of it?

06-01:04:57

Halsted: Right, exactly, not all the responsibilities either.

06-01:05:03

Farrell: What are your hopes for the future of not just the organization but sort of the younger demographic engaging? How do you hope that they, I guess, can learn from someone like you?

06-01:05:27

Halsted: That's an interesting problem. I'm really, really troubled by the fact that it's so hard for people to live here now because of the cost. My view is that we all should be involved in the communities we live in, but if you don't live here and just work here, it's really, really hard. I think we have to be thinking about how to restructure that. We can't make the property cheaper. Prices could fall sometime, but it doesn't look like demand is going away, but should we have regional government so that someone who lives out in Contra Costa has a vote here? I don't know how we do it. It's a little tough to figure out how to keep people living and working in this city or in any city. That would be my objective, is to find a way for people to live near where they work, distribute jobs, and distribute housing in relation to jobs.

Interview 7: June 1, 2018

07-00:00:04

Farrell: This is Shanna Farrell with Anne Halsted on Friday, June 1, 2018. This is our seventh interview and we are in San Francisco, California. Anne, today I thought we would pick back up with some of your engagement work and some of your board work. One of the things that you've been involved with since 1992 is the Institute on Aging. Their mission is dedicated to preserving the dignity, independence and well-being of aging adults and people living with disabilities. I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about how you first learned about the Institute on Aging.

07-00:00:44

Halsted: I learned about it through Stanley Herzstein who was on the board at that time. I had worked with him on the open space committee for San Francisco. We had become very good friends working on open space issues. After I retired from my job he tried to recruit me for this board. Finally I did come around to joining the board and it was an interesting and a fairly long-term position that I held there. I made a lot of connections and still have those connections in the aging field as I've aged.

07-00:01:18

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about what the board was like when you joined originally?

07-00:01:25

Halsted: Well, it was primarily a Jewish organization when it was formed and has had its roots in Jewish philanthropy. It actually was formed to help the frail and poor elderly more than everyone. It really dealt with the African American community in the Western Addition as well as the Russian community, the Russian Jewish community and a number of other communities like that, more than with the middle class or upper middle class aging community. The board primarily consisted of people who had been involved in Jewish philanthropy.

07-00:02:05

Farrell: Were there connections with the JCF, the Jewish Community Federation?

07-00:02:10

Halsted: There were, but not direct. And I don't think I can tell you exactly. When Mount Zion was an independent hospital, it was based there. It came out of that. And Mount Zion then joined UCSF [University of California, San Francisco].

07-00:02:26

Farrell: That's interesting. When they were founded, or their formation, thinking about the poor, so class relationships there—?

07-00:02:37

Halsted: Well, I think just the people who can't take care of themselves.

07-00:02:46

Farrell: If they needed to live in their assisted living facility?

07-00:02:49

Halsted: They didn't have an assisted living facility until they built that building on Geary. Mostly it was day services and services in the home. They had an Alzheimer's day care center where they brought people. Mostly services to people who were still in their homes.

07-00:03:11

Farrell: What were some of the priorities of the board? What were some of the things that you wanted to move forward?

07-00:03:17

Halsted: Well, I think that the organizations still did and still cares for the dignity of the elderly regardless of economic status or race or ethnicity. It directed its attention to those who seemed to be most in need and tried to provide them with all kinds of services that would make their lives more livable when they could stay in their homes.

07-00:03:50

Farrell: Yeah, and some of the services that they provide, and it sounds like not always, but at least now, they provide home care and support, social day programs, psychological and counseling services, all-inclusive health services. I'm assuming that's sort of like physicals and doctor-related care, community living and education training, and events, which is a pretty robust way to look at.

07-00:04:15

Halsted: Not all of these things are for all people. Obviously the events and training are broader. They bring in experts in fields. They have a hall where they can give lectures and give meetings.

07-00:04:29

Farrell: With some of the care that they provide, do you feel like they fill a void that was in San Francisco? Are there a lot of other services that pertain to other—?

07-00:04:42

Halsted: Well, when they started developing it was really a void. I think that On Lok was the only other service providing similar kinds of health as far as I know, really broad-based healthcare for the indigent frail in that area. It was a fairly new field of geriatrics. It's always been a hard one to recruit doctors for because it doesn't pay the most, but there's obviously a growing need. It's still a very important one. It deals with not research but clinical treatment. There are other organizations that deal more with research, although the Institute on Aging has dealt with some research in geropsychology and that kind of thing.

07-00:05:38

Farrell: Speaking about psychology and counseling, do you have a sense of when those services developed and what they grew out of?

07-00:05:48

Halsted:

Dr. Larry Feigenbaum, who was one of the founders of the organization, was very focused on that. He created a relationship with UCSF where they tried to build that into the curriculum for doctors. I think that started in the early '90s or late '80s. I think it's still struggling, from my viewpoint. There just aren't enough.

07-00:06:09

Farrell:

There's not enough doctors to be able to provide that care?

07-00:06:11

Halsted:

Mm-hmm, right.

07-00:06:13

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of the difference? I mean, you may not. Do you have a sense of the difference that that's made in elders' lives, having an ability to have counseling?

07-00:06:25

Halsted:

Oh, I think depression is one of the biggest problems for the elderly because they become isolated and because they have so many complicated interactive physical problems and drug problems. Being able to have someone to talk to about how to manage that is really, really key.

07-00:06:44

Farrell:

Yeah and how about the education training? I know that there's a few organizations around that are more tech-focused. They try to teach elders how to use email so they can communicate and still feel connected and less isolated.

07-00:06:59

Halsted:

I think what the IOA [Institute on Aging] focuses on more than that is education for caregivers, so for people who are actually providing services, whether they're nurses or whatever kind of practitioners, about the different services and needs of the elderly.

07-00:07:19

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of how big the organization or the Institute is?

07-00:07:30

Halsted:

It's hard to describe. If you describe it in dollars, it has a lot of pass-through money that simply goes to providers. It's not exactly the same as comparing it to other organizations. I don't know exactly how to compare it. It has a number of services. It's probably, other than On Lok, which is also a very large provider of elderly care services, probably the largest in San Francisco, and is providing services outside of San Francisco as well. I don't really know the numbers, though. The numbers are hard to match with other organizations.

07-00:08:09

Farrell:

How does the Institute on Aging get their funding?

07-00:08:13

Halsted:

Well, they get state funding. They get federal funding through Medicare for some of the clinical services they provide and state funding through Medi-Cal. For specific programs they get other kinds of funding. It's a complicated set of funding things for seniors.

07-00:08:36

Farrell:

Do they also rely on private donations?

07-00:08:39

Halsted:

Oh, absolutely. But I don't think that constitutes— it's primary funding.

07-00:08:47

(break in audio)

07-00:08:48

Farrell:

We were talking about a little bit about the donors, private donors, who fund the Institute on Aging. Was the board, again, active in fundraising?

07-00:08:59

Halsted:

In fundraising? Oh, absolutely. That's one of the major roles of the board is to raise that extra money to get over the top, because there are always costs that aren't covered by service fees. I mean, running the organization generally is not covered by service fees. The Jewish philanthropic community is very supportive of the organization. Richard Goldman, Rhoda Goldman was one of the founders of the organization. After she passed away, her husband assumed a major role as well.

07-00:09:35

Farrell:

Who were some of the other funders that the board was going to for donations? Or who are some of the major supporters of the organization?

07-00:09:43

Halsted:

Well, let me see. I'll think of it. The Koret Foundation always was a very big funder. I don't remember all the foundations that were. The Koret Foundation was a really big funder. Of course, that had its base in the Jewish community as well.

07-00:09:58

Farrell:

Yeah, and it's also close.

07-00:09:59

Halsted:

The Haas Foundation.

07-00:10:00

Farrell:

Yeah, and it's also the new. The assisted living is in the same neighborhood. So, that makes sense. Do you know when the assisted living facility or the community living center was built on Geary?

07-00:10:11

Halsted:

Well, I was really involved in it, but I can't remember the dates. We had facilities at 1426 Geary and where the Trader Joe's is on Geary and Masonic

right now, and other facilities. We tried to put together a building where we could put all our offices. That was probably, at the time, in 2001, when we had this run-up in real estate prices and nonprofits couldn't afford their, sometime around then. We made a decision to go for a building. We engaged with BRIDGE to have it be housing as well as the offices and facilities for the IOA. That's a combined building of BRIDGE and the IOA that you were talking about on Geary.

07-00:10:57

Farrell: What is BRIDGE?

07-00:10:58

Halsted: BRIDGE Housing is a nonprofit housing developer which builds and develops. I'm not sure they are running it. I don't know who's running it now, but somebody is running it for them.

07-00:11:11

Farrell: Why the decision to put it on Geary?

07-00:11:14

Halsted: Well, it's on a transit line. Really, it's one of those decisions that's really a natural and is in sync with everything SPUR supports, for instance, to have denser development and have people living on transit lines so they can get around without having to have a car. But it was very controversial. The neighborhood just got up in arms.

07-00:11:35

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

07-00:11:36

Halsted: It was very disturbing. Larry Feigenbaum lived right in the neighborhood. But, some of his neighbors were really irate about the idea of having a higher building on Geary and how that might ruin the neighborhood. Well, the Kaiser building is on Geary. It's a perfect location. It's a very wide street that can handle a taller a building. It has lots of one- and two-story buildings. So, really in the long run it's a perfect location for denser, higher housing, but that is not what people in the neighborhood wanted to hear.

07-00:12:13

Farrell: Do you have a sense that it was really just the size of the building? Or do you think that they were upset?

07-00:12:19

Halsted: I think it was the size of the building.

07-00:12:21

Farrell: Was there any compromising that happened? Was the building maybe at one point supposed to be higher than it was and they had to bring it down?

07-00:12:29

Halsted: I don't think so. There was a small neighborhood, and I can't think of the neighborhood, right behind. It was more directly affected by the height because it was right back up against it. There might have been a little compromise on that side about setbacks, but other than that I don't remember any lowering of heights. But, it's a while ago.

07-00:12:50

Farrell: That's kind of like the Lone Mountain area. There's a park directly behind it. That's interesting.

07-00:12:58

Halsted: It was the Coronet Theatre. That's one of the things that bothered people because the Coronet Theatre had some history. They considered it sort of a landmark because some big movies had opened there.

07-00:13:09

Farrell: That's right. I think Star Wars had opened up there, the very first.

07-00:13:13

Halsted: Right. It was the Coronet, wasn't it?

07-00:13:17

Farrell: Yeah, it was. You're right, yeah. Can you tell me a little bit about the difference that you've seen having that open?

07-00:13:29

Halsted: I haven't been on the board now for five years, five or six years, I think. I talk to the executive director and to the fundraising people, but I'm not really aware of their operations and how they're changing. Other than talking about fundraising, that's what they call me about usually, but I think they're doing well. It's not easy because the state funding has varied over time. When the state cuts back, it affects both patients and the organization.

07-00:14:05

Farrell: As far as how patients come into the IOA, do you have to be referred through your network? Or do you come independently for whatever service you want?

07-00:14:17

Halsted: I think both, but I'm not really sure at this point. There are many different services, so there are different referrals for different kinds of things.

07-00:14:27

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about the leadership of Larry Feigenbaum, who's the founding director?

07-00:14:33

Halsted: Well, he was a very gentle and sweet man—I'd follow him anywhere—but not a dominant force. He didn't run meetings. When he said something, you listened because he was just so knowledgeable and so caring. It was really his

kind of passion, I think, that brought the organization together and moved it along. He was a very, very special person.

07-00:14:58

Farrell: What was his background?

07-00:15:00

Halsted: He was doctor, but right now I don't remember what his specialty was.

07-00:15:05

Farrell: Was he from San Francisco?

07-00:15:06

Halsted: Yeah. He has a son who's a doctor, too.

07-00:15:09

Farrell: So he's got stakes in the community?

07-00:15:10

Halsted: Oh yeah, very much so.

07-00:15:13

Farrell: Now there are other locations in Marin, Los Altos, San Mateo County and San Bernardino.

07-00:15:20

Halsted: San Bernardino, really?

07-00:15:21

Farrell: Yeah, which may be a newer one but that's in San Bernardino. Were you involved at all for some of the expansions of their services?

07-00:15:28

Halsted: I was involved in talking about them. There was an organization in Palo Alto that merged with the organization. It sort of acquired an established organization and that provided service more to home care for more middle-class people rather than the same kind. I don't know how that's doing now. Marin, they've been a service for some time, particularly I think sort of a financial guardianship service.

07-00:15:59

Farrell: Was it difficult to kind of apply what you were doing in San Francisco, both city and county, to other counties around the state?

07-00:16:08

Halsted: When I was there it was not the same activity in each county. There were different activities, as I recall, in each county, different programs.

07-00:16:16

Farrell: So it's sort of what needs each county asked?

07-00:16:18

Halsted: Or what had developed and then building off that.

07-00:16:23

Farrell: During your time on the board, because you were involved from 1992 to 2001, who were some of the people that you had seen come through the board and spend time in service for them?

07-00:16:36

Halsted: One of my good friends, Barbara Schrage, was very involved. She was a big contributor to the organization. I got to know quite a few people. Audrey and Bob Sockolov, who live down the street from me here, but he's one of the owners for the Giants and had been involved in Jewish philanthropy for many years, and lots of people like that.

07-00:17:15

Farrell: I guess I'm curious about if you find San Francisco to be an elder-friendly city.

07-00:17:20

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

07-00:17:20

Farrell: Is it easy for elders to get around? Is it easy as a city to age in?

07-00:17:24

Halsted: I think in general it is. I think one of the biggest problems that I see in San Francisco is that our old, traditional housing is like this, with stairs. It's just not very accessible for people who have disabilities. Newer facilities or different kinds of facilities are needed for people who lack ability to get up and down stairs. As to services, we probably have more services for the elderly than most places. We have more transit, more cabs, more Uber, all those things, that make it easier for people to get around.

07-00:18:08

Farrell: Do you see the population of San Francisco aging? I mean, I feel like there's a lot. Tech has come in. There's a lot of younger people. They're kind of transient. They don't stay for very long. How have you seen that affect the aging population of San Francisco, kind of the people that are here for generations?

07-00:18:27

Halsted: I think the aging, I don't know the numbers, but I'll bet the aging percentages have grown. I think rent control is a big contributor to that because people have been able to stay in their homes to the degree they can physically. Certainly in this neighborhood, I've lived here for 40 years. Many of my neighbors have, too. When I take the bus in Chinatown, almost everyone has a cane, almost everyone. There are frequently, very frequently, wheelchairs on the bus. People do use the public transit and depend on it for senior life.

07-00:19:10

Farrell: With the accessibility issues and thinking about how aging housing here isn't really as accessible, has that impacted your work with other organizations? Do

you kind of like look at the issues from being on this board and apply them to, like, say you're working on SPUR?

07-00:19:28

Halsted:

In the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, where I serve, looking at accessibility issues for both the disabled and the elderly, in housing and transit, is important and edifies or improves my ability to think about what's needed. Certainly, for instance, on BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit], the fact that the elevators never work, or often the escalators never work, I mean, it's just very frustrating stuff for people who have access problems.

07-00:20:03

Farrell:

Has that influenced, I mean, even the work on Muni to reform Muni? Because now I think that Muni used to be sort of the bad thing, and now it's the good thing. And BART was the good thing. Now it's the bad thing.

07-00:20:18

Halsted:

Well, BART just needs to spend more time on some of their services and money. It's an expensive service. I think the disabled community has been really effective in San Francisco on Muni. I certainly support that. It hasn't been easy.

07-00:20:38

Farrell:

Was there a lot of overlap between your work on this with your work on other boards? A little bit I know we were just talking about with transportation.

07-00:20:47

Halsted:

That those were not at the same time? Not so much. It was a little bit different because it is a social service agency. The other ones I've been involved with are more involved in planning or neighborhood activities.

07-00:21:05

Farrell:

Did you enjoy that this was more social service-oriented?

07-00:21:07

Halsted:

Yes. I had also been involved in TEL HI [Telegraph Hill] Neighborhood Association, which is a social service and it's just nice to have that balance in what you're doing.

07-00:21:17

Farrell:

With some of the area, what were some of the priorities of the board, so like the funding areas that you were most interested in moving forward?

07-00:21:26

Halsted:

Well, for much of the last five or six years, it was the building, getting that building finished and accomplished, getting it permitted and funded, and then keeping the PACE [Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly] program going, which was full medical services for the poor elderly.

07-00:21:47

Farrell:

Were there areas that were more difficult to get funding for?

- 07-00:21:53
Halsted: Anything not covered by Medicare or Social Security or California funds.
- 07-00:22:02
Farrell: Do you have a sense of what those boundaries were?
- 07-00:22:08
Halsted: Well, I would say in general administration or running the places. When there are cutbacks, of course, then you have to figure out how to engineer continuing services.
- 07-00:22:20
Farrell: In general, especially through the lens of your work on the board, with funding nonprofits and funding city agencies, I know a lot of foundations or grants don't support overhead. That's basically administrative services. How do nonprofit boards compensate for that?
- 07-00:22:54
Halsted: By trying to keep the percentage of administrative or non-service-oriented costs within a certain range that makes it acceptable to foundations and to funders. There are standards by which people measure. I think it's reasonably acceptable for an organization to have, say, 15 to 20 percent administrative costs but not much more than that.
- 07-00:23:19
Farrell: Does that affect the work that the organizations are able to do when there's those limits? Like, if you don't have enough support staff to be able to support the programming areas?
- 07-00:23:27
Halsted: You can't expand. It does limit it unless you can get volunteer work to do.
- 07-00:23:33
Farrell: Have you seen that negatively affect different organizations over time?
- 07-00:23:40
Halsted: I don't think so. I don't think so. It's a bit of a game, too, of course, because how you describe what your expenses are can be different depending on how you categorize them.
- 07-00:23:55
Farrell: Are there any organizations that you've seen do that particularly well?
- 07-00:24:01
Halsted: Well, I don't think that any of the organizations I've worked on have been poorly run from that perspective, and each is different. I mean, if you're providing services the way the IOA is, your total budget is going to be much higher. So, 20 percent of a much larger number, or 15 percent, gives you a lot more leeway on those numbers, whereas if you're providing just policy work or something like that, like SPUR does, the numbers don't reflect money that

goes elsewhere. It's all money that stays inside. Do you see what I mean? The percentage applies to what is essentially a lower number.

07-00:24:43

Farrell: Why did you step away from the board in 2011?

07-00:24:48

Halsted: Basically, I have a belief that people should rotate off boards to bring new blood in. I thought I had been there way too long. That's why I did.

07-00:25:00

Farrell: What were some of your biggest success as being part of the board?

07-00:25:04

Halsted: I think probably helping to get that building built. I think that was what I would say primarily. It lived through some difficult decisions as to who was the executive director and not and just holding on, keeping going. It's always hard to find perfect people to run organizations.

07-00:25:29

Farrell: What were some of the biggest challenges that you had to deal with?

07-00:25:31

Halsted: Probably that.

07-00:25:33

Farrell: How did you or the board handle that?

07-00:25:36

Halsted: Discreetly.

07-00:25:42

Farrell: Was there any sort of messaging that you had to come up with?

07-00:25:45

Halsted: I'm sure there was, but I don't remember right now. I don't think the organization fell apart or suffered tremendous consequences. There were some kind of moving forward and moving back until you got the right person.

07-00:26:03

Farrell: Where do you see the future of the IOA going now under current leadership?

07-00:26:08

Halsted: Well, I think they're being led very well. Managing services and costs is really always a challenge. I mean, recently they had a joint program with CPMC [California Pacific Medical Center] to run an Alzheimer's clinic, which CPMC had to back out of. They have had to try to figure out how to take those patients and place them elsewhere. It's constantly shifting funding in the health care field, as I've been experiencing myself. Anyway, those kinds of challenges, and I think it's going to be a challenge in general just to keep up with the elderly population. There are lots of ways to do it. I think that the

IOA provides particular expertise in clinical services locally, so that's really useful.

07-00:26:59

Farrell: Do you see more people in general becoming more interested in elder care?

07-00:27:02

Halsted: Oh, absolutely, because the baby boomers have hit the aging level.

07-00:27:09

Farrell: Do you think that will continue after?

07-00:27:11

Halsted: Yeah, I do, because the percentage of the population is clearly there. Of course, that may be my perspective. My husband's very involved in the Buck Institute, which does research on aging. Everybody I know is aging. I don't know anyone who isn't aging, actually, even the dog. A lot is being learned. People are living a lot longer and the challenges of living well are there for all of us.

07-00:27:43

Farrell: How would you describe living well? In a perfect world, how would you live well and age at the same time?

07-00:27:51

Halsted: Well, I think I'm in a pretty perfect world. I think it's not being isolated, being engaged in activities that you find stimulating, having social activities, eating well, exercising, just having a good life, living in a good climate, being able to get to things easily. Many people feel that retirement should be in kind of a remote, quiet place. The problem with that is isolation. Almost everyone at some point loses their ability to drive, not everybody, but mostly people do. It's really hard to be out in the wilderness without access to services. I think it's great to be in a denser area where you can get around and you can have your friends over. I feel very lucky to be here.

07-00:28:47

Farrell: Yeah, and still feel part of a community.

07-00:28:49

Halsted: Mm-hmm, absolutely.

07-00:28:51

Farrell: What did it mean to you to be a part of the board?

07-00:28:56

Halsted: Well, it was interesting because I really learned about Jewish philanthropy. I learned about that community here through being on that board. That was a real addition to my knowledge of the world.

07-00:29:23

Farrell:

On that note with Jewish philanthropy, because it's been so strong, and it's been such a big part of how the city of San Francisco has developed, can you tell me a little bit about how you view the impact of Jewish philanthropy being like the imprint that it's left on San Francisco?

07-00:29:41

Halsted:

Well, I think it's been wonderful. I grew up a family where we didn't have that much money. But we believed in giving and volunteering. I think I came from that kind of background but not with that kind of money. Fortunately the people in the wealthy Jewish community had a long tradition of philanthropy and have invested in services for everyone in the community, which has been really quite remarkable. The younger generations are doing the same thing in the tech community, et cetera, so it's very reassuring.

07-00:30:19

(break in audio)

07-00:30:23

Farrell:

How do you see the Jewish philanthropy shaping San Francisco?

07-00:30:30

Halsted:

Well, I think it's very important that the Jewish philanthropy has embraced all ethnicities. It's invested in every minority group, as far as I know, and all the different kinds of needs of the community. It's helped to bring the community together, not separate it into one ethnicity or another. To me, that's very important. It's created a tradition where participating in NGOs is part of the city's life, I think.

07-00:31:09

Farrell:

Why do you think the Jewish leadership or philanthropic leadership is so strong in San Francisco in particular?

07-00:31:23

Halsted:

I'm sure you've read about the history of the German Jews coming to San Francisco early in California history. They were very instrumental in development, both in the south and the north. I think that their establishment here as the primary force before other parts of the community were here probably is key in the ownership they feel, or felt. I think in the Jewish faith there is a history of philanthropy in general, but I can't really speak to that very knowledgeably.

07-00:32:00

Farrell:

Do you feel like it has anything to do with the type of people that the Bay Area attracts?

07-00:32:05

Halsted:

I don't know about that. I don't know about that, because I think, have you ever read Towers of Gold?

- 07-00:32:12
Farrell: Yes.
- 07-00:32:13
Halsted: That was an interesting history of the history of the Dinkelspiel-Heller family.
- 07-00:32:20
Farrell: The banks going from Los Angeles up here, yeah, that's really interesting.
- 07-00:32:25
Halsted: To some degree I guess that reflects the entrepreneurial spirit. People who have been entrepreneurs and sort of brought themselves up have traditionally given back. That's not always true, but here it seems to have been mostly true, more true than not.
- 07-00:32:45
Farrell: Do you feel like it may have anything to do with the economic prosperity that the Bay Area sees?
- 07-00:32:52
Halsted: Oh, I'm sure, yeah, absolutely.
- 07-00:32:54
Farrell: There's more of the ability to give.
- 07-00:32:57
Halsted: Absolutely.
- 07-00:33:05
Farrell: Moving on towards the San Francisco Maritime National Park Association. You had been involved in that since 1998. And you're still on the board?
- 07-00:33:20
Halsted: No, I'm not.
- 07-00:33:21
Farrell: A trustee?
- 07-00:33:22
Halsted: I'm sort of like a retired trustee. I'm called a senior trustee, I think, which means I don't have really any responsibilities.
- 07-00:33:30
Farrell: Okay. I saw that on their website, and I was like, oh, she's still involved.
- 07-00:33:35
Halsted: They're using my name.
- 07-00:33:37
Farrell: They are. They definitely are.
- 07-00:33:38
Halsted: That's okay.

07-00:33:41

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about how and why you joined the association?

07-00:33:47

Halsted: I don't know whether I mentioned this before, but I grew up sailing. I really felt that that was very important to my formation as a youth, learning to understand nature and to understand how to organize myself to run a sailboat and get a crew to work for me and to compete in a race. I thought those things were very helpful to me in developing some leadership skills and some confidence. The Maritime National Park Association is involved in running programs training youth on the Balclutha and other historic ships down there. They provide some really important training for youth, which sort of parallels that. That was a real motivating factor. Of course, I just like the water. I like the boats. I'm glad they're there. So, trying to help preserve that was an interesting opportunity for me.

07-00:34:43

Farrell: I guess I should say their mission is to bring together our maritime heritage to life through education, preservation and philanthropy. The Maritime National Park includes a fleet of vessels, a visitor's center, a museum, and a library and research facility. They're also a National Park Service partner.

07-00:35:11

Halsted: The association is. The national park is a national park. It's a separate national park from GGNRA [Golden Gate National Recreation Area].

07-00:35:17

Farrell: Right, one of the affiliates of the park, right? It works like the Golden Gate National Park Service?

07-00:35:25

Halsted: It is parallel. It is another national park parallel to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. It's not a recreation area. It's a historic park, which is different under National Park Service. It's certainly a somewhat different park, but it is a separate national park. The association is a private nonprofit partner to help support that park, just as GGNRA has a private nonprofit partner.

07-00:36:00

Farrell: Is that also similar to the Presidio and how the Presidio Trust works?

07-00:36:03

Halsted: Presidio is different. The Presidio Trust is constituted quite differently. It manages the real estate for that park. It's just a different construct.

07-00:36:20

Farrell: So, thinking about how the maritime park is funded, does that nonprofit control the funding for the site and the services?

07-00:36:34

Halsted:

Only for running the programs it runs. It runs the education programs. I'm not really up to date on what it's running in the museum. It doesn't run the library. That's separate. They have a separate friends' organization. It runs the education programs on the Hyde Street Pier. It has a separate ownership of the Pampanito submarine, which is actually not part of the national park. That's a little complicated, but it runs educational programs on that as well.

07-00:37:16

Farrell:

How does that combination of ownership, leadership, how does that all work together in practice?

07-00:37:25

Halsted:

It's tough. It is a really tough organization to keep going, I have to say. It's one of the toughest. It's still struggling, I think, with its funding because it doesn't really have a regular source of funding. The park service would like it to be contributing to the funding of the park. It can barely manage to raise the money it needs to run the programs it runs. It's a real struggle. Traditionally, that whole national park didn't develop until the late 80s, I think. It's changed a little bit. At first they charged fees for going onto the Hyde Street Pier and sustained itself to some degree with that, but then the park service said that was unacceptable because it's a national park. We can't charge fees, which is understandable. That made it very tough to keep this organization alive, but it's still alive. I've found it a very challenging organization to work with. Nice people and all, but I had hoped to help it develop firmer funding and more diversity on its board. It's been really tough. It's beginning to happen.

07-00:38:34

Farrell:

Is it hard because there's so many moving parts that are involved?

07-00:38:38

Halsted:

I think it's partly that. It's not clear to people why they should be engaged. The park is there regardless. The park is responsible for maintaining the ships. The association has helped with that but can't really take that over. That's a huge job and the National Park Service is one of the most rigid organizations in our government as far as I can tell, and particularly for a historic park here they insist that everything be done as it was originally, which means taking care of a ship is really expensive that way, particularly if it's in the water. Anyway, it's a very challenging thing. I think the current leadership has finally, I think there's something like ten or twelve women on the board finally. I'm really excited about that. Traditionally they had funded it through the maritime organizations that were here. Of course, those have diminished because the shipping is diminished. The people running those organizations were traditionally fairly traditional people.

07-00:39:46

Farrell:

How did you make a case for people wanting to engage with it? Like, how would you sort of sell it as like this is here and this is why you should care?

07-00:39:55

Halsted:

I think it's very persuasive when you go down to the pier and experience the educational programs. You see the kids come on the ships and get trained on overnight programs. They develop leadership skills overnight because they're independent. They're out there learning things about history, learning things about how to take care of themselves. It's really amazing. That's a very good way to get people engaged.

07-00:40:20

Farrell:

When you would try to convince either to find more stable funding, would you actually bring people down there so they could see that?

07-00:40:28

Halsted:

Oh yes.

07-00:40:30

Farrell:

It would be a reaction?

07-00:40:31

Halsted:

Positive response, yeah.

07-00:40:34

Farrell:

With the overnights, was that a source of income for them?

07-00:40:38

Halsted:

Mm-hmm. It was a school program, basically. Classes of schools would use this as a whatever overnight program. They would get credit in their education for it and so parents would come with them. I think almost every night all year there is a class staying overnight, during the school year anyway.

07-00:41:04

Farrell:

That's something that's not free?

07-00:41:07

Halsted:

Someone has to pay for it.

07-00:41:10

Farrell:

Well, I guess it's not free to—?

07-00:41:13

Halsted:

To the school?

07-00:41:13

Farrell:

Yeah.

07-00:41:14

Halsted:

Well, there were scholarships for those who couldn't afford it. It was something we raised money for, but those schools who could pay normally would pay something. There were park service people, I think, running the program. I don't remember exactly how the reimbursement worked.

- 07-00:41:35
Farrell: Yeah, I just didn't know if that was a cost that either the schools incurred or if it was another thing that the association needed to—
- 07-00:41:43
Halsted: Both.
- 07-00:41:46
Farrell: And there's the overnights. Do you have a sense of what kind of things would happen on the overnights with schools?
- 07-00:41:56
Halsted: Oh yeah. They would learn how to cook their dinner from the kinds of food that people would get at the turn of the century on a ship and do it on their own. They'd learn how to climb the mast, you know, and do things like that. They'd learn what happens if someone goes overboard, all kinds. They'd stay in the hold, really kind of an unpleasant place but a lot of fun for kids, too. It was really a pretty fun operation, from my perspective.
- 07-00:42:31
Farrell: There's also some waterfront day camps as well for kids to come in and learn how to sail and work on boats.
- 07-00:42:39
Halsted: Uh-huh. I think they've had them more recently. They had wooden boat building. That's all I remember.
- 07-00:42:51
Farrell: There's also some adult teambuilding programming that happens.
- 07-00:42:53
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 07-00:42:56
Farrell: For kids, it's pretty immediate that they're climbing a mast. They're sleeping in the hold. They're learning to cook, what you're saying. They develop leadership skills overnight. How do you see that differ with adults?
- 07-00:43:10
Halsted: Well, I haven't been to their adult teambuilding. From my perspective, sailing is a really easy way to do that because someone has to be in charge, and someone has to follow and sailing is a perfect opportunity to develop teambuilding skills. They're probably doing it on some of the sailboats, but I don't know.
- 07-00:43:32
Farrell: What do you feel like the benefits of these programs are, especially for children in urban environments?
- 07-00:43:39
Halsted: Well, many children in urban environments never seen the water or been on the water or thought about the possibility of sailing. It's a big education

process. I think for lots of kids throughout our society, it's an unfamiliar activity, so learning about nature, learning about working with other people to work through nature.

07-00:44:09

Farrell: Do you feel like that sort of can be a gateway to kids wanting to engage with the environment?

07-00:44:16

Halsted: Oh, absolutely.

07-00:44:18

Farrell: Because I especially know with some of the national parks, there's a really big issue right now with diversity in their audience. The more you get kids there in younger ways, they'll spend more time there as adults. I just didn't know if that was something that the board had thought about.

07-00:44:35

Halsted: Oh, absolutely. That's why they really developed the scholarship programs.

07-00:44:44

Farrell: Who would be able to apply for the scholarship programs?

07-00:44:48

Halsted: There's school teachers who apply for their class.

07-00:44:55

Farrell: Were those always a pretty well-sought-after scholarship?

07-00:44:59

Halsted: Oh, I think so, yes.

07-00:45:01

Farrell: As part of the board, what were some of the areas that were easier to fund than others?

07-00:45:09

Halsted: Well, I think that for actual fundraising, the easiest thing was the education programs. The management is harder to fund, as we were talking.

07-00:45:21

Farrell: On that note, can you tell me a little bit about the role of the trustees? So, is that similar to the board?

07-00:45:27

Halsted: It's just a board of directors. That's another name.

07-00:45:31

Farrell: There's thirty-three trustees, I think, on the board.

07-00:45:34

Halsted: Now.

07-00:45:34

Farrell: Now. And their current CEO is John Trogenza.

07-00:45:39

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

07-00:45:39

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about what you see as his vision for the association?

07-00:45:44

Halsted: Well, I haven't been working with him recently. He has actually just retired, but he headed the board before he became executive director. I know him fairly well. I think he's trying to lead the organization to be more contributory and to be more diverse. It's a big challenge.

07-00:46:08

Farrell: Why do you think it's so challenging?

07-00:46:11

Halsted: Because the maritime industry that has funded it in the past has been traditionally old white men and they enjoy it. Getting women interested in participating in an organization that's run that way is harder. But it's happening. I guess the same could be said about diversity. But it's happening. Very hard.

07-00:46:35

Farrell: When you joined the board, were you the only woman?

07-00:46:40

Halsted: Maybe. I don't remember. Probably.

07-00:46:43

Farrell: Were you able to recruit any woman? Or was that also a challenge for you?

07-00:46:47

Halsted: It was a challenge for me because I wasn't involved in the maritime industry so much. They really wanted people with that background.

07-00:47:01

Farrell: Do you have a sense of it's started to change?

07-00:47:08

Halsted: I think that Darlene Plumtree may have made a big difference. I don't know if you know Darlene. She's married to Carl Nolte, who writes for the Chronicle. Anyway, I think she has been working there on and off over the years as a fund raiser. She has slowly but surely brought in women from the maritime industry. I have met with some of them recently. They are really wonderful, a lot of young and middle-aged women who are very prominent in the maritime industry now.

07-00:47:42

Farrell: If you were trying to convince somebody to join that board, what would be your selling points?

