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Rosalind Wiener Wyman

# "IT'S A GIRL"

## THREE TERMS ON THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL, 1953-1965

## THREE DECADES IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, 1948-1978

Regional Oral History Office
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ROSALIND WYMAN

*Photo by Dev O'Neill*

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Women in Politics Oral History Project

Rosalind Wiener Wyman

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## THREE TERMS ON THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL, 1953-1965

## THREE DECADES IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, 1948-1978

With Introductions by
Elizabeth Snyder
Stanley Mosk

An Interview Conducted by
Malca Chall
1977-1978

Underwritten by a research grant from
the Research Collection Program of the
National Endowment for the Humanities

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PREFACE

The following interview is one of a series of tape-recorded memoirs in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project. The series has been designed to study the political activities of a representative group of California women who became active in politics during the years between the passage of the woman's suffrage amendment and the current feminist movement--roughly the years between 1920 and 1965. They represent a variety of views: conservative, moderate, liberal, and radical, although most of them worked within the Democratic and Republican parties. They include elected and appointed officials at national, state, and local governmental levels. For many the route to leadership was through the political party--primarily those divisions of the party reserved for women.

Regardless of the ultimate political level attained, these women have all worked in election campaigns on behalf of issues and candidates. They have raised funds, addressed envelopes, rung doorbells, watched polls, staffed offices, given speeches, planned media coverage, and when permitted, helped set policy. While they enjoyed many successes, a few also experienced defeat as candidates for public office.

Their different family and cultural backgrounds, their social attitudes, and their personalities indicate clearly that there is no typical woman political leader; their candid, first-hand observations and their insights about their experiences provide fresh source material for the social and political history of women in the past half century.

In a broader framework their memoirs provide valuable insights into the political process as a whole. The memoirists have thoughtfully discussed details of party organization and the work of the men and women who served the party. They have analysed the process of selecting party leaders and candidates, running campaigns, raising funds, and drafting party platforms, as well as the more subtle aspects of political life such as maintaining harmony and coping with fatigue, frustration, and defeat. Perceived through it all are the pleasures of friendships, struggles, and triumphs in a common cause.

The California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project has been financed by both an outright and a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Matching funds were provided by the Rockefeller Foundation for the Helen Gahagan Douglas component of the project, by the Columbia and Fairtree Foundations, and by individuals who were interested in supporting memoirs of their friends and colleagues. In addition, funds from the California State Legislature-sponsored Knight-Brown Era Governmental History Project made it possible to increase the research and broaden the scope of the interviews in which there was

a meshing of the woman's political career with the topics being studied in the Knight-Brown project. Professors Judith Blake Davis, Albert Lepawsky, and Walton Bean have served as principal investigators during the period July 1975-December 1977 that the project was underway. This series is the second phase of the Women in Politics Oral History Project, the first of which dealt with the experiences of eleven women who had been leaders and rank-and-file workers in the suffrage movement.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of the West and the nation. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library. Interviews were conducted by Amelia R. Fry, Miriam Stein, Gabrielle Morris, Malca Chall, Fern Ingersoll, and Ingrid Scobie.

Malca Chall, Project Director
Women in Politics Oral History Project

Willa Baum, Department Head
Regional Oral History Office

15 November 1979
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University of California at Berkeley

CALIFORNIA WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Frances Mary Albrier, *Determined Advocate for Racial Equality.* 1979, 308 p.

Odessa Cox, *Challenging the Status Quo: The Twenty-seven Year Campaign for Southwest Junior College.* 1979, 149 p.

March Fong Eu, *High Achieving Nonconformist in Local and State Government.* 1977, 245 p.

Jean Wood Fuller, *Organizing Women: Careers in Volunteer Politics and Government Administration.* 1977, 270 p.

Elizabeth Rudel Gatov, *Grassroots Party Organizer to Treasurer of the United States.* 1978, 412 p.

Patricia Hitt, *From Precinct Worker to Assistant Secretary of HEW.* 1980, 220 p.

Kimiko Fujii Kitayama, *Nisei Leader in Democratic Politics and Civic Affairs.* 1979, 110 p.

Bernice Hubbard May, *A Native Daughter's Leadership in Public Affairs.* Two volumes, 1976, 540 p.

Hulda Hoover McLean, *A Conservative's Crusades for Good Government.* 1977, 174 p.

Julia Porter, *Dedicated Democrat and City Planner, 1941-1975.* 1977, 195 p.

Wanda Sankary, *From Sod House to State House.* 1979, 109 p.

Hope Mendoza Schechter, *Activist in the Labor Movement, the Democratic Party, and the Mexican-American Community.* 1979, 165 p.

Vera Schultz, *Ideals and Realities in State and Local Government.* 1977, 272 p.

Clara Shirpser, *One Woman's Role in Democratic Party Politics: National, State, and Local, 1950-1973.* Two volumes, 1975, 671 p.

Elizabeth Snyder, *California's First Woman State Party Chairman.* 1977, 199 p.

Eleanor Wagner, *Independent Political Coalitions: Electoral, Legislative, and Community.* 1977, 166 p.

Carolyn Wolfe, *Educating for Citizenship: A Career in Community Affairs and the Democratic Party, 1906-1976.* 1978, 254 p.

Rosalind Wyman, *"It's a Girl:" Three Terms on the Los Angeles City Council, 1953-1965; Three Decades in the Democratic Party, 1948-1979.* 1979, 150 p.

Interviews in Process

Marjorie Benedict, Pauline Davis, Ann Eliaser, Elinor R. Heller, Lucile Hosmer, La Rue McCormick, Emily Pike, Carmen Warschaw, Mildred Younger.

November 1979

The Helen Gahagan Douglas Component of the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project

In four volumes, in process

Volume I: *The Political Campaigns*

Discussion primarily of the 1950 Senate campaign and defeat, in interviews with Tilford E. Dudley, India T. Edwards, Leo Goodman, Kenneth R. Harding, Judge Byron F. Lindsley, Helen Lustig, William Malone, Alvin P. Meyers, and Frank Rogers.

Volume II: *The Congress Years, 1944-1950*

Discussion of organization and staffing; legislation on migrant labor, land, power and water, civilian control of atomic energy, foreign policy, the United Nations, social welfare, and economics, in interviews with Juanita E. Barbee, Rachel S. Bell, Albert S. Cahn, Margery Cahn, Evelyn Chavoor, Lucy Kramer Cohen, Arthur Goldschmidt, Elizabeth Wickenden Goldschmidt, Chester E. Holifield, Charles Hogan, Mary Keyserling, and Philip J. Noel-Baker.

Volume III: *Family, Friends, and the Theater: The Years Before and After Politics*

Discussion of Helen and Melvyn Douglas and their activities at home with their family and among friends, and their work in the theater and movies, in interviews with Fay Bennett, Walter Gahagan, Cornelia C. Palms, Walter R. Pick, and Alis DeSola.

Volume IV: *Congresswoman, Actress, and Opera Singer*

Helen Gahagan Douglas discusses her background and childhood; Barnard College education; Broadway, theater and opera years; early political organization and Democratic party work; the congressional campaigns, supporters; home and office in Washington; issues during the Congress years, 1944-50; the 1950 Senate campaign against Richard M. Nixon, and aftermath; women and independence; occupations since 1950; speaking engagements, travel to Russia, South America, Liberia inauguration, civic activities, life in Vermont.

November 1979

# INTRODUCTION

A friendship that survives for three decades in the political arena is rare. When it occurs, such a friendship is a splendid and rewarding treasure. Such are my feelings about my good fortune to have known Roz Wyman as a friend for over thirty years.

I first knew Roz as a volunteer in Democratic politics when she worked unselfishly and devotedly in Helen Douglas's senatorial campaign in 1950. She was a driver for Helen, making certain that her senatorial candidate arrived at the designated meeting on schedule. Prior to television, the candidate was dependent on reliable aides such as Roz.

Many of us say "the fun has gone out of politics." Today's candidate and staff can never know the commitment of or the dependence on the volunteer in campaigns of the '40s and '50s. Without T.V. and the computer, the mailings, meetings, and voter contacts all happened because of cooperative volunteers. We learned to place great value on the contributed time and effort of volunteers.

During the years I served as Democratic State Women's Chair and later as State Chairman, Roz was always present as a friend, advisor and colleague.

During these years, Roz was setting her new records in politics. She ran for the city council and was elected at the age of twenty-two. Her youth and being the only woman in the Los Angeles City Council brought early attention to her work and voting record.

Roz showed a great capacity to work for goals that would enhance Los Angeles as an important city. I think particularly of her efforts to bring the Dodgers to Los Angeles and her early support for such cultural facilities as the Greek Theater. During her entire life, Roz has been a devotee of the performing arts, in both the public and private sector. In 1979 President Carter wisely recognized these talents when he appointed her as a Council Member of the National Endowment of the Arts.

In 1954 Roz was married to Gene Wyman. This marriage was almost "story book" in the manner Roz and Gene worked and advanced together. They became parents of three wonderful children, Betty, Bob and Brad. For Gene, Roz and his family were always the "first priority" of his life.