07-00:47:48

Halsted: Well, I think right now it has a huge challenge, because do you know Muni Pier, which is that sort of semi-circular pier that goes from the end of Van Ness around Aquatic Park?

07-00:48:00

Farrell: Yeah.

07-00:48:01

Halsted: Very few people are allowed out on it anymore because it's falling apart. That needs to be redone. That's about a \$70 million project. That is part of this park. One of the association's jobs is to help find ways to raise money for that, so that's a big challenge. They really need big thinkers and big funders to come along to do maybe what was done at the Presidio with the promenade and the waterfront there. It is a great opportunity for someone to really make a difference in San Francisco because I think connecting Pier 39 with the Golden Gate Bridge with a really good way to walk and get there would be a big, big improvement.

07-00:48:53

Farrell: Are there anybody else that shares that vision?

07-00:48:55

Halsted: Oh yeah. It just hasn't come together yet, but I think we have to keep talking about it because it is something that ought to happen, because people in San Francisco don't think about that walk. Everyone goes to the Presidio. Fort Mason and the Maritime National Park is a really beautiful addition to that.

07-00:49:15

Farrell: Yeah, and I would never think about, even from the Ferry Building, walking over.

07-00:49:20

Halsted: It's a great walk, but it can be improved and there are plans to improve it.

07-00:49:23

Farrell: Yeah, because it doesn't seem like it's the easiest walk to do. Would that involve, in bringing that together, collaboration between different organizations?

07-00:49:32

Halsted: Oh yeah. Oh, sure, yeah.

07-00:49:34

Farrell: Do you feel like they're at a moment right now where they're willing to work together?

07-00:49:39

Halsted:

Right now I think they may be. There was a meeting I missed last week because I had my clinical trial thing. There's an association to save Aquatic Park. It is trying to spearhead a move to fund the Muni Pier protection. That Muni Pier actually protects that whole harbor.

07-00:49:59

Farrell:

Environmentally protects it?

07-00:50:01

Halsted:

From weather. That beach and the rowing club and actually the fishing harbor at Fisherman's Wharf are very much protected by Muni Pier and probably couldn't sustain themselves without a substantial pier there. It's a big project. That creates an opportunity also to work on this continuous connection, which we'll be added to if we can open up the tunnel between Fort Mason and end of the Maritime Park, the tunnel that used to exist there, and take the E Line all the way through that. Those are all things in the works and lots of people working on them.

07-00:50:48

Farrell:

So, with Muni Pier, the priority right now is to build the pot of money, that \$70 million. Are you kind of seeing people open to the conversation about creating a pathway?

07-00:51:09

Halsted:

Oh yeah, they are. There are always people opposed to it or afraid that more people will be in front of their houses or something. I think the success of the Presidio sets a wonderful example for opening up the rest of it. It's open already. It's just not very transparent, not very easy.

07-00:51:29

Farrell:

When you walk on the Embarcadero, that's a very clear path. It's very open. You don't even have to think about it. You know it's there.

07-00:51:38

Halsted:

When you get to about Pier 39 or Pier 45, it gets confusing. It's actually very interesting, but it's confusing.

07-00:51:50

Farrell:

Do you feel like that will eventually happen?

07-00:51:52

Halsted:

I do. I think it's almost like it's one of those things that it's so obvious it has to happen.

07-00:51:58

Farrell:

Will that affect the Maritime National Park at all in either the layout or the functionality of it?

- 07-00:52:05
Halsted: Well, sure. Since the Muni Pier is part of it, of course that management of it is up to the park service. But it could change. There's lots of opportunity for different thing to happen.
- 07-00:52:20
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about some of the other trustees that you've served with, kind of what they brought to the board, what their backgrounds were, what they contributed?
- 07-00:52:28
Halsted: Some of them were people who served on submarines in World War II or later. It was a different kind of mix because there was a whole legion of people who were particularly loyal to the Pampanito, which was not a park service asset, and worked on it as volunteers and were really interested in submarines. I must say that living and working on a submarine, to me, requires a different kind of personality from someone who lives and works on a sailboat. Just the claustrophobia in a submarine, to me, is just something I would have a hard time dealing with. But, a lot of people really treasure their experience and it's a special kind of loyalty.
- 07-00:53:15
Farrell: Do you find that people, even if they worked on different submarines, are kind of bonded by that experience?
- 07-00:53:19
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 07-00:53:20
Farrell: Are kindred in that way?
- 07-00:53:22
Halsted: Mm-hmm, absolutely.
- 07-00:53:25
Farrell: What were some of their, I guess, contributions? What were they bringing to the board?
- 07-00:53:31
Halsted: You mean the submarine types? Well, I would say it would be a terrible thing to generalize, but I'd have to say to some degree there were some nerds among them who are real technical experts. They had abilities to either make parts for the thing or to figure them out and figure out solutions that was quite different from other board members.
- 07-00:53:59
Farrell: They were more practical?
- 07-00:54:01
Halsted: They were really involved in that particular boat.

07-00:54:05

Farrell: How were those board meetings run with people who didn't have those interests?

07-00:54:14

Halsted: There was always a bit of a conflict. The park service was suspicious of it as well because it was not raising money. They thought it was not raising money for the park. It was raising money for the submarine, which belonged to the association but not the park.

07-00:54:31

Farrell: Was there ever any interest in doing separate meetings, like having a group?

07-00:54:35

Halsted: We did consider separating but realized neither one could sustain itself.

07-00:54:42

Farrell: That's interesting. Aside from that, what were some of the biggest challenges that you faced when you were working on some of those?

07-00:54:56

Halsted: Well, I think I've talked about them. The diversity of the board, raising money for the park service and for the submarine with people who had loyalties to one or the other. We always had really great staff, but they were so poorly paid that it was hard for people to stay. A lot of summer interns, people who were in education who loved the sea, would come and work there. One of my cousin's nieces—I had an email from her this morning saying how much she loved the summer she worked there. But anyway, it was hard to keep them.

07-00:55:37

Farrell: Why did she enjoy working there so much?

07-00:55:39

Halsted: I think she just thought it was fun and the people were fun. The activity was fun.

07-00:55:46

Farrell: What are some of the things that you're most proud of from your time as a trustee?

07-00:55:51

Halsted: Well, I'm still frustrated that I didn't make more of a difference there. I am proud that I made a little difference and it's still going and that we did get the Balclutha, the Thayer, the Thayer went into dry dock. I helped get the \$10 million from the park service to restore her. That was a big deal. Dianne Feinstein still may never forgive me, but she did it, and it was great. So, the ships are in pretty good shape. Old ships in the water are always deteriorating and very expensive to maintain.

07-00:56:28

Farrell: How did you go about working with NPS [National Park Service] to get that \$10 million for that?

07-00:56:34

Halsted: Well, simply putting together the request and asking people to support it without just going to friends we knew who should be interested.

07-00:56:49

Farrell: Was there opposition to it?

07-00:56:52

Halsted: In Congress, not locally.

07-00:56:55

Farrell: Why did Congress oppose it?

07-00:56:56

Halsted: Other members of Congress weren't necessarily supportive of spending that much money on that subject. In other words, we were competing with other projects.

07-00:57:07

Farrell: Why did you say that Dianne Feinstein may never forgive you for that?

07-00:57:11

Halsted: Because it was really hard work. It was hard to think about \$10 million to restore an old ship. Not everybody thinks that's the most important thing to do with our tax dollars and she did. She went along with it. It was a lot of competing issues, no opposition but competing issues.

07-00:57:35

Farrell: Do you have a sense of who supported it and why they did?

07-00:57:40

Halsted: I don't remember. But I know Dianne did.

07-00:57:45

Farrell: What do you make of the Maritime National Park now?

07-00:57:50

Halsted: The park itself? I think it's functioning pretty well. The park service rotates superintendents. They have a new superintendent whom I don't know. But it's a wonderful place. It has wonderful assets. I wish it came together as a park in people's eyes more clearly because most people aren't even aware it's a separate national park or that they even exist.

07-00:58:28

Farrell: Moving forward, how do you hope that people continue to interact with the waterfront in that particular area?

07-00:58:38

Halsted:

Well, I think that one of our huge assets in this area is the bay. It's such a critical part of our lives. It's changing. I don't know if you saw Resilient by Design last week. They had this huge competition about what we're going to do with rising sea levels. So, for people to have access to understanding the connection between the land and the water and how the bay affects our lives, that part of the bay is really critical. As I said, without Muni Pier there, there probably wouldn't be the swimming clubs. There probably wouldn't be the beach. There might not be the fishing harbor. Those things are not apparent to people until they sort of experience it and learn to think about it. People will love it. Here I am looking at the bay because I insisted on buying a house where I could see the bay. It does move me. It's one of my passions. I think it's important for other people. I hope they do, too. But I do think so.

07-00:59:42

Farrell:

I think that might be a good place to leave it for today. Do you have anything else you want to add?

07-00:59:45

Halsted:

Nope, nope. Okay.

07-00:59:47

Farrell:

Thank you.

Interview 8: June 6, 2018

08-00:00:04

Farrell: Okay, this is Shanna Farrell back with Anne Halsted on Wednesday, June 6, 2018. This is our eighth interview and we are in San Francisco, California.

08-00:00:14

Halsted: Good morning.

08-00:00:15

Farrell: Good morning. When we left off last time, we were talking a little bit more about the waterfront and your involvement with some of the projects that happened on this side of the bay. One of the things that you were involved with was the Ferry Building remodel. That happened in a couple of different ways and you had mentioned just a second ago that you were one of the people who had reviewed some earlier proposals to remodel the Ferry Building in the '80s and '90s. Can you tell me a little bit about where the remodel was at that point? Was it a consideration? Was that something that was just happening randomly?

08-00:01:02

Halsted: Yeah. I'm trying to remember what years, but mid-'80s, I think. The port put out an RFP, I believe, for a redo of the Ferry Building. Gosh, this is stretching my memory, but I do remember that the entity that ended up with a right to exclusive negotiation was the Continental Development. They wanted to do a combination of both Pier 1 and the Ferry Building. I believe it was the historic renovation of the Ferry Building and then a new building on Pier 1. It's stretching my imagination a bit to remember, but they hit a stumbling block because the World Trade Club was on the second floor of the old Ferry Building. I don't know if you remember that. It doesn't exist anymore, but it had most of the second floor.

They refused to negotiate and they were going to have to use eminent domain to remove them. I and others thought that that was really an inappropriate use of eminent domain and that they should have been able to negotiate. Anyway, that project failed for a number of reasons. I don't think that was the only one but other reasons. It went into back the same status it had been for many years and hadn't been remodeled. I think it was between the late '80s and, gosh, I wonder if my timing is right, and the late '90s. It was pretty much as-was and not being remodeled, but then after the freeway had come down, and I believe the market for commercial had risen to the point where it seemed feasible to do office on the second floor. Then the port put out another RFP. Now, I hope I'm remembering that correctly.

08-00:03:02

Farrell: At that point, what was the idea for the Ferry Building? That was an area where there was commercial traffic there.

08-00:03:17

Halsted: Yeah. It was basically a commercial office building and a ferry terminal.

08-00:03:21

Farrell: Ferry terminal. Thank you. Was the idea that it would continue being a commercial building and a ferry terminal at that point?

08-00:03:33

Halsted: I don't think at that point that any of us thought that the terminal for the ferries would be in the building as it was in the thirties and forties. It hadn't been for quite a while. But there would be ferry terminals adjacent. On the advisory committee that I was participating in, determining what the shape of the RFP, the request for proposals, should be, we were very clear in saying that the first floor should be entirely public, in other words not a separate commercial space that wasn't available to the public. That really seemed like a pretty amazing thing to be able to demand of a developer, that the first floor should be all public, but it certainly has been a wonderful, wonderful aspect that worked out better than I could have imagined. I think because a really good developer was chosen who was committed to historic restoration that was authentic and really well done.

08-00:04:33

Farrell: Yeah, cohesive.

08-00:04:35

Halsted: Yes.

08-00:04:36

Farrell: At that point, during the stage where the proposals had failed and it didn't move forward, eminent domain had come up. Had that been an issue in other areas in either San Francisco or kind of along the waterfront before?

08-00:04:53

Halsted: Eminent domain?

08-00:04:53

Farrell: Yeah.

08-00:04:55

Halsted: I don't know that it had. It probably had. It seemed to me that it was inappropriate to use eminent domain for a private development. This was a private development of a public space. I might have been wrong, but anyway.

08-00:05:10

Farrell: Was there a lot of opposition? I mean, I know that the use of eminent domain, you had said that you had opposed it. Were there other people opposing it?

08-00:05:16

Halsted: I don't remember. I don't think that it had gotten to the point where there was a lot of opposition.

- 08-00:05:21
Farrell: So it kind of died early?
- 08-00:05:22
Halsted: People were anxious to get the Ferry Building restored.
- 08-00:05:26
Farrell: What made you and the group that you were working with, or was it at this point the port commission who were shaping the RFPs?
- 08-00:05:34
Halsted: In which?
- 08-00:05:35
Farrell: For the first floor being public.
- 08-00:05:37
Halsted: Yeah.
- 08-00:05:39
Farrell: How did you conceive of that, the first floor being public, or open to the public?
- 08-00:05:45
Halsted: Well, I think as a ferry terminal it was and so the idea was that this next restoration should be also open to the public. And, to have the water in the back and the land in the front and have it be open through makes a very important public open space.
- 08-00:06:05
Farrell: Did you have an idea for what that might look like at that point?
- 08-00:06:08
Halsted: I really didn't have a specific idea. I would never have imagined we could have done a public market as successfully as they did. Selection of vendors, design of the spaces and selection of vendors done really better than I've seen almost anywhere.
- 08-00:06:27
Farrell: Were there other examples of public markets in San Francisco at that time?
- 08-00:06:32
Halsted: Not much, not much. I think the civic center food market was there. There wasn't much like that. There had been public markets in the 1900s, in the early 1900s, but not that were retail like this.
- 08-00:06:53
Farrell: Yeah, it doesn't seem like there's a whole lot in the Bay Area in general right now.
- 08-00:06:57
Halsted: There's more than there used to be.

- 08-00:07:00
Farrell: You had joined the Northeast Waterfront Advisory Group, which was all local people.
- 08-00:07:11
Halsted: People who lived in this Northeast Waterfront area.
- 08-00:07:13
Farrell: What was the idea of that group?
- 08-00:07:17
Halsted: I think that it was probably an outcome of when we did the waterfront plan at the port, starting in 1990, the port convened community groups in each area of the port to vet ideas about new uses. I think this was the advisory group the port created to vet ideas for developments as they came up along this part of the waterfront so that they would have community input before moving too far along so hopefully they wouldn't be starting on a project and then find that people didn't like that idea.
- 08-00:07:52
Farrell: Was that because with new uses it's going to affect local community members more?
- 08-00:07:58
Halsted: Oh yes. As you probably know, anything that happens on this waterfront is carefully screened by most of the neighbors within five miles.
- 08-00:08:11
Farrell: Were there conflicting ideas of what new uses could be?
- 08-00:08:16
Halsted: Oh yeah. We went through this waterfront land use plan from 1990 until almost 2000 and it took a long time to get ideas. Many of them were very vague, particularly on the ideas between Pier 7 and Pier 35.
- 08-00:08:34
Farrell: Was that sort of I think something you had mentioned before with bikes and just sort of really soft commercial uses that didn't actually generate a whole lot of revenue?
- 08-00:08:43
Halsted: That's what's easiest for the public to accept, but the port being a separate revenue entity that needs to sustain the maintenance and life of the piers all over the waterfront feels it needs to produce some revenue because then it can't go back to the general fund of the city for revenues. They need to have some way to sustain what it takes to maintain the port. They're always considering how that should be done.
- 08-00:09:13
Farrell: The Northeast Waterfront Advisory Group you called NEWAG. Do you remember who was on NEWAG with you?

- 08-00:09:22
Halsted: I really can't, but some of the same people, I think, are still on it. It would take a lot for me to remember exactly who was on it. I think it was probably fifteen people or something.
- 08-00:09:31
Farrell: Was there overlap at all with the Telegraph Hill Dwellers Association?
- 08-00:09:35
Halsted: There was probably someone from the Telegraph Hill Dwellers on it.
- 08-00:09:39
Farrell: Were there other people who [were involved]?
- 08-00:09:41
Halsted: The Golden Gateway and all the areas.
- 08-00:09:46
Farrell: Who did you each represent? Were there any commercial interests represented?
- 08-00:09:50
Halsted: Oh, I'm sure there were. I'm pretty sure that Flicka McGurrin, who has Pier 23 Café, people that ran the ferries, what are they called? Not Golden Gate, but anyway, one of the ferry operators, people like that, people who are active in the commercial life of this area.
- 08-00:10:12
Farrell: At that point, were the ferries active in that part of town going back and forth?
- 08-00:10:17
Halsted: Yeah. It depends on which ferries, but yes, there were.
- 08-00:10:22
Farrell: When you put out the request for proposal, how did you spread the word that those RFPs were open?
- 08-00:10:33
Halsted: That was the port that did that. It wasn't me, obviously. It was the Port of San Francisco. But, they have a public process that's legally binding for doing RFPs.
- 08-00:10:45
Farrell: The actual work that got done with what we see now with the public market, that original RFP was through the Port Commission?
- 08-00:10:54
Halsted: Right.
- 08-00:10:55
Farrell: Okay, I guess I'm a little confused.

- 08-00:10:57
Halsted: The advisory group to the Ferry Building that I was serving on that suggested it should be all public on the ground floor was advisory to the Port Commission.
- 08-00:11:10
Farrell: So you were working with the Port Commission in that capacity?
- 08-00:11:12
Halsted: Mm-hmm, and NEWAG is also advisory to the port commission.
- 08-00:11:16
Farrell: What was it like having been on the Port Commission and then working in an advisory capacity?
- 08-00:11:22
Halsted: It's interesting. I often think sometimes you have more power when you're not on a commission to suggest ideas that might not be totally acceptable to the staff. In some ways, it's more fun to be on a more outside group because you can be more candid and more free.
- 08-00:11:42
Farrell: Aside from the first floor being open to the public, were there any other qualifications that those RFPs laid out?
- 08-00:11:50
Halsted: Oh yeah, lots. It's on the National Register of Historic Landmarks, I believe. It had to meet a tremendous number of standards for the development of it. I don't remember all of them, but there are lots of pieces of it. Some pieces of the historic fabric were removed. There was this huge tile thing of the state of California on the floor and that's no longer there as I recall.
- 08-00:12:21
Farrell: Yeah, I think you're right. How did the group go about deciding, or the committee go about deciding what would work? Were you privy to any of that?
- 08-00:12:34
Halsted: I don't think it was so much our job to decide what would work as to decide what we thought should work, honestly. It's up to the developer to figure out how it would work.
- 08-00:12:46
Farrell: Oh, I guess I sort of mean when you're deciding on a successful, whichever proposal's going to move forward.
- 08-00:12:55
Halsted: We didn't get to decide that. The Port Commission decided that.
- 08-00:12:58
Farrell: Were you privy to any of that, any of the reasoning?

- 08-00:13:02
Halsted: Probably, but I don't remember right now.
- 08-00:13:07
Farrell: How closely did that original proposal match what actually happened?
- 08-00:13:14
Halsted: Gosh, I don't know for sure. I don't know for sure.
- 08-00:13:17
Farrell: On NEWAG you were the chair from 1999 to 2002 and at this point the Ferry Building remodel was moving forward. So, that was there. It was a few-year remodel that actually reopened in 2002 and Page-Turnbull was the architect firm who were selected. They had worked with a couple of other groups. Can you tell me about what the strengths of Page-Turnbull was as part of this remodel?
- 08-00:13:49
Halsted: I don't think so. They have a tremendously strong reputation in historic restoration. I think that that would be primarily it, but I didn't have the opportunity to work with them in any real matter. One of the projects we did work on during that time was Pier 27. Did you find any evidence of that in your research?
- 08-00:14:09
Farrell: I didn't, actually.
- 08-00:14:10
Halsted: That was really controversial. At that point, the Port wanted to redevelop it as a recreational pier because it came out of the land use plan as an acceptable use for that location. A group from New York came in and proposed something like the Chelsea Pier in New York. Are you familiar with that?
- 08-00:14:37
Farrell: I am.
- 08-00:14:39
Halsted: We went through a lot of consternation over whether that could work and NWAG supported it happening. It almost got done, and then at the very end Mayor Brown kind of vetoed it. It was a very tumultuous time.
- 08-00:15:01
Farrell: So, just for maybe readers or listeners, Chelsea Pier in New York is on the west side of Manhattan. It's on the Lower West Side, but it's also a really expansive area that has tall buildings, warehouses. There's a lot of recreational commercial use. It's where the iconic trapeze things are on the water. There's an equestrian center. There's bowling alleys. There's bike rentals. It's massive.
- 08-00:15:37
Halsted: But it's within an old pier shed building.

- 08-00:15:40
Farrell: Yeah, so it's kind of reanimating historic spaces. What was the idea? Can you tell me a little bit about how they were planning on adapting that model to San Francisco? They're different. Even the size is different.
- 08-00:15:56
Halsted: The size is definitely different, but they were taking an old pier shed building which no longer is there and restoring that to accommodate indoor recreation and other recreation on the waterfront on that side of the pier.
- 08-00:16:10
Farrell: It's indoor but it's on an outside park. In New York, at least, they're massive buildings that do obstruct views.
- 08-00:16:23
Halsted: Well, you may be thinking of more than the pier itself. Anyway, this was within forty feet. It was not a high building.
- 08-00:16:38
Farrell: That's, I guess, what I'm curious about, is what that would have looked like had it gone through.
- 08-00:16:46
Halsted: It would have looked like a pier shed building. What we have now is the cruise terminal, which originally had been planned for Piers 30 and 32. One of the issues that I was first involved with at Pier 27 was that BCDC had insisted that there be an open view across the front of Pier 27. The NWAG committee had to work on how that would be designed, and actually the way it's designed at the cruise ship terminal is very much the way we had it planned for the Chelsea Pier project.
- 08-00:17:27
Farrell: What were the opposing sides to that? Why was there tension around that?
- 08-00:17:33
Halsted: It was the financial opportunity where [there] was competition. Of course, that creates people advocating for different things. The YMCA associated with another project with, I think, Mills, the shopping center developer. There was controversy between those two, with the Mills project committee working on it, because he never explained himself.
- 08-00:18:33
Farrell: You don't know why he vetoed it?
- 08-00:18:34
Halsted: Not exactly.
- 08-00:18:36
Farrell: Why did he originally support it?

- 08-00:18:40
Halsted: Because it met what we were looking for. I think there were some high-level politics involved that we were unaware of.
- 08-00:18:53
Farrell: What kind of recreation were they proposing?
- 08-00:18:57
Halsted: Well, there was baseball. There was swimming. There was all kinds of stuff. I don't think there was any equestrian, but tennis, as I recall, maybe not tennis. At Chelsea Piers there's batting cages, and they have golfing cages and all kinds of things and a lot of gymnastics and things like that.
- 08-00:19:22
Farrell: Do you remember what the size would have been?
- 08-00:19:25
Halsted: You probably don't remember the old pier sheds that were there. It was within the pier sheds, for the most part, which are huge, but not as big as what you're thinking of Chelsea Piers in New York. But that is still within what was there originally, I think.
- 08-00:19:41
Farrell: Did you find that the developer who wanted to come in and do that, since they were not from the Bay Area, that they were sensitive about the Bay Area and kind of understood?
- 08-00:19:49
Halsted: It seemed that they were to us who were working with them. It was interesting.
- 08-00:19:53
Farrell: How did you feel about that proposal?
- 08-00:19:56
Halsted: I thought it was a good idea. Of course, I'm happier with the cruise terminal being there than with that, because I'd much rather have a water-oriented use there.
- 08-00:20:05
Farrell: You didn't think that that model [was ideal]?
- 08-00:20:07
Halsted: At that time the port was unwilling to consider bringing the cruise terminal to this location. But anyway, so I'm happy that that's the way it worked out.
- 08-00:20:19
Farrell: That's interesting.
- 08-00:20:20
Halsted: I know. Just wait, and something will get better maybe.

- 08-00:20:26
Farrell: When did the cruise terminal get built?
- 08-00:20:30
Halsted: It was just finished about three years ago, I think.
- 08-00:20:31
Farrell: Three years ago?
- 08-00:20:32
Halsted: Yeah. I lose track of time.
- 08-00:20:38
Farrell: Going back to the Ferry Building a little bit, can you tell me what your memories of what the building actually looked like before it was remodeled?
- 08-00:20:53
Halsted: Inside or outside?
- 08-00:20:55
Farrell: Either, both.
- 08-00:20:55
Halsted: Outside is more similar to what it is now than inside. Inside was vastly different. It was a rabbit warren of little offices and very few public spaces except that there was a long ramp stairway that went up from the first floor to the top floor with interesting tiles about the history of California. That was the most public feeling of inside of the building.
- 08-00:21:25
Farrell: Did you see people just walk by the Ferry Building and not engage with it at all at that point because it was all private commercial?
- 08-00:21:32
Halsted: Yeah. At that point it was not a walkway so much. It wasn't until the freeway came down and we began to take the railroad tracks off the sidewalk and the roadway and created uses that were publicly oriented rather than warehouses that people started to use it as a walkway.
- 08-00:21:54
Farrell: Did you start to see people biking and jogging along that area?
- 08-00:21:57
Halsted: Oh, sure, yeah.
- 08-00:21:59
Farrell: I always feel like that's the first sign that people are going to be more comfortable in those industrial areas. I know that there are a lot of things with the Ferry Building. It's a challenging project because it was landmarked. It's historic, so there are certain qualifications that need to be met about how you preserve that space and how you can work with reanimating it. The staircase was taken down. The tiles were taken down. There were aluminum-framed

windows that were taken down. From what I read, I could be wrong about this, the second floor was opened up, but the clock was kept. That's kind of the big iconic clock that's on the top of the building, kind of signals that you're in the Bay Area waterfront.

08-00:22:49

Halsted: The exterior was very similar to what it is. Color-wise it's a little different.

08-00:22:57

Farrell: Why do you think that the clock was kept?

08-00:23:02

Halsted: Because it's historic. Also, you can look and see the time. It's very valuable.

08-00:23:11

Farrell: With the public use on the first floor and that becoming a public market, do you remember how that sort of evolved or how all that ended up working out? Because, now when you go into the Ferry Building it's a lot of different vendors. Those range from food purveyors to ceramic vendors. There's coffee. There's ice cream.

08-00:23:43

Halsted: Well, the developer, I think it was Chris Meany, Meany Wilson, Wilson Meany, was very strict about selection of vendors. He hired some really good people who had great taste and selected only really high-quality vendors. I don't know how they structured their leases, et cetera, but they've done a good job because they've had a little turnover but not a lot of turnover. They've really maintained high quality among those vendors. They've not allowed them to change the space in a way that is not complementary with the design. It's really been very well done so far.

08-00:24:24

Farrell: Was there any worry that that wasn't going to be done in a good way?

08-00:24:29

Halsted: Well, yeah. Any retail environment, when you have people who are struggling to make money, often they make individual entrepreneurial decisions that are not in sync with the whole. That must have been an incredible struggle for the developer to keep really engaged entrepreneurial vendors who were using new products and bringing fresh food and getting them to operate within the same environment without having to discourage them.

08-00:25:00

Farrell: There's also the CUESA. I'm now going to forget CUESA's, what the acronym stands for, but it's a food-oriented organization, and they brought the farmer's market.

08-00:25:13

Halsted: The public market, yeah.

08-00:25:14

Farrell:

That's a really popular Thursday and Saturday morning activity. Can you tell me a little bit about what having the food, the food being so present in that space, has done for the Ferry Building?

08-00:25:29

Halsted:

Well, from my view, it keeps it from being a completely touristic place. It keeps it being a place where locals go all the time, which I think is very important, because without that it loses a kind of authenticity, but it also is a great resource for locals. I think CUESA probably developed when the market was down here on Green Street and moved over to the Ferry Building, when that happened.

08-00:25:59

Farrell:

It did, and it definitely grew with the Ferry Building.

08-00:26:02

Halsted:

Yeah. I remember the controversy because I was, where was I, on the port commission then? I think so. I was on the port commission when we decided to bring it over there. It seems highly unlikely, but anyway, I was involved in the decision somewhere. But many of my friends on Telegraph Hill wanted to keep the market more local here and not have it move over there where they had to compete with the tourists. It really did enliven and firm up. I would like to have it even seven days a week.

08-00:26:36

Farrell:

That would be amazing.

08-00:26:37

Halsted:

I know.

08-00:26:39

Farrell:

That's really special. I think that you're onto something there with it involving locals, especially in the rise of restaurant culture here in the Bay Area. The Ferry Building and that market have been so incredibly important because you get a lot of celebrity chefs who would go to that area and then use the purveyors there and then put that on their menu so people knew where they were sourcing from.

08-00:27:05

Halsted:

It's been great. It's been really bringing together some of the best aspects of the Bay Area.

08-00:27:11

Farrell:

Yeah, and you could see those fingerprints all over the city.

08-00:27:12

Halsted:

Exactly.

08-00:27:17

Farrell:

What do you feel like having the Amtrak station there and the ferry terminal there has done to keep the space active and lively?

08-00:27:32

Halsted:

And authentic. That was its original use, as a ferry terminal. I was walking down there just this morning. I saw a ferry, not a ferry, but it looked like a private yacht, come in from Berkeley. I could tell the people on it were not private because they weren't talking. They were commuters. I thought this is a great way. It came into Pier 1. I don't know if you've ever seen it, but it looked like a fabulous way to come into the city. There are more of those water taxis coming in there. The more we can use the bay, the better because we don't have to pave the bay. It's great.

08-00:28:12

Farrell:

This was a very expensive remodel. It was \$70 million budget for the overhaul. I couldn't figure out in my research where that money came from, how that money was budgeted. Was that from the city? Was that from the developer?

08-00:28:28

Halsted:

The developer.

08-00:28:28

Farrell:

Developer?

08-00:28:29

Halsted:

Oh yeah. It was not public money.

08-00:28:32

Farrell:

There was no cost incurred to the city for that remodel?

08-00:28:36

Halsted:

I'm sure there was some cost somewhere, but it was primarily a private development. It was a lease with the port to develop that property.

08-00:28:48

Farrell:

How did some of your involvement with that overlap with your work with SPUR?

08-00:28:55

Halsted:

Well, it's interesting because often the overlap has more to do with people than actual plans. For instance, one of the people who was first involved in running and starting CUESA was a former president of SPUR, Beverly Mills. All those connections, it's interesting how they all come to. There was a lot of consternation over the development around Justin Herman Plaza and that whole area. Another advisory committee I'm trying to remember, but SPUR has always been present in the planning for those areas. SPUR's involvement in advocacy for good planning has always been beneficial so that if something is going well we can ask them for a permit for approval.

08-00:29:50

Farrell: I know that the traffic and transportation is a big thing that SPUR focuses on.

08-00:29:55

Halsted: It's always been a big issue.

08-00:29:56

Farrell: And that with, I think, the remodel of the Ferry Building, the flow of traffic has changed, also with the freeway coming down and the train tracks being moved.

08-00:30:07

Halsted: The redesign of the roadway was a big controversy because it was originally proposed to have a big park or a big open space in front of the Ferry Building, attached to the Ferry Building, and have the roadway go around it in a semicircle. That was the proposal that I and almost everyone supported, but at the very end someone came in and said, "Well, we think the roadway will be too difficult for seniors to cross if it's in one chunk." It was suddenly changed. I think that was a really bad error at that time because we would have had, instead of having the roadway on both sides and the big space in the middle that's not very usable, we would have had a big space attached to the Ferry Building where you could have had the farmer's market in front of the Ferry Building, which would have been much better.

I think there was some interest, because some people advocated for putting the roadway underground there. Of course, underground would be underwater. That wasn't an option available because it was too expensive and also would have created big sort of portals at both ends. When you go underground you have to have a big open tunneling area. You would have lost a lot of ground there. Some of us didn't think it was a practical solution, but others thought we should hold out for that solution. By keeping the roadway where it is now you have still that option in the future, supposedly, of putting it underground. But anyway, I think it was an error that we didn't make that go around that space because now the space in the middle of the Ferry Building is just kind of a lovely, non-useful space.

08-00:32:00

Farrell: That all didn't happen because people gave a compelling argument about seniors not being able to walk?

08-00:32:07

Halsted: Sue Bierman made that argument to Willie Brown.

08-00:32:11

Farrell: Willie Brown was executive decision maker on that?

08-00:32:13

Halsted: Right. That's my recollection.

08-00:32:17

Farrell:

There's a lot of changes happening there, and I know they don't exist in a vacuum. How did you see the flow of transportation change in the late nineties, early 2000s, particularly after the remodel happened?

08-00:32:38

Halsted:

Well, we struggled with figuring out where to put pedestrians, where to put bikes. It was no kind of order to it all. I think we're still struggling with it, but it's gotten better. I think that the bike lanes are much better defined. At that time we didn't have as many people on scooters, et cetera. But, the sidewalks along the promenade or Herb Caen Way are jammed and there really isn't room for vehicles along with people. It's just a shame that we can't figure out a little better way to distribute, but I think it is working better now. From the late '80s to 2000, say, from '88 to 2008, the transportation changed dramatically because it went from being a commercial area with trucks and warehouses to being a pedestrian and bike and car-oriented area. My husband has a fit because we have so many stoplights that are there primarily to allow pedestrians to cross. But, that does slow traffic down, too, but it's okay.

08-00:33:48

Farrell:

Yeah. I feel like sometimes it's better to have people on foot walking through than too many cars. One thing that I do want to talk about is, this is an embarcadero on a waterfront. And, there is climate change. There's sea level rise. There's also erosion because it is on the waterfront. How much of that affects the waterfront and the planning and sort of the future of how the buildings might work?

08-00:34:22

Halsted:

Well, all of it because the seawall is crumbling. The city has a bond measure that's going to be on the ballot in November to start to rebuild that seawall. It's going to be tumultuous, though, because to go under those buildings and try to rebuild it is going to be difficult for everybody. I'm not sure exactly how it's going to work, but there is a tremendous consensus that that needs to happen and we need to pay attention. People love the area, and they don't want to lose it, too. In an earthquake that seawall could all collapse. Those piers could separate from The Embarcadero. We could have subsidence on The Embarcadero and then sea level rise and it could be really a disaster. It's time for us to belly up and start to figure out how it can be sustained because that seawall was really built in the late 1800s or mid to late 1800s. It's not substantial enough for the future.

08-00:35:22

Farrell:

Was there consideration given to that when the Ferry Building was remodeled, from what you remember?