After Gene's early and sudden death, Roz has continued this same credo; her first priority was and is, being mother, confidante and friend to her children. She is also a loving daughter who always wants to be a part of her mother's life. To hear Loll Wiener speak of her daughter, Roz, is always a moving experience. Anyone who has been privileged to watch this family's relationship must say it is "one of a kind," both successful and beautiful.

Roz's record as a fund raiser is most uniquely successful for a woman. She is the only woman to twice chair National House and Senate Congressional Campaign Committee Dinners for the Democratic party. With her usual enthusiasm she has aided fund raisers for Cultural and Performing Art Centers, the Jewish Community and the Big Sisters.

By these introductory remarks, I hope I have conveyed my respect for Roz's personal growth and willingness to assume responsibility to meet the demands life places upon her.

Lest any reader assumes we have never found ourselves supporting different candidates, I must make a quick reference to the 1960 Democratic Convention held in Los Angeles. In that year, Roz was an enthusiastic supporter for John Kennedy while I had made an early commitment to Lyndon Johnson. Each of us was forthright and consistent in fulfilling her pledge of support.

To have been Roz's friend for three decades has been a wonderful experience that has enriched my life and given me many precious memories. Roz not only is a friend; she demonstrates her friendship constantly.

Elizabeth Snyder

15 Janaury 1980
Los Angeles, California

# INTRODUCTION

Many good people become interested in public service as an after-thought, an anti-climax upon completion of other career goals. Not so with Rosalind Wiener Wyman. Performing useful public service was her first aspiration in life, and it has remained her constant all-consuming interest.

My wife, Edna, and I first met her as Roz Wiener, an eager youngster just out of school, determined to get herself elected to the Los Angeles City Council. She campaigned from door to door, meeting the voters on a one-to-one personal basis, finding out about their problems and their desires, discussing her proposed solutions. And win she did. It is not given to many to cast their first vote as an elector for themselves as a candidate.

Roz was a splendid city councilwoman. She devoted full time to her responsibilities, and learned the intracacies of city government from bottom to top. She soon became one of the leaders in that legislative body, and her views won wide attention and respect.

The marriage of Roz to Gene Wyman merged two beautiful people, both intelligent, friendly, energetic, generous and considerate of others, and deeply ambitious for their community and their country. They were a remarkable team, until Gene's untimely death at an early age.

Our paths crossed at many intersections. During my race for Attorney General in 1958, Roz Wyman was my campaign treasurer in both the primary and general election and gave that task her usual devoted service. She resumed that responsibility for me when I ran and was reelected Attorney General in 1962. Later Gene Wyman assisted me as Democratic National Committeeman, and when I left that post after four years, he succeeded me as the committeeman, a position he filled with enthusiasm and effectiveness.

Roz was a rabid sports fan, and was perhaps more directly responsible than any other individual for bringing big league baseball to the Pacific Coast. She worked tirelessly to persuade the Brooklyn Dodgers, under Walter O'Malley, to move to Los Angeles, and when the Dodgers made their decision, the Giants elected to match them with a transfer to San Francisco. Were it not for the persistance and effectiveness of Roz Wyman, there might be no major league baseball today in Los Angeles--or, indeed, in the Bay Area, Anaheim, San Diego or Seattle.

Roz and Gene Wyman were gracious social hosts, always willing to share distinguished celebrities with their local friends. Through them many an Angeleno came to know Hubert Humphrey, Edmund Muskie, Scoop Jackson and countless other senators, Dean Rusk and other cabinet officers, John Bailey and other party officials, Bess Meyerson and other devotees of the theater and the arts. An evening at their home was an experience long remembered.

Rosalind has carried on her activities alone in recent years. She has chaired the congressional committee's annual fund-raising dinner in Washington, and set records with the resultant income. She has retained an active interest in the arts, locally in the motion picture and television industries, and nationally through the Commission on the Arts.

In short, it has been a rare privilege to know and to be close to Rosalind Wyman these past three decades. My wife is honored to be the godmother to her son, Robert. And we have both received pleasure, satisfaction, warm affection and inspiration from her friendship.

California is a better place today for having had Rosalind Wyman as one of its daughters.

Stanley Mosk, Justice
Supreme Court of California

4 September, 1979
San Francisco, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Rosalind Wiener Wyman, at the age of twenty-two, and in the year 1953, when young persons, especially women, did not openly aspire to political office, ran for and won a seat on the fifteen-member Los Angeles City Council.

During her ensuing three terms on the council (1953-1965), although always its youngest member by many years, and always its only woman, she never hesitated to take strong stands on issues which she considered important for the city at large, or for the citizens of her district. During these twelve years she also continued to organize campaigns for state and national Democratic candidates and to attend national conventions as a delegate. And during these same years she added to her duties that of wife and mother by her marriage to prominent attorney Eugene Wyman and the births of their three children--Betty, Robert, and Brad.* When, in 1962, Eugene Wyman assumed an active leadership role in the Democratic party, first as state chairman, then as national committeeman, and later as fund raiser for congressional and presidential campaigns, Roz Wyman's skills as a campaign organizer, party-giver, compromiser, and battler in behalf of her own and her husband's causes were put to the test.

The Wymans' prominence and their political activity enmeshed them in some of the internecine struggles within the Democratic party in the 1960s--probably one of the factors behind her failure to win her fourth bid for a term on the city council. Despite that she continued in various ways to utilize her organizational and political skills both in politics and in the private sector. Twice since 1965 she ran again, unsuccessfully, for public office.

Roz Wyman's political career made her an obvious participant in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project. An additional reason was her life with Democratic party leader Eugene Wyman because of his links with the career of Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr. currently being studied by the Regional Oral History Office as a part of its long-term Governmental History Project, now focusing on the administrations of Governors Goodwin Knight and Edmund G. (Pat) Brown --1953-1966.

Mrs. Wyman did not, at first, care to participate, claiming that she had already been interviewed briefly for several projects, that she had never reviewed the resulting transcripts or tapes, and that she would not review this transcript either. Rosalind Wyman is an intelligent and strong-willed woman whose approach is always straightforward. I knew at once where I stood with respect to this project. Nevertheless I eventually persuaded her to record something of her political career, having decided to cross the review bridge when I came to it.

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*At the time of Betty's birth, headlines proclaimed: "City Father Becomes a Mother."

We held our first interview on May 24, 1977 at one o'clock in the small, beautifully furnished, book-lined study, probably the smallest room on the first floor of the spacious and elegantly appointed Wyman home in Bel Air. Working from an outline which I had sent ahead we talked for about two and one-half hours about Roz Wyman's parents and their interest in politics, about her election to the city council, about her marriage and children, about some of the controversies she had taken part in during her three terms on the council, and about her defeat in 1965.

As she explained when we had concluded this session she had not anticipated that discussion of her marriage to Eugene Wyman and their life together as parents and political activists prior to his sudden death in 1973 would prove so anguishing. That she did manage to continue the interview, it seemed to me, was due to a self-control which was part of her basic personality, but which must also be a learned part of any politician's demeanor.

Prior to our next interview session on February 15, 1978, at 10:00 a.m. I spent an evening looking through her scrapbooks--15 huge volumes, crammed full of pasted-down clippings and some pictures, detailing her twelve-year career on the city council and in Democratic politics, and a couple of similar books devoted to Eugene Wyman's press during his active years in politics. Mrs. Wyman had gone to the theater but the housekeeper and Brad occasionally came into the study to find out if I wanted anything to eat or drink.

When two mornings later I arrived for the interview, Mrs. Wyman met me in her dressing gown uncertain that she could talk to me because she had awakened with a severe migraine headache and was taking medication to ease the pain. We discussed the fact that I did not know when I would be in Los Angeles again; that it might be better for her to stay up and talk than to lie in bed alone suffering with the pain. She agreed to try to continue with her memoir. Once again she had to bring to the fore her strong willpower and sense of duty.

We sat in the large glass-walled, simply furnished room which faces onto the back garden with its broad expanse of lawn and surrounding shrubbery, its swimming pool and adjacent pool house. This modern-day sunroom is an open area between the living and dining rooms and was a pleasant and peaceful location for our discussion of the restless, fun-filled, but often problem-filled political life of the Wymans.

Despite her pain, Roz Wyman was articulate. As she reminisced she laughed heartily, or chuckled softly; at times she was irate, at times wistful. So we worked for three and a half hours, taking a brief break for lunch which gave me an opporutnity to see the legendary kitchen--the work area for the famous Sunday dinners.

When it came time to review the transcript, and remembering Mrs. Wyman's warning that she would not do so, it was my good fortune that Marilyn Fishman, who had worked for Eugene Wyman for many years, and was now Mrs. Wyman's executive secretary at Producers Guild of America, agreed to take on this task.

Making use of her intimate knowledge of the family, she corrected errors in dates and the spelling of names, and revised a few sentences in order to clarify their meaning. I am deeply indebted to Marilyn for her concern that the memoir be correct and that it be completed, and for the friendship which she manifested toward me as she efficiently emended the transcript between May, 1978 and April, 1979.

Although there are albums full of pictures which illustrate the activities of the Wymans, and albums full of letters from Hubert Humphrey, Harry and Bess Truman, scores of congressmen, state legislators, and presidential candidates, I could copy only those few which had not yet been fixed in place. Similarly, out of the hundreds of press clippings in the scrapbooks, I could take out for copying only those which had come unglued--a barely representative sample of her career, or of the pro and con arguments on her losing 1965 campaign for city council. All the albums and scrapbooks remain with the family.