08-00:35:29

Halsted:

I think that the seawall under the Ferry Building was redone, but I should verify it. But I'm pretty sure that's true. When projects have been done, say, between Piers 1.5, 3 and 5, I believe that the seawall was redone under that as

well, but I don't know whether it was redone to incorporate concerns for sea level rise, more for earthquakes. Our standards have changed. I can't tell you whether how those projects would measure up with a combination of sea level rise and earthquake.

08-00:36:06

Farrell: This is kind of jumping a little bit in time, but now when you're working on these things, seeing that things have changed, I'm wondering if the conversation about that has changed.

08-00:36:18

Halsted: Oh, absolutely. Every project that BCDC looks at is reviewed for sea level rise adequacy. There's a lot of change in the way that's being.

08-00:36:30

Farrell: How are people starting to account for that, especially in new construction projects?

08-00:36:35

Halsted: Well, they're having to do an awful lot. At Treasure Island, for instance, they're having to plan for 2050 but then also finance for 2100, plan backup plans as things change. It's pretty complicated. It's not just building a project for the next ten years.

08-00:36:53

Farrell: Are you seeing plans take into account the physical structure, maybe like how far above the water they are?

08-00:37:05

Halsted: Oh sure, yeah. I just last night was looking at the plans for the new fire station at Pier 24 and that plan is to have a floating fire station. It would be attached to piers so it can move up and down. It can move up with sea level rise.

08-00:37:21

Farrell: That's interesting. It's also, too, because I know at least with Chelsea Pier and thinking about those projects, the difference between the east side and the west side of Manhattan is there's way more erosion on the east side. There's less on the west side. Are you seeing different areas of the waterfront be affected differently by the level of erosion?

08-00:37:48

Halsted: I don't think so, but I don't know. I think the most erosion I know of is at Ocean Beach because of the ocean. The bay is not subject to as much erosion as far as I know.

08-00:37:59

Farrell: So this area is slightly more protected. You can have those commercial buildings?

08-00:38:04

Halsted: Right, but sea level rise will have its own course.

08-00:38:11

Farrell:

I'm wondering if you can tell me a little bit about what the impact of the Ferry Building as you see it has been on the Bay Area culturally?

08-00:38:23

Halsted:

Well, it sort of has brought Alice Waters to the center of San Francisco and replaced Fisherman's, in my mind. I don't know about the numbers, but [it] replaced Fisherman's Wharf as kind of the center of tourism and brought the tourism into the 21st century, in a sense. People still love to go to the wharf. I understand that, but the retail there is not as authentic feeling as it is at the Ferry Building. I think it provides an inspiration to the wharf to become more in sync with what people are looking for. As our economy lost its base in shipping and industry, tourism has more or less replaced it along with technology. If we want to be continuing to be successful, I guess we need to sustain that touristic economy in an authentic way we can stand.

08-00:39:38

Farrell:

Do you think that Fisherman's Wharf can catch up with where the Ferry Building is now and come into the 21st century?

08-00:39:44

Halsted:

I think it could. It could, but there are a lot of old lease holdings that are in old property, held by families, et cetera, and some of them are. I think it could. I'm really advocating for continuing the walkway from the Golden Gate Bridge through Fort Mason, through Fisherman's Wharf, all the way around so that there will be a continuous kind of traffic of people, not just tourists but locals, and that could bring it all together, to some degree.

08-00:40:19

Farrell:

How about economically? What do you think that the impact of the remodel has had on the Bay Area financially?

08-00:40:26

Halsted:

I haven't done any projections, but it appears to be incredibly successful. People love being there. People try to be near there whenever they can. Offices near there certainly have risen in rentals more than elsewhere, not just because of the views but because of the quality of life. I think the impact is great.

08-00:40:49

Farrell:

Do you think that it's shaped what's affordable and what's not? Is there accessibility now?

08-00:41:00

Halsted:

Accessibility of?

08-00:41:03

Farrell:

Apartments, commercial space?

08-00:41:05

Halsted:

Well, the more successful things are, the more expensive they get. That doesn't necessarily make things easier or more accessible for people, but we continue to try to develop as much affordable housing as we can. There's actually a fair amount down at the foot of Broadway and more coming in at 88 Broadway. The Golden Gateway remains a reasonably successful housing development project that's very nearby.

08-00:41:43

Farrell:

What do you think have been the benefits of merging the historical elements of the Ferry Building with the 21st century and things that are happening culturally now?

08-00:41:58

Halsted:

I think its authenticity is so much increased by having that and it feels like a place where people can be comfortable. It's not an alien place. People from all over the world feel comfortable being there and it sustains itself partly because of that.

08-00:42:20

Farrell:

What do you think that people can learn from a model, a remodel that's been this successful?

08-00:42:27

Halsted:

I don't know. I wonder. I think very few developers would have had the deep pockets and the commitment to the authenticity that was done there. I don't know how much that can be repeated by other developers, because it took a lot of commitment and energy to do it as well as they did.

08-00:42:44

Farrell:

So, it's a bit financial?

08-00:42:47

Halsted:

Financial and character, I think. I should talk to Chris Meany and find out what he thinks it takes.

08-00:42:56

Farrell:

How do you hope in 100 years that the Ferry Building is remembered in this moment in time?

08-00:43:04

Halsted:

Well, when I think about it in the beginning of the 20th century it was the center for everyone coming in and out of San Francisco before the Bay Bridge was built and the longshoremen were there. It was a very active place. You look at pictures, and it was sort of the center of activity. It feels like it is that way now. It feels like it will become more. We have a new ferry terminal going in just south of the Ferry Building. I love seeing these water taxis. I looked at those people getting out of that boat this morning and coming to work in that boat. What a wonderful way to come to work. If you could use boats going across the bay instead of having to get into your car, drive on the freeway and go across the Bay Bridge, what a blessing that would be for

everybody. I think there is the possibility we'll see a lot more of that. The Ferry Building will be kind of the center of the hub of that.

08-00:43:55

Farrell:

In the future, especially if there's more traffic on the bay, or trans-bay traffic, how do you see that affecting fishing boats? I know that I had actually remembered that I read in one of the newsletters or something, you had started a meeting asking people to look out the window and looking at the fishing boats that were outside. How do you see this affecting them?

08-00:44:22

Halsted:

Well, there's not very much fishing that goes on there. I think that was a herring fleet. In the winter it's the residue from the herring that is captured or that makes all the mess around the fishing boats, but that herring goes on all over the bay. It just happened they were passing in front of there, but most of the fishing is not in that location. In fact, I was down at Pier 7 this morning and asking the fishermen what they were catching. They were catching bottom fish, just a few fish, not very many. They said if we're really lucky we get a trout or something like that sometime. It's all pretty small fish, things that size.

08-00:45:06

Farrell:

Yeah, I could see that.

08-00:45:07

Halsted:

These are fishermen with fishing rods from Chinatown.

08-00:45:10

Farrell:

Yeah, like the hook and line?

08-00:45:10

Halsted:

Yeah.

08-00:45:13

Farrell:

I'm going to sort of transition a little bit. So, NWAG is all locals and then the Ferry Building Advisory Group was citywide. There were only a few people on that. How did those two committees differ from each other in what you wanted for the waterfront? Were there conflicting ideals?

08-00:45:43

Halsted:

I don't think so. I don't think they existed at the same time either. I think they were at separate times. What happened was the port staff, when they were looking at an opportunity for development they said, well, we need to create an advisory committee of the community. Who are the people who would be most likely to represent the stakeholders? Let's pull together a group of them and consult with them. That's really what these groups were, although NWAG continued on to be a more permanent group.

08-00:46:12

Farrell:

Where is NWAG now? What are they working on?

08-00:46:15

Halsted: I think they're working on a new land use plan. I keep getting the notices. I haven't been going to the meetings. I'm letting other people do that.

08-00:46:25

Farrell: Does the Ferry Building Advisory Group still exist?

08-00:46:27

Halsted: No.

08-00:46:28

Farrell: So that's gone?

08-00:46:28

Halsted: That was just a point in time when we were looking at the RFP for the Ferry Building.

08-00:46:37

Farrell: Also around this time in the early 2000s you become the vice president of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, which is the BCDC. Can you tell me a little bit about moving into the role on that commission as vice president?

08-00:46:59

Halsted: Vice chair?

08-00:47:00

Farrell: Vice chair, sorry.

08-00:47:01

Halsted: That's okay. I was appointed by Gray Davis to that commission. I was one of five gubernatorial appointees. The governor in that case decides who should be the chair and who should be the vice chair. The governor appointed me as vice chair. It wasn't a choice of the commission.

08-00:47:31

Farrell: Had you had interactions with Governor Davis?

08-00:47:35

Halsted: Yes. I knew him.

08-00:47:37

Farrell: I guess from my perspective, being appointed by a governor, I can't wrap my head around that. What was that like for you to be appointed by the governor?

08-00:47:55

Halsted: I knew him. I had worked with him on other kinds of issues on other boards. I worked with him on the BENS board, the Business Executives for National Security. I'd helped him with some fundraising. I'm pretty sure that he didn't pick my name out of a hat, or he didn't come up with my name on his own, that probably some local San Franciscans suggested me because I had been on the port commission. It could have even been someone like John Burton, I

don't know who, or because of my involvement in SPUR, that I was suggested for the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. I think at that time Barbara Kaufman was the chair. I'm struggling with remembering for sure. I think she was appointed about the same time I was

08-00:48:43

Farrell:

Were there a lot of other women on that commission at that time?

08-00:48:47

Halsted:

There were some, and there had been some. Dianne Feinstein had been on it many years before. Carole Migden had been on it. Let me think, quite a few, because it does represent all the counties and the cities that touch the bay in the Bay Area. Wherever there are elected official who are women, many of them were represented on it.

08-00:49:11

Farrell:

Did you feel like you were stepping into a supportive environment?

08-00:49:14

Halsted:

Oh yes, I did. From the outside, BCDC had always seemed a bit overly regulatory and controlling. It was a little hard to understand why they would go to a restaurant and say you have to remove that trashcan. It's in the Bay View and the operators of the restaurant wouldn't understand that either. But, I think over time it's become a little more accessible. People have begun to understand that just whatever you put on the waterfront is important to everyone.

08-00:49:48

Farrell:

What do you think accounts for that change?

08-00:49:54

Halsted:

What accounts for it? I think Will Travis did a lot to promote communication with people and make them understand that while it is regulatory, its role is to promote both development and conservation. He was out in the public talking about that a lot and developing the confidence of people who were in business as well as those who wanted to save the bay.

08-00:50:30

Farrell:

Yes, there's more engagement with the public. Did you see people become more interested because it's the Bay Area, the bay is so important? Did it seem like a natural thing that people would be interested in the bay?

08-00:50:46

Halsted:

Absolutely, but after it was passed in, what, '67 or '68, I think there was a period of time when people just accepted and thought, well, saving the bay is really important. But if I put this little pile in the bay right here, that's not going to damage the bay. Every action within the bay was what the BCDC was controlling, so it seemed overly regulatory to people who might want to do just one little change. For instance, when I was on the port commission there was a pier down at Pier 43 where there was parking on top of the pier

because it had been in disuse, and it was used for parking. And it started to fall apart.

The port wanted to replace it because it was falling apart and went to BCDC. The port was shocked to learn that they couldn't replace it because under the rules of BCDC it was supposed to be removed if anything were changed there. Truly the port had not understood that. There are many instances like that where people just hadn't really thought about how this really will impact them if something happens. Probably the same thing is going to happen with sea level rise.

08-00:52:04

Farrell:

Yeah. Was there a way that Will Travis explained that or a method he used?

08-00:52:13

Halsted:

He has a great sense of humor and a really great style of communication. I think his ability to negotiate with people was much increased by the way he presented the problems. He was no pushover, though. He always held his ground. He was very effective. The staff had the job of being straight and narrow, enforcing things. Sometimes they would go overboard. Will was able to back them off to some degree and to communicate the need for it. There were conflicts, but he worked out a lot of them.

08-00:52:48

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about your role as vice chair on that commission?

08-00:52:56

Halsted:

Well, I think I'm more of a facilitator more than a driver. I got to run the performance evaluation for the executive director. That was one of his least favorite. It wasn't a lot of fun, and sort of get input from everybody, from all of our constituents, about what they thought about his performance, which is why I have a great admiration for him. He really did very well, but not everybody was happy. Mostly my role was to bring whatever my experience as a port commissioner and caring for the bay to this body, which was regulatory, and try to act in what I thought was the best interests of the region.

08-00:53:41

Farrell:

At this point, did you have a pretty good understanding of how things worked, how regulations worked in the bay?

08-00:53:48

Halsted:

Pretty good, yeah, pretty good. I don't think I could take a staff job and be very good at it.

08-00:53:54

Farrell:

Was there a learning curve at all with this?

08-00:53:58

Halsted:

Well, a learning curve as to how to be effective on the commission because the commission feels to me very different from other commissions I have

served on. In other words, the things that come to us for consideration are all very, very legalistic and bureaucratic in the way they're presented. It's not like we have this idea and we need your input about how to get it done. No, this is the way it is. If you have anything to say, give us the answers within these frameworks. It's very different and probably more like higher-level legislative activities. From that perspective it was challenging.

Many people I know, when they look at the agenda for one of these meetings, or even go to one of the meetings, say there's no way I could sit through one of them. They're just too unusual. They don't feel like they're engaging your mind. Actually, they do, but it takes a while to figure out how.

08-00:54:58

Farrell: How did you feel about that structure?

08-00:55:02

Halsted: Well, I was impatient with it. But I think I've learned to understand it enough that I'm less impatient.

08-00:55:09

Farrell: How long did it take you to grow your patience?

08-00:55:12

Halsted: Probably three or four years, yeah.

08-00:55:14

Farrell: At that point during that period of time did you ever question wanting to be on the commission?

08-00:55:18

Halsted: Oh yeah. You don't really know how much difference you're making. One of the differences you make is just to understand and be stable and to be able to pivot when necessary, to understand the interests of other people and try to move things along without having it be very disturbing or a break in continuity.

08-00:55:44

Farrell: Why did you decide to stay on the commission?

08-00:55:47

Halsted: Because it's very interesting. I really love the work of the commission. I have often thought about resigning. But it's too interesting to not be there.

08-00:56:00

Farrell: Do you feel like this work on the commission is taking a lot of your other work to the next level?

08-00:56:05

Halsted: I guess it is. I think it is building on what I've done in the past. It's a great opportunity. I think I'm really blessed to be able to be there. I think that

maybe someone else could do an even better job than I do, but I do enjoy it and feel like I am contributing.

08-00:56:25

Farrell: How do you think your experiences with other commissions or other groups has helped you move into the BCDC roles?

08-00:56:35

Halsted: It's really interesting because I think that I really enjoy chairing meetings, for instance. I remember back when I was chairing the open space committee, and occasionally when I'm chairing BCDC I feel like I am pretty good at kind of sizing up the audience, figuring out who needs to say something and how that can be done in a fair way to make sure that everybody gets the same shot at the target, and then bringing things to conclusion without being disruptive of people's opportunities. I really enjoy that kind of activity.

08-00:57:11

Farrell: Do you feel like your style has helped make those meetings more engaging and the audience more engaged?

08-00:57:20

Halsted: I hope so.

08-00:57:26

Farrell: Let's see. What do you see as the strengths of a facilitator in that role? What kind of qualities or methods do you aspire to be as a facilitator of meetings of this nature?

08-00:57:56

Halsted: Well, most of these meetings are comprised of people who are public policy makers by profession and are very articulate persuasive. One of my objectives would be to create balance so that there is no bullying and people have an opportunity to express themselves, and decisions are brought together in a civil and reasonable way. I think that being aware of how one can limit debate, how one can increase debate, those kinds of things, is very important.

08-00:58:44

Farrell: This might be a good place to leave it for today and then next time when we come back I'm probably going to ask you more specific questions. I'm going to ask you questions about specific issues. Now that we kind of have the framework for how everything worked, we'll move into the more nitty gritty.

08-00:59:00

Halsted: Okay.

08-00:59:01

Farrell: Thank you.

08-00:59:02

Halsted: Good. Thank you.

Interview 9: June 14, 2018

09-00:00:04

Farrell:

All right, this is Shanna Farrell back with Anne Halsted on Thursday, June 14, 2018. This is our ninth interview and we are in North Beach, San Francisco. Anne, when we left off, or in one of our previous sessions, we had started talking a little bit about the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, which is the BCDC. Their mission is to protect and enhance San Francisco Bay and to encourage the bay's responsible and productive use for the future and future generations. There's also some state legislative guidelines that go into that commission. I'm wondering if you could kind of refresh my memory and tell me a little bit about how you initially got involved with them?

09-00:00:53

Halsted:

Well, I first became aware of them, I think, when I was on the port commission and had to deal with the port's lack of understanding of BCDC's jurisdiction. That was when I first became aware of them and got to know some of the people who were running it and some of the people who were on the commission. I think it was in 2001 that Governor Davis, I think it was 2001, appointed me to BCDC and then I became more familiar with it.

09-00:01:24

Farrell:

It was Governor Davis in 2001. What was it like for you to get appointed, especially because you'd been on the port commission and you had been doing a lot with the waterfront plan with SPUR [San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association]?

09-00:01:37

Halsted:

It seemed like a logical extension of things I had done and not a big stretch for me to be able to do it, although the nature of the commission and the work it does is quite different from other commissions I'd been on.

09-00:01:53

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit more about that, what you mean?

09-00:01:55

Halsted:

Well, there are specific regulations that the commission is charged with enforcing and those are very legalistic. They're not financial deals put before you or general policies. You're actually looking at interpreting regulations as they exist when a situation comes up [and] the paperwork that comes to one to review is put together by the staff. The commission's job is really to evaluate and see whether it's efficient and then make a recommendation based on that, rather than to create anything out of whole cloth.

09-00:02:39

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about how the BCDC was formed initially?

- 09-00:02:46
Halsted: Well, it was in the late '50s, early '60s. The Army Corps of Engineers had an idea that we could keep filling the bay so that it became almost like a river. They presented some maps and the public became aware of it. The three women in Berkeley, whom you've heard of, put a ballot measure on to save the bay and that ballot measure, as constituted, created BCDC.
- 09-00:03:21
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about the legislative charter that exists within the BCDC?
- 09-00:03:28
Halsted: You reiterated a summary of it in the beginning. But, there are a lot of details which I really can't [remember].
- 09-00:03:40
Farrell: That's fine. I guess I'm still a little bit confused, how that works practically, the fact that there's a legislative [act]?
- 09-00:03:47
Halsted: There's a rule. There's a law, the McAteer-Petris Act, which is what we need to interpret. Lawyers look at that and decide what it means in any particular situation that's presented in writing.
- 09-00:04:05
Farrell: So that only happened once?
- 09-00:04:08
Halsted: Right.
- 09-00:04:10
Farrell: And that kind of set the stage for everything?
- 09-00:04:12
Halsted: Right.
- 09-00:04:13
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about, it's a collaborative myriad of people who are involved in this. What are some of the areas that they represent who are on the commission?
- 09-00:04:27
Halsted: Every city and county that touches the bay has a representative. There's a representative from the attorney general's office, from the resources agency, from fish and game. We have broad representation, all the interests that are most affected by or most engaged in managing the bay.
- 09-00:04:53
Farrell: How do the commission meetings work given that there's so many different stakeholders that are involved?

09-00:05:00

Halsted: They're very well organized and probably less free-form than other commissions because the agendas are very strictly adhered to, and because they're regulatory they're quasi-judicial. They need to be managed in a way that's more specific than other commissions, a lot of laws to follow.

09-00:05:20

Farrell: Do you feel like everybody on the commission gets a voice, is able to speak when they need to?

09-00:05:26

Halsted: I do, yeah. I think it's very collaborative and people make an effort to make sure that people are not shut out. It is not a political grandstanding situation. There's very little of that which happens in many other political groups.

09-00:05:42

Farrell: With the state agencies that are represented, how do you see them understanding the bay, especially if they don't live near here?

09-00:05:56

Halsted: Well, many of them do. No, I think they do reflect. They understand the bay as well. There are people like us who happen to be in a state agency and working through that agency to accomplish the same aims.

09-00:06:13

Farrell: Are there any conflicting ideas for how the bay should run or sort of ideas about how—?

09-00:06:21

Halsted: I think the biggest conflicts that you see occasionally are between industry who wants to use it more as an economic resource and between the environmentalists who want to conserve it. That's the biggest conflict overall.

09-00:06:35

Farrell: How has that played out over different periods of time with people who want to preserve it environmentally and people who want to make it a functioning economic—?

09-00:06:47

Halsted: It's always a compromise and it requires a lot of conversation, a lot of constant conversation. I think it's played out pretty effectively. Dredging is a really good example of that because dredging has environmental impacts and can have advantages, too.

09-00:07:05

Farrell: Compared to other bays, do you feel like this kind of balances the environmental interests with the economic interests pretty well?

09-00:07:13

Halsted: I'm told it does. I don't really have the worldwide experience to know, but I'm told that it's a very good example of what can be.

09-00:07:23
Farrell: Have there ever been tensions between the BCDC and other organizations that are involved in the waterfront?

09-00:07:38
Halsted: Yeah, of course. The port of Oakland or the port of San Francisco may have an intention to do something that is not easily worked out with BCDC, but we've overcome most of those. I'm trying to think of what else. The Corps of Engineers and BCDC don't always agree on how things should be done.

09-00:08:00
Farrell: One of the things that the commission did was to build out a strategic plan. Can you tell me a little bit about your level of involvement with that?

09-00:08:12
Halsted: My level of involvement is more guidance and making sure that the issues that are dealt with are relevant and comprehensive, not so much to write it but to guide the staff and come up with ideas for it.

09-00:08:30
Farrell: Before we got started you were telling me a little bit about how when the charter was originally written or enacted, that some of the issues that went into the strategic plan weren't very prominent in the sixties when it was written. That includes things like climate change and sea level rise, sediment management, the sea port plan, oil spills, environmental and social equity. Can you tell me a little bit about how the factors that didn't exist then were built into the strategic plan that the commission wrote?

09-00:09:10
Halsted: Over times, those things came up at various times, but we've redone the strategic plan every five years. I can't remember how often. Some issues that have become more apparent have been included at a later time. Sea level rise didn't become really an issue until about 2010 or something, a lively issue, at least. It existed, but it wasn't—

09-00:09:38
Farrell: How is the commission addressing sea level rise?

09-00:09:42
Halsted: Well, I think that policy requires that it's addressed in every permit that comes before us. The permittee has to address projected sea level rise in their application. Treasure Island, for instance, had to agree to raise its facilities to cope with 2050 and beyond. It's pretty complicated. That's changed a lot for all the agencies. The state has issued guidelines that have been updated recently about what they think the projected sea level rise is. It's a continually changing world there.

09-00:10:25
Farrell: Who are the experts that BCDC consults when they're implementing things like that?

09-00:10:32

Halsted: Lots. We have our own engineering design review board and another. We have a design review board, but I think we go to outside experts in NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration], all the coastal management agencies.

09-00:10:53

Farrell: It really is looking at what data exists that's out there and really trying to make sure it works? How about environmental and social equity? How does that play out in the Bay Area? When I was reading about this, that just seemed so broad. Can you explain how that works?

09-00:11:14

Halsted: We're just beginning to grapple effectively, I hope, with it because with sea level rise obviously it cuts both ways because some of the coastal communities are the most valuable and some are the least valuable. It's kind of whether they're located next to a toxic waste place or whatever. Anyway, so as the sea rises, people who are living in the lower-value properties are more at risk and need to be dealt with and taken care of. It's a new area. Certainly all around the bay there are underserved communities or economically disadvantaged communities like in San Rafael or in the South Bay that can easily be at risk. We're working with other agencies and cities to make sure we understand what to do about them, how to protect them, whether we need to relocate them. It's not an easy one.

09-00:12:17

Farrell: Does that also include Bayview-Hunters Point?

09-00:12:20

Halsted: To some degree, although Bayview-Hunters Point is not so low. For the most part, it's a little higher and the redevelopment that's happening there has already begun to deal with planning for sea level rise.

09-00:12:42

Farrell: Just to clarify, with sea level rise the concern there in areas that are on toxic sites, that the flooding will happen, and then that'll seep into buildings? Is that correct?

09-00:12:54

Halsted: Right, or buildings can be inundated, too.

09-00:12:59

Farrell: It also seeps into groundwater.

09-00:13:03

Halsted: Right.

09-00:13:05

Farrell: San Rafael you had mentioned.

- 09-00:13:08
Halsted: The canal district there, and then there's Marin City, which is not so much sea level rise but climate change, I guess, affecting it.
- 09-00:13:17
Farrell: How about in the South bay? Where are the areas that are the toxic sites?
- 09-00:13:21
Halsted: I don't think I can run through a list of them, but all around right there are specific areas that need to be protected and thought about. It's a whole different exercise from what we've done in the past.
- 09-00:13:35
Farrell: It also makes me think about, so the strategic plan gets refreshed every five years. This charter was written in the 1960s. The environmental decade happened from 1969 to 1980, so that was the period. They call it a decade, but it's eleven years, of when all the benchmark federal legislation passed, like the Clean Water Act or the Clean Air Act. The Superfund Law was passed in 1980. I know you weren't involved then, but do you have a sense of how BCDC historically has adapted to those federal standards?
- 09-00:14:12
Halsted: Well, we've had to work with them and manage through them. I think they've enhanced what we've done and so it's been a collaborative effort and really a learning experience for everybody. There's a lot of change. I think the whole equity issue is one that is affecting the whole environmental movement in a very profound way.
- 09-00:14:31
Farrell: Yeah, absolutely. I think, too, in San Francisco, people don't think about things like that as much. It's here and it exists, too. It's kind of a mental switch. It's not just preservation. It's, how does this affect marginalized communities that do exist in this area? There's also another factor about oil spill prevention and response. Was that an issue at any point?
- 09-00:14:58
Halsted: Has it been? Occasionally, yeah. We've had a few oil spills and had some emergencies.
- 09-00:15:04
Farrell: How were those handled?
- 09-00:15:06
Halsted: Oh, well, we have had emergencies where we've had to pull out special port operations, Coast Guard operations, to take care of them.
- 09-00:15:22
Farrell: Is that something that the BCDC works with the Coast Guard to figure out responses?

- 09-00:15:29
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 09-00:15:31
Farrell: The other one, I think, which has been a factor for a longer time is the sediment management with the fill and everything. How has that issue been refreshed over time?
- 09-00:15:47
Halsted: Well, the fact that sediment is used to soften sea level rise, to create restorations that make sea level rise, that's something that no one had thought of in the seventies or eighties. That's a big deal and it makes a big difference in the way we're responding to keeping the bay.
- 09-00:16:07
Farrell: Can you explain a little bit how that works?
- 09-00:16:15
Halsted: Well, fill, fill can be used to, if you've got an area that's washing away and sea level is rising up above it, you can create a way for the waves to be cushioned and softened.
- 09-00:16:29
Farrell: Oh, so it's like seawall kind of?
- 09-00:16:30
Halsted: Mm-hmm, seawall but softer than that.
- 09-00:16:34
Farrell: I didn't know if that meant with sea level rise, water is rising, so you dredge so it lowers.
- 09-00:16:41
Halsted: No. It's really just you fill. When the waves come in they get softened before they get to the shore, or what was originally the shore. That's a poor description. I'm not an expert.
- 09-00:16:54
Farrell: That's okay. That made sense to me. I understood. Are there other factors, or have there been other factors that have come up over time with the refreshment of the strategic plan, that have gone into?
- 09-00:17:09
Halsted: Yeah, but I can't think of any right now. It's not something on our calendar every month.
- 09-00:17:14
Farrell: In writing the updates to that plan, what has that process been like?
- 09-00:17:24
Halsted: Well, we've engaged with the whole commission and with communities as well in workshops.

- 09-00:17:32
Farrell: How long does it normally take to do those?
- 09-00:17:35
Halsted: I can't remember, maybe six months.
- 09-00:17:39
Farrell: How often does the BCDC meet?
- 09-00:17:42
Halsted: It is scheduled to meet twice a month and it doesn't always meet.
- 09-00:17:47
Farrell: During periods when you're updating the strategic plan in those meetings, is most of the meeting time, does that go to going over the plan?
- 09-00:17:57
Halsted: No. That's really done more in workshops and a little bit in the meetings. Meetings are more to do with permits that are before us and other things like that, that really require, that cannot be accomplished without a vote of the commission.
- 09-00:18:16
Farrell: So building permits and things like that?
- 09-00:18:17
Halsted: Permits from BCDC.
- 09-00:18:24
Farrell: You had mentioned workshops. Have you ever attended one of the workshops?
- 09-00:18:30
Halsted: Oh yeah, lots.
- 09-00:18:31
Farrell: How do those run?
- 09-00:18:34
Halsted: How do they run? Well, generally if you're working on a strategic plan you might divide into three or four different groups. It's just like a group workshop in any other kind of thing.
- 09-00:18:47
Farrell: How long do the workshops usually last for, like a day, a half day?
- 09-00:18:50
Halsted: Probably a half day.
- 09-00:18:53
Farrell: With that, is it the staff of the BCDC who are writing the plan, and you're going over and figuring out what works and what doesn't?

- 09-00:19:00
Halsted: Yeah, and adding ideas but not writing it, per se.
- 09-00:19:03
Farrell: Just kind of making sure that you're editing it, essentially?
- 09-00:19:07
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 09-00:19:09
Farrell: You had also just mentioned that BCDC gives permits. What kind of permits do they give?
- 09-00:19:15
Halsted: If you want to put a dock in the bay, you need to have a permit from BCDC. If you have a restaurant that's over the bay, you have to get a permit from BCDC.
- 09-00:19:29
Farrell: You don't get the permit from the city of San Francisco?
- 09-00:19:33
Halsted: You have to do that as well—many layers of permits.
- 09-00:19:34
Farrell: Oh, so this is an additional permit? If you wanted to build a restaurant on a pier, how many permits do you have to get total?
- 09-00:19:43
Halsted: A lot. BCDC is typically the last one.
- 09-00:19:48
Farrell: How do the BCDC permits differ from the other ones?
- 09-00:19:51
Halsted: Because they are to do with just maximizing access to the bay and not disturbing the bay.
- 09-00:20:04
Farrell: So it's both the environmental and the economic in there?
- 09-00:20:06
Halsted: Yeah.
- 09-00:20:15
Farrell: Jim Chappell is your alternate, so that means if you couldn't attend meetings, Jim will sit in for you. You don't often attend the meetings together, but when you talk about the meetings, can you tell me a little bit about some of the conversations you have?
- 09-00:20:33
Halsted: We hardly ever talk about the meetings. He just simply asked me if I have any concerns. In order to get a pass to get a permit at BCDC you have to have, I

think, fourteen affirmative votes. There are twenty-seven commissioners. You can't have too many people missing. Therefore we have alternates so that a permit can be passed because if a permit comes before us and there are not enough votes to pass it, they can't come back for some period of time to request it again. It's really a legalistic kind of issue that we need to have enough people there present to be able to vote for it if it's going to be approved.

09-00:21:17

Farrell: Has that been an issue in the past when someone is trying to—?

09-00:21:19

Halsted: Occasionally, so that's why we need to have alternates.

09-00:21:24

Farrell: That makes a lot of sense. Jim being your alternate, do you get to sort of use him as your representative or your surrogate? Or does he get to have his own opinions?

09-00:21:36

Halsted: I can't control him.

09-00:21:39

Farrell: Have you ever had instances where you and Jim disagree on how something should be handled?

09-00:21:43

Halsted: We might have differences in approach, but I've never tried to tell him he can't do.

09-00:21:49

Farrell: When you do have differences of approach, how do you talk about that? Or how do you discuss things like that?

09-00:21:57

Halsted: I actually haven't discussed it with him.

09-00:22:03

Farrell: Was he appointed your alternate?

09-00:22:06

Halsted: I selected him. I selected him, and then he had to go through the same approval process.

09-00:22:11

Farrell: Why did you select him for your alternate?

09-00:22:13

Halsted: Because we were working together at SPUR, and I trusted his kind of general approach to the balance between development and conservation as reflecting mine to a large degree.

09-00:22:24

Farrell: What do you think that he brings to that position?

09-00:22:28

Halsted: He brings from his urban planning and landscape architecture position a lot of wisdom and a lot of experience with San Francisco politics as well.

09-00:22:40

Farrell: We did talk a little bit about Will Travis' leadership and kind of what his strengths are and have been in the past. As time has changed, there's a new set of issues, sea level rise, environmental and social equity. How has the leadership of BCDC adapted and changed and tried to incorporate some of the newer stuff and sort of moved into the twenty-first century?

09-00:23:10

Halsted: Well, we had a kind of upheaval when we first decided to try to cope with sea level rise. I'm sure that maybe Will Travis told you about this, but we put out some maps that indicated that sea level rise was happening on the bay and it created a lot of controversy among people who own or occupy land adjacent to the bay. We weren't really trying to change anything but let people know about the threat of sea level rise, but the property owners and their lawyers got very excited about it. It created a real stir about BCDC trying to extend its authority, which we really weren't.

We held many meetings to try to explain and try to compromise on these maps so that people could accept them. One of the end results is, when Will left the commission, and when Mayor Brown—no, Governor Brown, not Mayor Brown—Governor Brown was elected this last time, he brought in a lawyer, Zack Wasserman, who had been one of the lawyers representing people concerned about sea level rise in BCDC. That was an opportunity to create a more collegial approach on sea level rise. It was interesting.

09-00:24:37

Farrell: Was that successful? Did that work pretty well?

09-00:24:40

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

09-00:24:45

Farrell: How do you see BCDC adapting in the future? There are issues that we might not even be aware of right now that come up.

09-00:24:53

Halsted: I think because it has representation from so many places, I think it's likely to respond reasonably well. It could change its nature over time. Institutions aren't forever and the shape of it might change. I don't know. It requires state law to do that, though.

09-00:25:09

Farrell: Are there a lot of forward thinkers on the commission?

09-00:25:11

Halsted: I think there are, yeah. I'm not sure any or all of them are spending all their time thinking about that commission, because it's one of many duties for most people there.

09-00:25:23

Farrell: As far as that being a duty for a lot of people who have a lot of other stuff going on, usually does this overlap with their other work?

09-00:25:32

Halsted: To some degree, yeah, mostly. Aaron Peskin is on BCDC. He's also in the coastal commission and the board of supervisors.

09-00:25:41

Farrell: It is definitely a piece of the puzzle or piece of the pie of the larger, sort of like you, that this fits in a lot with what you've done?

09-00:25:47

Halsted: Right.