Elizabeth Snyder, a well known Democratic political party leader, and a long-time friend of Mrs. Wyman, agreed to write an introduction, as did California Supreme Court Justice Stanley Mosk.

Thus, despite reluctance and physical and mental pain, Rosalind Wyman has provided the California Women Political Leaders project with a memoir replete with background and observations on her unique experiences in politics--a successful collaborative effort of two strong-willed women unwilling to countenance failure at any step in the process.

Malca Chall
Interviewer-Editor

3 August 1979
Regional Oral History Office
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ROSALIND WYMAN: BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

| | |
|---|---|
| 1930 | Born, Los Angeles |
| 1945-1948 | Student, Los Angeles High School |
| 1948-1952 | Student, University of Southern California; B.S. Public Administration |
| 1951-1954 | Member, Los Angeles County Democratic Central Committee |
| 1951-1953 | National Committeewoman for California, Young Democratic Clubs of America |
| 1952-1962 | Member, Democratic State Central Committee; Executive Committee, 1972-1976 |
| 1953-1965 | Elected Member, Los Angeles City Council |
| 1958, 1963 | Appointed, Member, Coliseum Commission, representing City of Los Angeles |
| 1954 | Married, Eugene Wyman |
| 1954 | Speaker, National Jefferson Jackson Day Dinner, Washington, D.C. |
| 1953-1954 | Chairman, 26th Congressional District Council |
| 1958 | Executive Director, campaign of Judge Stanley Mosk for Attorney General |
| 1959 | Chairman, Coliseum Commission's Arrangements Committee for Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, (1960) |
| 1954 through 1972 | Delegate, Democratic National Conventions |
| 1960 | Co-Chair, California committee, Kennedy-Johnson campaign |
| 1960 | State Chairman, Women's Division, Kennedy for President campaign |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1963 | Appointed, Member Commission for United National Economic and Social Council [UNESCO] by United States Department of State |
| 1964 | Co-Chair, Public Affairs Committee, Johnson-Humphrey campaign |
| 1966 | Appointed, Member, U.S. Delegation, United Economic and Social Council [UNESCO] by President Lyndon Johnson |
| 1967-1969 | Director, Public Affairs for Columbia Pictures and Screen Gems Television Program Productions Division |
| 1968 | Executive Committee, California Humphrey-Muskie campaign |
| 1970-1971 | Administrative Assistant to Chairman of the Board, National General Corporation |
| 1972-1974 | President, Tel-It Productions, Inc. |
| 1973-1976 | Democratic National Committeewoman for California |
| 1973, 1976 | Chairwoman, National Congress Kick-off Dinners, Washington, D.C. |
| 1974-1976 | Special Consultant to Mayor Tom Bradley City-County Consolidation |
| 1974 | Member, Executive Committee for reelection of Senator Alan Cranston |
| 1975 | Member, Charter Commission to draft charter for Democratic Party |
| 1976 | Member, Carter-Mondale National Jewish Advisory Committee |
| 1976 | Member, Executive Committee for reelection of Senator John V. Tunney |
| 1976 | Member, Executive United Campaign Committee of California for Carter-Mondale |
| 1977-- | Executive Chairperson, Producers Guild of America, Inc. |
| 1979-- | Council Member, National Endowment for the Arts; appointed by President Carter |

## AWARDS

Mademoiselle Merit Award in the Field of Politics

B'nai B'rith Women Award of Achievement

"Look Applauds"

"They Say It With Action", Ladies Home Journal. Selected as one of nine honored from among 2000 women serving in elected capacities throughout the United States

Los Angeles Times -- "Woman of the Year"

Distinguished Service Citation, Jewish National Home for Asthmatic Children

Sports Writers' Civic Award

"Woman of the Year" -- Sunair Foundation

USC Alumni Merit Award

Key Award, Chamber of Commerce

Shared honors with Mr. Wyman and received "Mr. and Mrs. American Citizen" Award -- Los Angeles B'nai B'rith

Scopus Award (Mr. and Mrs. Wyman) -- Establishment of the Institute for Studies in Political Science in name of Rosalind and Eugene Wyman at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. (Building presently under construction.)

## ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Community Relations Committee of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Council

Board Member, Los Angeles Center Theatre Group

Cabinet Member, Music Center Arts and Education Fund

Member, Los Angeles County Music and Performing Arts Commission

Board Member (Founders) of the American Friends of the Hebrew University (Jerusalem)

Board Member, Law Foundation, Public Law

Honorary Member, Diabetes Association of Southern California

Honorary Patron, Los Angeles Music Festival

Board Member, California Council for Environmental & Economic Balance (1973)

Member, Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Commission (1968-1969)

## FIRSTS

Youngest legislator ever elected in country for a major city

First woman elected to Los Angeles City Council in thirty-six years

First woman to preside over the Los Angeles City Council

First member of Los Angeles City Council to serve on Coliseum Commission

First woman Acting Mayor of Los Angeles, November 8, 1963

First woman reelected by colleagues to be President Pro-Tempore of City Council

# I BACKGROUND OF A POLITICAL ACTIVIST

[Interview 1: May 24, 1977]##

## Parents

Chall: Did you have any preference for where you wanted to begin on this?

Wyman: No, you decide.

Chall: I guess we'll start with your background, then. Can you tell me your birth date?

Wyman: October 4, 1930. Wouldn't a biography do a lot of that for you?

Chall: Do you have a biography?

Wyman: Yes, I do. Why don't I give it to you? It will give you my parents, my marriage date, all the children.

Chall: But it doesn't tell me about your parents? Where they came from?

Wyman: No, it doesn't tell you that.

Chall: I would like to have that biographical data, because it's very helpful.

Wyman: My dad was born in Russia.

Chall: What was his name?

Wyman: Oscar Wiener. He came over from Russia as a young boy.

Chall: With his parents?

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 147.

Wyman: No. By himself.

Chall: How old, then, was he?

Wyman: He was about thirteen. He got away from the czar. He was on some kind of boat and came through South America. He had a brother who had gotten to New York in some way, so he went up there. Then he became a druggist because he found a job sleeping in the back of a drugstore. He put himself through Columbia University at night and he became a druggist. That was his sole work. He did it his entire life. He owned drugstores in L.A. [Los Angeles]. In fact, the day before he died, he was filling prescriptions, at the age of eighty-one, at the free clinic. He had retired and was filling prescriptions up till the day he died, which was December of last year.

My mother is kind of a remarkable woman. She had no formal education beside high school. She had kind of a gift of gab of some sort and was able to get herself a job in her twenties as a labor manager in the amalgamated clothing industry in Chicago. She represented management and sat across the table from Sidney Hillman in his early days. She was the only woman of umpteen number of labor managers in that era, and she tells some marvelous stories of the union organizers and the management. One would throw a dance, and they'd throw a dance down the street. It was really very interesting work. She left Chicago and came out here. She had a son; divorced.

Chall: You mean she was married in Chicago?

Wyman: Yes. She had a son by that marriage, was divorced and then came out here and met my dad. When she was pregnant with me, she became a pharmacist. She went to night school at USC [University of Southern California]. It was 1930. Dad never got home so it was either never see him or become a pharmacist. So she became a pharmacist. She attended night school as well. In those days, you didn't quite have to have the college credits. Because she didn't go to college.

Chall: I was wondering how, if she hadn't gone beyond high school.

Wyman: No, in those days you didn't have to have college. She's eighty-four. She was very active in politics in the thirties.

Chall: In Chicago?

Wyman: No, here.

Chall: Just so I won't keep asking these kinds of questions, when did your mother move out to Los Angeles?

Wyman: I can't tell you.

Chall: But it was before the thirties?

Wyman: It would have had to be, because I was born in '30, so it had to be the late twenties.

Chall: When were they married?

Wyman: They were married fifty-two years ago. This would be their fifty-second year, so we can subtract.

Chall: They were married fifty-two years, so that would be 1925.

Wyman: Right. That's about it. So she was here, obviously, in 1925.

Chall: What propelled her out here? Was she still going to be working in labor management?

Wyman: No, she wasn't well. My aunt was here; married and in business. In fact my mother and brother moved in with my aunt. She was not well; I don't remember exactly the circumstances. They thought California would just be a better place to come. So she came here. I think her divorce was an unhappy situation, so she just decided to get away. Then the rest of her family came out here--my uncle and my grandmother. One other uncle was later in coming.

Chall: Were they all from Chicago?

Wyman: Oh, yes. All my mother's family was from Chicago.

Chall: Had your mother been born in the United States?

Wyman: Yes, she was born in Chicago.

Chall: And her parents?

Wyman: My grandmother--her mother--was not, and her father was not. My mother's father came from Germany and my mother's mother came from Poland, as I recall.

Chall: They settled in the Midwest, is that it?

Wyman: Settled in Chicago. It's the only place, I think where they lived. There's a big German community in Chicago and that's where my grandfather went. I never knew him. Knew my grandmother. He was quite a character from what everybody says.

Chall: Had they come from Germany and Poland in the late 1880s?

Wyman: They must have. I can't tell you; I just don't know. I presume they had to.

Chall: Your mother must have been born shortly after they arrived.

Wyman: My mother was next to the baby. There were four children--all born in America. My aunt is older than my mother, and she's born in America. My aunt is eighty-seven or eighty-eight, so you can just subtract it all back. It would have to be at the turn of the century because this is '77. It would have to be the 1880s.

Chall: And you don't know anything about those communities in Germany and Poland that they came from?

Wyman: No, I don't.

Chall: Your father moved out here about when?

Wyman: It had to be in the 1920s. Obviously he was here before she came. I'd say '24 or '23 or something like that.

Chall: What brought him out here?

Wyman: I haven't the slightest idea.

Chall: If he came at thirteen and worked in the back of the drugstore in New York, was he going to school then, high school?

Wyman: Yes. He was going to grade school or high school. He went through regular school and then went to Columbia. He didn't go to special pharmacy school in college. In those days you got your pharmacy degree as you went along. Now, I think you have to graduate or have two years, or something. I'm not quite sure what it is now, but it was a lot simpler to be a druggist in those days than it is today. He didn't go on to graduate school. He became a pharmacist at Columbia, doing whatever was necessary. So that was his formal education in college--pharmacy.

Chall: Your older brother's how much older than you, your half-brother?

Wyman: My older brother is dead. He was thirteen years older than I am. There was a span of years there.

Chall: So your parents met here and married here? Married in Anaheim.

Wyman: Yes.

Chall: Did your mother start college before you were born or after? I mean pharmacy school.

Wyman: Right after.

Chall: So your mother's worked almost all the time you were growing up.

Wyman: Almost all my life she was in the drugstore. I don't remember her not in a drugstore. My dad and mother were always in drugstores. In '32, our drugstore was the Democratic headquarters within that assembly district. It was a two-storey building where they kept supplies upstairs. They had a big Roosevelt and Garner banner across the inside of it.

I always felt their activities and interest in politics was steeped in me. In my baby book, at two, I'm looking up at a picture of FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt]. Most kids in their baby book are not looking at posters of FDR. He was a vital part of my growing up. I used to write to him all the time and we used to listen to old fireside chats. I remember that. They were very active, interested citizens, my parents. Mother a little bit more than Dad. They certainly read everything and listened to everything. We were really steeped in the interest of politics, in the interest of good government, and all that. It came from Dad's background of knowing how bad it was in Russia. Mother's older brother was active in politics in Chicago. Of course, her labor-manager activities. They were all Democrats.

## Early Forays Into Politics, 1948-1950

Wyman: I guess I fell into being an active Democrat and interested in government and politics. My first foray into politics was in Harry Truman's campaign of 1948, kind of, but not much. I was in college and in the Democratic Club in college. Jesse Unruh was in the same club and Congressman Phil Burton.

Chall: Where was this, USC?

Wyman: USC. They had different parties in school. We elected the first non-org [non-fraternity-organization person]. We formed something called the Unity Party. It was the first time SC had a non-org--fraternity man--as student body president. They were so shocked that the fraternity kids swiped the ballots twice, and we had to re-ballot. It was quite an experience, I must say. [laughter]

Helen Gahagan Douglas and the 1950 Senate Campaign

Wyman: Then in '50, Helen came along. In high school, I had done a term paper on Helen Douglas, and she was really my heroine. When she ran in '50, she came to SC. I didn't know her and I went off to the meeting to meet her. She was late--she was always late. I was so excited. There she was in the flesh. I was very disappointed in the meeting. She was late and she didn't spend much time. I was really disappointed.

So I went to another meeting at the old Embassy Auditorium and I went over to her as she was walking out. I said something about, "I don't like the way you run your camapign." She was startled because everyone loved Helen Douglas. She was something very special. You touched her. She had that magic like Mrs. Roosevelt. She had a real magic about her. She was really amazed that a young person she didn't know came up and said something like that. I said, "You know, you were late at that meeting and you didn't stay. Now you're rushing out of this meeting..."

Chall: That's politics.

Wyman: I don't even know how or why I did that. It was very forward on my part and very not like me. It was funny. She stopped and said, "Well, if you know so much about a campaign, here, here's a card. Come and see this lady and get into my campaign." That was Ruth Lybeck. Obviously, Helen did this all the time and the poor Lybecks didn't know what to do with all those souls she kept sending down.

Chall: I want your help. Here's my card.

Wyman: Yes. Go down and see these people. Get active in my campaign. [laughs] Obviously, I thought, well here's a card from Helen Douglas. I'm going to run this campaign. I went down to see the Lybecks and they were great, great people. Obviously, Ruth thought, "Oh, here's another one."

So they gave me an assignment which was very funny. They gave me quarter cards that said Douglas on them. They said to go out and put them in good locations. No, first they said to go to Hollywood Boulevard and get them in all the merchants' stores, in their windows. I spent hours and nobody would take them. "Oh, Helen Douglas." In the first place, Nixon was smearing her right and left. It was a tough-rough campaign. I couldn't find anybody to take her card. I was sick.

Chall: Was this the general election campaign?

Wyman: This was in the general, yes. We had passed the primary. Then I took those quarter cards and found key spots on telephone poles in L.A. and hammered them up all by byself. Hundreds of them. It was interesting. I had gotten a check from a policy that my family had taken out for college. You know, those policies that help you go through school. I called Ruth Lybeck after I got home, after I put up the last of those cards and asked, "Can you do that?" I didn't tell her I had done it. I just asked, "Can you put cards up on telephone poles?" She said, "There's a fifty dollar fine for it." I thought, there goes my college education. I'm going to have to give them my check. So I went and took them all down.

It's interesting--in almost any campaign after that I've always had to stick up one quarter card for somebody in order to make up--always after that horrible experience. I didn't know you had to get caught. What they do is call the campaign office and the headquarters people say, "Oh, we've got some zealous worker out there." When I later told Ruth and Ed Lybeck this story, they used to love to tell the Roz Wiener story of her first experience in politics. Then I became fairly close, in, for some reason. We all liked each other and pretty soon I got to drive Helen around. I became her driver. Often.

Chall: In Los Angeles.

Wyman: Yes. In Los Angeles. I was cutting classes and was getting in real trouble. But, boy, I was really dedicated and I would do anything. We became fairly good friends, but we have become, subsequent to that campaign, much better friends. She really thought I was a little crazy, I think. She tells funny stories about it now. You know, I was eager. One of the things was that Helen was so tired in between campaign stops, she didn't want to talk, and I couldn't wait to get at her to talk. Finally, she had to tell me that if I was going to drive, I had to be quiet. [laughter] Anyway, we finally made our compromise in our relationship.

But I must say, when she lost, she lost with the most dignity I've ever seen in a human being. She was special. I was there the night she lost and I was there the morning after. The reporters just dogged her. They absolutely couldn't wait for a woman to break down and cry. Just waiting. Just waiting. She didn't.

Then the next morning I called to say I was coming up and they said Helen was gone off to San Francisco because they were so down. To cheer up her workers. It was just incredible. I was there when she came off the airplane at Burbank, after that. I'll never forget. One of the most moving things was a reporter who went up to her and touched her and hugged her, with tears coming down his eyes. He said

Wyman: it was the saddest thing he could ever remember--her loss. I tell you, she just hugged that man and spoke to him and was so kind and so lovely.

I thought her sole worry in that loss was the people who worked for her, who had put in all the time and all the effort. It was brutal, that campaign, brutal. I remember that. It had a great effect on me, the way she carried herself. I was saying the other day--I saw her about two weeks ago--that as we get older, we become more moderate or more staid--we change. But Helen is as vital and exciting, interesting, caring, and as liberal as she was the day I first met her. When I leave Melvyn and Helen, I'm always up. They are so well read and so caring about the issues that were burning then and are burning now. They haven't changed their liberalism at all. They really are very special.

Chall: What kind of impression did you get while you were working with her about how a candidate, particularly a woman candidate, would carry on a campaign? Do you compare candidates, as you've known them since, with her, at all?

Wyman: I have never seen a candidate who compares with her. She's by far the most outstanding woman candidate I've ever known. Obviously, I've never known out-of-state people; only in the state. I don't know Sissy Farenthold, who people really rave about. I know Bella Abzug, but God, that's day and night between those two women. I have known another woman in my life who I think would probably be one of the great candidates, who doesn't run, and that's Bess Myerson. I just have never seen a woman candidate who has the charisma, the integrity, the liberalism, the caring that Helen has, and I've been around politics a long time now.

Chall: Does she have an unusual amount of stamina?

Wyman: Yes. She did. I couldn't understand how sometimes she could keep going. She was very smart. As I say, she knew how to save her energy a little bit. That's why when she drove in between, she had to pull herself together and wanted to be quiet and wanted to take those moments of rest. I think she had some special inner strength, and she still does today, with her illness. She's very special. Some people are <u>just special</u>. I don't know another word to describe her.