09-00:25:50

Farrell: What is the turnover like on the commission? How often does it get refreshed?

09-00:25:59

Halsted: Well, if someone is an elected official, if they're not reelected or if they're termed out, then they are replaced by someone else. I think the longest-standing member of the commission now is John Gioia. Do you know him, from Contra Costa? Anyway, so he's probably been there since mid-nineties, I would guess. After that it might be me or maybe, no, Jim McGrath. There is a good amount of constancy so that there is a memory of what's happened in the past. But the members keep changing, too.

09-00:26:46

Farrell: Are there any things, any priorities, that you would like to see the BCDC address moving forward?

09-00:26:57

Halsted: I'm very excited about this Resilient By Design contest that just concluded. I haven't even seen it, although I will tomorrow, proposed creative solutions to sea level rise in ten different places around the bay. I think finding a way to look at those and see what really might work and getting specific ideas about how we may protect communities and protect the bay is what I'd like most to see.

09-00:27:28

Farrell: Where were the places that were part of that contest?

09-00:27:31

Halsted: They were all around the bay. Marin City was one, Highway 37 all the way to Vallejo and up and down the bay, ten places. It's really worth looking at.

- 09-00:27:46
Farrell: Who entered the competition?
- 09-00:27:49
Halsted: There were ten teams. More than that applied, but there were ten teams selected and they were from all over the world.
- 09-00:27:58
Farrell: There was a similar contest a few years ago in New York.
- 09-00:28:02
Halsted: This was modeled on that.
- 09-00:28:05
Farrell: I actually went to go see that. SFMOMA [San Francisco Museum of Modern Art] has an annex. They were doing open studios that was really remarkable, some of the things that people were proposing.
- 09-00:28:14
Halsted: You'll enjoy seeing these, too. It's pretty exciting.
- 09-00:28:17
Farrell: Are they pretty visual plans?
- 09-00:28:18
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 09-00:28:20
Farrell: Is the idea that you'll kind of see something that will inspire future design or that will be practical and can be applied?
- 09-00:28:29
Halsted: Right. We have a program at BCDC called Adapting to Rising Tides, which has dealt with some of those areas, but this has gone beyond that in a somewhat more creative way.
- 09-00:28:38
Farrell: What is the involvement, if there is any, organizationally between SPUR and BCDC?
- 09-00:28:47
Halsted: Nothing fixed, certainly a lot of communications. I think we've done a few tasks. We're working on Mission Bay and sea level rise to some degree. SPUR did a big programmatic outreach on Ocean Beach, but that's the coastal commission.
- 09-00:29:13
Farrell: Is sea level rise something that SPUR is becoming more interested in?
- 09-00:29:20
Halsted: I think on the environmental side Laura Tam is very involved in that in SPUR.

09-00:29:25

Farrell:

What are the differences in the way that you see SPUR and BCDC approaching issues like that?

09-00:29:31

Halsted:

Well, BCDC has an official legislative role in issuing permits. SPUR's role is more in looking at policy and thinking about what could be, not in controlling or managing. SPUR is much more on the outside looking in.

09-00:29:54

Farrell:

Is there any ideological differences about how that should be handled?

09-00:29:58

Halsted:

I don't think so.

09-00:30:00

Farrell:

What do you see the impact of BCDC's work being on the Bay Area?

09-00:30:10

Halsted:

Well, I think if it hadn't been for the work, for BCDC being creative, we wouldn't be able to see the bay that we can see here and many projects would have just edged out into the bay. We wouldn't have the same access. Now, certainly the Bay Trail and all the places where we have public access to the bay wouldn't be there.

09-00:30:36

Farrell:

How about culturally? How do you think their work has impacted the culture of the Bay Area?

09-00:30:46

Halsted:

Well, I think people are very enthused about access to the bay. If you can consider that a cultural aspect, I think that is something that attracts people to San Francisco and attracts people to the bay. It's one of the big values. I'd say that's a cultural value. I don't know really how else to express that.

09-00:31:07

Farrell:

Do you see more younger people getting involved in these issues? Do you see the population of San Francisco that lives here now becoming involved and investing in the future of the bay?

09-00:31:25

Halsted:

I don't really know. I think that environmental studies are very interesting to young people in school. Many people are doing that and so we have lots of interns and people who come to work at both SPUR and BCDC who are much better educated than we ever were in the environmental issues. I think they do, but I really don't know about whether the youthful inhabitants of San Francisco in the Bay Area are any more engaged than other people were. We don't have any more swimmers at Aquatic Park, I don't think, than we used to.

09-00:32:00

Farrell: You don't have any more swimmers?

09-00:32:02

Halsted: More than we used to. We've had a lot of swimmers down there for a long time, but I don't think the numbers have changed dramatically. It's still pretty cold. And kayakers, we have a lot more kayaking facilities along Mission Creek, et cetera, so there's probably more of that, but I don't think it's a dramatic change. I started sailing on the bay in the '60s. I don't see that that's grown dramatically, et cetera.

09-00:32:26

Farrell: Do you still sail on the bay?

09-00:32:28

Halsted: I haven't for quite a while.

09-00:32:31

Farrell: How has sailing on the bay changed?

09-00:32:35

Halsted: I don't think it's changed too much.

09-00:32:36

Farrell: No? You can still go everywhere you used to be able to go?

09-00:32:38

Halsted: I think so, yeah.

09-00:32:41

Farrell: I was just wondering if maybe that was a barometer for any change.

09-00:32:45

Halsted: Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think that's changed.

09-00:32:48

Farrell: What has it meant to you to be a part of the BCDC and help shape San Francisco and preserve but also help it function economically?

09-00:32:58

Halsted: It's a very interesting particular slice of San Francisco life. It's not as intense, really, as being on the port commission or having a specific piece of land you're kind of working on and trying to manage and make better. It's a big amorphous bay that can come and go, et cetera. It's a nice way to be involved in the region, understand about the region, get to know about how different municipalities affect each other. It's a very interesting organization to be a part of.

09-00:33:36

Farrell: What are your hopes for its future?

09-00:33:40

Halsted:

I hope that it is effective in finding techniques to make the bay as good as it can be given sea level rise. In some cases, that may mean letting it get bigger. In some cases it may be walling it off from the land to protect the land. But we need to do it in a way that people can still appreciate the bay and have a sense of their environment.

09-00:34:07

Farrell:

Do you see that happening?

09-00:34:09

Halsted:

Mm-hmm. This great competition that they've just released, I think, is a really good step in that direction.

09-00:34:17

Farrell:

Another organization that you were involved with, and kind of starting around the same time that you started, that you were appointed, to be on the BCDC, is the North Beach Citizens. You were involved with that from 2002 to 2010, so a good ten-year stretch. That program was started in 2000 by Francis Ford Coppola with a group of residents and merchants, so people who owned commercial space, to come together to discuss the rise of homelessness in the North Beach neighborhood. That resulted in a number of different programs and a walk-in clinic to help people off the street with different things. Some of the programs include a resource center, so the walk-in, a storefront operation, housing assistance, dealing with eviction and community support in the face of eviction, and then a food bank. There's also a street beautification program. Can you tell me a little bit, with that background, how you got involved with them?

09-00:35:29

Halsted:

Well, I, as you know, have been involved in the North Beach community for a long time and friends of mine had been involved in it and were interested. From the outside it wasn't clear what Francis Ford Coppola was trying to do. It was just a little bit unclear about how he was trying to do this, but it became apparent through some of his work that his vision was for the North Beach community to embrace its homeless community as members of its citizenry, in other words to treat them with dignity, give them the tools to be able to function as citizens, rather than to try to do something to them. So, that was his inspiration and I think it was a good one because we've all gotten involved.

As you said, it is a storefront operation, but it's not run by bureaucrats. It's not run by social workers. The woman who runs it, whom I helped hire, is actually an artist who is a gifted person who cares about people. Her role is to try to help people who are on the street find the resources they need to be able to be better citizens, essentially. They work one on one with people. The center is open from 9:00 to 1:00 every day. They come in, and they may have a meeting with her if they need an identity card or they need something. But they have to follow the rules of the organization, which involve not being

violent, not being mean to other people there, behaving. They try to educate each other about street behavior as well and also train people to be able to be housed, because once people have been on the street for a while they're not very houseable.

09-00:37:21

Farrell: What's the woman's name who runs?

09-00:37:23

Halsted: Kristie Fairchild.

09-00:37:27

Farrell: When you initially got involved, were you approached by Francis Ford Coppola to join?

09-00:37:34

Halsted: No, someone else on the board was looking for more members.

09-00:37:38

Farrell: Is it a lot of people who live in this neighborhood? Or is it people from outside as well?

09-00:37:44

Halsted: It's both.

09-00:37:45

Farrell: Do you have a sense of why people who don't live in North Beach or the surrounding area are involved?

09-00:37:53

Halsted: Well, I think that they probably care for the area. It's sort of unique as a homeless program. I don't know of another one that's quite as well supported. It doesn't really get any governmental funding except for maybe the street cleaning program, so it's all funded by contributions from the local community.

09-00:38:19

Farrell: It's definitely a very interesting model. It's staffed only with volunteers as well.

09-00:38:23

Halsted: No, that's not true.

09-00:38:25

Farrell: Oh, really? When it started, was it only volunteers?

09-00:38:28

Halsted: No, it had an executive director and everything.

09-00:38:34

Farrell:

What do you think the strengths of it being run by somebody who is an artist and not a social worker and is not part of the government, what do you think that that lends to the organization?

09-00:38:46

Halsted:

Well, she's in a better position or is more able to treat the homeless clients as individuals rather than as a category. It's just the nature of things. She is a person. She relates to them as individuals rather than as a dual-diagnosed this or a this and fitting into a category. It's just a very different kind of ability to connect with people and engage with them.

09-00:39:19

Farrell:

So she's more personal than clinical?

09-00:39:21

Halsted:

Mm-hmm.

09-00:39:22

Farrell:

Interesting. Do you think that's because of her background, because she's not from social worker, or just because of who she is?

09-00:39:30

Halsted:

Right, and the way the organization is structured, we don't require that she be a social worker. We're not offering money. We're not offering payments to people either. We may help them with housing occasionally. But we're not offering long-term payments to people for things. The government would require verification.

09-00:39:54

Farrell:

Yeah, that's very true. Also, you have an obligation to help but it makes sense if there are rules in place and it's voluntary, you want these services, that you have to abide by these rules. Also, I guess I'm wondering, too, the way that it functions, is that because it is somebody who's not involved with social work or city government, the approach to how you can help somebody might also be more relatable because if you don't have a sense of how the system works you can create an easy pathway. Do you have a sense of how that was built out, like how these services were conceived and the structure for those resources?

09-00:40:52

Halsted:

It's pretty simple. The structure of the services at North Beach Citizens really are one or two people connecting with people and trying to help them with their lives rather than a very big structured organization.

09-00:41:10

Farrell:

That is pretty simple. Do you have a sense of how many people North Beach Citizens serves?

09-00:41:20

Halsted: I was at an event last night. Kristie was there. I think she said about 1,000 right now, but I'm not sure.

09-00:41:31

Farrell: Have you seen the homeless population grow?

09-00:41:35

Halsted: I'm not aware of its growing particularly in this neighborhood. Certainly in other neighborhoods, but I think that it's been reasonably constant here.

09-00:41:48

Farrell: While that may have stayed constant, in other parts of the city, the open drug use is becoming increasingly more of an issue. Have you seen anything change here in terms of that?

09-00:42:05

Halsted: I have heard that it has, but I haven't seen it. Certainly, at the BART station I've read plenty about Civic Center BART station.

09-00:42:15

Farrell: Oh yeah, but that's not technically North Beach, right?

09-00:42:17

Halsted: No, not at all.

09-00:42:20

Farrell: I guess things like that, seeing that there, you're not seeing that here.

09-00:42:22

Halsted: Not that I've seen, but it doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

09-00:42:27

Farrell: As part of the board what was your role?

09-00:42:32

Halsted: Well, as in any board, governance and fundraising, primarily.

09-00:42:37

Farrell: Because neighbors are contributing, were you basically trying to mobilize neighbors to just give a little money?

09-00:42:46

Halsted: Well, we did two fundraising events a year that were really big, one in the spring, one in the fall.

09-00:42:53

Farrell: What were those events? Can you tell me a little bit more about those?

09-00:42:56

Halsted: Sure. One is in the basement of St. Peter's and Paul's church, a big 500-person dinner with volunteers cooking. Usually Francis Ford Coppola would be cooking. It was a big gala event, not fancy. We raised a couple hundred

thousand dollars from that. In the fall we created another event called a community recognition event to honor someone in the community each year.

09-00:43:27

Farrell: Who are the types of people that you're honoring?

09-00:43:30

Halsted: Well, people who are somehow connected with both the homeless and the community, whether they be through organizations or whatever they've done. Jeannette Etheridge at Tosca was involved with North Beach Citizens for a long time. There's a list of fifteen people who have been honored.

09-00:43:51

Farrell: One of the big programming areas of North Beach Citizens is the community pantry, so the food bank. I've read that 88,000 pounds of food is distributed and that is a collaborative effort with the San Francisco Food Bank and was established in 2010. Can you tell me a little bit about your involvement with the food program?

09-00:44:20

Halsted: That happens on Wednesdays. The food bank delivers food for food pantries there and in Chinatown with their own trucks. What I do is a little bit different. I go to the food bank once a week and get food for North Beach Citizens to keep at their facility to use for their own purposes, for their breakfasts, for their other things that they use. The food pantry is for people to come in from SROs [Single Room Occupancy] and take food back to their houses. It's a little bit different. So, it's a little bit different. It's all using the resources of the San Francisco Food Bank, but a different operation.

09-00:44:56

Farrell: Okay, that makes sense. Does North Beach Citizens have breakfasts that they provide?

09-00:45:11

Halsted: Yeah. They have cereal. They can't cook. They don't have facilities for cooking. But they have breads and cereals and things like that.

09-00:45:20

Farrell: How do you pick out food? How does that work?

09-00:45:24

Halsted: How do I pick out food? I walk around and decide what I think they ought to have.

09-00:45:28

Farrell: I guess when I think of food deliveries I think of big Cisco trucks, like those big Mac trucks. I'm assuming you're not driving.

09-00:45:35

Halsted: No, I use my station wagon. I load it. It's a lot of work, actually.

- 09-00:45:43
Farrell: How long have you been doing that for?
- 09-00:45:44
Halsted: I don't know, for a while, eight or ten years, I guess. I don't know how much longer I'll be able to.
- 09-00:45:52
Farrell: Doing the boots-on-the-ground kind of work like that, how are you seeing that impact the homeless community?
- 09-00:46:01
Halsted: Well, they really appreciate it. I don't know actually how it impacts them. The other thing is, restaurants that have leftover food bring it. Tante Marie's has a food runner service that goes around to restaurants and picks up their leftover food and brings it to homeless facilities like that, which is great.
- 09-00:46:19
Farrell: Do you have a sense of which restaurants participate in that?
- 09-00:46:22
Halsted: I don't know. Kristie could tell you.
- 09-00:46:28
Farrell: What impact have you seen this have on the community, especially since it's a community-supported organization?
- 09-00:46:35
Halsted: I think that one of the good things about it is that people in North Beach feel not as distant from the homeless. They're not abused or mistreated. People connect with them as individuals and actually try to help them. I think that the homeless population is less angry at the local population.
- 09-00:46:54
Farrell: So it's a better relationship?
- 09-00:46:57
Halsted: Yeah, it seems to be.
- 09-00:47:00
Farrell: Do you see any mental health issues?
- 09-00:47:04
Halsted: Oh yeah.
- 09-00:47:05
Farrell: What about services to address that? Do those exist in this area? Or does North Beach Citizens work with any places that can provide mental health services?
- 09-00:47:15
Halsted: The community mental health programs of the city exist. They're pretty good, for a city. Some of the best mental health services you can find are run by the

city, not to say they're fabulous. But you can't get as good services for private pay as you can through the city.

09-00:47:44

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about the street beautification program?

09-00:47:49

Halsted: Well, I think that what you're referring to is more like a street cleanup program. People at North Beach Citizens, in order to earn a little money, work in street beautification in teams as requested by DPW, I think.

09-00:48:08

Farrell: What has the impact of that program been?

09-00:48:11

Halsted: I don't think I have a good answer to that. I don't know how big it is at this point. It's come and gone, depending on funding, too.

09-00:48:24

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about how successful you think the vision and the mission of the organization has been?

09-00:48:38

Halsted: I don't have any measures and I haven't been on the board for a number of years, but I think it is sustaining itself and has a real role in the community. I had hoped that we could create a model that other communities could replicate. So far we haven't been able to do that.

09-00:49:02

Farrell: Do you have a sense of why not?

09-00:49:04

Halsted: I think that maybe people who live in this community are more involved in the everyday life of the street than other communities.

09-00:49:14

Farrell: Are there residents who have lived here for a long time? Do you see most of the people? I think about places like the Outer Richmond, and there are generations of families that have lived there versus a place like SoMa [South of Market], where it's a lot of transplants to the city. How about North Beach? Are there a lot of longtime residents here?

09-00:49:36

Halsted: There are both. There are both, yeah.

09-00:49:39

Farrell: Do you see some of the newer residents get involved?

09-00:49:43

Halsted: Some. Last night I went to an event, and there were quite a few young people I'd never seen. But, it takes a while. It does take a while.

- 09-00:49:52
Farrell: How does the organization get the word out there? How do they advertise?
- 09-00:49:58
Halsted: Well, they advertise in all the little local papers. I think they could do a better job. But they try very hard to get the word out with all the means of communication that exist. Now, there's a lot going on the internet that isn't so accessible unless you know where to find it.
- 09-00:50:20
Farrell: Well, especially to homeless populations where they don't necessarily have access to a smartphone.
- 09-00:50:24
Halsted: Right.
- 09-00:50:31
Farrell: Why did you end up stepping down in 2010?
- 09-00:50:34
Halsted: Because I thought it was just time. It's good to keep boards renewed with young people, particularly.
- 09-00:50:41
Farrell: Were those board meetings that you were a part of different from other board meetings then?
- 09-00:50:46
Halsted: Oh yeah, because it's much more hands-on. Everybody participates in the work in a different way.
- 09-00:50:54
Farrell: Who were some of the other board members when you were involved?
- 09-00:50:58
Halsted: Well, my good friend Jeanne Milligan. Well, almost everybody I know has been on the board. Dick Grosboll, it's a very local community.
- 09-00:51:15
Farrell: What areas were they coming from? Or what were their fields? I guess, how did they work together? I don't like using the word, "stakeholders," but essentially what were the different stakeholders? What did they represent?
- 09-00:51:30
Halsted: I don't know if it was a good stakeholder representation. George Hamel, who used to work for Dick Blum, he participated because he was a friend of Jeannie's and mine. We brought him in and he contributed a lot of money to help us buy a building. Tom Layton's wife, Ginger Gyongy Laky, I don't know if you know Tom.
- 09-00:51:53
Farrell: Mm-mm.

09-00:51:54

Halsted:

Anyway, he ran the Gerbode Foundation and she's an artist. She was very involved. Gussie Stewart, who's John Stewart's wife, and he's a housing developer. It's just a bunch of community-interested people.

09-00:52:12

Farrell:

That's nice. To be a board member could you just be sort of like not in that class? Could you just be sort of a regular, I work at a bank? Can you be on the board?

09-00:52:28

Halsted:

You could, but you'd need to raise money. If you don't have access to being able to help the organization, it doesn't mean you'd have to do it yourself.

09-00:52:40

Farrell:

I'm also curious about why you think that this hasn't taken off as a model for other neighborhoods.

09-00:52:46

Halsted:

As I said, I'm not sure other neighborhoods are as entrenched and engaged in supporting the services in their particular neighborhood as North Beach is.

09-00:53:02

Farrell:

Do you think that that also had something to do with the fact that Francis Ford Coppola was at the helm of it originally?

09-00:53:08

Halsted:

Could be, although in some ways that put a lot of people off because they thought, well, if he's going to be involved, he could just pay for it. A lot of people did come along just to be seen by him, which is not helpful either.

09-00:53:26

Farrell:

That's true. What did it mean to you to be a part of that organization?

09-00:53:32

Halsted:

It's been very pleasant. It's just nice to be involved in some hands-on things where you actually have a sense that you're helping some individuals who really need help rather than just policies.

09-00:53:47

Farrell:

How do you hope that it grows? How do you hope that it continues?

09-00:53:50

Halsted:

Well, I still hope that it will inspire other people to create small, non-bureaucratic, homeless-serving organizations in other neighborhoods.

09-00:54:05

Farrell:

With all your work in North Beach, what has that meant to you to be such an active part of this community and be so involved and be able to have your hands in a lot of different areas?

09-00:54:20

Halsted: You mean in North Beach in general?

09-00:54:22

Farrell: In North Beach in general, yeah.

09-00:54:23

Halsted: Well, it makes me feel like I belong here. I'm part of the community. Even though I have differences with some people in some issues, there's other things that override that. It's a very pleasant community from that perspective, even though it's kind of hyperactive.

09-00:54:39

Farrell: What do you think makes this community or this neighborhood unique or special?

09-00:54:47

Halsted: Probably the density and the fact that we are very close to jobs. You can live here and be involved in your job. You don't have to spend three hours commuting. By the time you get home you still have time to be involved in your community. Of course, there are not as many families because of the living conditions and the prices, but there are some.

09-00:55:14

Farrell: How do you hope that North Beach continues to maintain this in the future, with future generations?

09-00:55:24

Halsted: We fought for a long time to keep the Financial District from moving in this direction. I think we were successful at that. We've been pretty successful at precluding change coming too quickly, but our adjacency to Fisherman's Wharf and to the tourist industry has resulted in the fact that many of the retail establishments are more touristic than local and locally-serving businesses can't necessarily afford to be here. Many of the residences, which we've tried to preserve in the center of North Beach, are deteriorated and not up to date. I think that I'd like to see continuing change and improvement in the quality of housing while we still try to preserve the character of the neighborhood.

09-00:56:20

Farrell: What would that look like? Would that be sort of restoring a lot of the old houses?

09-00:56:25

Halsted: I don't know. We don't have too many old houses. This is one, but right in this neighborhood, in central North Beach we have a lot of one- and two-story buildings that are ground floor retail with housing upstairs, which is more or less SROs and things like that. Many of them are converted into offices, even though they're not supposed to. People may have a bed in them, but they don't really stay there.

09-00:56:56

Farrell:

Well, we're running out of time today, so I figure that's maybe a good place to leave it. Do you have anything else that you want to add, either about BCDC or North Beach?

09-00:57:03

Halsted:

No, that's fine. Thank you.

09-00:57:04

Farrell:

Thank you.

Interview 10: June 22, 2018

10-00:00:01

Farrell:

Okay, this is Shanna Farrell with Anne Halsted on Friday, June 22, 2018. This is our tenth interview and we are in San Francisco, California. We're going to pick back up with some more of your civic engagement. We've talked a lot about that, but you have such a long list of activities that you've been involved in and several of them are overlapping and kind of are related to the North Beach-Chinatown-Waterfront area in this part of the city. One of those things is the Chinatown Community Development Corporation, which is referred to now as the Chinatown CDC, but it has a long history. It's been around since 1977 and has taken different forms and different names since then. Can you tell me a little bit about how you first became aware of what is now the Chinatown CDC?

10-00:01:01

Halsted:

Well, when I was involved in politics of Telegraph Hill, I guess, with the Telegraph Hill Dwellers and other things, I became familiar with Gordon Chin, who started Chinatown CDC back in the '70s. As an employer, I also was working through one of the agencies that they subsumed that referred candidates. I'm trying to think of what the name of it was, but anyway, so I had multiple connections to that community. I felt that that should be integrated into the network of neighborhoods since this is that neighborhood, too. I tried very hard to get Gordon involved in things outside of Chinatown, but he stayed focused on Chinatown for the most part.

He came on the board of SPUR [San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association] for a while. He did a really great job of focusing on Chinatown and preserving it and developing that organization in the face of really difficult—the six companies, the traditional six companies, thought they ran Chinatown. Gordon was coming in from a completely different perspective to organize about saving the residences and preserving Chinatown for the elderly Chinese, I guess I could say, so his perspective was quite different from the six companies. He had to be very gradual about how he approached that. I don't think I can describe it entirely, but he was thoughtful. He's got a great personality for doing that. I don't know if you read the book he wrote, but it's very good. I've known him since he started it, so I was very supportive all along of what he was doing.

What impressed me the most over the years was their ability to take on housing that was dilapidated and redo it and restore it for people to live in comfortably. Now I think they operate maybe 3,000 units, something like that, and run organizations that help organize people within those units. They do a great job of that.

10-00:03:26

Farrell:

What are the six traditional companies who thought they ran Chinatown?

- 10-00:03:31
Halsted: I don't know the names of them, but they are in the history of San Francisco the old tongs or something that ran Chinatown until the '70s and '80s. Maybe they still do. I don't know.
- 10-00:03:48
Farrell: And by, "ran Chinatown," do you mean that they owned a lot of the real estate there?
- 10-00:03:52
Halsted: They were The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (originally ambassadors of the Qing government) and provided services for Chinese immigrant workers in SF.
- 10-00:04:12
Halsted: Oh, that's amazing. That was the power structure in Chinatown from 1900 or earlier.
- 10-00:04:22
Farrell: What did that power structure look like? Or how did that play out? I guess from your perception, what was Gordon Chin trying to change about that, how things existed?
- 10-00:04:34
Halsted: They were more economic, probably less run by business people concerned about preserving housing for poor people. Gordon was trying to bring in change that would benefit more people, I think.
- 10-00:05:00
Farrell: You had mentioned that you had worked with them in your HR role doing job placement or recruitment. What kind of jobs were you recruiting for from that community?
- 10-00:05:10
Halsted: Well, whatever we had. But there were a lot of administrative jobs—accounting, administrative, that kind of thing.
- 10-00:05:22
Farrell: At this period of time, what was the relationship between North Beach and Chinatown?
- 10-00:05:30
Halsted: I think there still was at least an appearance of a standoff. It was more in people's minds than in reality. It was more in the press than in reality and maybe some of the Italian restaurant owners thought they owned North Beach, but most of the property was already in Chinese hands, strangely enough. I guess in the '40s and '50s sort of the demarcating line was Broadway and some people felt they didn't want Chinese on this side of Broadway. Well, by the time I moved here that was just not true, and that was in the '60s. So, there was a residue of that feeling which the press would generally gin up whenever

possible, but in fact I think the percentage of ownership of properties in North Beach has been more Chinese than not since the '60s or '50s.

10-00:06:36

Farrell: What was your role on the board?

10-00:06:39

Halsted: Of Chinatown CDC?

10-00:06:40

Farrell: Yeah.

10-00:06:42

Halsted: Well, I came on that fairly late.

10-00:06:44

Farrell: I think 2002 to 2010.

10-00:06:46

Halsted: Yeah, but in my long history, I was sort of representing people with similar interests but who were not Chinese. The board was interesting because there were always a few non-English speakers on it, and so everything had to be translated, and lots of representation of people living in Ping Yuen, the housing, the public housing. It was a different kind of board and I was happy to be on it. I really thought they did great work in housing, great work in helping to sustain people. I have since become a little bit cynical about some of the work they're doing.

10-00:07:41

Farrell: Why is that?

10-00:07:42

Halsted: Because they have chosen to organize their tenants to support particular individuals and positions. I think they should be educating their tenants to vote and to make choices, but not telling them what to do. They have chosen really to go hard-line on what their positions are and telling their tenants what to do.

10-00:08:12

Farrell: So they've become very political?

10-00:08:14

Halsted: Yeah.

10-00:08:20

Farrell: At this point, I think in '98 they reorganized to become the Chinatown CDC. It was two different organizations. It was the Chinatown Resource Center, which would make sense.

10-00:08:31

Halsted: Which would be employment.

- 10-00:08:33
Farrell: Yeah, employment, and also if politics were involved that would make sense as well. The Chinese Community Housing Corporation merged to become the Community Development Center. You joined four years after this reorganization happened. Were you, as a board member, kind of seeing the effects of that play out organizationally at that point? Or had they ironed everything out?
- 10-00:08:59
Halsted: I think they had pretty much ironed everything out. I'm not sure everything was transparent to me.
- 10-00:09:06
Farrell: There's twenty-seven members on the board. What different interests or sectors do they or did they represent?
- 10-00:09:17
Halsted: Well, people involved in planning and history in housing, essentially Chinese, and a few developers and public tenants, and what else? I think that's about it.
- 10-00:09:38
Farrell: When you were on the board, where did you fit into that?
- 10-00:09:42
Halsted: I was probably a community representative, I guess.
- 10-00:09:46
Farrell: What kind of projects or areas were you most interested in? In terms of their work, what areas were you most interested in when you were on the board?
- 10-00:09:57
Halsted: I was very interested in their work in housing, although I don't have expertise in it, so I didn't serve on those committees. But I was very interested, most impressed by that. I did serve on their program committee, which reviewed the political positions they took. I was very interested in seeing that piece, too.
- 10-00:10:16
Farrell: Did that kind of overlap with some of your work with SPUR since you were doing some of that anyway?
- 10-00:10:20
Halsted: Some, yeah, since the issues were the same.
- 10-00:10:25
Farrell: What kind of things at that point were they in favor of or supported?
- 10-00:10:29
Halsted: Well, things like the subway in Chinatown.
- 10-00:10:32
Farrell: They supported that?

- 10-00:10:33
Halsted: Yeah. It was initiated by Rose Pak. She was very instrumental or behind the scenes in Chinatown CDC.
- 10-00:10:44
Farrell: She wanted to close Stockton.
- 10-00:10:46
Halsted: That was at the very end of her life. That was a last-minute deal.
- 10-00:10:57
Farrell: Let's see.
- 10-00:11:01
Halsted: But there was a lot of interesting stuff there because the original alignment for that was supposed to come up Third Street and down Kearny. And, because the people who were organized by Chinatown CDC said that they couldn't walk from Kearny to Grant or to Stockton, they decided to put it on Stockton, which made the alignment incredibly more difficult, which was, I think, a fairly questionable decision.
- 10-00:11:37
Farrell: It's interesting as somebody who has to navigate that area. It is a little bit difficult, yeah. As far as the housing goes, you had mentioned that a lot of the population of people living in Chinatown, they're aging. There's some movement to try to support them. Can you tell me a little bit about how that's kind of played out, how you see the work of the Chinatown CDC benefit the aging population?
- 10-00:12:12
Halsted: Well, there's a very strong senior community in Chinatown. I just got off the bus. Believe me, it's strong. The shopping center is maintained. People come in from other areas, but the seniors tend to live right around there. They'll take a bus for a block because that's easier. It's a very strong community and there are health services. There are all kinds of things that they really don't need to go outside that community very much.
- 10-00:12:45
Farrell: Do you know a lot of the housing units in Chinatown have bilingual signs or multilingual signs, so there's understanding there?
- 10-00:12:57
Halsted: Mostly.
- 10-00:13:00
Farrell: With the change in economic circumstances, the city is getting more expensive. People are getting pushed out. How have you seen that affect Chinatown, rising housing prices?

- 10-00:13:15
Halsted: I don't think as much as in other places because there's a strong support for both the public housing and the SROs [Single Room Occupancy]. Chinatown CDC does a good job of helping people avoid evictions, a lot of work in that area. I don't think we've seen as much redoing of buildings and tossing people out as you have in The Mission or other places where there's not the same kind of protective agencies.
- 10-00:13:49
Farrell: That's because it's historically a Chinese neighborhood with a lot of Chinese services in that area?
- 10-00:13:55
Halsted: And because Chinatown CDC has really been active in protecting those.
- 10-00:14:01
Farrell: As that population starts to decrease, as people start to die, essentially, how do you think that that's going to change?
- 10-00:14:10
Halsted: I have asked that question myself. I haven't gotten anyone willing to talk about it. It's interesting because obviously there may be elderly people continuing to come in and that would be where they would go because if they don't have language skills that would be a comfortable place to be, although there are other centers, I think, in San Jose and other places that do have centers. But it seems like there is needed some thought about how this will devolve in the future, and I haven't heard that. I have tried to raise that, but I haven't.
- 10-00:14:49
Farrell: People aren't really willing to have those conversations quite yet?
- 10-00:14:51
Halsted: That's what I've experienced.
- 10-00:14:54
Farrell: I did hear something recently about how some of the buildings, and I think particularly SROs, are now currently making their signs or their notices in English only.
- 10-00:15:13
Halsted: I know. You said that before.
- 10-00:15:17
Farrell: Yeah, even though it's still the same management. They've been playing ads on TV that have been geared towards essentially college-aged people. Had that been an issue in the past or anything like that?
- 10-00:15:32
Halsted: I hadn't heard it. I don't know.

- 10-00:15:36
Farrell: In terms of the anti-eviction actions or program areas, what were some of the things that they were doing, that the Chinatown CDC was doing, to make sure to help aid with evictions or people not getting evicted?
- 10-00:15:54
Halsted: Making sure people let them know and then bringing lawyers in and really very active.
- 10-00:15:59
Farrell: Do you remember who some of the law firms were that were there? No? How do you see this work building community and building leadership in that neighborhood?
- 10-00:16:14
Halsted: Well, I think they've been really good at building some leadership. They've got a youth program that encourages people to be involved in community organizing and helping with this. That's very effective, I say. At the same time I say I don't think they should be taking absolute political positions that don't allow their tenants to have other opinions, but they do have a really strong youth development program at CCDC.
- 10-00:16:43
Farrell: Have you seen any of the people involved in that program go on to become community leaders?
- 10-00:16:48
Halsted: I don't know to what degree, but I think Jane Kim came out of that program, to some degree. I can't think of who else right now.
- 10-00:17:01
Farrell: Who are some of the leaders that have really sort of made a difference, aside from Gordon Chin, in that organization and in the neighborhood, that had sort of a vision for how things were going to work?
- 10-00:17:17
Halsted: I think I have to give primary credit to Gordon. Norman Fong is the executive director now. He's very strong. He's a minister but a very strong leader, community leader, and very charismatic. The Historic Preservation Community in Chinatown has also been pretty effective at making sure that buildings aren't torn down and that the history of the Chinese in San Francisco is preserved. And that has matched the interests of Chinatown CDC.
- 10-00:18:01
Farrell: How do you think San Francisco benefits from having Chinatown as one of these, as an area with a lot of heritage and a lot of culture?
- 10-00:18:13
Halsted: I think it benefits a lot. It's very authentic. It's almost more authentic than what you can find in Hong Kong now in some ways because it's so old-fashioned. I think it's still human-scale. Anyone can go there and get to the

groceries easily despite the language. It's very walkable, so I think it's a big plus for San Francisco.