I had an instance where she spoke at my daughter's high school about two years ago. Now this is Helen who was then in her seventies. The kids know very little about her. They've just been given a smattering of who she is. She decided she's going to talk about the Constitution. She was house-guesting with me. I said, "Helen, those kids won't listen to you." I mean I was worried. I thought, gosh,

Wyman: how can she talk about the Constitution? She went in, took that Constitution and applied it to Watergate, and applied it to how our system can work. I tell you, those kids didn't move. She had them mesmerized. The lunch period came and we said they could leave and the the mass of them stayed. These are high school, sophisticated girls who are not turned on, necessarily, by that sort of thing at all. They come from affluent families. And they still talk about Helen Douglas. I say, that in my life, she's one of the most special people that I've ever known. She's always been somebody that I've admired.

Chall: Were you aware of the kind of issues she was propounding in her 1950 campaign and the reactions that people, besides the storekeepers, had about this campaign? Generally speaking, did you have the feeling that she would win? Or that she could win?

Wyman: No, I never thought she would win. I just knew that it was uphill, and it was tough, and it was murdersome. It was just a terrible campaign. I felt that she was ahead of her time when she talked about water. Just think about Helen talking about water in 1950! Now this is 1977 and now we've got drought and the water thing. She used to talk about the acre limitations. I'm sure you know some of the things she talked about. And she talked about civil liberties, civil rights. Nobody talked about those things.

I don't think that the masses could totally understand what Helen was trying to articulate, and I think that her issues were so important. Sometimes the masses don't follow the important issues. Without media, without money, there was no hope of getting anything across as big as this state was. We just couldn't raise those dollars.

Helen was one of the few candidates who paid bills at the end. Part of selling her house was to pay her bills at the end. She absorbed all the debts personally. Like John Tunney. We had a big fund-raising dinner for John Tunney. Senator Hubert Humphrey and Edward Kennedy came to Los Angeles for the dinner and helped raise money for his deficit. I don't think Helen left the state with a debt. I'm not positive of that, but I don't think she did. She felt that was her obligation as a candidate. As I say, she's just special all around. I think the issues she articulated when she talked about the McCarran bill, back in those days--I mean she was just so far ahead of her time that it's unreal today.

Chall: And she wasn't willing to give on any of her issues at all, was she?

Wyman: Helen was not a compromiser, in the sense of compromising principles. She just wasn't.

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Chall: When you were driving her, were you driving her from house meetings? What kinds of meetings was she attending?

Wyman: All kinds. We would attend labor meetings, house meetings, meetings that were put together for her primarily. We were in restaurants, and in homes, parks, all those sorts of things. I would say that was the variety of the kind of meetings. She had a zealous following. It was interesting. Even though, as I say, I don't feel she touched the masses with her issues, the following of her was incredible. It was magical. As I say, the feeling, the touching, the need to touch her that you see with some candidates over the years--she had it.

Chall: There was a need expressed for touching?

Wyman: There was a need to touch her.

Chall: And they did?

Wyman: They did. And they reached her. You know, I've been campaigning for years and it's rare to see such reaching. There was a real need to touch her. It probably was her training as an actress that she could project herself. Just the way she stood. She stood erect and her voice was able to project. I've always said that any woman who goes into political life who has the ability to project the way Helen does, has something going for her. Because she could deliver; she could raise the audience that was listening to her to a peak. Most candidates can't do that. They really can't. They may be good and they're running, and they're extroverts because they're running, theoretically.

I always feel you have the leaders and the followers in campaigns, too, and in candidates. Somebody can get elected and he goes to the Congress, but he could be a follower in Congress. Helen Douglas would never be a follower anywhere. She is a leader. She was a leader; she would have been a leader. I think she's one of the real tragedies of California history in politics. Maybe if the women's movement was as zealous then as it is today, or cared as much... Women were very jealous of women in those days. She was glamorous and had a husband who was a movie star, and had children.

Chall: She had everything.

Wyman: She had everything. And I must say I understood that later, because I had everything, and I found a tremendous jealousy following me when I was elected.

Chall: Would she travel with others in the car or was she alone with you?

Wyman: Usually when I drove her, we were alone.

Chall: She wasn't conducting business along the way.

Wyman: No, she wasn't. Once in a while, somebody would get in who maybe needed to talk to her. From one stop to the next. Usually it was someone from the campaign. Or I may have stopped by the campaign office and got stuff that I gave her in the car. When I stopped talking so much and became good. [laughs] Once I captured her. I wanted her to come to my house. That was important to me. To feed her and have her rest; take care of her; mother her a little bit.

Usually she was reading for the next stop, or preparing, or resting. She really wanted to be quiet in the car. That was pretty clear. That was the way she got her energy level up. Because of the pace she kept! She was one of the first people to campaign from a helicopter. And she'd lean. Those rickety-dickety helicopters in those days. She'd lean way out.

Chall: Was she talking from the helicopter?

Wyman: I can't remember. I'm not sure. Getting from place to place. I don't think she had a mike. I remember once changing my hose in the car with her in a parade. [laughter] She took mine and I took hers. Crazy things a woman candidate worries about. [laughs]

Chall: Did she ever discuss with you her feelings about that campaign? Either during or after?

Wyman: Off and on. I think she was bored with talking about it, as the years went on.

Chall: But at that time?

Woman: I remember when I got elected, I went and spent a month with her. [April, 1953]

Chall: Yes, that would have been a good lesson.

Wyman: She told me more like the pitfalls--about being a woman, and maintaining being a woman, and not becoming hard. In other words, if you have certain characteristics, keep them. It was interesting. She talked about melding with the men rather than sticking out from them, because I was one woman with fourteen men. There weren't many women in Congress when she was there. She said something about working with them because you get so much press anyway, or attention, being a woman. Not to play that up so much, but to try to handle that. That was something she told me and that was something that didn't have anything to do with the campaign with Nixon.

Wyman: But she never was bitter. That was the thing I remember the most. To Helen it wasn't a bitter experience. Those of us around her were bitter. She rose above it again. As I say, those are the exceptional qualities, I think. I think she put it as perspective in history, a perspective of her learning, part of her life, a growth in her life, something to try to understand herself; why those issues she cared so deeply about didn't seem to get over; the lack of money she talked about. I must say, I can't recall in-depth discussions over the years of that campaign. I know she resented the "pink lady" very deeply.

Chall: I should think so. Unfair treatment.

Wyman: Yes. Unfair treatment. Because justice is important to Helen and you know, there's got to be some justice in life. Some of the things --I don't know if she remembers now--but we did once talk about the fact that they jammed our switchboards and we couldn't phone out. We had what were called Liberty Bells, or Bell Ringers, or something. Those right-wing ladies' groups at those times. They would call in and call in and jam our switchboards with awful calls about the pink lady. I remember that. My mother worked with the volunteers down there and she was so bitter. I thought she hated politics. My mother said she would never do anything in politics again after the Douglas campaign. It affected people who were close. But Helen, I think, felt it was a part of a growing experience in her life.

Chall: Just went on to something else.

Wyman: Right on to something else! She always has. She's lectured; she's written; she went back to her music; she did art. She's never been a person who isn't busy. I know when she left here, some of us really hated to see her leave California. That was the saddest thing of all.

Chall: Was her idea that she had other places where she preferred to live?

Wyman: Her family was mainly in the East, and Melvyn had had a terrible time with the industry at that point--that "red channels" business and all of that. Melvyn really had difficulty working after that campaign. She got smeared and everybody else got smeared.

I'm not really absolutely positive on this, but I think his contracts were not renewed, whichever studio out here had them. You'd really have to ask them. He decided the only place he could make a living was the stage, and so, he went back to New York to be on the stage. He was out of the service at this point, and there was no point in Helen not being with Melvyn. I don't know if it was just before the McCarthy era but it was that whole House Un-American Activities period, and the actors' problem took Melvyn. I don't know if you're going to interview Melvyn for Helen's history, but there's a terribly interesting story on his part.

Chall: There's a biography or an autobiography being written. I think somebody will get the story. So that was your first activity, politically.

Wyman: My first really active, active...

Chall: You were really quite busy.

## Some Additional Family Background

Wyman: Yes. I really got the feel of it. I could have hated politics from then on. I must say I never thought of running for office myself. I really always thought of working for somebody.

Chall: But then you did it. Before I take up that campaign, I wanted to get back and ask you some things more about your parents and your family's background. Were they active in the Jewish community here?

Wyman: Not really. Not when I look at my activities.

Chall: There just wasn't as much.

Wyman: There just wasn't as much. We weren't as active a community. We were not a very religious family, although my father was.

Chall: In what way was he religious?

Wyman: He studied to be a rabbi or had some training in his early days in Russia. His father, I think, was a learned scholar in the community in those days, so he had a lot of talmudic learning. We didn't belong to a synagogue. Even when I was a child, we didn't belong. We always had a seder. That was about the extent of the Jewish activity. My mother had no Jewish training. Her family was not religious at all. She didn't speak Hebrew, or any of that, so Dad really had no one to talk to.

It was very strange. The block I lived on, whoever went to Sunday school on Sunday, we all went with them. It was the Christian Scientists who seemed to lead the block, so on Sunday, we all went to Christian Science Sunday school. Everybody. It didn't make any difference what you were. [laughter] It was really very strange. We lived in a wonderful neighborhood.

Chall: Where was that?

Wyman: On Kenmore Avenue in Los Angeles. Mother, being in the drugstore a lot, there was a lady who used to take care of me, I used to call my nanny. She weighed 300 pounds. She was one of the most unforgettable characters in my life. Just a wonderful person.

It didn't matter on that block. We all did everything together. As I say, the Christian Scientists seemed to be the most active church goers. We went to Christian Science Sunday school. I used to go around and say that I was God's perfect child, as a little kid. I didn't know the difference--that I was really much different. Then as I became older, my mother was in the Eastern Star; then she belonged to the Council of Jewish Women, or Pioneer Women--one of them. Pioneer Women, I think, is the oldest one. So she paid her dues, as it were.

My Jewishness really came later for me. Just from me, being aware that I was Jewish and caring. Being that I was Jewish and was elected, I wanted to be active in the Jewish community. It really came after I ran more than before I ran.

Chall: Did any members of your father's family, aside from that one brother he came to live with here, come from Europe afterwards, do you know?

Wyman: Yes, his whole family came.

Chall: They all came from Europe and then came here?

Wyman: Two brothers stayed in New York and one came here. Two brothers were here and two brothers stayed in New York.

## II THE CAMPAIGN FOR LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL, 1953

### The Preliminaries

Chall: Were your parents interested in your doing well in school?

Wyman: Oh, yes.

Chall: Then you went to public school?

Wyman: I went to Los Angeles public high school and USC.

Chall: What did they have in mind for you?

Wyman: I always thought I was going to be a lawyer. In my early, early days, I used to say I would run for the House of Representatives. I wanted to be a congresswoman. I think that was all even before Helen Douglas. But it was funny, right after her election, I didn't think about running at all. I didn't run till '53, which was three years after. When I was younger I thought about running, and then there was a period when I really didn't think about running at all.

Then I just became active in Democratic politics. I was active at SC. At twenty-one, I ran for the Democratic county committee, so the first vote I ever cast was for me. [laughter] For the county committee. I marked my X first. I won that race.

Chall: Did you really? Down in the Ws?

Wyman: Yes, it was wild. We went around, door to door. It was so insane. Nobody even knew what you were talking about when you talked about the Democratic county committee. Then we'd say, "You vote for seven." But there were a few of us who got together. Nobody ever made much of an issue about running in those days. We put a slate together. We pooled our money--we each put in twenty-five dollars, or whatever it

Wyman: was, and we picked a section we figured would vote, which was the heavy Jewish area, the Beverly-Fairfax area. We figured they voted and if we could get them to vote for us, we'd win, and we did!

Chall: All seven of you won?

Wyman: All seven of us won. [laughter] Crazy. Then I served on a committee.

Two councilmen retired and they put two districts together. I served on a committee which was primarily Democrats--but it was a non-partisan office--to find somebody who might run for that district. I kind of represented the young voter at that point on that committee. We interviewed people, and I always had something to say. So they all turned to me and said, "You know what you'd do, or how to run it, why don't you run?" And that's how I decided to run.

Chall: I see. You felt you were just as good as any of the people you were interviewing?

Wyman: Yes, I really did. Liz [Elizabeth Snyder], I guess she was southern division woman's chairman at that point. When I went to see Liz about it, she said, "Well, you can get your feet wet. You have nothing to lose." When I won, everybody really got scared. They were petrified. What would she do?

Chall: Let's see, you were then twenty-three.

Wyman: I was twenty-two.

Chall: You were twenty-two and had currently graduated from college?

Wyman: Graduated from SC. What happened was I fell in love with Adlai Stevenson. He ran for president in '52. And I was going to go to law school. I graduated in summer of '52 and I was going to go to law school in the fall of '52. I decided that I just had to work for Adlai Stevenson.

School started in September and the election was in November, so I just figured I'd go the following semester, to law school. I took off and didn't go to law school, and worked for Adlai Stevenson for president, as a volunteer in the district and in the state headquarters. That's where I began to know people, like Liz and all these other people. Obviously Adlai lost.

Then in January of '53, this committee met to fill this council vacancy. I never got to law school, which is one of the saddest things of my life.


Elizabeth Snyder, Rosalind Wyman, and Helen Gahagan Douglas, 1956

The Primary Campaign: Top Vote Getter

Chall: Actually, then, you got into office in April...

Wyman: '53.

Chall: Was there a run-off?

Wyman: Yes! [laughs] My God! There were six or seven candidates. The scrapbooks are going to have to help you. I just can't remember.

Chall: That's all right.

Wyman: Six or seven candidates. I didn't have a chance in hell.

Chall: All, of course, men?

Wyman: All men.

Chall: All older.

Wyman: The so-called winners. President of the Board of Public Works. Big businessmen known well in town. You know, it was crazy. I filed the last five minutes to file, too. Then you had to go out, in those days, and get hundreds of names on a petition before you could run. They've changed all that. I think now they're down to fifty. I think we needed 500 good ones and that meant about 1500. We almost didn't get the petition. When we turned it in, we didn't have enough names, and then they gave us some extra days.

It was just my friends from college, my personal friends and others who were actually members of Young Democratic Clubs. We didn't know what we were doing. Well, that isn't true. We did know what we were doing. I'd been in the Stevenson campaign and I'd been in a congressional campaign--Sam Yorty's--and we really, really plotted that campaign out. We took and overlaid Stevenson's vote in the fifth council district, and figured if they voted for Stevenson--'cause he did so poorly--they were Democrats. We decided to concentrate on those areas that had voted Democratic, even though it was non-partisan. I've always been known as a Democrat. We had no money. I think I ran the primary on $1500. And ran first--which shocked this town.

Chall: You ran first?

Wyman: By 900 votes.

Chall: You ran ahead of those other six candidates?

Wyman: Yes. I had no newspaper; I had no nothing.

Chall: Just door to door.

Wyman: Door to door, and zealous kids. In fact, I was national committeewoman of the Young Democrats at that point. They came down from the North. We had them from all over. We did precinct work every single night--and day. We had gimmicks like a bar of soap to clean up the city. We got the soap free; then we had to find a way to package it because we couldn't hand out sweaty soap in our hands, going door to door. We packaged it. It was an epic campaign. It really was. It was run out of my house--we had no headquarters. My home. We'd meet every night, and Mother would feed us. We'd get pots of spaghetti. People working, or kids from school, would come right there and wouldn't waste time. Lucy was on, I think. Lucy was the biggest thing in the world at this point.

Chall: Lucy?

Wyman: The show, the television show?

Chall: Oh, yes, "I Love Lucy."

Wyman: We'd always watch. And Ralph Edwards--that sappy, soapy thing he did. Was it "My Life?"

Chall: Oh yes, "This is Your Life."

Wyman: We knew the nights people stayed home. We could tell you what the television ratings were without the Nielsen. We always did precinct work on those nights and tried not to be at the door when they were watching those shows.

Chall: Just during the commercials?

Wyman: No, we tried to go either before or after, because we knew people were home. We didn't want to waste our time. Then we plotted it. We plotted our precincts; we plotted our bars of soap. Then I got little eye-savers because it was so smoggy. We gave away that. Then we got little 3 x 5 cards. In those days, we used to get 35,000 of them, for about $15 or $20. We packaged that on everything. We stapled it on our bar of soap and on the eye-savers. Our thinking was if they would save them and use them, they'd keep seeing the name.

My mother is in the Eastern Star and we had all her friends mobilized and had them call their friends. Then she was in some other

Wyman: clubs. Also she played cards. They used to take something off the pot, all her friends, for the campaign.

It was the most grass roots, well-planned campaign that you've ever seen. I don't have the record, but the night I won in the primaries, I wasn't given a chance. Nobody bothered writing or telling anything about me. That night Joe Micchice, who was a famous voice who used to do the radio broadcasts from city hall, on election night. ...

Chall: How is that name spelled?

Wyman: I don't know. It's strange, the way it's spelled. I think he's still around.

Chall: All right. I'll check that.

Wyman: Anyway, Joe Micchice was the announcer who was famous for doing this year after year--the city hall results. As the results were coming in, there was a man named Nash who, alphabetically, was above me. He was the president of the Board of Public Works and the so-called winner. As the bulletins were handed to Micchice, he said, "I'm sure that the votes are on the wrong name." So, he, during the night, would give my vote to Nash. Finally he put his hand over the mike--we have this on a record which is so wonderful--and he said, "Is this bulletin right?" Or "Who the hell is Wiener?" We had it on tape, because he didn't cover the mike completely, and he said, "Somebody better find me something about her!" They didn't have any background on me. So, they were running around, digging, looking for me.

Chall: Where were you?

Wyman: At home. In my house, listening to the radio and going insane. We spotted our precincts and we thought we were winning.

Chall: Did you have people down there?

Wyman: No, we didn't have anybody downtown. We didn't know you were allowed to. [laughs] We didn't know all the rules then. But we had people at precincts who had voted and were tallying, and we were finding we were winning! We kept saying, "Why isn't it being reflected?" I must say a couple of the young people who were in it kept saying, "Roz, they're wrong, those results." Finally, Joe Micchice said, "I have been giving the votes to the wrong person on the bulletin." They couldn't believe that I could win.