10-00:18:47

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about some of the Chinese New Year celebrations that happen?

10-00:18:54

Halsted: A little bit, but I've not been particularly involved in it. I go to the Lunar New Year lunch. And I go to a dinner and I listen to the fireworks, but I'm not intimately involved.

10-00:19:07

Farrell: I guess maybe not on the involvement part but as a neighbor of Chinatown, what you experience when that happens.

10-00:19:15

Halsted: It's really a lot of fun. I don't go to the parade very often. It's often raining. But I think the whole period of the new year is a great celebration for San Francisco and really a lot of fun.

10-00:19:33

Farrell: Do you see a lot of tourists coming in for that?

10-00:19:36

Halsted: Yeah, I guess so. We have a lot of tourists here all the time.

10-00:19:39

Farrell: That's true.

10-00:19:43

Halsted: This week they're more Swedish and German, I think.

10-00:19:46

Farrell: Why did you step down from the board as well in 2012?

10-00:19:51

Halsted: I think my term was up and I think that's the main reason.

10-00:19:57

Farrell: What are your hopes for how the Chinatown CDC continues to develop or grow or maintain presence in the neighborhood?

10-00:20:06

Halsted: Well, I think they're a great organization. I would love it if they were able to back away from their absolute political views. For instance, they're part of the Choo Choo [Council of Community Housing Organizations] group of housing developers, which is aligned with Calvin Welch and doesn't think that we should have any market-rate housing, basically. We had created a housing action coalition that SPUR was part of and they were part of. They dropped out of it when they decided they didn't want to have any support for any market-rate housing, which seems to me just nuts.

10-00:20:48

Farrell: With the SPUR, their relationship together, how did that partnership work or that collaboration work?

10-00:20:55

Halsted: SPUR and Paul Sedway and other people helped with a number of planning issues early on in Chinatown. There was a good collaboration. And both Gordon and Norman have been on the board of SPUR. We worked together on the Chinatown subway, lots of things. There's a reasonable collaboration except on this housing issue, which is unfortunate. Hopefully we can find a way to—I don't think we can. It costs as much to develop affordable housing as it does non-affordable housing. The only question is who pays for it, so we have to find a way to do both.

10-00:21:42

Farrell: How do you think that the Chinatown subway is going to change Chinatown, or just this area in general?

10-00:21:50

Halsted: Well, it's going to be interesting. I worry because it's kind of inadequately designed. It's only going to allow two short cars in each station. The demand for that service is very high. I just watched the 30 Stockton. Hopefully it will connect with the T Line that goes to Mission Bay and to Hunters Point. When that's connected and hopefully to Fisherman's Wharf, the potential is very great. But we're going to have to have an ability to have more cars and more utilization.

10-00:22:35

Farrell: How do you think the neighborhood will change when that construction is done?

10-00:22:39

Halsted: When it's done? The construction that's underway right now will get better, but then we've got to do the other parts. Capital projects are terrible because they do really take forever.

10-00:22:56

Farrell: They just ping-pong around different parts of the city. How do you hope that Chinatown continues to maintain its cultural heritage?

10-00:23:08

Halsted: Well, I really do hope it does continue to do that and keep a base of active seniors in Chinatown that make it as authentic as it can be and as useful to people who are monolingual or don't have other choices and with services of all sorts. We've got hospitals and health centers and schools, but I also really love the old architecture, so I hope that that can be preserved. I think that there is real commitment to that as well.

10-00:23:45

Farrell: Another organization that you were involved in, starting in 2005, is the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, also known as the MTC. Can you

tell me a little bit about how that formed and sort of in the grand scheme of the federal mandate for that, that kind of thing?

10-00:24:06

Halsted:

Well, it is the MPO, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, for the planning area which is dictated by the federal government. I don't remember when it started, but I think it was in the early '80s. It represents the nine Bay Area counties and coordinates federal, state and local funds and prioritizes them with a commission of seventeen people and representatives from every county and group of cities.

10-00:24:41

Farrell:

Do you know what the nine counties are?

10-00:24:43

Halsted:

Yes. Solano, Sonoma, Napa, Marin, Contra Costa, Alameda, San Mateo, San Francisco and Santa Clara. I think that's nine. Is it?

10-00:25:00

Farrell:

I think so, yeah. It really is the whole. So the MTC, they do the transportation planning, financing and coordinating for the agencies. I'm really struck by the fact that it's these nine counties that really do encapsulate this whole Bay Area, but they're so different. Their transportation options are so different. Can you tell me a little bit about how the MTC balances those?

10-00:25:44

Halsted:

It's even worse than that because **there are 29 transit operators** coordinating. One of the biggest coups that's been accomplished by MTC, from my viewpoint, in addition to keeping the bridges going and getting them all redone—that's bigger, actually—is the Clipper system, which allows you to, with one card, to move from one system to another. That was an incredible accomplishment because, as I said, all these operators have different fare systems. They weren't ever willing to budge on cooperating on having a joint fare. The whole system for arranging that had to be negotiated with **101 different operators**. But it does work and now people have mobility across systems, which is very special, I think. I use it all the time. It makes a huge difference.

10-00:26:47

Farrell:

Were you involved, or did you have any knowledge of how that negotiation between those 29 operators worked?

10-00:26:54

Halsted:

Only from the outside, only listening to the sighs and the ohs. It turned out to be very expensive because it took years.

10-00:27:05

Farrell:

What did the expenses account? Why was it so expensive?

- 10-00:27:09
Halsted: Just putting together the systems, organizing the system to distributing money differently to each authority according to their rules.
- 10-00:27:21
Farrell: Clipper is one organization now that kind of manages all that?
- 10-00:27:25
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 10-00:27:28
Farrell: Aside from you have to build infrastructure to be able to do this, and you have to distribute money appropriately, and then you have to create a card that actually works everywhere so it's functional, were there any other issues that these operators had? Do you remember what some more of their problems were?
- 10-00:27:51
Halsted: Well, just wanting to have their way. You think you could have one definition of what a senior is, but no, we don't do that, or youth or whatever. All those things, each organization has its own definitions.
- 10-00:28:13
Farrell: Do you remember how a couple of them classify that, like a youth was under five in some places?
- 10-00:28:17
Halsted: No, I don't remember.
- 10-00:28:21
Farrell: How did it eventually come together? How did it eventually work out?
- 10-00:28:25
Halsted: With a lot of money.
- 10-00:28:27
Farrell: Do you remember how long the whole process actually took?
- 10-00:28:30
Halsted: My guess would be about five years. Now they're going through the next iteration of it, Clipper 2.
- 10-00:28:39
Farrell: Clipper 2.0? What are some of the areas that those transportation operators represent?
- 10-00:28:49
Halsted: Well, we've got VTA, Valley Transportation Authority, in Santa Clara. You've got a bus system in Napa and Solano and all those different people. Here we have the Muni [San Francisco Municipal Railway] and BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit].

- 10-00:29:10
Farrell: Does the bridge count as one of those?
- 10-00:29:13
Halsted: No, not as an operator. AC Transit and—
- 10-00:29:21
Farrell: You said that there are seventeen members on the board they all represent different areas. What areas specifically do they represent?
- 10-00:29:30
Halsted: Well, I should remember the numbers. But anyway, San Francisco, for instance, has a representative of the mayor's office and the board of supervisors. I am a BCDC [Bay Conservation & Development Commission] representative, but now my position has to be approved by the mayor of San Francisco, too. Santa Clara has, I think, the mayor and a representative of the board of supervisors. I'm trying to remember if there's one other person, but there may be. Equally in Oakland it's the mayor and a member of the Alameda Board of Supervisors, and I don't think anyone else. I should remember the numbers. But then, Cities of Marin have a representative, one representative for all the cities, because there's a smaller population. Same in Napa, Cities of Napa, and Solano. What else?
- 10-00:30:38
Farrell: Is the number of representatives from each county, in addition to the population, also represented by how many different transportation lines they have?
- 10-00:30:51
Halsted: No.
- 10-00:30:54
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about what board meetings were like, or commission meetings, when you first joined?
- 10-00:31:05
Halsted: Well, they were interesting because I hadn't experienced meeting with regional politicians who were divvying up money. Really, they're there because they can get money for their constituents to some degree. They're there for regional purposes, too, but they have the ability to deliver projects for their constituents. That changes the dynamic. At BCDC, for instance, nobody's getting any money. It's a very collegial kind of thing, whereas at MTC there is a fair amount of competition for who gets what money. There was always a fair resentment for San Francisco getting so much money because it has so many people. Therefore, people in Livermore aren't getting what they should, that kind of discussion. That was a new kind of discussion for me.
- 10-00:31:57
Farrell: How is that handled at meetings?

- 10-00:32:01
Halsted: Well, it's up to who's running the board. Interestingly enough, the power on the commission has generally resided with people from the outlying communities because it's sort of seniority based. Not all of those communities have term limits, whereas in San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose we have term limits.
- 10-00:32:24
Farrell: You had also mentioned earlier that you're the only non-elected member with a vote. Can you tell me a little bit about how that works?
- 10-00:32:32
Halsted: It's a little odd because the elected officials don't quite trust me because I'm not accountable to a bunch of voters. That's reasonable. They don't quite trust me, so I don't get to serve on some of the committees that they want to be. I don't think I have the same credibility as if I were an elected official. I do have the ability to say what I want when I want. But, that can be discounted fairly easily.
- 10-00:33:04
Farrell: How does that affect your interest in serving on the commission?
- 10-00:33:07
Halsted: Well, it's interesting. It does occasionally, like, hmm. I'm not as effective as I'd like to be.
- 10-00:33:16
Farrell: Do you have allies on the commission who support you?
- 10-00:33:18
Halsted: I do, yeah.
- 10-00:33:20
Farrell: Are those people that you've worked with in the past so you have rapport with them?
- 10-00:33:24
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 10-00:33:26
Farrell: In situations where somebody is sort of discounting or excluding you, how do they support you?
- 10-00:33:37
Halsted: Well, wherever possible, I think that they will jump in to help. But it's really up to me to support myself.
- 10-00:33:50
Farrell: Are there any committees that you serve on?
- 10-00:33:53
Halsted: Mm-hmm.

10-00:33:53

Farrell: What are those committees?

10-00:33:55

Halsted: Well, there are quite a few committees. We have two committee days, Wednesdays and Friday. I'm on all the Friday committees, which are planning, operations and legislation. I'm vice-chair of the planning committee. I go to all the other committee meetings, which are the Wednesday committee meetings. So, there are about eight committees that meet regularly.

10-00:34:23

Farrell: How much time does that all take?

10-00:34:25

Halsted: It takes quite a bit of time. It takes probably, I'd have to look at it on a monthly basis, probably thirty hours a month.

10-00:34:38

Farrell: With all the committees?

10-00:34:39

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

10-00:34:40

Farrell: Okay, so it's three hours Wednesday and three hours Friday-ish?

10-00:34:43

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

10-00:34:44

Farrell: That's a big commitment.

10-00:34:45

Halsted: Maybe not thirty hours. Maybe less than that.

10-00:34:48

Farrell: What are some of the legislative issues that you've been dealing with on that committee?

10-00:34:55

Halsted: Well, anything that's proposed by the state or federal legislatures that affects transportation, we try to take a position on, or on housing because we now are being involved in the nexus between housing and transportation. We're looking at housing issues as well. Everything that is going to be coming before the legislature we have a view on, which is interesting.

10-00:35:26

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about what maybe some of the larger issues have been and what your position has been?

10-00:35:35

Halsted: What have the larger issues been?

10-00:35:38

Farrell: Or a memorable issue that you felt more compelled by?

10-00:35:40

Halsted: I just don't have it at the top of my mind. I'm sorry. All the affordable housing things that David Chiu has been doing at the state level have been well supported by MTC. Scott Wiener recently, I don't know if you remember, proposed an exemption from certain controls for housing that was done within half a mile of a transit station. Everyone on the commission would have liked to have supported that, but locals, it just caused such an uproar in local localities that I don't think it moved. I think we might have even supported it and said we would support it with reservations. Anyway, that was a controversial one because Scott Wiener served on that commission with me for quite a while. He's got really strong policy ideas. He pushes them and it's great because if you're not willing to push those outside limits, nothing ever gets out, right?

10-00:36:48

Farrell: How did you feel about that proposal?

10-00:36:52

Halsted: I thought it went too far, but I thought it was the right direction. It was too broad, too far. But it was a good idea to start it.

10-00:37:02

Farrell: How do you think a city benefits from having a lot of housing near public transportation?

10-00:37:08

Halsted: Hopefully people don't have to drive in. Ideally, the public transportation should be near both jobs and housing so that that coordination can happen. That's what we're aiming for.

10-00:37:28

Farrell: Does that also put a burden on public transportation, though, if more people are taking that?

10-00:37:33

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

10-00:37:34

Farrell: How does the MTC address that?

10-00:37:37

Halsted: Well, by trying to fund that, but we're also trying desperately to reduce greenhouse gases. That's one of the reasons for reducing the car use.

10-00:37:50

Farrell: That makes sense. Are there other ways, not action items, but are there any other ways that the MTC is trying to reduce greenhouse emissions, aside from just reducing car traffic?

- 10-00:38:08
Halsted: We're encouraging electric vehicles and vehicle charging stations. I think everything we can think of as far as connecting people with systems, having shuttles, all kinds of things.
- 10-00:38:25
Farrell: Does the MTC support bike traffic and bike commuting?
- 10-00:38:29
Halsted: Right, very much, and pedestrian.
- 10-00:38:33
Farrell: So more bike routes and that kind of thing? Is the MTC involved in that at all?
- 10-00:38:37
Halsted: Oh, yeah.
- 10-00:38:39
Farrell: How does that fit in with the larger picture?
- 10-00:38:44
Halsted: Well, there are lots of programs, federal programs, that fund Safe Routes to School, which has a lot of bike programs in it. San Francisco, there are many programs that have bike and pedestrian improvements.
- 10-00:39:03
Farrell: You're also on the operations committee. What are some of the things that you work on that committee?
- 10-00:39:09
Halsted: That one's a little bit different because highway operations, it's more about highway operations, I think. I don't know that it's meant to be, but it seems to be. There are things like metering lights on highways. It turns out that those lights have been set up all over the Bay Area but haven't been turned on in many communities. We've been trying to get those turned on because they really do increase the throughput of freeways and the ability to reduce congestion. We've been trying to make sure those are functional and operating. Another aspect would be the HOV [High-Occupancy Vehicle] lanes and trying to preclude violations, trying to get the CHP [California Highway Patrol] engaged in limiting violations, not an easy job.
- 10-00:40:08
Farrell: Does the MTC have a good relationship with—?
- 10-00:40:11
Halsted: CHP?
- 10-00:40:11
Farrell: Yeah.
- 10-00:40:11
Halsted: Mm-hmm, I think so.

10-00:40:15

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about your role as vice-chair on the planning committee?

10-00:40:22

Halsted: Well, I think I'm more backup to the chair than I am a leader of that, but I enjoy it. It's interesting. The planning issues are some of the most interesting to me.

10-00:40:35

Farrell: One of the planning things that MTC has been doing and working on is called Plan Bay Area 2040. It's a long-range regional transportation plan and sustainable community strategy. They just published it and adopted it in July of 2017.

10-00:40:58

Halsted: That's the second one.

10-00:40:59

Farrell: The second one, yeah.

10-00:41:01

Halsted: We're now starting on the third one.

10-00:41:03

Farrell: Yeah, sorry. The first one was adopted in 2013. Then it was updated for 2017. But, the idea, so it's an effort that grew out of the California Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 and that requires each state's eighteen metropolitan areas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions like we were just talking about from both cars and trucks. It's focused on updating the previous integrated transportation and land use plans. There's a couple different areas. I guess they referred to it as a roadmap, which I kind of like because it's also a set of guidelines. One of the things is forecasting transportation needs through the year 2040. What was the idea there? How do you see the transportation needs changing in the next twenty-two years?

10-00:42:04

Halsted: Well, that's a really interesting question. We've set in place a whole new process for visioning over the next year and a half, I think. Have you read about that?

10-00:42:20

Farrell: I didn't.

10-00:42:22

Halsted: That's sort of blue-sky visioning about what's going to happen with autonomous vehicles. What's going to happen, what technologies we have to be thinking about. We really don't know what it's going to look like. It's a lot of supposition and guessing. But we're spending, I think, a year and a half trying to get a better idea of what we think the options really might be, because I think they really will change.

- 10-00:42:50
Farrell: Are you working with tech companies or talking to tech companies?
- 10-00:42:52
Halsted: Oh, yes.
- 10-00:42:53
Farrell: How do you manage that, because I feel like tech companies are so secretive about what they're working on. How do you negotiate that?
- 10-00:43:04
Halsted: I don't know, but we are. I think that they're probably pretty careful relationships. They probably don't reveal much of their technology. But, they can't really plan without having systems in the Bay Area that will accommodate them. I don't really know the answer to that. They should be following what we're doing if not. Google Maps and all, I think, get their information from what comes through MTC and create what they do from that.
- 10-00:43:45
Farrell: That's interesting. In terms of thinking about how to think about it, what are you guys talking about? What's the discussion like?
- 10-00:43:58
Halsted: It's wide ranging. I wish I had a summary of it, but it's very blue-sky and there's a lot of modeling and a lot of projection. It's very interesting stuff.
- 10-00:44:10
Farrell: What do those conversations look like when you're sitting in a room being like, well, what technologies might exist?
- 10-00:44:17
Halsted: We on the commission aren't doing that. It's the staff that's doing that. We look at what they produce and say, well, does that consider what we think is happening? We aren't really driving the choices. We may be driving the evaluation of it.
- 10-00:44:38
Farrell: Have you learned anything new?
- 10-00:44:40
Halsted: Not yet.
- 10-00:44:44
Farrell: New technology is one of the aspects that you're considering for the transportation needs.
- 10-00:44:50
Halsted: And changes of demographics and stuff, too.
- 10-00:44:54
Farrell: How are you and how is the MTC thinking about changing demographics?

10-00:44:59

Halsted: You mean what are we thinking?

10-00:45:01

Farrell: Yeah. How do you think that the demographics might change?

10-00:45:04

Halsted: Well, I don't think I'm an expert on it, but obviously they're becoming less white and more elderly and more Hispanic. The distribution of wealth is a big issue and that's one of the things that has to be brought into these evaluations and how people are going to be able to sustain themselves and get to their jobs.

10-00:45:38

Farrell: Do you find that with your economic status comes different choices for transportation? So, if you're wealthy you're more likely to drive to work?

10-00:45:53

Halsted: It depends. In fact, it may not be actually true. Certainly in San Francisco that would be true. But, if you are a service worker who lives in Fairfield and needs to get to Marin to do landscape work, you have to drive. The further out you live, where the cost of housing is less, the less transit is available, so that you need to have a car. They're more dependent on cars in some ways.

10-00:46:29

Farrell: Is there any discussion of, blue-sky, more public transportation further out into the suburbs?

10-00:46:37

Halsted: Oh, sure.

10-00:46:38

Farrell: I know the BART line just was just extended, but that stuff takes so long.

10-00:46:43

Halsted: But the point is the problem with BART and heavy rail is that it really requires density to make it useful. Even what we provided in San Jose with light rail is not used anywhere enough to justify it. So, my view, what we should be doing is buses, not rail. We did the smart train to Marin, and that's a good start. But buses are a lot less expensive.

10-00:47:21

Farrell: And faster to get on the road.

10-00:47:22

Halsted: And more flexible. Anyway, if we can decide on the routes where density will be and then put heavier rail in those lines, or heavier facilities, that makes sense. But we can't do it just out into nowhere.

10-00:47:47

Farrell: How do you see the demographics shifting geographically? This is not even like the breakdown of racial or economic, but what areas are you thinking that might grow in the next twenty years? Will the suburbs get more popular?

10-00:48:04

Halsted: I think that San Jose will continue to grow and, of course, the places where housing is cheaper, and then it becomes more expensive, so that whole corridor between Davis and Fairfield, that looks to me like a likely growth area.

10-00:48:27

Farrell: Why is that, because there's space?

10-00:48:28

Halsted: There's space. Land isn't as expensive. It's adjacent to a highway and there can be jobs there, too.

10-00:48:39

Farrell: Why do you think that San Jose is going to continue to grow?

10-00:48:43

Halsted: It's the largest population center in the Bay Area now. It's an attractive place for people to live, particularly for the Hispanic community.

10-00:49:03

Farrell: How do you think housing prices are going to affect? Again, I know you don't have a crystal ball, but are these conversations—?

10-00:49:12

Halsted: Demand makes prices go up. If there are more people wanting to live in the same place, the prices go up.

10-00:49:21

Farrell: Are these conversations that you're having as part of the MTC committees that you're on?

10-00:49:29

Halsted: To some degree. MTC also has created another separate committee, which I'm not on, called CASA, which is trying to come up with ideas for really addressing the housing problems in the Bay Area.

10-00:49:41

Farrell: Interesting, so they're working on that?

10-00:49:43

Halsted: Yeah.

10-00:49:45

Farrell: Another one of the areas of the roadmap for Plan Bay Area 2040 is preserving the character of diverse communities. Can you tell me a little bit more about

what that is and how they're trying to accomplish that, or what diverse means in that context?

10-00:50:05

Halsted:

I'd have to look at that part of the plan and see what it's referring to, but it's only a guess on my part. I'm sorry. It's not destroying diverse communities because the land is cheaper there, I guess, is what I mean to say.

10-00:50:22

Farrell:

Another one of the areas is also livable communities and that has a lot of different areas. I'm curious to know, for you, in your opinion, what makes a community or a neighborhood livable. What would attract you to a community?

10-00:50:44

Halsted:

Well, for me, the basic issue is does it have all the elements that are necessary to live in it? It has jobs. It has housing, has churches, has schools, has parks, is walkable. Those are the biggest things for me. It's a place where you can run your life without having to go too far.

10-00:51:11

Farrell:

In San Francisco, what communities do you see being the most livable? I know North Beach because you've lived here for so long.

10-00:51:19

Halsted:

Well, I have to look at San Francisco more as a whole than not, I think. It's very livable except that we've not coped with some of the problems, the consequence of being livable.

10-00:51:34

Farrell:

Yes. I think when you become an attractive place to live, there's a whole other host of things that come with that. If you were to live in another neighborhood in San Francisco, where would you want to live?

10-00:51:49

Halsted:

I like being near the water. That's one limitation for me. I really like being able to see the water. I wouldn't mind being in South Beach or Mission Bay or Dogpatch. I'm not so interested in being in The Mission just because I feel isolated from the water. I'm less interested in being out in The Avenues because it's cold and windy. I'm trying to think of other places than that.

10-00:52:25

Farrell:

Do you find The Dogpatch livable? Do you think that it's as accessible?

10-00:52:28

Halsted:

Yeah, I think it is. It is getting to be great.

10-00:52:30

Farrell:

Yeah, there's a lot happening there. Does your definition of what make a community livable differ at all from the MTC's? Or are you all kind of on the same page?

- 10-00:52:43
Halsted: I think we are, but if you take the same words and apply it to Livermore and apply it to San Francisco it'll look different. But the same descriptors apply.
- 10-00:52:55
Farrell: Have you heard at all from people who live in Contra Costa or Alameda or even Marin or San Mateo what makes a community livable to them?
- 10-00:53:09
Halsted: There's lots of different views on that. I think walkability, biking, easy access to whatever their needs are. It's fairly similar. The biggest issue, I think, is how hard it is to get to work.
- 10-00:53:29
Farrell: That makes sense. How about the leadership of the MTC? What do you see as their vision, especially as you're working on Plan Bay Area 3.0?
- 10-00:53:45
Halsted: I think it's proceeding pretty well. The leadership, from this perspective I consider the staff to be the leaders because they are the constants. The chair of the organization changes every year or two and their perspectives are very different. The staff is very competent, planning and visionary. The question was how do I see them leading?
- 10-00:54:15
Farrell: Yeah.
- 10-00:54:16
Halsted: I think they're really trying to explore all the alternatives and try to come up with the best strategy. None of us knows how we're going to manage this greenhouse gas thing or whether it will actually have any effect on climate change, but we're trying. We really need to also, in this Plan Bay Area, strategize about climate change and planning for that because most of our infrastructure for roads and for other transportation facilities will be inundated by 2050 if we don't do something about it.
- 10-00:54:53
Farrell: Are there any, in thinking about the visions for the future, models that the MTC follows? I know with greenhouse gas emissions, California has always been the leader. They exceed federal standards. They really set the tone for everything, but in terms of everything else, are there other cities that you're looking at as models for how to be sustainable?
- 10-00:55:15
Halsted: I think we look at a lot of them, yeah. We're not out of touch with it. They participate in all of the planning things around the world with regard to these issues.
- 10-00:55:24
Farrell: Which ones do you see as good models?

10-00:55:28

Halsted: I don't think I know right now. London is a good model in many ways, but they have centralized funding for their transportation services, which we don't have.

10-00:55:43

Farrell: Are there any that have a myriad of transportation options that you look at as a case study?

10-00:55:52

Halsted: I think they all do. I think we're not alone in this.

10-00:55:59

Farrell: What are some of the things that you've been most proud of from your time on the commission of the MTC?

10-00:56:07

Halsted: Well, seeing this Bay Bridge, the new Bay Bridge get finished, despite all the harping and problems, et cetera, but it's been quite successful, and it's quite beautiful. That's amazing. I think all the bridges now are relatively resilient, which is a big deal. All we have to do now is to make sure the approaches are not going to be inundated, which is a big job, too. Those are really big deals. As I said, I think the Clipper card is just a huge thing in making people feel they're part of the Bay Area. I'm looking to see people have more of a sense of belonging to the region rather than just to wherever they are. In San Francisco we've been very San Francisco-centric. We are really not the center of the world anymore. I think the more we can learn that we're actually connected to San Jose and to Solano County and all those things, the more likely we are to do better in the long run.

10-00:57:18

Farrell: Do you feel like the collaboration between the nine counties fosters that?

10-00:57:26

Halsted: I do. It's getting better. It's interesting. The mayor of San Jose and the mayor of Oakland always show up to MTC. The mayor of San Francisco almost never does. She has a representative that shows up. It's just always a long tradition of we are kind of—it's resented to some degree, too.

10-00:57:52

Farrell: Yeah. It makes sense. I could see how the optics of that don't look very good. How do you see, aside from the mayor showing up to these meetings—well, no, that's me saying that, not you. How do you see the collaboration improving and becoming better?

10-00:58:13

Halsted: I think that many of the individuals have become very good friends and share a lot of views and work together quite well. It's encouraging, some really good people. Libby Schaaf and Sam Liccardo both are terrific and some of the people who have been on the commission for many years are also really good.

- 10-00:58:36
Farrell: I think with committees like that it really helps when people have lived in the area for a long time and have a long view. Is there anyone on the commission who is a bit newer to the Bay Area and brings an outside perspective?
- 10-00:58:57
Halsted: Not that I know of.
- 10-00:59:00
Farrell: I'm just wondering if they could offer something.
- 10-00:59:03
Halsted: Because they're mostly locally-elected officials.
- 10-00:59:09
Farrell: If you were to try to sell someone on moving to the Bay Area or one of these anyone counties that make up the Bay Area, how would you sell this place to them?
- 10-00:59:29
Halsted: Well, climate, the bay, diversity, choices, food. I think those are the main things.
- 10-00:59:41
Farrell: How do you hope that that grows or continues in the next twenty-two years?
- 10-00:59:48
Halsted: Well, I hope that we can find a way for people to be able to afford to live near where they work, because I think the stress on people's lives here is too great. People will be leaving the Bay Area if they can't find a better way to live. It's just too much to ask people to commute three hours a day. That's what lots of people are doing. I think we really need to find some better answers, moving jobs closer to the housing, or I don't know what.
- 10-01:00:19
Farrell: Well, I think that might be a good place to leave it for today. And then we'll pick up with some more stuff next time. Thank you.
- 10-01:00:27
Halsted: Great. Okay, thanks.

Interview 11: July 9, 2018

11-00:00:02

Farrell:

Okay, this is Shanna Farrell back with Anne Halsted on Monday, July 9th, 2018. This is our 11th interview and we are in San Francisco, California. Anne, when we left off we were talking about more of your involvement in different boards, on different councils, on different committees and the last one that we have to talk about is the Neighborhood Parks Council. You were involved in that from 2007 to 2011 and that was founded by Isabel Wade, who you've worked with since the 1970s. Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like to know somebody in the '70s and work with them thirty years later?

11-00:00:51

Halsted:

Yeah, it's interesting because we do have a long relationship. I think she first recruited me to be on the board of Friends of the Urban Forest when she started it and so I really got to know her around parks issues. Then, many years later she called me and asked me if I would help her support the AIDS Memorial Grove, which she also created. I think of her as a serial environmental entrepreneur, really high energy, very oriented towards the environment and very focused, quite different from me as far as I'm sort of here and there and everywhere. She's really smart, really focused and I like working with her. She can be a little abrasive with people occasionally. I could help her through those things that kind of balance that occasionally. But she gets things done. She's really good.

11-00:01:48

Farrell:

How does she go about getting things done and being a leader in that way?

11-00:01:52

Halsted:

Well, I mean, she sets out with an objective. For instance, the urban forest, I think she was trying to create an infrastructure for street trees in the city, and developing the board and funding. She just is very focused on moving ahead. Neighborhood Parks Council was similar because she created an organization that consisted of a whole bunch of smaller groups that came together to be one council talking to the rec and park department, which is hard to move, so an external influence on the park department in the interest of many neighborhood parks.

11-00:02:34

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of how she went about choosing people to be on the different boards?

11-00:02:41

Halsted:

Better to ask her, of course. I think she's smart about it. She looks to people with whom she can work and who can balance her, who can bring money in, who can bring political juice in. I'm working with her right now on Jack London Park in Sonoma and the Sonoma Development Center. We're doing an event with Gavin up there. She's just really focused on bringing people together in the interest of whatever it is she's working on. They've been

general interests like street trees, AIDS Memorial Grove, Neighborhood Parks Council, which was even bigger and really had a big impact.

11-00:03:27

Farrell: Yeah, and also things that they don't seem like hard to get behind. These just seem natural.

11-00:03:33

Halsted: Right. They're kind of apple pie-ish if you can see them that way.

11-00:03:36

Farrell: Yeah. How have you seen her develop as a leader over time?

11-00:03:43

Halsted: Well, I think she remains extremely focused. I think she understands what she does well and what she doesn't well and she brings other people in to help her. She was amazing. I mean, she actually transcended out of the Friends of the Urban Forest as the founder and brought someone in as a director. It's been more or less successful ever since and the same thing's true of the Neighborhood Parks Council, which she founded and really ran with a tight control. When she decided to retire, she found someone to run that and then I worked with her. I can't take responsibility for it, but I did help her to bring the Neighborhood Parks Council into the Parks Alliance, which was Friends of Rec and Park. There was a Friends of Rec and Park, which was more involved in Golden Gate Park and getting big socialite money, et cetera, involved in the park system. The Neighborhood Parks Council tended to be smaller parks and smaller park groups trying to do the similar thing for them. There are many more of them. So, she—I helped—put together a combined organization which is called the Parks Alliance and that was a big deal. It was sort like putting ABAG [Association of Bay Area Governments] and MTC [Metropolitan Transportation Commission] together.

11-00:05:01

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

11-00:05:02

Halsted: About which?

11-00:05:03

Farrell: The process of putting all of that together and making those moving parts jell.

11-00:05:11

Halsted: Well, when you've got two existing organizations, there's always jealousy over money and power. You've got to try to figure out how to get them to see that their objectives will be better met if they can walk away from their individual control, and so one of the biggest things was developing of a common board. She put together a nominating committee, and I was on that nominating committee, to come up with a common board. That was a very effective process.

- 11-00:05:39
Farrell: How did that, combining those organizations, benefit the greater good?
- 11-00:05:47
Halsted: Well, they weren't competing so I don't know. I can't tell you right now whether the Parks Alliance is as successful as the two of them were.
- 11-00:05:59
Farrell: Individually?
- 11-00:06:00
Halsted: Individually, combined. But in the general interest of San Francisco, having one Friends of Parks organization should be more effective if it is organized well.
- 11-00:06:15
Farrell: Going back to the '70s or the time when Isabel was first getting started and thinking about fundraising, do you have a sense of how she initially got to know potential funders, or how she cultivated donors in those early days?
- 11-00:06:33
Halsted: She's very good at grant writing, extremely good at grant writing. She has a PhD in environmental sciences from Berkeley. She's a good writer, good thinker. I think she made contact with me through the chamber of commerce, I think, talking to John Jacobs or maybe even Dorothy Erskine. She was always good at reaching out, because I was in a corporate job but I had been involved in parks issues. She's always good at reaching out to people like me who kind of crossed over.
- 11-00:07:04
Farrell: She had no problem doing that cold?
- 11-00:07:07
Halsted: Right. She's very competent.
- 11-00:07:11
Farrell: That's impressive. When you were on the Neighborhood Parks Council board, did you find that there were any differences in how meetings were run, given that it was a female-led organization?
- 11-00:07:25
Halsted: Well, in a sense, it was a more personally-run organization than most boards I've been on. It was not a huge board. I think it was seven or eight people, including her husband and me and other people who were close to her. She maintained pretty close control of that, which is different from most of the boards that I've been on, but it worked.
- 11-00:07:47
Farrell: What made it more personal?
- 11-00:07:49
Halsted: Her control.

- 11-00:07:51
Farrell: So she was just more personally involved?
- 11-00:07:52
Halsted: Yeah, and everyone who was there was there more or less—I don't know if I want to read this in writing—was more or less loyal to her.
- 11-00:08:02
Farrell: Yeah. Well, I mean, it makes sense if you're helping her out. It all makes sense. Who else was on the board when you were involved?
- 11-00:08:14
Halsted: Well, I know her husband Jan was. Mindy Kershner, a good friend of hers, I was. I think Alice Russell Shapiro, who's another good friend of hers. Who else? We had several wayward people occasionally who came and went. but those are the ones I can think of right now.
- 11-00:08:34
Farrell: Did you find that this board was more efficient than others or was more able to get things done?
- 11-00:08:40
Halsted: Yeah, because it was smaller and Isabel was very competent. She was really good at all the financial aspects, good at fundraising, good at communications.
- 11-00:08:53
Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about how, in practice, the Neighborhood Parks Council worked?
- 11-00:08:59
Halsted: Well, they convened, I think it was monthly meetings of each park group and each park group would send a representative. They talked about issues coming before the whole park system. They would advocate for the whole park system but with the input of all these little groups. It was a very effective way to try to encourage sort of consensus change in the park department, which the older an institution like rec and park department gets, the more mired it gets in all the things that happened in the past and how you can't change anything.
- 11-00:09:31
Farrell: Do you have a sense of whether or not it was hard to balance all the different perspectives from the smaller groups?
- 11-00:09:39
Halsted: Oh, sure, although I think that they really valued their participation in it. They would every year have a meeting with the mayor and have meetings with the head of rec and park. They had more power by working together.
- 11-00:09:55
Farrell: To clarify, the Neighborhood Parks Council, it's a coalition of community-based park groups that are actively involved in improving neighborhood parks

throughout San Francisco. It was founded in 1996. And now it includes over 120 park groups and 4,000 park volunteers.