Winning the Runoff Campaign

Wyman: As it turned out, I didn't run against Nash. I ran it off against a man named Marshery, which was the real break of the century. He was a businessman who was very righteous, very conservative--one of those pillar type guys who likes to, anyway, pretend he's the pillar of the community. We got a tip that we ran down. The tip was that he had defrauded servicemen in the war on housing projects. It was a godsend! Just a godsend! There it was. We thought even though I ran first by a bare number of votes...

Chall: There was certainly no way to know you were going to win in the final.

Wyman: No. But by then, obviously, some attention began to be paid to me, which I just as soon had not, because that had been one of my real breaks--nobody had bothered me. We were just out campaigning. Then I got the Daily News endorsement, which was really something. Then labor came through for me. In the finals, I got labor. A very dear friend of mine who subsequently died, named Leo Vie, was the head of Political Action Committee. I had the CIO--they were separated in those days--I had the CIO in the primary, kind of. Not totally, but some of the guys thought it was fascinating that I would run, and they knew me from politics already. They knew me from Helen's campaign, from Stevenson's campaign. I had been around.

Chall: You had been on the central committee, after all.

Wyman: Yes. I had been on the central committee. I began to circulate with the kind of people who were active. Obviously, I was very well liked. Then my big break came with Leo Vie who was the head of the political action for the AFL, which had the money and the prestige. He and I just really hit it off. We were really something very special. He was always one of my very special friends. Leo went ahead and said, "We're going to help her. We're going to help her in the finals." Which was very helpful.

Then a judge named Bernie Silbert, who was active in the district, went to see the Daily News people and said," She deserves support," and fought with them. He said, "You're supposed to be a liberal paper. This woman has a chance." I was kooky, as far as they were concerned. He got the Daily News, finally, to support me. We got a few breaks then. We began to raise a little money. We had the billboard man, who was named George Kennedy.

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Wyman: I started to tell you about the billboards. I got some breaks. For example, my sister-in-law was in advertising [Lennie Wiener Evins]. She did my advertising. So, nothing had to be spent. No overhead. No staff. No expenses or anything. Lennie did my billboards. She went down to meet George Kennedy, who was the billboard man--little billboards, not...

Chall: Like Foster & Kleiser.

Wyman: A quarter the size of those. I think they were called quarter board. They were smaller; they're still around town. They struck up a great friendship, so he let me have boards and I paid less than somebody else did. Things like that began to happen.

Then we put "trained for the job", which used to drive my opponent insane because he said, "She just graduated from college. How could she be trained for the job?" And I said, "I was trained for the job because I majored in public administration in college, and that was government." I actually trained to be exactly what I was.

The funniest part of that was, when I was in SC, I had a class in statistics. Oh, I was horrible--never could understand what was going on. When I became a city councilperson and went down there and they showed me how they made the salary survey, and they used all those statistical things I'd been playing with but couldn't see applied to anything, I, as the freshman councilwoman, was very bright at that moment. [laughs] All those years that I couldn't do well in statistics came to light.

So we used everything; we said "trained for the job." I was last on the ballot in the primary, which I always thought was an asset. And we made a to-do about being either last or first. You know, that long list of six or seven people.

We used everything. It was really great. This town was really stunned when I won! The headline in the Mirror--which was publishing in those days, said, "It's a girl." It was a full headline. The story went across the country. I wore out about twenty pairs of shoes. I was the first woman to be elected in a major city in the United States --a city of its size. It had been done in little cities, but nobody had won in a major city. Except there was one woman who'd been elected [in Los Angeles] before I had--Estelle Laughton Lindsay. She may have served a term. The first year that women had a right to vote--I think it was 1917?

Chall: 1920. Wait. In California, they had the vote from 1912.

Wyman: I think she was the first woman elected. It was kind of a fluke election. She didn't really want to continue. I was really the second woman in the history of the city. After I lost, it was quite a while until we finally got a woman on the council again.

Door-to-Door Precinct Work

Chall: In the campaign, how did you handle fatigue and hoarseness and all that goes with the real management of a campaign, because you had to be on top of what you were doing?

Wyman: Remember, I was very young. I was in my early twenties; I was young and vigorous and full of pep. I used to get tired walking. I used to come home and really be dead. I would try to, if I had to go out at night, lie down or just be quiet, myself. I didn't want to talk to anybody. I would say, "I have to get away by myself, even if it's twenty minutes." I used to say, "Just give me a few minutes alone to think." I often didn't get them, but I tried to. The headquarters was the house.

Luckily, we had a two-storey house and I would go up to my room. I was still living at home at that point. I would try to go upstairs and close my door. Obviously, the phone in the house was the headquarters phone, and that was it. It was very difficult. Through my experience I probably had a greater appreciation for Helen.

I would say that I did not handle fatigue well and get tired. But I had so much energy at that point that fatigue was almost a nonexistent word. You just didn't let it happen. I just knew I was going out the next day, no matter what happened. No matter how tired I was. If I had done precinct work the night before, I got out, usually by ten in the morning. I didn't go out too early because people didn't like to be bothered.

My biggest problem going door-to-door was trying to explain to them that that picture on that piece of literature really was me. People just really didn't understand that.

I had been reared in this district. I've lived in the fifth district almost my whole life. I really knew that district. Remember, I had gone to grammar school, junior high school, and high school within the fifth district. Then I went off to SC. So I had pockets of school families all over in that district. I walked down Burnside where my elementary school was. I knew some of the neighbors. I was Roz Wiener, who had gone to school with their kids. I tried to

Wyman: find every classmate I could find who still had parents in that area. I was a real product of the community. I was born here, reared in the fifth district.

And I also knew some of the problems. I knew where some of the storm drains dumped out and it was a mess. I took a picture of that, not in the primary--I couldn't afford a piece of literature--but in the finals. Maybe we did have a piece--it was not what you'd call a piece of literature. In the finals, I think I dramatized better what the problems were. When I talked to people door-to-door, I really began to pick up what people cared about. No candidate had done as extensive a door-to-door campaign, that I was aware of, certainly within the immediate time of that campaign.

Chall: You covered the district.

Wyman: Oh, I covered the district. We figured we saw 20,000 people in the primaries. By the time we'd finished, we'd seen maybe 30,000 people. I can't remember what the vote was, but it almost reflected what we'd seen. It was a real novelty--this young college girl. It began to catch on a bit. Then the people who were Jewish in the community, when they found out I was Jewish--"My gosh, a little Jewish girl," on top of it. They were beginning to talk about it.

## Raising Funds

Wyman: I remember going to one of the big contributors. I didn't know anybody who gave money. The only people I knew were people I met through Helen Douglas, or who gave to politics, or might give. I was a playground instructor at USC and I worked on a playground. One of the people on the playground whose parents were active in the Jewish community said, "You've got to get this name and this name." I said, "I don't know those people. How do I get to them?" He said, "I'll get to them. I'm going to introduce you to my mother."

These were the people who owned the Sally Shops. Now I met him because I had his kid on the playground while I was going to school. He got me to certain people. Their name was Zukerman. Sadie Zukerman, for example, took me by the hand and took me down to see certain people. I got in to see--I'll never forget--Ed Mitchell and Oscar Pattiz who were chairman and president of Beneficial Life Insurance. I got in to see them. I asked them for money. Oscar Pattiz and Ed Mitchell said, "You shouldn't do this. You should go out and find a husband and get married and stay home." It was unheard of. I said, "Give me a contribution anyway."

Wyman: Then the Boyer family was very well known in fund-raising politics. Lou and Mark Boyer. Mark wasn't active in those days; Lou was. He was very prominent in the Jewish community, and we knew them from when I was a little child. My uncle was their very best friend. And we knew Lou Boyer had money and he would give money. When I say give money, they might give me a hundred dollars or fifty dollars. That was big.

Then there was a man who subsequently died, who was really just wonderful. His name was Joel Moss. He called me out of the blue and I thought it was a set up because I was very nervous. I was single and he was an old man, but kind of an in-man. I went out to see him in his home. He wanted to see me in his home, which made me a little nervous; not his office. I remember somebody went with me. We didn't know if it was a set-up of some sort. In the finals, we became very nervous about being set up, because we weren't in the in-swing, and we'd heard stories. You know, being a young woman, and being single. I just didn't want to get set up. It was funny. Al, the campaign manager--his name is slipping me now--Al Burnstein, was a young lawyer.

Chall: He was your campaign manager?

Wyman: Yes. And Al said, "I'd better ride with you. I don't know if we should let you go alone." I can't remember if he did and sat outside. I went in and Joel Moss turned out to be the loveliest man in my life. [laughter] He was so fascinated that a young Jewish girl would be doing this, and he said, "I'm going to help you raise money." And he really did. He constantly would be sending me checks. He'd play poker with somebody. He was a big poker player. The men would come to his house. He was a builder in L.A. He was just fascinated, fascinated with my election. He'd never done anything like that in his life, so on election night, he came down with me to city hall. He was so excited.

I'll never forget, when I got married, he wanted to meet Gene, and he gave me my whole sterling silver set. He just fell in love with the idea of me, and he would call and say, "Roz, I'm so excited. I read something about you in the papers," when I'd get a little write up. It was like he adopted me.