11-00:10:16

Halsted: But it has been integrated into the Parks Alliance, so it's not a freestanding organization now, as far as I know.

11-00:10:25

Farrell: Those numbers make sense. Do you have a sense of when it was integrated into the Parks Alliance?

11-00:10:31

Halsted: About five years ago.

11-00:10:32

Farrell: Five years ago?

11-00:10:34

Halsted: Something like that.

11-00:10:35

Farrell: So they provide support for restoration and improved maintenance for neighborhood parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities and technical assistance in organizing help to their network and new park groups?

11-00:10:54

Halsted: Right.

11-00:10:55

Farrell: They also identify their areas of interest as being park advocacy, which was just described, community involvement, education and public awareness. Do you have a sense of how their programming or how they went about developing or cultivating these areas of interest, how it worked in practice?

11-00:11:25

Halsted: I'm not sure I can respond to that exactly, but I just want to say that this particular method of organizing people to be engaged in improving their lives is something that's always appealed to me because most people want to have a connection with nature and want to have a connection with parks in their area. We have neighborhood parks all over the city. It's one of the ways that people can come together to build community in a more or less positive environment compared to most other political activities. I think it just is a natural for me to be involved in helping that because I worked on just parks around here, Pioneer Park and other ones. It just seemed to be completely aligned with my sense of community politics.

11-00:12:20

Farrell: Were there any programs that they did that directly matched that?

11-00:12:26

Halsted: Oh yeah.

11-00:12:27

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about those?

11-00:12:29

Halsted: There was a time when the Park and Rec Department didn't allow volunteers to work in the parks because labor didn't want them doing that, because it might take away jobs. However, none of the parks have ever had individual budgets for them so that people in your neighborhood, you never know whether you've got a gardener working your park or not because Rec Parks doesn't design their system so that you know what's allocated for your park. It's a lot of interaction required to figure out how to improve the maintenance of a park, for instance. I think some of the activities of Neighborhood Parks Council resulted in allowing volunteers and the Park Department began to take that on. But every park has needed that kind of involvement, eyes and ears on the ground, for security as well as maintenance and improvement. Anyway, it's a constant sense of organization. I was on that open space committee early on and partly it's the same kind of thing. We went out, and people came to see it, to ask for money for improvements in their parks. They were the same kinds of neighborhood park groups. It's almost like church groups all over the city. Every park seems to have an advocacy group trying to help protect that asset for that neighborhood and it's a very positive thing in general.

11-00:14:00

Farrell: What better way to get investment but from the neighbors who live there?

11-00:14:03

Halsted: And to get people involved in the public process in a kind of apple pie way.

11-00:14:09

Farrell: Do you know why they didn't allow volunteers originally?

11-00:14:12

Halsted: As I said, labor didn't want their jobs to be subsumed by volunteer and therefore, they set up blockades everywhere saying liability, liability, et cetera.

11-00:14:28

Farrell: So now that there's volunteers, has that affected jobs at all or no? Okay.

11-00:14:35

Halsted: Someone has to work with the volunteers.

11-00:14:39

Farrell: Do you know how the volunteer programs are run or how they go about recruiting people to work in the parks?

11-00:14:46

Halsted: I don't know what they're doing right now. I have been involved with them in the past. but there are a lot of them, a lot of corporate volunteer programs. I think the Rec and Park Department has taken this effort on pretty strongly.

- 11-00:14:59
Farrell: Have you ever done a park volunteer day or anything?
- 11-00:15:02
Halsted: Oh yeah. We used to have volunteer days at Pioneer Park all the time.
- 11-00:15:07
Farrell: What did those volunteer days look like? Was it cleanup?
- 11-00:15:10
Halsted: It was partly cleanup, but it also would be pulling out weeds or non-natives or whatever, usually supervised, though.
- 11-00:15:21
Farrell: How did you see members of the neighborhood?
- 11-00:15:25
Halsted: People who want to do that always enjoy it. It's a sense of owning your public assets, taking responsibility for yourself.
- 11-00:15:36
Farrell: Did you see friendships?
- 11-00:15:38
Halsted: Oh yeah, lots.
- 11-00:15:39
Farrell: Or community be formed that way?
- 11-00:15:40
Halsted: Yeah.
- 11-00:15:41
Farrell: What impact do you think that has had on the community?
- 11-00:15:46
Halsted: I think it has a lot. I think it's an important way for people who live in dense housing to connect with the earth and to connect with their neighbors and to connect with the body politic. I just think it's a very substantial way to do it.
- 11-00:16:04
Farrell: As far as your time commitment goes to the parks council, how often would the board meet?
- 11-00:16:13
Halsted: I don't really remember. I think it must have been once a month, but it might have been less.
- 11-00:16:20
Farrell: What was the role of the board, aside from fundraising and advisory?

- 11-00:16:27
Halsted: It was more oversight. It wasn't organizing the community meetings or any of that. It was more oversight of the finances and the general direction and fiscal stuff.
- 11-00:16:38
Farrell: Did everything run pretty smoothly?
- 11-00:16:40
Halsted: Yeah, I think so.
- 11-00:16:42
Farrell: So the board never really had to step in to make things work?
- 11-00:16:44
Halsted: I don't remember. I don't think so.
- 11-00:16:47
Farrell: In 2000, there was a parks package ballot measure that was passed when Gavin Newsom was mayor. More generally, I'm wondering if you could tell us a little bit about how you get a measure on a ballot.
- 11-00:17:05
Halsted: There are alternative ways. You can get a measure on the ballot, I think, with four supervisors. I should know better. I have known. I don't remember right now. A certain number of supervisors can put a measure on the ballot, or you can take it to the streets and get signatures. I'm pretty sure we did that with supervisors.
- 11-00:17:30
Farrell: That's pretty much how that all got on there? Are there any other ways that you can go about getting a measure on a ballot?
- 11-00:17:43
Halsted: Collecting signatures.
- 11-00:17:44
Farrell: Aside from that, though, it's just really those two ways, supervisors and signatures?
- 11-00:17:46
Halsted: I think so.
- 11-00:17:50
Farrell: The parks council also co-sponsored a proposition to require maintenance standard for parks. What goes into co-sponsoring a proposition, that you're aware of?
- 11-00:18:05
Halsted: Well, just signing on as someone who supports it.
- 11-00:18:09
Farrell: Is that in name only? Or is that financially as well?

11-00:18:15

Halsted:

I don't know. I'm trying to think of who the co-sponsor of that would have been, who we would have been co-sponsoring with. Usually if you're trying to get something done you get as many people to join you in sponsoring as possible so that the more organizations who are signed up, the more support you have. In fact, generally if you have a proposition that goes on the ballot like a money raising where you have to get over two thirds of the voters, you can really not afford to have anyone opposing it. What you want to do before you put it on the ballot is get almost everyone signed up to support it. Does that make sense?

11-00:18:57

Farrell:

Yes, and this would have been before you had joined the board. But in 2004 they released a Green Envy report and that was based on a two-year study of the critical gaps in San Francisco's open space system. There were some action items associated with that. Do you remember that report at all?

11-00:19:18

Halsted:

Some, yeah.

11-00:19:19

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

11-00:19:21

Halsted:

I can't really tell you. I remember more of the parks report we did for SPUR [San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association], which was really an analysis of what needed to be done in the parks. The Green Envy, I don't remember that name, but we did a lot of work on analyzing what was needed and what the long-term demographic gaps were, et cetera. I'm not sure how far the results of that went, though.

11-00:19:47

Farrell:

What were some of the things, even for the SPUR one, that you identified as areas of improvement, that needed improvement?

11-00:19:54

Halsted:

Well, I'd say one I mentioned like budgeting for parks. Why can't you have a budget for each park? Why can't you have a plan each year for each park, that kind of thing?

11-00:20:07

Farrell:

What demographics were you seeing use parks?

11-00:20:12

Halsted:

Well, I don't remember. There was a lot of demographic analysis. It varied quite a bit by location. People don't get all around the city to all the parks. But they do tend to use their neighborhood parks.

11-00:20:29

Farrell:

Were you finding that the demographics of who used the park were pretty reflective of who lived in the neighborhood?

- 11-00:20:34
Halsted: In general, yeah.
- 11-00:20:37
Farrell: Okay, because I know sometimes, at least with the East Bay Regional Park District, people travel from all over, so I didn't know.
- 11-00:20:42
Halsted: That would be true for Golden Gate Park. I'm really talking about neighborhood parks more than that.
- 11-00:20:48
Farrell: In 2005 the Blue Greenway Initiative launched. Can you tell me a little bit about that?
- 11-00:20:54
Halsted: That was really a consequence of—I don't know if anyone else remembers it this way—but Isabel and me talking about how we get the Golden Gate Promenade to go all the way around to Hunters Point and figure out a way to have that kind of sense of the waterfront all the way down the southern part. It was a concept that we came up with and talked about. They're very hard to execute because the ownership is mixed all along, but it's still moving along. I think the port is taking it pretty seriously.
- 11-00:21:27
Farrell: How did that feel to have that initiative be launched?
- 11-00:21:30
Halsted: It feels like it's something that needed to be done. It's not done yet. But it's moving along. People have the idea, at least. The idea was you could connect on the water as well as on the land. I don't know how much that's come across, but it's integrated into the Giants' proposal and into Pier 70 and all those things that are happening down there, Mission Bay.
- 11-00:21:55
Farrell: Are there any things or any event that happened while you were on the board between 2007 and '11 that were particularly significant to you that you feel particularly proud of for having been involved in?
- 11-00:22:10
Halsted: My memory's terrible. I have to apologize. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed participating. I don't remember anything that stands out in my mind other than moving towards bringing the Parks Alliance into action. That was a major kind of structural change.
- 11-00:22:29
Farrell: What was your reason for stepping away in 2011?
- 11-00:22:33
Halsted: I can't remember; 2011, too many other things to do.

11-00:22:41

Farrell:

Well, that is a fantastic segue into the next thing that I wanted to talk about, which is time management. You've been involved in so many boards and committees. I'm wondering how you go about choosing which boards or committee to serve on or how that's evolved over time?

11-00:23:07

Halsted:

In the beginning, when I first did that rezoning of the North Point Sewage Plant, it was helping my neighbors down on Francisco Street. It seemed fairly obvious that working on parks, as I said earlier today, was the significant way to bring people together, to build community. That's really why, when I was asked to join the open space committee, I thought that was a perfect kind of activity for me. I had the additional opportunity because I had a corporate job and had some freedom to be able to bring people together to work on things.

11-00:23:48

Farrell:

How have you chosen to work on other boards since then?

11-00:23:52

Halsted:

How have I decided to, you mean?

11-00:23:54

Farrell:

Yeah. What's gone into your decision to join?

11-00:23:57

Halsted:

Well, I think one thing is what kind of marginal difference I can make. Do I bring something different to the board from what other people might? Do I feel like I can make a difference? The most difficult board I ever served on or chaired, was president of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers because they didn't have any staff. Everyone expected me to do everything and it was very, very demanding. After I did that, I said I'm never going to do another board like that because I had a job and people would be calling you in the middle of the night, calling you in the middle of the day, asking you to take care of their cats or their whatever, things that were not board activities.

11-00:24:46

Farrell:

Yeah, far beyond your duties.

11-00:24:49

Halsted:

I'm never going to do a board like that where I don't have any staff to help organize what's going on. That was an interesting experience. It was meaningful, but it was enough of that. One is just feeling that you make a marginal difference. The other one is it's not going to wear you down. Another one is, are they people you can work with effectively with whom your communication style and their communication style can blend to come up with ideas that are reasonable and you're not going to have in-building conflicts without good reason, because I'm always more interested in working towards consensus than conflict. The other part is just learning from another board, learning about other ideas and feeling that the direction of the organization is going towards building a community I want to live in.

11-00:25:52

Farrell:

That all makes sense, yeah. So that experience you had where you're just being asked to do things that go way beyond your duties, how did you go about vetting boards in the future to prevent burnout or for being stretched too thin?

11-00:26:09

Halsted:

I think you just have to look at the board and see who's doing what and see how well it's organized and people have very different attitudes about their board activities. I have some good friends who serve on boards. They get in, and they just start doing everything. I've never really done that. I kind of sit back and watch to see what the staff needs and try to support the staff but not take over their work and both ways can work, but I'm much more of the delegator, stand back. For me that's the most effective and it does work pretty well.

11-00:26:50

Farrell:

That also sounds like there's a balance there, too, that is really necessary on boards where you have the ability to delegate, where a lot of times people aren't willing to let go of things in that way. How has that been received by staff when you're watching and looking at what they need?

11-00:27:09

Halsted:

In general it's better, first off. I guess I can say that because I was staff in an organization. I know how it feels to have someone interfering in your work. It's just so much more effective-feeling to be able to get an idea about what you should be doing and then try to do it, get input about it. If you're not doing it right, get input, but not today someone looking over your shoulder saying, do this, do that, and why didn't you call that person?

11-00:27:37

Farrell:

You mentioned that one of the ways you go about deciding whether or not to be on a board is the difference that you can make and what you bring to a board. What do you think you bring to boards?

11-00:27:50

Halsted:

Well, it depends on the organization but I think I am a good listener. I have enough organizational experience to be able to look at things and see whether things are operating in a constructive way. I know enough not to be in charge of the audit community in an organization that's very complex, that kind of thing. I don't have any pretense of being an expert in most of these fields. I guess, to be honest, one of the things I've brought to most organizations is a lot of connections with people. I'm pretty good at sizing up who might have an interest in a certain field but is over here and might be willing to come over there. I've been pretty good at doing that kind of thing and that pertains to fundraising as well, not something I want to say I'm great at, because I'm not, but I'm pretty good at identifying common interests.

11-00:28:54

Farrell: How do you go about doing that? How do you go about deciding or assessing who might have what to offer?

11-00:29:01

Halsted: I think it's more looking at what motivates people. I know Isabel cares about trees. She cares about the environment. I'm not going to ask her to work on something that's really alien to her. It's just a matter of paying attention, I think, to what people are interested in. I think that's the main thing.

11-00:29:25

Farrell: You mentioned that you know that you wouldn't want to be on an audit committee. Can you tell me why not?

11-00:29:31

Halsted: I have been on an audit committee, but I didn't like it because I didn't feel I could master it at all. I was on CCDC's [Chinatown Community Development Center] audit committee and their finances are extremely complex. I had not a clue how to look at them. I didn't want to be responsible for that, so I quit that committee. I said you've got to find someone who knows about this. This is not good.

11-00:29:56

Farrell: You also mentioned that you like to be on boards where your communication style matches and you work towards a consensus. What would you say your communication style is? Or what communication styles do you thrive the most in?

11-00:30:13

Halsted: Well, I don't do very well with bullying. I'm also not a great talker. I need to be in a board where people can listen and take the time to hear other people's ideas and give people time to do that. SPUR is really good at that. I've never had any problems being involved with SPUR. It's been a particularly good organization for me to be able to communicate about the issues that come before.

11-00:30:40

Farrell: Has there ever been a time where you've decided not to join a board?

11-00:30:44

Halsted: Oh yeah.

11-00:30:46

Farrell: Can you give me an example of a time you turned a board membership down?

11-00:30:49

Halsted: Well, I think when Dianne Feinstein asked me to be on the planning commission, Moscone asked me to be on the landmarks board. I turned both of those down. I just didn't have the time to do them at that time. Other people have asked me to be on boards in the last couple years and I just said I can't

do any more until I quit another board. I just don't think I'm in a position to take on more responsibility.

11-00:31:17

Farrell: How many boards are you typically a member of at once?

11-00:31:20

Halsted: It's been different over time. Right now I think I'm only on three boards.

11-00:31:25

Farrell: Has there been a time where you've been on more than that at once?

11-00:31:28

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

11-00:31:29

Farrell: Do you remember the greatest number of boards you've been on at once?

11-00:31:31

Halsted: No. I could go back and add them up. It depends on what they are. They're not necessarily all overwhelming in time and commitment.

11-00:31:45

Farrell: How do you go about factoring in your personal politics with boards?

11-00:31:57

Halsted: I think it's very important. My personal politics is being an advocate of parks. Is that what you mean, or an advocate of women's issues. You know, on the board of the Women's Campaign Fund, I'm very much pro-choice. I was on the board of BENS. I was really an advocate for improving or reducing the power of the military industrial complex. I don't think we did that, but anyway, we tried.

11-00:32:31

Farrell: I guess also, in terms of your personal goals, whether that's professionally or community-minded or, for lack of a better word off the top of my head, legacy goals, are there ways that you think about joining boards or your board service in terms of your personal goals?

11-00:32:55

Halsted: I've never been a very good goal setter. I apologize. From my viewpoint, legacy-wise, I think when I was working in HR if someone ever called me for an informational interview, I almost never turned them down. I've always felt it was very important to just listen to people talk, to be able to share advice that you have. Try to be a mentor. Try to share whatever minor wisdom you've acquired. I've done more of that kind of thing as a legacy. I know people for many, many years that I've known from my first informational interview in the sixties or seventies.

11-00:33:42

Farrell: That's important, I think.

11-00:33:44

Halsted: But I always felt it was important to be generous with that kind of thing.

11-00:33:51

Farrell: One thing you also said that you add to a board is your network. What do you think the importance of networking is when you're a member of a board?

11-00:34:09

Halsted: Well, you know people to reach out to when you need help. Starting in the early '70s, I built this political network and knowing all the politicians and all the people who supported them and so I call on people easily to help, and still can.

11-00:34:33

Farrell: Is there a difference for you between your professional and your personal networks?

11-00:34:42

Halsted: A bit, not dramatically. There are some people who are not at all part of my political network but are more of my friends.

11-00:34:53

Farrell: I know you had mentioned this a number of interviews ago when you were first getting involved in community boards. You, I think, had mentioned that it was when you were early in your professional career. Obviously, you wanted to improve the community, and there was involvement that way but it was also a way of socializing a little bit. Does that remain true for you?

11-00:35:24

Halsted: To some degree. Socializing but as a community activity, I think. It's not exactly personal socializing. There is a difference.

11-00:35:34

Farrell: When you're at these events and you participate in this, is it fulfilling for you? Does it feel like socially fulfilling? I guess I'm asking because when I do things that are related to my writing career and I'm socializing, it's both social and professional and a lot of times it's reciprocal.

11-00:35:58

Halsted: Oh yeah, and that's certainly true at SPUR, for instance. I've been involved so long that many of the people there have become my friends. They do really overlap a lot, not true with every organization, though.

11-00:36:10

Farrell: Are there some boards that you find that more true for aside from SPUR?

11-00:36:17

Halsted: I'm now on the board of Greenbelt Alliance, which I was also on the board for in the mid '70s. It's very similar, a little different but similar.

11-00:36:29

Farrell:

When you are trying to manage your time, when you are thinking about the different activities that you have going on, how do you go about planning your week?

11-00:36:43

Halsted:

Well, when I think about time management, I think it was the hardest for me when I was in charge of HR in a financial company. I was also president of the port commission. I was still on a bunch of other boards, two in Washington. That was really challenging because the management didn't particularly want me to be doing that. I remember when the port director resigned, and we had an acting director. I felt I had to be down there almost every morning at 7:00 to meet with the port director to find out what was going on. Then I'd come to work at 8:00 and it was an additional kind of responsibility that was hard and other employees would be resentful of my doing that much outside work.

11-00:37:33

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of why they would be resentful? I mean, you were getting the job done.

11-00:37:38

Halsted:

But if you're not there, if they can see that you're doing something else, people figure that you're not putting full effort. It's a natural thing.

11-00:37:49

Farrell:

Especially in times when you were very busy like that, how do you prioritize your commitments?

11-00:37:57

Halsted:

I think it's a matter of evaluating what really needs to be done and where you can do it or someone else can do it. Obviously if you've got a corporate or have a job where you've got responsibilities, you've got to make that number one, in a sense. But also, an important role like being president of the port commission when things are under stress has a similar value.

11-00:38:21

Farrell:

Do you think because of that, because you're deciding what needs your attention and what other people can do, that's how you've developed your ability to delegate?

11-00:38:32

Halsted:

Probably, yeah. That job in HR that I had was a very, very demanding job from the very beginning. I had very little support in the beginning. I learned a lot of things about how I couldn't do everything. So, that was probably a good experience.

11-00:38:50

Farrell:

When you're preparing for a board meeting that requires a little bit more, like you have to show up having read or knowing something or being prepared to comment on something, how do you go about preparing for that? Are you

taking time to read about the issue or listen to the radio? How are you going about familiarizing yourself with different issues?

11-00:39:13

Halsted:

Something like BCDC [Bay Conservation & Development Commission], we had a long agenda and a lot of reading, and the MTC as well. There's a lot of reading on that and then there are always ancillary reports that you get that you need to read, so there is a lot of reading. I don't do a lot of calling around to ask people about what they think about things. It's more or less trying to take in what information comes to me. I could look and try to keep myself informed on the general subject matters, but it does take quite a bit of reading. And it's kind of boring reading.

11-00:39:49

Farrell:

Yeah. When you're reading, how carefully are you reading?

11-00:39:55

Halsted:

Good question—some things very carefully, some things not, because there is a lot of bureaucratese also in the stuff we get. You have to sort of sort through them and be able to know what's really critical because a lot of language just gets repeated and repeated and it's not that significant.

11-00:40:20

Farrell:

If there is a situation where it does require you to talk to someone, like call and talk to somebody about an issue, I'm sure it depends, but is there anyone that's kind of your go-to to have discussions about this, even to help you synthesize information that you're reading?

11-00:40:37

Halsted:

There isn't. I've tried, but I haven't found anybody. I've tried using SPUR staff that way, but it doesn't work very well.

11-00:40:44

Farrell:

Why doesn't it usually?

11-00:40:45

Halsted:

Because their perspective of staff is very different. It's just a different role.

11-00:40:52

Farrell:

Do you ever feel underprepared for meetings?

11-00:40:55

Halsted:

Yeah, sometimes.

11-00:40:59

Farrell:

I'm sure you're not alone. I'm sure people go in there all the time.

11-00:41:02

Halsted:

Well, most of the people on these two public commissions I'm on have staff researching and presenting them with stuff to do or to whom they can direct research to be done. I don't have that.

- 11-00:41:15
Farrell: As far as current events, because I think being a person in the world informs a lot of anyone's perspective, what papers are you reading or radio shows are you listening to?
- 11-00:41:27
Halsted: I'm so predictable. *New York Times*, the *Chronicle*, NPR. I listen to NPR all the time, definitely just all those liberal-minded media.
- 11-00:41:45
Farrell: Do you have a preference for reading a newspaper over listening to radio?
- 11-00:41:50
Halsted: No, I don't. I prefer to listen to the radio when I'm driving or when I'm doing something else, that's all.
- 11-00:42:02
Farrell: I think the writer in me comes out when I ask these questions, but do you read a lot for pleasure?
- 11-00:42:06
Halsted: Mm-hmm.
- 11-00:42:07
Farrell: Do you tend to read fiction or nonfiction more?
- 11-00:42:11
Halsted: I like both. I particularly like historical fiction or history, biography, that kind of thing.
- 11-00:42:20
Farrell: Are there any books that you've read over the past five, ten years that really have stood out to you that you really liked?
- 11-00:42:26
Halsted: I was thinking about it the other day. Two that I've—they're very popular books. *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, did you read that?
- 11-00:42:33
Farrell: No.
- 11-00:42:34
Halsted: It's a wonderful book. And *All the Light We Cannot See*. Those two stand out in my mind, two books that I just really enjoyed every moment of reading.
- 11-00:42:49
Farrell: Thank you for sharing that.
- 11-00:42:51
Halsted: There are lots of others.

11-00:42:54

Farrell: I'm also wondering, kind of moving back to the actual board involvement, how do you approach being a board member versus being a board president?

11-00:43:10

Halsted: Well, I think the board president really has to keep the relationship the leader of the organization in line and to make sure that the rest of the board lives up to its responsibilities. It's quite different from just being a board member.

11-00:43:34

Farrell: When you're a board member and not in charge of the board, do you keep that in mind because you've been in that position?

11-00:43:40

Halsted: Absolutely, yeah.

11-00:43:41

Farrell: Do you see other people kind of follow suit? Or is it sometimes more challenging?

11-00:43:48

Halsted: I think people generally appreciate that. I don't know how much.

11-00:43:53

Farrell: From being a board member or board president, how do you approach being appointed to a board versus volunteering for one? You were appointed to BCDC. How do you approach that from being a board member on the Greenbelt Alliance?

11-00:44:19

Halsted: Well, they are really different because BCDC and MTC are public bodies with official responsibilities and laws that affect them and all that, whereas these other nonprofit boards are private. There really is a different kind of responsibility, but how you talk to people, what people you can talk to when, how you raise money, those different things, there are many more restrictions on the roles on public boards.

11-00:44:51

Farrell: So the regulatory is a big thing?

11-00:44:53

Halsted: Yeah.

11-00:44:54

Farrell: How about representation? When you're being appointed to a board, do you feel like you need to represent the organization differently than you might if you're there as Anne?

11-00:45:05

Halsted: In general, yes, although I haven't found it—since I've represented BCDC on MTC I've been constantly looking for the nexus between MTC and BCDC.

It's always there, but it's not necessarily relevant. I am more representing what I think in trying to figure out what BCDC's interest really is.

11-00:45:35

Farrell:

With your thematic interests, so I know that the waterfront's important to you. Parks are really important to you and this idea of building community through these organizations, and service, essentially. I think looking at your resumé it's pretty obvious which ones are similar. With different ones like the Institute on Aging, what draws you to things outside of what you're typically interested in?

11-00:46:12

Halsted:

It's interesting because the person who invited me to be on that board had been on the open space committee with me. He really wanted me to do it. I made a great effort to try to help him with that. It was a very meaningful experience. Certainly, my husband's still on the board of the Buck Institute on Aging. We're aging. I made a lot of contacts in a very different community. Also, many years ago I was on the board of the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Association, which is a social service agency and those are really quite different. North Beach Citizens also was another social service agency, very different role from the other boards that I've been on. It's not so much involved in the work of the organization as being the fiduciary board for the organization, and fundraising.

11-00:47:05

Farrell:

Do you feel like your membership on those boards are kind of a nice break from the other stuff?

11-00:47:11

Halsted:

Yeah, in general. I think that one or two of those at a time would be enough, though.

11-00:47:21

Farrell:

How do you go about making time for yourself in all of this, in all of your commitments?

11-00:47:28

Halsted:

It hasn't seemed to be a real problem. I didn't get married until 1988. I was really shocked that my husband wanted to spend time with me all the time. It was like, what is this? I was just going ahead and doing what I wanted to all the time. He'd been married already for thirty years, so he had a different view. But he's adjusted, so I don't think I've ever been a real loner. I've never needed a lot of time just to stay by myself, probably more now than ever. When I was younger I really wanted to be out with people all the time.

11-00:48:19

Farrell:

Do you and your husband share any board responsibilities? Are you ever on the same board?

11-00:48:24

Halsted:

We have been. He was on the SPUR board for a while. I'm trying to remember. I think it was before he was diagnosed with lung cancer, was it? Maybe not. Anyway, and he was on the International Institute board fifteen years after I was. So, he followed in that interest. He was on the Greenbelt board for a while, too, but not at the same time.

11-00:48:59

Farrell:

What's that like to kind of share some of those experiences with your partner?

11-00:49:02

Halsted:

It's good. He has a different perspective. When he gets involved, he really gets involved. Even on the Greenbelt board, he met with everyone on the staff and really got engaged.

11-00:49:19

Farrell:

What are your hopes for moving into the future for your participation on boards? How do you hope that that continues or plateaus?

11-00:49:32

Halsted:

I think that I enjoy what I'm doing. I think I shouldn't be doing it all that much longer, but I will continue working to support people who want to do the things I think are important to do. That's really what I want to do. I want to be behind the scenes, encouraging other people.

11-00:49:54

Farrell:

If you could choose just one board to be on going forward, which one would you choose?

11-00:50:00

Halsted:

That's interesting. You mean that I'm not on or that I am on?

11-00:50:05

Farrell:

Either/or. It may be hard to choose one.

11-00:50:10

Halsted:

Yeah, I can't really think. I really enjoy BCDC and MTC. I've loved being on the SPUR board. I don't have any ambition really beyond that at this point. It was really fun to be involved in the Women's Campaign Fund when we were trying to elect more women to Congress and that was great.

11-00:50:34

Farrell:

From your board experience, what are you most proud of, whether that's professionally or personally or as far as your contributions to the board? Is there something that stands out as being the most significant part of your contribution?

11-00:50:49

Halsted:

Well, it's a little bit hard to assess, but I think from my viewpoint, what I want to do is, I don't feel like I'm the best educated or the most knowledgeable or the smartest or the richest or the most beautiful or any of those things. I think

that I come to each board with just my particular set of experiences, which are a great deal of privilege but also not ultra-privilege. I try to be honest with myself and with other people. I think just being able to be fully engaged as an individual honestly with the subjects before you and communicate honestly with people without crossing any bridges, trying to encourage people to work together, communicate and be straightforward addressing the subjects before them. It sounds a little airy-fairy, doesn't it? But anyway, I think having integrity and honesty and trying to be self-knowing while you're pursuing the subjects before you.

11-00:52:02

Farrell:

That takes a lot of work for a lot of people to get there so I can see why you would be proud of that, yeah. Well, I think that might be it for today, unless there's anything else that you'd like to add for this part.

11-00:52:13

Halsted:

Well, I'll try to think some more about it.

11-00:52:16

Farrell:

Well, thank you.

11-00:52:16

Halsted:

Thank you.

Interview 12: July 16, 2018

12-00:00:01

Farrell:

Okay, this is Shanna Farrell with Anne Halsted on Monday, July 16th, 2018. This is our 12th interview and we are in San Francisco, California. Anne, as we've been talking over the past number of sessions, we've talked a lot about the work that you've done and how you've been involved in the community and the city and even national politics as well. You've been recognized by a number of organizations over the years for your contributions, so I wanted to talk a little bit about that today, starting with the first award you received in 1972, from San Francisco Tomorrow. It was their environmentalist award and it had to do with your work with the North Point Sewer Project. Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like for you to receive that very first award?

12-00:00:54

Halsted:

Well, I think it really did impress me. I was amazed. I got a lot of attention for having accomplished that. I guess I felt fairly proud of that, so I felt it was really kind of a watershed to be recognized for something completely outside my regular work but had taken a tremendous amount of energy on my part. I was really gratified and felt included in an organization that I hadn't really been that much part of but I felt sympathetic with.

12-00:01:24

Farrell:

Had you had a previous relationship with them? Or was it kind of out of the blue?

12-00:01:27

Halsted:

Only in working on similar things. I worked on the high-rise limit, the 40-foot high-rise thing and they were very involved in that. After that, I went on their board and found that I really was not totally in sync with them. I was not as committed to preservation as they were.

12-00:01:48

Farrell:

Was it motivating for you to get that award, to keep going with your civic work?

12-00:01:53

Halsted:

I think certainly from the perspective of not feeling like it was unrecognized, I think it was, but I did get a lot of attention for having accomplished that rezoning, from Senator Feinstein now and from many people. It was quite a satisfying piece of work.

12-00:02:14

Farrell:

How did that change your relationship with people in the city? How did that help your networks grow?

12-00:02:24

Halsted:

I think it did. The award or having accomplished that—hard to separate them—but it did manifest itself. When I was appointed to the open space committee, it was probably because of that and it was because people had seen

my name in the press. I had been recognized by other people. They'd seen my name maybe at that event, and so I had the dual advantage also of being a corporate person, being an environmentalist per se and active individual, and being a corporate person. I wasn't kind of being anti-anything. I was really trying to make a difference without being anti-something.

12-00:03:08

Farrell: Do you think that that helped open people up to you and your work?

12-00:03:14

Halsted: Absolutely.

12-00:03:16

Farrell: Had there been other women recognized by San Francisco Tomorrow before that?

12-00:03:22

Halsted: I'm sure there had been. But I don't really know. I'm sure there had been. Lots of women had been involved. Look at BCDC. Lots of women had been involved in environmental issues over the years.

12-00:03:38

Farrell: The next one that you received was in 1982, by the Advocates for Women. Can you tell me a little bit about that organization and what they were recognizing when they gave you the award?

12-00:03:50

Halsted: I was just looking that up because I can't remember what happened to them, because I don't think they exist anymore, but they were trying to promote organizations that advocated for women. They recognized four people that year and I remember one was Naomi Lauter. Another one was a friend of mine from college, Susan Robinson, who was the first senior vice president of Wells Fargo, and me. I think that was just for advocating for women in jobs. One more person who was from UC-Berkeley, and I can't think of her name. Anyway, it was really a big honor for me. Even more than that, my bosses from work supported this award. It's like they supported the fact that I was advocating for women, and that was a big plus for me.

12-00:04:35

Farrell: Was the advocacy that you were doing, was that in HR? Or was that in other organizations when you were a board member?

12-00:04:43

Halsted: Probably both.

12-00:04:45

Farrell: What did it feel like to share the stage with women who were doing wonderful things as well?

12-00:04:52

Halsted: I was really impressed and pleased, honored.

- 12-00:04:58
Farrell: Did that also help motivate you to keep going with that work?
- 12-00:05:01
Halsted: I think so, yeah.
- 12-00:05:02
Farrell: Or wouldn't it have made a difference?
- 12-00:05:05
Halsted: Who knows? It possibly did. It probably did. I don't think I've ever decided I wanted to get honored or an award. I've never had that as an objective. I think most of my work has depended on opportunities that I could find and see where I could make a difference, rather than what I thought I was going to get out of it.
- 12-00:05:27
Farrell: What were some of the ways that you were helping women step into different roles and become a more visible part?
- 12-00:05:38
Halsted: Changing the systems by which people found jobs, changing the systems by which they were evaluated, changing their perspective on things and providing career development opportunities, those kinds of things. As I've talked before, it was the time when the EEOC first had power. People had more rights in the workplace. So, things were changing. I was able to be in a position to lead women to take advantage of that.
- 12-00:06:12
Farrell: Did you ever get any feedback from the women that you were helping or that you were advocating for?
- 12-00:06:19
Halsted: Yeah. I don't know. I did lots of different things over time. It was all very individual and very personal.
- 12-00:06:28
Farrell: Is there anyone in particular that maybe has stood out to you that your mentorship has meant a lot to or has been particularly significant?
- 12-00:06:36
Halsted: Quite a few people. I don't think I really want to go through, but quite a few people, not so much recently because it's some time ago. But yes, I've run into people here and there, even at MTC and various places, who think that what I did was a model for them.
- 12-00:06:53
Farrell: That's pretty touching.
- 12-00:06:56
Halsted: Yeah, it's very satisfying.

12-00:06:58

Farrell:

In '93, you received the Eisenhower Award from the Business Executives for National Security, so BENS. Can you tell me a little bit about that award?

12-00:07:09

Halsted:

I was just looking at that, too, because I was thinking about this conversation and realizing that it was really quite amazing. It was a very big deal because people from all over the country came to this award, people who are still in the news now in the national security world. I was really very nervous about talking about national security to a large group of military contractors and people like that. It was a little beyond. I got a little nervous. I made a few mistakes in my speech, which just humiliated me, but it was really a very heartwarming and very special event. I'll give you a copy of that program, too, because it is really amazing.

12-00:07:57

Farrell:

That would be great. At that point, had you stood in front of audiences of that size and spoken before?

12-00:08:02

Halsted:

I had, but the subject matter and the nature of this thing, you know, Business Executives for National Security, here I am an HR person, a woman in San Francisco. I felt this was kind of an unusual opportunity to find the right message to talk to them about.

12-00:08:20

Farrell:

With the Eisenhower award, what kind of things were they recognizing? Or what were some of the criteria for the honorees that they selected?

12-00:08:29

Halsted:

I think it was just people trying to promote the idea of limiting the military industrial world that Eisenhower had warned about, and so honoring people who individually had made some difference in that. I'd been on the board for quite a while and tried to help in my own small individual way, so I think there weren't very many women, only a couple of women over time who had been on that board or stayed for very long or lasted for very long. I had a good relationship with a lot of these people. I don't think I was instrumental in making any major changes. but I did keep on focus about connecting with the community, connecting with women, connecting with things I thought were important.

12-00:09:23

Farrell:

How did that help motivate your career in HR? Or did it?

12-00:09:29

Halsted:

I don't think it did. I think that was quite separate. I did actually run into the organization when I was at lunch with the chairman of US Leasing. I think I told you that before. But anyway, I think it didn't really come back to US Leasing.

12-00:09:44

Farrell:

I think this one is a particularly cool award. In 1995, you received the award for Women who could be President from the League of Women Voters. I think that's particularly apt because you've been involved in so many things and really seem to be part of the engine that drives organizations forward and gets things done. Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like to receive that award?

12-00:10:12

Halsted:

Again, it was a very diverse group and it was really fun to be part of. I remember the event well. And I remember thinking it was really very special. I had just finished, I think, being president of SPUR and I'd been president of a number of other things, so it didn't feel uncomfortable to me. It was really kind of a, whoa, president—oh, president, of anything, maybe my household.

12-00:10:38

Farrell:

Had you been a member of the League of Women Voters prior to that?

12-00:10:41

Halsted:

I had been, but I'm not sure I was right at that time, but anyway, off and on.

12-00:10:46

Farrell:

Was there any particular work or project that you were honored for or just sort of an amalgamation of all of your work?

12-00:10:53

Halsted:

I don't think so. I think they were just looking for women who were in leadership and had been in many different roles. Again, I have the list of people who got an award at the same time downstairs.

12-00:11:06

Farrell:

What was it like to share the stage with solely women? I guess it would have been for the second time, but in this capacity?

12-00:11:14

Halsted:

Share with—?

12-00:11:15

Farrell:

Yeah, so it was all women that were being recognized. Did that event feel different than the BENS award, where it was coed?

12-00:11:23

Halsted:

Yeah, very different, more comfortable, easier.

12-00:11:32

Farrell:

You had mentioned SPUR. You got the Silver Spur Award in 2000 and that is honoring the contribution of SPUR.

12-00:11:40

Halsted:

No, it's really to recognize individual contributions made on their own to the community. It's been going on for many years. Every year we recognize four to six people.

- 12-00:11:56
Farrell: Having served on SPUR and then being recognized for your contributions outside of SPUR, what was that like?
- 12-00:12:02
Halsted: That was wonderful because I was so connected with SPUR and had done so much, had put so much energy into it. It may somewhat have been for my contribution to SPUR but not exclusively.
- 12-00:12:16
Farrell: Did that change anything for you or help you feel more connected to the community?
- 12-00:12:23
Halsted: It made me feel more important.
- 12-00:12:28
Farrell: In 2008 you received two awards, actually. You were the Legal Momentum honoree. You were the Maritime Park Association honoree. Can you tell me a little bit about the Legal Momentum award?
- 12-00:12:46
Halsted: It had another name that we all know. It's a national organization advocating for legal status of women, NOW. I think it is the derivative organization from NOW.
- 12-00:13:06
Farrell: That makes sense.
- 12-00:13:08
Halsted: Again, they recognized, I think, four women who had advanced the cause of women in some way.
- 12-00:13:16
Farrell: Was this a national or a local award?
- 12-00:13:17
Halsted: It was a national organization with a local fundraising effort. Do keep in mind that all of these awards are fundraising efforts.
- 12-00:13:29
Farrell: Thank you for clarifying that.
- 12-00:13:32
Halsted: I mean, they're not for me, but that's what motivates organizations to do them.
- 12-00:13:41
Farrell: As fundraising events, do you find that this is a successful way to go about doing that?
- 12-00:13:47
Halsted: Yeah. One of the things that people don't realize, and I guess I became aware of it fairly early on, is that if you accept an honoring situation, you really have

an obligation to provide your lists and invite your people and help with the fundraising effort.

12-00:14:09

Farrell: Did these types of awards or events, fundraising opportunities, feel different than galas or things like that?

12-00:14:20

Halsted: They're not very different. I think people probably don't understand that, but if someone does really accept one of these awards, for the most part they really are expected to help with the fundraising effort.

12-00:14:37

Farrell: Do you attend these when other people that you know are being honored?

12-00:14:40

Halsted: Oh sure.

12-00:14:46

Farrell: How do you go about ensuring that the people in your network are going to show up?

12-00:14:55

Halsted: It's pretty easy. One of the keys to all of this stuff has always been having your rolodex. It's no longer the rolodex. It's your address list, your whatever, and being able to produce a list to support an organization and be able to write notes or send notes to friends saying this is important and I think you should join in this event. For SPUR, for instance, every year for Silver Spur I would send out at least 300 notes.

12-00:15:26

Farrell: Wow. All handwritten?

12-00:15:28

Halsted: Mm-hmm.

12-00:15:30

Farrell: Wow. How much time would that take to do?

12-00:15:31

Halsted: Not too much if you just get your mind to it. You'd probably do 300 notes in a couple of hours. But you just have to do it. You have to set it up so it works. The honoring is wonderful, but it really has another purpose.

12-00:15:48

Farrell: For something like the Silver Spur awards, how many people show up?

12-00:15:52

Halsted: For that, it's around 2,000.

12-00:15:55

Farrell: Where do those usually happen?

- 12-00:15:56
Halsted: The only place that can house them now is at Moscone Center.
- 12-00:16:00
Farrell: Wow. That's incredible. Where have some of the other venues been for maybe some of the smaller awards?
- 12-00:16:10
Halsted: Well, the BENS one was at the Federal Reserve Bank when it was still on Sansome Street. It was very nice. Let me see. The Advocates for Women was at the Fairmont or the Mark or something like that. I can't remember. The Maritime Park, that was down at Fort Mason, one of the piers, I think. What else? I can't remember.
- 12-00:16:43
Farrell: These events, are they pretty integral parts of an organization's budgets?
- 12-00:16:49
Halsted: Yeah.
- 12-00:16:50
Farrell: So there's a lot of work that goes into these every year?
- 12-00:16:53
Halsted: Right. For SPUR, right now SPUR's budget's gotten awfully large. But Silver Spur has always been close to half the budget. Not now. And, what else? North Beach Citizens is another organization that honored me. I think their event is maybe a quarter of their budget, so it's a big deal for their organization.
- 12-00:17:20
Farrell: When were you honored by North Beach Citizens?
- 12-00:17:23
Halsted: A couple of years ago. It's written. Was it not on that list?
- 12-00:17:27
Farrell: When I was looking at it, I think it may have been an older copy of your resumé.
- 12-00:17:31
Halsted: Oh, I see. Okay. 2012.
- 12-00:17:39
Farrell: Anything in particular, just sort of your long-term contributions?
- 12-00:17:42
Halsted: Yeah. What was really fun about that was John Keeker, whom I've known forever. When he ran for supervisor I lived down the street from him on Francisco. I supported someone else, so I'm actually probably responsible for him not winning that office. But anyway, he and I have become good friends. He had been in North Carolina and run into some of my sorority sisters just by

chance. He came and gave the presentation. It was just completely weird. He had all this background about me from college. It was really funny. At North Beach Citizens I think I'd just gone off the board. What I do mostly there, just go to the food bank, pick up food, and bring it to the homeless. I was honored to some degree just for doing that.

12-00:18:32

Farrell: That's boots-on-the-ground action, too.

12-00:18:36

Halsted: Yeah. It always feels good.

12-00:18:39

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about being honored by the Maritime Park Association?

12-00:18:45

Halsted: I worked very hard with that organization to try to make it more successful and they obviously appreciated me because they honored me. I never felt like I moved it to the place where it should be. I am grateful to them but feel still guilty that I didn't make the difference in the organization because of the nature of the maritime industry. I think that it's beginning to come out of that, but I felt badly.

12-00:19:12

Farrell: Are there any other ones that I'm missing?

12-00:19:15

Halsted: I don't think so.

12-00:19:18

Farrell: Regardless of them being fundraising opportunities, you've received more awards, I think, than most. How does that feel for you to have these organizations have honored you over the years? How has that impacted your life?

12-00:19:42

Halsted: It does make one feel like probably something I've done has been worthwhile. You never know. We all want to be worthwhile. We want to have an impact. We want to have some kind of good. But it makes me feel like probably something has taken hold or has inspired someone or has made a difference. It's a nice way to reflect upon where you've been and think, I guess someone thought it was useful.

12-00:20:07

Farrell: Has there been one that has been particularly touching for you?

12-00:20:13

Halsted: Well, I have to say, because of my extensive involvement in SPUR, getting the Silver Spur was really special for me.

12-00:20:29

Farrell:

I guess I'm also wondering who, in more recent years, you've been most proud to have shared that award, who else has been the recipient that you're particularly proud to be a part of that cohort?

12-00:20:39

Halsted:

So many, because I've been working with SPUR and working on choosing honorees for many years. So I'm really aware of people like Cissie Swig, who I always regarded as a really special person and a good friend and someone I admire a lot, but it covers San Francisco history.

12-00:21:00

Farrell:

How does it feel to be a part of that San Francisco history?

12-00:21:03

Halsted:

It feels great. It feels great. I hope that we can keep going, get better.

12-00:21:10

Farrell:

One thing that you had mentioned before, before we started recording, was that part of your daily routine is to go to a café in North Beach. Can you tell me a little bit about how that part of your routine developed initially?

12-00:21:28

Halsted:

I don't really exactly remember. It was sometime in the mid-seventies. A bunch of us friends started going to the Caffé Roma when it was on Columbus Avenue. It was in that space that has been a bakery. And it had these Italian paintings of putti on the ceiling. It was kind of a funny place. Anyway, so a bunch of us started going there. That must have been, like, '75 or '76, and most of those people are not alive anymore. But I am. Many years later, that café closed and they moved it to Stockton Street so we moved there. And then recently that café closed, so it's not the same group of people. It is a descendent group of people, moved to Caffé Greco. It's always been very nice no matter what your activities are or what's going on in your life that you could go to a café at a certain hour, sit down and read the newspaper. People would come in. You could talk to them. They were people you've worked with or known for years from different walks of life. Even now, the people who come, come from all over the city. They just come to this little table. It's kind of funny.

12-00:22:46

Farrell:

How did you initially pick the café? I mean, how did you decide to start doing this?

12-00:22:49

Halsted:

I don't remember.

12-00:22:52

Farrell:

Was this your thinking?

12-00:22:54

Halsted:

I don't think so. I don't really remember. I know that lots of people would go to the Caffé Trieste, but I didn't. I think I might have gone there a couple of times. Because I had a corporate job. I had to dress up in a suit and heels and nylons and stuff, and it was very uncomfortable at the Caffé Trieste to be dressed that way. It was much more Bohemian and just didn't feel comfortable. It was more comfortable to go to a place where people were kind of not so connected to one style.

12-00:23:28

Farrell:

You'd kind of just go in, in the morning, at around 7:30 and just have breakfast and read the paper?

12-00:23:35

Halsted:

Right.

12-00:23:36

Farrell:

At the group's biggest, how many people would come by?

12-00:23:40

Halsted:

We used to be there on the weekends, too, actually. It was bigger on the weekends. During the week I think it was probably seven or eight people.

12-00:23:52

Farrell:

Who else was a part of this group?

12-00:23:56

Halsted:

Well, my old friend George Fox, who just died about six months ago; Marshall Roath, who was a friend; Clyde Winters, who was a designer. Jane Winslow started coming sometime in that period. David Howie, Michael Leonard, Michael George—a bunch of old fogies now.

12-00:24:18

Farrell:

So it was more men that were there than women?

12-00:24:21

Halsted:

It was, yeah.

12-00:24:23

Farrell:

Did you ever feel tension about that?

12-00:24:28

Halsted:

No, I don't think so. It wasn't discriminatory.

12-00:24:35

Farrell:

Why did you decide to stay at Caffé Roma and not kind of change venues?

12-00:24:45

Halsted:

We did try a couple of times because we got in arguments with the owners. We tried to move to another café, but it was hard to get the whole group to decide at the same time. I think that was the main reason. You couldn't get everybody motivated for the same reason.

- 12-00:24:59
Farrell: What was it like for you to start your day in that way?
- 12-00:25:02
Halsted: It was great because when I got to work, my day was so intense. There would be people waiting outside my door to talk about jobs. My phone would be ringing. People would be demanding. It was the best way for me to get myself together and then walk to work and then go, all right.
- 12-00:25:25
Farrell: Just kind of helped you transition and ease into it?
- 12-00:25:26
Halsted: Yeah.
- 12-00:25:28
Farrell: Before that you would go running each day?
- 12-00:25:30
Halsted: Yeah, that made a big difference, too.
- 12-00:25:33
Farrell: How did the running help you?
- 12-00:25:35
Halsted: Any kind of aerobic exercise just makes a big difference in one's psychological ability to deal with stress, I think.
- 12-00:25:43
Farrell: So you would kind of just wake up, put your running shoes on, go, and then—?
- 12-00:25:48
Halsted: Come back, change. That was the routine. If I didn't do that, then my employees wouldn't like me very well.
- 12-00:25:58
Farrell: What time would you wrap up work every day?
- 12-00:26:02
Halsted: Good question—probably 6:00, 6:30.
- 12-00:26:06
Farrell: Then you would go to your evening commitments?
- 12-00:26:09
Halsted: Community stuff, yeah.
- 12-00:26:11
Farrell: Long days.
- 12-00:26:11
Halsted: Mm-hmm.

12-00:26:13

Farrell:

How did you stay motivated to keep doing this for so long?

12-00:26:17

Halsted:

Well, I liked it. I did like it. I enjoyed it. I felt like I really had lots of opportunity to try new things, learn things, participate in things. I felt very fortunate. At a certain point I would have gotten married and had kids and been the typical something or other if I'd figured that out. But since I didn't, I really felt I had a great opportunity to contribute in a different way. That's one of the things I really wanted people to know, is that you don't have to follow the path that you thought you had to follow. There are other paths that can work.

12-00:26:57

Farrell:

Did you feel supported in your choice to kind of make your own way?

12-00:27:01

Halsted:

I think so, yeah. I think I did. It's interesting how it all worked. I remember my sister, my younger sister, went the other way and had kids and had a beautiful house and joined the junior league, and plus was a wonderful person. What I didn't realize along the line is at a certain point I think she was actually jealous of me because I got a lot of notoriety and acclaim for doing something that was really not what she was doing, not intentionally, but anyway.

12-00:27:34

Farrell:

Did you feel like you had a lot of freedom because of forging your own path like that?

12-00:27:37

Halsted:

I think so, yeah, I do.

12-00:27:43

Farrell:

Are you starting to see now more women kind of do their own thing?

12-00:27:47

Halsted:

Oh, absolutely. I think the choices available are so much greater. It's hard to even believe how constricted we were in those choices, going back. I look at the things women are doing, and there's just no way I thought I could do those things, which is great.

12-00:28:06

Farrell:

Knowing now the choices that exist, would you have done anything differently?

12-00:28:11

Halsted:

The choices that exist now?

12-00:28:12

Farrell:

Yeah.

12-00:28:13

Halsted:

If I had those choices now, I might well indeed have gone to law school or medical school or something different if I thought that was something I could have done.

12-00:28:24

Farrell:

I want to talk a little bit about the role of citizen activism, because that is something you did do and you did do very well and still do, but I do have some general questions about your thoughts on the role of citizen activists or activism in cities and communities. What do you think the value of having people who are active in their communities in this way, what's the value add?

12-00:28:58

Halsted:

Well, I think from my perspective is that, because you're only acting on your own account, you're more independent. You can more likely say what you think and people might trust it in a different way, might listen to it differently. You still have to speak in a language that people can understand and that makes sense to people, et cetera. I think that if you can be an integrated, authentic person, which I'm sure I'm not always, but anyway, I would try to be, it makes it possible for people to hear you and take your message differently from if they believe it's coming from a big organization or from something that's threatening to them.

12-00:29:46

Farrell:

It gives you a different kind of credibility?

12-00:29:48

Halsted:

Right.

12-00:29:53

Farrell:

There's also, I think, a unique positioning for people who are involved in this way but unaffiliated with different governments, whether they be city, local, national, whatever. Do you think by being unaffiliated with the government but being active in your community you can accomplish different things?

12-00:30:15

Halsted:

I do, yeah, I do, because if you're affiliated, once you've chosen an affiliation, you have a certain obligation of loyalty or at least consider the perspective of that organization if you're going to operate within it. If you're not doing that, you have more opportunity to take a position that's completely outside. For instance, if I had been on the planning commission when I was advocating for the change in the North Point Sewer Plant thing, the mayor would have fired me because his administration had a different view of that.

12-00:30:55

Farrell:

That makes a lot of sense.

12-00:30:58

Halsted:

It wasn't an idea that was contrary to his administration actually, but they had a policy that they were pursuing.

- 12-00:31:07
Farrell: Yeah, that their employees have to follow. When somebody choose an affiliation, whether that be in whatever capacity, because I think there's a million different combinations of those, but when you choose an affiliation, do you think that it's hard to change your affiliation? Do you think that that kind of determines your path for the course of your career?
- 12-00:31:28
Halsted: It is kind of interesting, and not necessarily, but it can. What I found really shocking was that for at least ten years after I stopped being president of the Hill Dwellers, people thought I was president of the Hill Dwellers. For ten years after I went off the port commission, people still thought I was on the port commission. Still, people do. It's kind of interesting.
- 12-00:31:55
Farrell: Have you ever seen somebody, let's say, go onto the port commission and then kind of take a left turn and go join an organization that's contrary to what they were doing?
- 12-00:32:13
Halsted: Contrary to what the port's doing?
- 12-00:32:14
Farrell: Yeah.
- 12-00:32:15
Halsted: I haven't really.
- 12-00:32:16
Farrell: So it is kind of once you are on that track?
- 12-00:32:19
Halsted: It certainly can happen, though.
- 12-00:32:23
Farrell: Do you feel like for you that, because you had involvement in organizations that some were kind of outliers, that that did help you?
- 12-00:32:33
Halsted: Probably, have a different kind of perspective coming in.
- 12-00:32:38
Farrell: Do you feel like it gave you more freedom to be able to choose what organizations you'd be involved in without kind of keeping on one track, like the environmental track or something like that?
- 12-00:32:47
Halsted: Right. In reality, all of my efforts have not been as focused as many have. If I had been more focused I would have stuck with environmental issues, but I didn't really feel that way.

- 12-00:33:04
Farrell: Sometimes, too, I think it's easy to get burnt out on a certain topic. You need a break. Have you ever felt like that before?
- 12-00:33:10
Halsted: Mm-hmm. Well, I think on Telegraph Hill Dwellers I definitely did.
- 12-00:33:15
Farrell: What do you think are some of the ideal characteristics or things that citizen activists might bring to an organization?
- 12-00:33:26
Halsted: Well, the willingness to express views without threatening people, to try to bring issues to the fore and gather steam with them without trying to undermine the existing status quo, I guess. Obviously, articulation and being able to express an idea, and then just being able to bring other people along, to gather other people to understand the idea that you have and then join in the effort—organizing.
- 12-00:34:01
Farrell: Have you ever had any role models for that kind of thing, like people you look up to?
- 12-00:34:07
Halsted: Well, we've talked about a couple. Isabel Wade is really a great model, I think. I still work with her on things. Of course, there are people who have way more resources, money resources or organizational resources. That's something that not everybody can do. So, I do admire that. But not everyone can do that.
- 12-00:34:29
Farrell: Yeah, that's one thing that I wanted to talk a little bit, too, is giving your time versus giving money, because not everybody does have the same financial resources. But also, people don't have the same kind of time as well. Where you fall, is it more you give time rather than money, kind of thing?
- 12-00:34:51
Halsted: I think in the grander perspective, yes, because I don't have as much money. I have more than many, but not as much money as people who are truly philanthropists. So I think from my perspective I have more time than money.
- 12-00:35:10
Farrell: What made you want to give your time?
- 12-00:35:14
Halsted: I think, to some degree, I wanted to be involved in community because I thought that was an important way to exist as a person, to be connected with other people and be part of making change in a community. When I was working and had extra time, even when I was in college at Duke, I was frustrated by the fact that I wasn't connected with the local community. When I was working, I wanted to be connected with the local community,

understand the environment in which people were building their lives. And, so that not being married, not having kids, I had time. I just chose that as a way to spend my time.

12-00:36:06

Farrell:

Do you find that you can see perspectives differently? What I think I'm trying to ask about or get at is, I do think that some people who have the economic means to live in the philanthropic society, there's huge donors for those things. They don't interact. It's my hypothesis that they don't interact with communities in the same way or see things in the same way.

12-00:36:34

Halsted:

I think that there are many who are capable of it. But they don't have the opportunity. In fact, I think it is a real education and a privilege to know people in a personal way who have very different opportunities and be able to connect with them. I thought that of my work, to some degree, too. That was really very special for me.

12-00:37:02

Farrell:

Yeah. That's kind of where I was going with this. Do you think that you were able to sort of bridge that gap? Because, in a board capacity, you're probably interacting with some of these people, but with North Beach Citizens, when you're boots on the ground, delivering things to homeless shelters, are you seeing both perspectives?

12-00:37:18

Halsted:

Oh yeah.

12-00:37:20

Farrell:

When you would go to the board meetings, did you feel comfortable trying to share your experiences with that and relate it into real life?

12-00:37:28

Halsted:

I think so, yeah. In fact, I was on the board of the Legal Aid Society for quite a while, which was the Employment Law Center. Many of those cases were brought on behalf of working people like the people that I was working with in my job. Having the perspective of working with them to try to get their problems resolved and then work with the legal agencies that's helping, it's a different role.

12-00:37:55

Farrell:

You can see how all those parts fit together and how one organization can't be the end-all.

12-00:38:00

Halsted:

Right.

12-00:38:02

Farrell:

What do you feel like the impact is on an organization for having people who are involved in the capacity that you're involved in, that don't just open their checkbooks but do spend time?

12-00:38:14

Halsted:

I think if it's the Fine Arts Museum it may not make as much difference, although they need to connect with community as well. I do think it's important to have members of the community on a community-based board relating to people, choosing issues and building equitable solutions for the whole society. It's become more and more important. When I first started out, they were all white men anyway, so there was a long way to go.

12-00:38:44

Farrell:

Have you seen the composition of boards change since the '70s?

12-00:38:48

Halsted:

Oh yeah, pretty much. Not all of them; there are some still that aren't.

12-00:38:52

Farrell:

At this point in your life, are you finding yourself be more attracted to boards that do have more diversity?

12-00:39:02

Halsted:

Mm-hmm, absolutely, yeah.

12-00:39:05

Farrell:

What do you think the impact is on a local government with involved citizens? Because I think that does differ than organizations.

12-00:39:17

Halsted:

I would say San Francisco is kind of the ultimate in involved citizenry and probably Berkeley is, too. I can't imagine what it would be like if you didn't have involved citizens. We have this alienation in our society where we have people from polarized positions talking out. I think we still in San Francisco have a broad base of people exerting their interest and influence.

12-00:39:46

Farrell:

Do you feel like the input from people is treated differently based on economic resources? Do you think that somebody's opinion is privileged more if they can have the ability to kind of open their checkbook?

12-00:39:59

Halsted:

In general, unfortunately. They can broadcast it more. They can give the impression they'll do something down the line for someone, I would guess. Of course, it depends on what they've done in the past and how reliable they are and how well regarded they are, and unfortunately money. Money does still talk.

12-00:40:24

Farrell:

They also have the ability to earmark it, too, I think, so they can dictate programming in that way.

12-00:40:28

Halsted:

Right.

12-00:40:31

Farrell:

As far as the impact of board members on organizations, I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about the ways in which you've seen board members shape organizations. You don't have to talk about one specifically, but I guess just in general how you've seen that happen?

12-00:40:48

Halsted:

Well, it's very different. North Beach Citizens, we had one really, really generous philanthropist on the board who gave a tremendous amount of money and allowed the organization to buy a building. He really accomplished that and did it. And the organization is quite sound as a result. That was probably the most impact I've seen one individual have on a board. At SPUR, it's a lot of different people playing different roles at different times. I don't think it's been one board member driving a certain result but maybe building towards it.

12-00:41:35

Farrell:

Do you think that that is because the board is so big?

12-00:41:42

Halsted:

Could be. Or it's constantly changing itself. I think it also has history and an intention not to be driven by one person.

12-00:42:00

Farrell:

It's a conscious choice they make.

12-00:42:01

Halsted:

I think so.

12-00:42:03

Farrell:

Have you seen that go the other way ever, where a board is not willing to change, and that's affected the effectiveness of the board?

12-00:42:10

Halsted:

I think so, yeah. I don't think I would say who, but I think it's very important for organizations to turn over and bring in new people while keeping continuity and keeping their focus on their culture and wherever they really intend to go.

12-00:42:29

Farrell:

I know gender balance is something we've talked about a little bit on boards, but are you seeing age demographics change or economic demographics change on board membership over time?

12-00:42:43

Halsted:

It really depends on the organization. If they don't require turnover in their board members, the age thing doesn't change enough. It really is a key to that. Of course, some organizations get stuck on the idea that every board member has to give a major amount of money and that can be a limit on how the board changes.

12-00:43:18

Farrell: How are you seeing access to boards change, whether that be networking or financial? I guess I'm just wondering how somebody who's my age, in their thirties, how would they access a board, board membership of an organization they're interested in?

12-00:43:42

Halsted: Well, I think probably by getting to know the executive director and finding out what the board needs. Most boards need someone who has a legal background, someone that has a financial background, someone who has a fundraising background, or those various kinds of things. Depending on what it does, they need people with other specialties. If I were advising someone, that's what I would do, would be get to know the executive director and find out what the board needs and then how to do it.

12-00:44:18

Farrell: Are you seeing people that don't have a ton of financial resources or the ability to give, are you seeing them have access to joining boards?

12-00:44:28

Halsted: Oh, sure.

12-00:44:29

Farrell: It just depends which board, kind of thing?

12-00:44:30

Halsted: Yeah, exactly.

12-00:44:34

Farrell: Are there any boards that you wish that you could have been on or would have liked to have been on?

12-00:44:39

Halsted: I think at one point I thought I would like to be on some corporate boards because it seemed like that would be a great thing, but I never rose to that level. My friend Ellen Tauscher did that.

12-00:44:50

Farrell: I'm also curious about some advice that you would have to give to people who are in their twenties and their thirties, and they're trying to become more active in their communities. Let's say that I cared about the Superfunding issue in Bayview-Hunters Point, but maybe I wouldn't be as comfortable going to some of the community meetings. What advice would you give to someone in that position to get comfortable or make that leap?

12-00:45:20

Halsted: You mean to become involved in the community or to be involved in an organization? I would say just find out what environmental organizations are involved, and then become a member of one or two of them and evaluate which ones you think suit you, because I do think that you have to work in organizations where you can be heard. Not all organizations are the same, so I

guess that's what I would think of. The Sierra Club might be one, or I'm sure there are some better organizations than that for that particular purpose. I would really focus around your interest. I think you're right on that. Choose what you're interested in. Find out what organizations are advocating or are involve and then just go online and look at them.

12-00:46:11

Farrell:

Once you have identified one, do you have any advice for somebody who is nervous to go to their first meeting?

12-00:46:20

Halsted:

You probably don't just go to a meeting. You probably have to get involved in some way, in a project or doing something. That's what I would think. Once you're invited to join the board, you probably wouldn't be nervous about the board anymore because usually there's a process.

12-00:46:47

Farrell:

Are there any gaps in boards that you see, or organizations in San Francisco, like there should be a committee for this or a board for this, that don't exist?

12-00:46:59

Halsted:

I'm sure there should be, but I haven't thought about that. I'm sure there's a lot we should do. We should do one on home maintenance for my house. No, I'm kidding. I'm really not up on it, but I do think that I'm very happy about our new mayor. I'm hopeful that she can pull together some new energy for building equity in our society and building housing. It's a lot of need, but I still think we have to concentrate on the quality of life while we're doing that because I think some of that's fallen away.

12-00:47:30

Farrell:

Do you see the energy and excitement of people change with political administrations?

12-00:47:37

Halsted:

Mm-hmm, I do. It's interesting how one personality can affect people's energy, but it's true. I think if someone is kind of cynical and untrusting, it causes people not to want to be active with them because they don't feel trusted.

12-00:47:56

Farrell:

Have you seen one administration, and this is San Francisco city, invigorate people more than others?

12-00:48:06

Halsted:

Interesting question. In reflection, looking back, it seems like the Feinstein days were really good days. They weren't always so good, but she did govern from the middle so she brought lots of people in. I think that Moscone was a real bringer-together as well. I'll think of other examples. Willie did, too. He really accomplished a lot.

12-00:48:45

Farrell: What are your hopes for yourself as an active community member in the future?

12-00:48:51

Halsted: Oh, gosh. Well, I hope that I will have the opportunity to not have to be on too many boards but to have a real impact on moving the organizations I care about to take care of the problems that we have in our society. I really feel lucky to have some opportunity. I don't feel like I'm as effective as I would like to be in many ways. So, I will keep trying and see what I can do.

12-00:49:18

Farrell: Which boards do you always want to be a part of?

12-00:49:22

Halsted: Well, SPUR is one if I can. I'm not on the board anymore, but anyway, and I will stick with BCDC and MTC for the time being, but that won't be forever because those are public positions that ought to be held by someone else eventually. Anyway, I don't need to be on a board to have an impact either, by the way.

12-00:49:45

Farrell: I'm also wondering about, so we did talk a little bit about mentorship, but I guess I do have just a couple more general questions. We've talked about people who have helped shape your life and have been models for you, but what do you think in general the role of a mentor is to someone, or can be?

12-00:50:10

Halsted: Well, to point out directions that look to be likely opportunities that someone might not have thought of, to encourage and give confidence to people because most of us don't have enough confidence, don't have as much confidence as we should when we're thinking about what activities we could do. It's sort of hard to know how you can be effective and how to move ahead. Some people have an excess of it, but most people don't. I think that in my mind is one of the more important things, but also to give input about what things don't make sense and where my experience tells you things will work or be effective and then just to be there for an "attaboy," "attagirl."

12-00:51:11

Farrell: Have you seen there be an imbalance of mentors for men versus women throughout your life or career?

12-00:51:23

Halsted: I don't think so.

12-00:51:24

Farrell: No?

12-00:51:24

Halsted: No.

12-00:51:26

Farrell: What do you see the importance of mentorship and the development of young people's careers being?

12-00:51:36

Halsted: Good question. I think that it's important to know something beyond your family experience about how people who were older than you have done. I think that's just a terrifically important way. Many people do follow in their families' backgrounds and just kind of repeat it, but I think the opportunity to learn from people who might have followed different courses and could give you advice that would be at least as meaningful as your parents is really important.

12-00:52:10

Farrell: What do you think in the various people who you feel like have been models or mentors for you, what have you taken from your experiences with them?

12-00:52:23

Halsted: Well, the most important thing, I think, is not to hesitate to spend time talking to people who want to talk, who want to get advice but it's always seemed to me a really wise choice of how to spend time, even if you don't have it.

12-00:52:45

Farrell: Do you have any questions for this? I'm going to put you on the spot. Did I miss anything?

12-00:52:57

Female Voice: I can't recall if you've asked this already but you've dedicated so much of your life to board membership and being this engaged citizen. Did it ever occur to you to perhaps move towards an elected official role?

12-00:53:14

Halsted: It did, but I tested that out on myself, asked a few people, and I got a really clear bit of kind of nonverbal input that that wasn't going to work. I'm just not the right personality for it. I have thought about it, and I might have done it at an earlier age if I'd learned to be a public presenter in a different way or something. But, I did think about it at different times and talked to people, decided that was really not the right course for me.

12-00:53:48

Female Voice: Do you know what it was that you thought you were lacking to get to that point?

12-00:53:54

Halsted: Well, I think to some degree what an elected person needs to do is be able to make people really comfortable in their own skin and to be kind of popular, very popular, make people listen to them and feel that they are like them and I think that maybe I don't do that. Whatever. We are who we are. I think it's important to accept that my personality is what it is. I'm probably not going to be able to change it too much. That's my perception. I never really pushed that too hard, but when I got immediate feedback, I guess I'm not going to do that.

- 12-00:54:41
Farrell: Do you feel like your strengths come in as a citizen activist?
- 12-00:54:47
Halsted: Mm-hmm, I do. I feel like I do better on a one-to-one level. I don't think I'm uncaring. I'm just not an effusive person. I'm a little bit maybe too private or quiet or controlling. I don't know what. Does that make sense?
- 12-00:55:11
Female Voice: Yes.
- 12-00:55:12
Halsted: Thank you for asking, though. It's something, you know, it really did occur to me. I thought about it. I have friends who are naturals. Like my friend Ellen Tauscher or Angela Bradstreet, just ask them a question, and you've got a lively answer and a response that anyone can understand—very different.
- 12-00:55:38
Farrell: My last question for today is, is there some work that you've been the most proud of?
- 12-00:55:50
Halsted: Can I think about that for a week?
- 12-00:55:52
Farrell: Yeah, absolutely. I'll come back to that, yeah. Is there anything else that you want to add for today?
- 12-00:55:57
Halsted: I don't think so. Thank you.
- 12-00:55:59
Farrell: Okay. Thank you.
- 12-00:56:00
Halsted: Great.

Interview 13: July 24, 2018

13-00:00:02

Farrell:

Okay, this is Shanna Farrell back with Anne Halsted on Tuesday, July 24, 2018. This is our 13th session and we are in San Francisco, California. Anne, this being our last session, I wanted to talk to you a little bit about San Francisco politics, or Bay Area politics, and how they have impacted politics on the national scale or maybe even regional, too. I'm wondering if you could kind of tell me a little bit about how you've seen specific policies that have either been a big deal here, like same-sex marriage, greenhouse gas emission regulations, affordable housing, sanctuary cities, how you've seen those things start here and kind of ripple out nationally?

13-00:00:58

Halsted:

I think even before that, going back to the beginning, like Earth Day, and the beginning of the environmental movement, those really—I'm not enough of a historian—but my recollection is that they had their roots in this area and in California. That was in the '60s, and things happened where we were probably the first city in the country that stopped a freeway from going through. People started to take control of their environment and I think that has a long history. And, of course, the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley.

13-00:01:38

Farrell:

Oh yeah, the Free Speech Movement. That's right.

13-00:01:41

Halsted:

And the San Francisco State riots. We have a long history. I'm not really knowledgeable enough. I remember about the general strike in the '30s, but that seemed more like a movement than individual actions, whereas some of these seemed like really community taking back control of their community. Anyway, so I think that the Bay Area has a long history of individuals being engaged in their community in a relatively independent way. I know if I said that to a Republican on the East Coast they wouldn't believe that, but it does seem as though individualism is very key here. People have acted on their own to take care of their community for many years, and it continues.

It's remarkable what happened with gay marriage, really remarkable. Of course, all the environmental laws, which people are trying to reverse now. There are lots of things like that. I do think that people when they came to the Bay Area after the Second World War had a different sense of optimism about what their community could be from the rest of the country. They engaged more with taking responsibility for their community. I don't have evidence of that, but that's my perception.

13-00:03:06

Farrell:

How have you seen those things that have been important here, like Earth Day, like the Free Speech Movement, like the San Francisco State riots and then same-sex marriage, that kind of thing, how have you seen the nation

benefit from those kinds of policies or things that have grown out of the Bay Area?

13-00:03:23

Halsted:

Many things. When I think about some of the movements to protect children and education and all kinds of things, many of those things came from people who were actually involved in some of those movements and also in the environmental area. When we think back about it, wasn't it Nixon who actually first created the EPA? He was from California.

13-00:03:48

Farrell:

That's a good point.

13-00:03:49

Halsted:

Hard to imagine.

13-00:03:53

Farrell:

In your experience, especially since you have been involved in political organizations that are national, have you seen it take time for that to catch on in other areas of the country?

13-00:04:11

Halsted:

Time for those policies to catch on?

13-00:04:14

Farrell:

Yeah.

13-00:04:14

Halsted:

Oh yeah. I think when I was on the board of the Women's Campaign Fund, I think that we had people in San Francisco, New York and Washington and that was it. It took awhile for people in other places, and maybe to some degree not as much anywhere now, even now, for women to organize, to support each other. It's just, I think those are three very special kind of liberal communities that have supported women, for instance.

13-00:04:46

Farrell:

Do you see women-focused organizations kind of being stronger here?

13-00:04:55

Halsted:

They have been. I think stronger, certainly stronger than many parts of the Midwest and many of the less progressive parts of the country. There's another aspect which we haven't talked about, but just the Jewish philanthropy, which has been dominant in San Francisco since the 1850s or 60s, which has really been important to this city and the way people feel about taking care of their community.

13-00:05:23

Farrell:

Can you talk a little bit more about that, about how you've seen Jewish philanthropy shape the city or impact it?

13-00:05:35

Halsted:

There are so many Jewish philanthropists in the city who act very independently and act in the interests of protecting women, of advancing children, of advancing education and the arts. It's a remarkable tradition and has been, I think—I don't really know other cities well enough to know—but I think it feels like it's a much stronger philanthropic movement here among the Jewish community than I'm aware of in other cities.

13-00:06:10

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about how you've learned from some of the Jewish leaders? You've talked about being on committees with Cissie Swig and I know that she was involved in the Jewish Community Federation. Like, how you've learned from her philosophy or people who've been involved with?

13-00:06:27

Halsted:

She married into the Swig family, obviously. She was from Chicago and I think she was fairly young when she married Dick Swig. I don't think it was that easy coming here and becoming the wife, but she held her own over the years and she really continues to this day to be supportive of people making a difference in the community. Margie Jenkins is a good friend of mine, who has the dance company. She was remarking about when she puts out a request for something to the philanthropic community. She said Cissie is always the first one on the phone to call her and say, what can I do? She's just that kind of person, really grounded.

13-00:07:11

Farrell:

How do you think the Bay Area would be different without that philanthropic support?

13-00:07:15

Halsted:

I think it would be very different. I don't really know, but it does seem like it is continuing. It takes different shapes at different times. It does seem like there is a very strong tradition among families to continue that philanthropic energy, which I think it's benefited many parts of the community, certainly not just the Jewish community, certainly all parts of it.

13-00:07:39

Farrell:

Do you think that the city would be less, or perceived as less, progressive without that support?

13-00:07:46

Halsted:

I do.

13-00:07:50

Farrell:

How has it helped continue more progressive policies?

13-00:08:08

Halsted:

Family foundations investing in projects. I actually haven't gone through and looked at SPUR's foundation support. I don't know how much of it is from the Jewish philanthropic community. It never even occurred to me to think that way about it, but I'm sure there is a substantial amount.

13-00:08:31

Farrell: The Bay Area is seen as being more progressive than other parts of the country, but I'm wondering if there have been any instances where you've seen the Bay Area lag behind in certain ways?

13-00:08:42

Halsted: Good question. I am not aware of that. I can't think of any. Do you have any?

13-00:08:50

Farrell: Sometimes I think about transportation, just how piecemeal it is.

13-00:08:55

Halsted: That really, since I'm still involved in this transportation thing, unfortunately is a consequence of our having 101 cities and 30-some transit agencies. Once we've set it up in the wrong way, it's really hard to get it to come together. In most other cities there is a dominant force, like in New York or Chicago, that keeps it all under one umbrella at some point. We have a devil of a time moving away from local control on each of these agencies. The best thing that happened is Clipper Card because at least you can cross over. It's unfortunate that these agencies were set up in a way that it's hard to correct.

13-00:09:39

Farrell: Do you feel like there is pressure on Bay Area politicians to lead the charge nationally, to kind of be the standard bearers?

13-00:09:51

Halsted: I think certainly in the fields like immigration, affordable housing, human rights. I don't think so much in the field of transportation. There's some. Ellen Tauscher was a very good leader in transportation but only one among few. Certainly in those areas I'm aware that Bay Area politicians feel a need to have an effect on the rest of the country.

13-00:10:27

Farrell: How do you think that the Bay Area has been a model? From that, what can other cities learn from that?

13-00:10:38

Halsted: The politics have been tumultuous in the city when you think about it, with Moscone and Milk being shot. All kinds of things keep happening over the years that really kind of turn everything upside down, but we continue to have people like our new mayor who come out of somewhere, a lot of work and a lot of—but still from a new place, and bring new energy and a different take on what is progressive. It'll be interesting to see how she does. I'm very optimistic about it.

13-00:11:14

Farrell: Moving from national to more regional, how have you seen the Bay Area affect other parts of California, whether that be the Central Valley or closer to the border, the northern border or even like Los Angeles?

13-00:11:36

Halsted:

I think maybe some of them have dominated us in the area of water rights, but I don't think that I really know a good answer to that question because I'm not close enough to it. I'm aware of the sprawl issues and the water issues to some degree but not enough of the internal policies. Of course, those areas tend to be considerably more conservative, more like the rest of the country. So, I'm not sure I have a good answer to that.

13-00:12:05

Farrell:

On that note, have you seen a lot of involvement or dovetailing between the Bay Area and Los Angeles politics?

13-00:12:18

Halsted:

Occasionally but not a lot. I don't support splitting the state up, but it does seem as though things have changed dramatically. If we go back thirty years, LA did not have the money and power it does now. Now it does. I remember asking Willie Brown when he was Speaker of the Assembly what we could do to maintain our control over water rights, et cetera. He didn't really have a good answer except keep voting me in, but I think that's shifting now. I think with this water project, this twin tunnels project which may be one tunnel, going through with Jerry Brown's full support—of course, I think he's supported the water project all along—we're going to see a shift in that. That may have a real impact on the bay.

13-00:13:17

Farrell:

Going back to specifically in the Bay Area, there have been a number of female politicians who have either—they've come out of the Bay Area, including Nancy Pelosi and Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris. Are there any other ones? I only named three, but other ones that you can think of off the top?

13-00:13:37

Halsted:

Well, I think of a few because in the early nineties we elected all these women to Congress—Anna Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren, Jackie Speier, not then but now, Barbara Lee. Our whole congressional group was women with a few exceptions—and Ellen Tauscher a little bit later, in '94, I think, '95. We have had this really great contingent of women representing us in Washington and having an impact on women's politics around the country at the same time. I think Zoe Lofgren has been a real leader in immigration. There's no doubt about it, and Jackie has been a great leader in human rights and many other issues. In addition to the ones we know the best—Dianne and Barbara and Nancy—there are quite a few others.

13-00:14:35

Farrell:

You had just mentioned that they've had a big impact. Can you talk a little bit about what you've seen their impact to be?

13-00:14:45

Halsted:

I think that, for one, they've given women confidence that they can run and win. And, we're seeing more and more of that. It's been slow, admittedly,

around the country to get equal representation. But I think it really is coming finally. I don't know if we'll ever have a woman president at this point, and that's a little discouraging. But, I do think that change is accelerating and we will continue to see more. Very exciting to see what happened in New York last week or the week before.

13-00:15:26

Farrell:

How have you seen national politics benefit from having women that specifically came out of the Bay Area?

13-00:15:35

Halsted:

Good question. Well, I certainly am happy when I look at the judicial committee and think that without Dianne and Kamala there, that in looking back to the Clarence Thomas hearings, for instance, the change of the dynamics of the conversation is dramatic. I can't account for our current president in that regard. But, I don't think that our women have been able to change that enough.

13-00:16:14

Farrell:

You had earlier, a few minutes ago, talked about the individualism that has largely defined the Bay Area. Do you see them kind of following in that path of individualism on a national stage? I ask this because I'm thinking about some of the hearings about the appointed—the nominations for the cabinet and how Kamala Harris was really asking questions that nobody else was and she was trying to hold people accountable.

13-00:16:52

Halsted:

No, I do. I really do. Each individual has a different view of how to approach that. Dianne is very different because she's always felt that she should be able to deal across the aisle, but she is very individual in her pursuit of questions and ideas and doesn't back away from them easily. Kamala was terrific in those hearings but not appreciated by her fellow senators, and I think the same can be said of Zoe. It's really a very special group of women.

13-00:17:29

Farrell:

Do you see a difference between the perception of politicians that came out of San Francisco versus the East Bay? I'm thinking about Barbara Lee when I'm asking that question.

13-00:17:43

Halsted:

Barbara Lee is from Oakland. And Ellen Tauscher took Bill Baker's seat out in the suburbs, which had been a Republican seat. They're very different depending on their constituencies. I think it's what their constituency is. Barbara and Ron Dellums had much more in common policy-wise than they did with Ellen, for instance.

13-00:18:07

Farrell:

Do you see any parallels between their ideologies and Bay Area politics, just in general? Like, Nancy Pelosi, for example?

13-00:18:18

Halsted: Nancy, of course, comes from a longstanding democratic family in Baltimore. She understood partisan politics in a way that I don't think most of the other politicians understood politics. When she first got, I knew her then. And I've known most of them since they first started. I think she had a much clearer idea of what it meant to be a Democrat than most of us. The original question was, how are they different?

13-00:18:54

Farrell: Before we get there, you just mentioned she had a much better idea of how to be a Democrat than most. What do you mean by that?

13-00:19:01

Halsted: How to strengthen the Democratic Party. I think, as I recall, she ran the 1984 convention here. She hadn't really done anything in public politics before that. But she could raise the money. She could organize. She could do those things that are key to running the party.

13-00:19:21

Farrell: She had the organizational strengths to be able to do that?

13-00:19:23

Halsted: The knowledge of what politics is about at an internal level, not external so much. She understood the discipline, some of those things that some of us that have never really dealt with parties haven't comprehended very well.

13-00:19:41

Farrell: When you say internally knew what politics were about, can you tell me a little bit more about what you mean by that?

13-00:19:50

Halsted: I think, my perception, she understood how to cultivate people and bring them in the tent but not deviate from the structure of the party and the policies that existed but always trying to advance the future of the party, not just her idea at this point or her idea at that point.

13-00:20:18

Farrell: Is that something you've learned how to do over time?

13-00:20:20

Halsted: Not so much. I've never been very much involved in actual partisan politics. I've never gone to the conventions. I mean, I went to the '84 convention but not as a delegate or anything like that.

13-00:20:33

Farrell: But in San Francisco have you been able to do that?

13-00:20:36

Halsted: Yeah. The Democratic Party is so dominant in San Francisco that those politics are not as relevant here. They're more relevant on a national scale.

13-00:20:48

Farrell:

I'm also curious about your specific work within the Democratic Party and specifically for women in the Bay Area. You've done a lot of work, either fundraising work or organizational work, for these women over time. I'm wondering about why you're drawn to these women and doing this kind of work?

13-00:21:21

Halsted:

As I told you earlier, I was a political science major and have always been interested in how people can affect their community. I think when I came to San Francisco I was a single woman. I first ran into Dianne on something I was working on. My sense of identification with women who can lead other people to greater purpose, to accomplish things for their community, is inspiring.

13-00:21:53

Farrell:

What keeps you interested in supporting them over time?

13-00:21:59

Halsted:

The hope that we will be able to continue to improve the human condition, which we have to have a lot of hope about. I don't want to be possessed by the fear and anger that is tending to possess us right now. I think that people like Kamala and Nancy, et cetera, they do bring a lot of hope to the future. I remain hopeful about that.

13-00:22:28

Farrell:

Do you consider yourself to be an optimist?

13-00:22:30

Halsted:

I do, maybe sometimes a Pollyanna.

13-00:22:35

Farrell:

I was just going to ask you if there's ever been a time where you feel like that's wavered a little bit. You've talked about your networks before and that's been one of your big assets that you bring to boards and your various organizations. I think you've mentioned how that's translated into doing fundraisers for particular people, like hosting a cocktail party at your house for Ellen Tauscher. So, I'm wondering what it's like to host events like that and kind of open your networks up and invite people into your house in that way, in an intimate setting?

13-00:23:21

Halsted:

Since I don't have a huge house, I can't invite 100 people here. I could probably only invite 30 or so. That's not terribly difficult. I've done it with many people over the years. I guess when I'm doing it, generally now it's more of a neighborhood-based or at least area-based kind of event rather than a grand scale. If I had a grander-scale house, I could have a grander-scale party.

13-00:23:47

Farrell:

Does it take a lot of work to throw a party like that?

- 13-00:23:51
Halsted: I think it takes a lot of work to make sure that you get the message out to the right people and you encourage them to come. Doing the part itself is not so much, too difficult.
- 13-00:24:05
Farrell: What was it like for you to throw your first one?
- 13-00:24:08
Halsted: Good question. I think probably not so hard. In the seventies or eighties I was involved in doing a lot of kind of social organizations at work, doing the company picnic and doing the Christmas party and doing this and this. I've always done a lot of that kind of thing. Once I had become established and knew people throughout the city it was reasonably easy for me to include them. I was really probably closer to more people back in the '70s and '80s and '90s than I am now. So, it was probably easier then.
- 13-00:24:48
Farrell: It was kind of because you were involved in HR and you were doing cultural events, it was kind of a natural progression for you to be able to—?
- 13-00:24:55
Halsted: Right.
- 13-00:25:09
Farrell: What has made you want to do fundraisers and work on programs with women who are maybe still involved in politics but not currently in office?
- 13-00:25:22
Halsted: I guess I've always enjoyed trying to figure out who is going to be able to motivate and inspire people. I'm better at watching it happen and identifying people than making it happen myself. I really love that opportunity to let them shine and give them an opportunity to try to have a role in the community that goes beyond their earlier role.
- 13-00:25:55
Farrell: Do you think that there's a lot of space for women in various capacities in politics to come up and grow?
- 13-00:26:04
Halsted: I do.
- 13-00:26:06
Farrell: Are there areas where you feel like there's more opportunity for women to come up than others?
- 13-00:26:12
Halsted: You mean subject matter areas?
- 13-00:26:14
Farrell: Yeah.

13-00:26:19

Halsted:

I don't know that I do. Sometimes there's more room for women in areas where there are fewer of them. In other cases you might be dealing with subject matters that they seem to be more involved in, so I don't know that I think there's a narrowness to that.

13-00:26:38

Farrell:

What are some characteristics that you find make the women that you have supported over the years more successful?

13-00:26:48

Halsted:

Confidence, ability to speak and inspire, ability to write as well, ability to see other people's perspectives and to make people feel good.

13-00:27:01

Farrell:

I'm going to toss the ball. Amanda, is there anything that I might be missing?

13-00:27:05

Tewes:

Sure. In a previous interview, Anne, you talked about learning to make the ask for donations. It was a challenge for you at the beginning. I'm wondering, is there a difference for you when you ask for a political candidate than a nonpartisan organization you're representing?

13-00:27:27

Halsted:

I think that the strategy is the same of trying to identify self-interest in what you're trying to put together. I mean, trying to see if I think, you, Amanda, are really interested in the advancement of women, I would talk about that and the person's role in doing that, rather than something else. Anyway, I think it's a similar strategy of trying to make sure that you match people's interests with the goal.

13-00:28:03

Farrell:

You have to read people in that way?

13-00:28:05

Halsted:

Right.

13-00:28:07

Tewes:

Is there anything that you think is different, though? You mentioned that your networks are social and political. A lot of people overlap. But not everyone may agree with a candidate you're supporting.

13-00:28:21

Halsted:

Yeah. I think you have to keep your eyes open and be aware. I've never done broadcast fundraising. I would go through what I would say would be likely people, whether it be another organization's lists. If you're a part of Sierra Club you might be interested in Greenbelt Alliance. You might be interested in NRDC or whatever, trying to identify similar groups. And the same could be said with geography. You can take people on Telegraph Hill and people who live in North Beach and people who live in Chinatown, and you can try

to figure out where they have common interests, that kind of thing. Does that make sense?

13-00:29:10

Farrell:

I think I already asked you that question. I'm not going to try to re-ask it. It was about women being uniquely suited for politics. But I think you just answered that.

13-00:29:27

Halsted:

I think women are a little more other-oriented in general, so from that perspective.

13-00:29:33

Farrell:

How do you see the new generation of women coming up in San Francisco right now in politics?

13-00:29:43

Halsted:

I'm not really close enough to it, but I am encouraged by London Breed and her cast. Did you see the list of people who are her people she's appointed to be in her office? A really good, strong group of women, so that's very encouraging.

13-00:29:59

Farrell:

Anybody else that you feel inspired by who is kind of in the newer generation?

13-00:30:05

Halsted:

I think I'm not close enough.

13-00:30:11

Farrell:

Looking back at, in general, life in the Bay Area, how you see San Francisco having changed over time.

13-00:30:27

Halsted:

We had this dramatic increase in population in the early part of this century. That changed our perspective on a lot of things because it just created an imbalance in what was already a somewhat unbalanced world of income separation, overcrowded streets. I think it's become a more difficult place to live because of those many factors. The fact is we have great jobs, but we have lots of people who don't have jobs as well. It's a much more challenging place to live, and I think in some ways a little bit less happy. You are always aware of these great differences we have and people not going to public schools or public schools being poor. There's just an awful lot of stress in our society that didn't seem to be true from my perspective in the seventies and eighties. Things were changing.

13-00:31:35

Farrell:

Does that dull your optimism at all?

13-00:31:40

Halsted:

No, I don't think it does, but I may have to look out a longer distance to see. I'm just not really sure about where we're going to ever be able to regrow the middle class. That's what I really worry about. I do worry about the ultra-rich and the very poor. But I think the middle class is the key to our democracy. I just don't know how we're going to be able to make that happen.

13-00:32:05

Farrell:

Especially now when, if you're in a family of two and you make under \$110,000, you're considered poor, which is staggering. Is there anybody that you feel like is equipped to kind of take on that stuff or vision quest for the future?

13-00:32:23

Halsted:

I can't think of anyone, a woman right now but I think Gavin can be very visionary. I'm very interested to see how he does if he is elected governor, which I think he will be. But he was incredibly visionary as mayor. For whatever people liked or didn't like about him, he did move the needle. There are other people we have. There's a guy who's on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission who's also a BART director named Nick Josefowitz who's another big thinker, also with a fair amount of money and ideas and a visionary and Jared Blumenfeld, did you ever know him?

13-00:33:04

Farrell:

I've heard that name.

13-00:33:04

Halsted:

He's an environmental guy. He ran the rec and park department and the department of environment. People like that, they're really encouraging because they're thinking big picture and looking out a distance. I'm sure there are women in that same category, but those are the ones I'm aware of that I think are visionary in that way.

13-00:33:26

Farrell:

Do you think that there's any keys to that puzzle, like it's about interdepartmental communication or it's about thinking about living wage? Are there any significant puzzle pieces that might make the whole thing fit?

13-00:33:43

Halsted:

Yeah. I think some kind of guaranteed minimum income in the long run is going to be necessary. I don't know how we do that. I think universal health care is going to be part of it, Medicare for all, whatever we call it. I think those basic ability to survive in our society needs to be protected for people. I don't understand why we've gotten so far off that track.

13-00:34:13

Farrell:

Conversely, thinking about change in San Francisco, have you seen the city benefit from any of the changes that have happened over time?

13-00:34:22

Halsted:

Yeah. I think that we have a lot more restaurants.

13-00:34:30

Farrell:

But there is a ripple effect to be said. There's a lot more tourism.

13-00:34:34

Halsted:

There's a lot more tourism and industry has changed dramatically. We had the financial industry in the seventies. Now we have the tech industry, and that seems less stable to me even than the financial industry because it's very young people who can leave town in a minute, or not, and not necessarily engaged in the day-to-day workings of a city. We have improved the water's edge, all along the northern waterfront, and all the way down to Hunter's Point, I guess, and out to the Golden Gate Bridge. That's a big improvement. I think our parks are probably in better shape than they were back then. The Presidio was a huge improvement, huge improvement. GGNRA, those are huge. Those are really big advantages we have now.

13-00:35:34

Farrell:

And I think underappreciated, just how big of a difference.

13-00:35:35

Halsted:

Yeah, exactly. Those are just tremendous for both tourists but for locals even more.

13-00:35:45

Farrell:

How have the organizations that you've worked with over time, or the most successful ones, adapted to change or most successfully adapted to change?

13-00:35:58

Halsted:

It's always hard to evaluate success at today's level if you're looking at budget level and stuff. But as far as effectiveness, I think that SPUR has been magnificent in the way it changed from 2000 to 2010 because I think around 2000 we were still predominantly white, male and old. We really changed that when we got our new building and we had a younger management and had a much younger and much more diverse board. That's going to keep changing. It's really exciting to see what's going to be happening. There's commitment to connecting with a broader cross-section of the region diversity-wise but also economically.

13-00:36:49

Farrell:

What role do you see SPUR playing in the changing landscape of San Francisco or in the future of San Francisco?

13-00:36:57

Halsted:

It's become a regional organization, so it has these three offices in Oakland, San Jose and San Francisco. I think that it probably will expand beyond that to areas that are not one of those three cities to try to improve the transportation. I don't know if we'll get as far as education. But transportation and housing, particularly, those are the biggest focuses that I know of, and then other systems that support our area. I think that SPUR's role historically from my perspective has always been to be independent and to tell the truth about

policy, so not to fall in line with falsehoods. I'm hoping that it retains its role in that way over the years.

13-00:37:52

Farrell:

How do you suggest that people go about investigating things in a way that they don't need to fall in line. If you're reading something, how do you look at something objectively in this day and age?

13-00:38:11

Halsted:

Well, you have to rely on what you know, I think. Critical thinking is obviously the key to questioning what appears to be common wisdom.

13-00:38:29

Farrell:

What has that meant to you, to work with SPUR, an organization that's been so instrumental in the development of San Francisco?

13-00:38:35

Halsted:

It's been a real privilege, and it's always been one of the organizations I feel most comfortable about because it does bring together people with different ideas and allow them to express themselves within that organization, not always winning the argument but—I talked about partisanship before. In a political party you really have to be disciplined. You have to have an idea of what the right policy is and what you're advocating for. That's not true at SPUR. It's a very different kind of consensus-building organization.

13-00:39:13

Farrell:

Is there anything that you're most proud of about your time working with SPUR?

13-00:39:19

Halsted:

I think working with Jim Chappell to try to revive the organization, that's probably the biggest thing. Now that our executive director or president is leaving, they will be recruiting another president. I'm trying to quietly have a little role in making sure that it continues in the same traditions.

13-00:39:46

Farrell:

How do you hope they grow in the future? How do you hope they stay significant in continuing to shape San Francisco?

13-00:39:54

Halsted:

It's not San Francisco anymore. It's the region.

13-00:39:57

Farrell:

Oh, sorry, the region.

13-00:39:58

Halsted:

It's a transition I have to keep making, too. I've always been most happy when the elected officials in San Francisco or elsewhere refer to SPUR for advice on how to make their policies better. SPUR's work on creating policies that make sense for the region, whether it be in transportation or housing or whatever, can be sort of the research for whomever the elected people are.

Many mayors have used SPUR in that way. I think that is probably the most important, to develop really solid research about whatever it is—sea level rise or ocean protection or whatever it is we're working on, and to be available to advise the people who are actually making the decisions and inform them, because obviously most people don't have time to be informed, knowledgeable about everything.

13-00:40:59

Farrell:

What has it meant to you to be a politically minded woman and active in civic engagement, and actively engaged civically?

13-00:41:09

Halsted:

Well, I hope that I have had at least a minor impact on encouraging people to be responsible to themselves and responsible to their community and feel that they can make a change and individually that we each can have an impact on the future for ourselves and for our fellow people.

13-00:41:34

Farrell:

Is there anything that you feel like helped you from your career in HR in San Francisco politics?

13-00:41:45

Halsted:

I think actually yes. I think when I was trying to advance affirmative action in my job, there was a lot of antagonism and a lot of really—it was pretty hard. It took a while for me to understand that I had to go through that, listen to people, and then just keep going in a way that they would eventually come to the table. I think that's one thing, and also just to be aware of all the different trains of thought and ideas and cultural perspectives that I had been unaware of and I think that's really important to understand in politics.

13-00:42:30

Farrell:

What do you hope that people remember about your work? However you want to define work is sort of up to you.

13-00:42:37

Halsted:

That's a hard one. I do hope people think I cared about my fellow beings and cared for the underdog as much as for anything and hope that they believe I have been honest and had some integrity and pursued ideas with humanity.

13-00:43:01

Farrell:

Is there any specific impact that you hope that your work has had or continues to have?

13-00:43:09

Halsted:

I would like to hope that people work together in civil ways. I noticed people are trying here. But it's not always true. We have some really tough stuff. The whole gun control thing is just overwhelming to me, and with not even guns. The fellow with his knife on BART, just, I don't know how to counter that except for just trying to encourage people to keep talking and not separating. I

guess that's always been around. But the news is in front of us all the time. All the bad news is what we see the most.

13-00:43:52

Farrell: What have you liked about living here?

13-00:43:56

Halsted: I've loved the water, the air, the individualism. I think that one can be one's own self in San Francisco more easily than most places. I'm sure I said this earlier, but growing up in many places in the country you wouldn't be comfortable unless you were married with children and that's certainly a nice thing for people here, too. But it's certainly not been necessary to be an effective or a well-regarded person. We have people of every kind of ilk that constitute our body politic now who are really effective. It's great to see. The transgender thing has just changed dramatically in the last twenty years.

13-00:44:43

Farrell: Oh yeah, even in the last five, I think, too.

13-00:44:44

Halsted: Yeah. It's amazing. It's a revelation.

13-00:44:48

Farrell: What do you think it is about the Bay Area that welcomes individualism or is a harbor for individualism?

13-00:44:58

Halsted: I'm not really sure. I really don't know. I think I have thought about it in the past, and I probably had some good ideas. It seems that the further west you go from Europe, the less constrained society is. The other side of that is that money is the only common value, but it's a more fluid society. But money plays a big role.

13-00:45:28

Farrell: That's an interesting point. I have a few more questions, but I'm going to throw the ball back to Amanda before. Is there anything else that you want to add that perhaps I missed?

13-00:45:42

Tewes: You've touched on this, but Anne, I'm interested in the last time you mentioned that you never ran for public office because you didn't think you had the qualities necessary to sustain the election.

13-00:45:54

Halsted: Right, whatever, to persuade people or whatever.

13-00:45:57

Tewes: Sure. Do you think there's a similar barrier for people who just want to be civically engaged at multiple levels? Or is there a lower bar?

13-00:46:05

Halsted:

I think there's a lower bar. I think that I've tried to encourage several friends of mine to run for office when I thought they had the right abilities and most of them haven't made it, but they are still very involved in many different ways on a national and a local level. I think that being a public politician is really a very different thing from being someone who can create change in a nonprofit or some other organization.

13-00:46:37

Tewes:

What kind of qualities do you think are important at that level?

13-00:46:41

Halsted:

At that level? It's a commitment to whatever your goals are. I have a good friend who's very involved in Chinese-American activities around the country. She really is dogged about it. She just continues to expand her networks, bring new people in. She's committed to improving the Chinese-American life experience. Others, another woman who's very involved in the disability community, similar. In both cases it reflects who they are because they understand that community, so I think that may be part of it. Easier to create change when you understand the issues better.

13-00:47:33

Tewes:

You just mentioned the prominence of money a few minutes ago. I wonder if that has an impact or if it even should at the civic engagement level.

13-00:47:44

Halsted:

It can. Certainly if one has a big foundation and a lot of money to give away, one can pick and choose how to fund initiatives and drives, that kind of thing. But that's a very different kettle of fish from going to work with an organization and trying to help organize events, et cetera. I do think that having a great deal of money and being able to fund big projects would be spectacular if you really want to create change. But I also think that an individual can change things by organizing and articulating and giving confidence to the direction of change.

13-00:48:28

Tewes:

So, passion?

13-00:48:29

Halsted:

Right.

13-00:48:30

Tewes:

I like it. Thank you.

13-00:48:35

Farrell:

You had just mentioned that other women's work have reflected who they are. How do you see your work as a reflection of who you are?

13-00:48:49

Halsted:

Good question. I think that I early on identified as a single woman and that motivated me to help other women because I could see what the barriers for

me and for other women were. I guess that is one characteristic of mine that I've been involved in. I've also always cared about the environment. I've never been the strongest environmentalist, but that's really been at the key of many of my concerns, that people have a connection with the earth and maintain that and feel comfortable with it and have an opportunity to grow something and are connected with what they can do with themselves on the ground. What else? Certainly in the environment in the city, I love living here because the transportation network does work for me. But it's got to get better. It really does. It's hard because sometimes I think the only way to change things would be just to cancel everything and start again. That might be easy if we had an earthquake. But we can't will one. We did that with The Embarcadero.

13-00:50:05

Farrell: You harnessed your energy?

13-00:50:06

Halsted: Yeah.

13-00:50:11

Farrell: Anything else that you want to add?

13-00:50:12

Halsted: Not off the top of my head.

13-00:50:16

Farrell: What are your hopes for the future of women in politics in the Bay Area?

13-00:50:27

Halsted: It's going to be an interesting time as the group of women that was elected in 1992 gradually retires because I doubt that it will be as persistently female when they retire as it is now. It'll be interesting to see how that all plays out. I assume Emerge must be playing a really big role in that, in thinking about that, but I wish I were more involved. But I do think that there is a great tradition now of women in national politics from San Francisco. So, hopefully we'll have many more coming up.

13-00:51:06

Farrell: What are your hopes for the community of North Beach in the future?

13-00:51:11

Halsted: I hope we can find a way to improve and restore some of the older housing we have which seems really dilapidated. I don't think we can afford to tear it down and start again, but it's getting a little tired and limited. We don't really have enough housing anywhere, but in North Beach it's dense, but it's still not enough. I don't know how to improve on that. I wish it were not as touristic as it is, which is part of the reason I would like more housing as well, because property values have gotten so high that no one can afford to do anything that really serves the neighborhood. All the retail is serving the tourists, which is not what we really want to happen. I'm hopeful that we can let residents

become more dominant in the longer run, but I don't know how that's going to happen.

13-00:52:15

Farrell:

On a personal note, how do you hope that your work either continues or mellows out in the future? What are your hopes for the future of your work and your engagement?

13-00:52:27

Halsted:

My efforts? Well, I think I actually would love to be more effective. I think I need to stand back and let other people be more effective. I'm thinking that I'd like to be much more of an observer. Once I finish this, maybe I'll figure out how to write about it, too. I'd really like to do that. That's what I'm thinking right now. Maybe do some more artwork because I really enjoy the beauty of life and would like to express it myself.

13-00:53:03

Farrell:

I think that may be all the questions I have. Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

13-00:53:07

Halsted:

Can I call you later?

13-00:53:09

Farrell:

Yes. Well, thank you so much for your time and sharing your story.

13-00:53:14

Halsted:

Thank you. You've been so gentle and so kind, and you, too. So, I hope this is of value to someone.

13-00:53:23

Farrell:

Oh, absolutely.

13-00:53:25

Halsted:

And I thank you.

13-00:53:26

Farrell:

This has been a real pleasure. Thank you.

[End of Interview]