But people began to do that in the finals; not in the primary much. I began to raise a few dollars when we ran again. But we didn't do much different, except we had a piece of literature; we had some billboards. We had some things that we didn't have in the primary. It was just epic. People coming into the house. It was so fresh in politics. They'd come from work and they'd eat, and out we'd go, and then we'd come back and sit around the floor and tell what had happened.

Wyman: Then everybody they felt was positive was transferred on to another card and the phone number immediately looked up to be ready to be called to get out the vote. Even though amateur we were doing things quite professionally without money. We had amateurs with sense. As I say, laying our vote against Stevenson's vote, breaking the district down, knowing here, in Bel Air, that I wasn't going to get two votes which I didn't get--don't waste one minute up here. Certain sections, it was silly to campaign in--we didn't.

Chall: You were very savvy.

Wyman: We ran a really great campaign for what we did. The excitement--the freshness of it. People who were in it will always talk about it.

Chall: Did Jesse Unruh and people of your old group at USC help you?

Wyman: Yes they did. Jesse did help. I can't remember exactly what he did do--probably walked the precinct; he probably did do something. Jesse, at that point, was a working guy. He was trying to get through college. His wife was helping put him through college at that point, so, he didn't have much influence. But everybody in my Democratic Club came to help. All the Young Democrats, as I said, bussed down from San Francisco once; up from San Diego. The last week-ends, they came in from Pasadena. Dick Nevins who got blasted in today's paper, went out and was doing precincts for me. It was just a marvelous, wonderful experience.

Chall: Did you have to do any public speaking?

Wyman: Oh, yes. I did meetings I could get into. I wasn't really very well trained in public speaking. I had taken one speech class in high school--not even college.

It was funny, though, how we had to use everything. One of my school teacher's husband was an American Legionnaire, a right-wing Republican. I needed an American Legion name of some sort to head the Veterans' Committee. I went to Mr. McFadden and said, "You've got to give me your name. You're going to be the head of my Veterans' Committee." Helen McFadden died! He didn't agree with anything I did. His wife was one of my dear friends in high school. So I got Hillis McFadden's name. How we stretched to get names on that literature the first time I ran--to list anybody.

Chall: A great list. [laughs]

Wyman: It was weird. Nobody really heard of Hillis McFadden, except his own Legion post, but I had to have a name, and he was the only one I knew. We really stretched for everything, to get it filled--like categories. It was really a wonderful, wonderful campaign.

## III THREE TERMS ON THE CITY COUNCIL, 1953-1965

### "Now What Do I Do?"

Chall: Then when you won, you said, "Now what do I do?"

Wyman: Everyone was petrified. [laughter] Everybody. Liz Snyder thought, oh, my God, now what are we going to do? She doesn't know how to run a city. What will she do down there? She's going to embarrass us. [laughs] It was really funny. They said, "Well, you know, we've got to help her now. She needs things. We have to help her."

I really began to study. Really, the courses and books from college really went to work when I became a member of the council. I was amazed by how useful they were.

I was amazed just recently. In the Carter administration, the people surrounding him didn't understand the budget process in Congress, and admitted to it. I think of how I became a city councilperson and I took that charter and read it and read it. Then I took the municipal finance books and read them. And I studied the salary survey.

Even though I went in there green, I really learned and I was not going to be caught. I knew the rules of the council and I knew that charter inside out by the time I sat down in that seat. Thank God, I did, because I was resented when I first got there--greatly. Most of the men were old enough to be my father and my grandfather.

Chall: It had been a tight little club for many years.

Wyman: Oh, yes. It was really murder when I arrived there. It was not pleasant at the beginning, at all.

Chall: There were or still are fifteen council members?

Wyman: There are fifteen members of the council.

Chall: And you were, of course, the only woman and just a young freshman.

Wyman: The woman thing wasn't so bad--it was the age.

Chall: The age?

Wyman: The age was really resented.

Chall: How dare she!

Wyman: Yes. Win. We've spent our life in business or in doing something--lawyers, or something--and here's this kid out of college, who just comes in here and wins. I had to toe very carefully at the beginning because, one, I figured I had to get along with those men. I tried to remember the business about trying not to stick out from them. I had so much publicity. I didn't have to do anything, and they watched me. They followed me--everything I did.

Then, very soon after I took my seat, I got into an awful fight over an appointment of Mayor Poulson's to the library commission. There was a great to-do, by the way, over the presidency of the council.

## Selecting the Council President

Wyman: Let me digress before that. There was a whole change. The council had always been very conservative, and there was a change in our election--mine. Everett Burkhalter who used to be a congressman, was elected. I was elected. The balance of power could change. So there was a big to-do about the presidency of the council. I was hounded. Eddie Roybal, who is now a congressman, was one of my closest liaisons.

Chall: Was he on the council at that time?

Wyman: Yes, he was on the council at that time. A councilman died in the interim between the election and my taking my oath. The old councilmen wanted to be able to appoint somebody before the new councilmen were sworn in--so they would have the control of power, being conservatives.

Chall: It was that close?

Wyman: Then the liberal councilmen disappeared. It was incredible. I thought politics was always like this. [laughter] There I was, and it really became kind of dull most of the time. The liberal bloc disappeared and, under the council rules, you have to be present. If you're not present, the sergeant-at-arms goes and gets you to make a quorum--if you're not excused. They all, theoretically, went on a fishing trip.

They decided one night. There were about six or seven days involved here. They knew if they could hold out till we took our oath that the others could not appoint somebody in the interim. And they did disappear. And one of the councilmen's wives never knew where he was because he was very henpecked. If they told, he would have been murdered. They thought they'd gone on a fishing trip.

They were actually in Ojai. I didn't know where they were but they called me at night and said, "Now, look, you're going to get real pressure from Councilman [Harold A.] Henry--who wanted to be the president--for you to pledge your vote to him. And we're not going to show up until that day, the day you're sworn in." There were headlines in the city. They were looking for them all over.

Chall: No quorum.

Wyman: No quorum, and it was wild. I thought, "My God, isn't this exciting." The interesting part of that story was that Henry came to see me and they were making me all kinds of offers. Freshmen got the worst office, obviously. And I, being the only woman... His office had a toilet. There was more to-do about the fact he would let me have a toilet because the only toilet was off the council chambers and that was for the men.

That became an incredible issue that got around town. Where was I going to go to the bathroom? I thought I would die over that! Then finally it got so involved--and a cartoon is in the poolhouse--that the L.A. Mirror did a cartoon with an outhouse with my initials on it, and it ran in the paper. But I just said I would use the one the secretaries used and that my kidneys were in good shape. Now I understand Councilwoman Pat Russell. She makes the sergeant-at-arms stand outside while she goes in. [laughter] The whole thing has changed since my year, I want you to know.

Anyway, I was promised anything. So I wound up with Recreation and Parks chairmanship. What happened was this: The liberals disappeared as the three new members would have changed control of the council from conservative to liberal; they finally came back, but I was offered certain chairmanships. I was offered a good office

Wyman: and all sorts of things, if I said I was going to vote for Henry. So, when they came back we had a temporary president, who was Harold Henry. You see, we went weeks without a president being elected, which is the first time that ever happened because we had an even number on the council. We had fourteen of us. No way could they break a deadlock for president and no way could they break a deadlock to fill the seat. So, under those circumstances, I kept my chairmanship, which was interesting.

Finally one of the councilmen one day--whom he least suspected because he was on the conservative side--stood up and said, "I'm going to go for Gibson."

The fight was over Henry and [Ernest] Debs, and his seatmate was John Gibson. This was a conservative and he got up and said, "I'm for John Gibson for president." That broke it. Then John Gibson became president and finally we filled the seat. We filled the seat then with Mrs. Davenport, the dead man's wife.

Chall: What's her name?

Wyman: Harriet Davenport. She was an interim appointment only because they couldn't agree. Then somebody ran and won the seat. Then I became chairman of Recreation and Parks.

## The First Battle: Opposing an Appointment to the Library Commission

Chall: You took recreation.

Wyman: That's what I wanted. I loved recreation. I took that, and then, under that committee chairmanship came the library as well. So the first month I was in office when I really didn't want to get into any battles, Poulson had nominated a woman. What was her name--Mrs. Kirby, I can't think of her first name--to the library commission. She was an arch conservative and had said that she was in favor of book burning.

Under the rules of the council, it came to my committee and we had to make a recommendation, whether to support her or not. I went to Poulson and I said, "Please take her off this and put her on something else. Why would you select a person who's for book burning?" He didn't know me very well. We became great friends later. But he said no. She was obviously a big supporter. I decided I couldn't vote for her and I went to the other councilmen and they said, "Roz,

Wyman: we never object to a mayor's appointment. He's allowed to have his team and we've never objected down here." Even Eddie Roybal said, "Roz, you won't win it. I'll vote with you, but it's probably the only vote you'll get." And he was the only one I got. [laughter]

But we filled the council chambers that day her vote came up like nothing I've ever seen. Women with the hats. Boy, conservative America was out there. It was hairy for me. I was really a neophyte and I took on a major battle, and I lost. I always felt I was right and I would have done it again.

Chall: Did you make your opinions public?

Wyman: Yes. I stood up and made them public, and said why. I said I'd asked the mayor to put her on another commission and that this was just against my principles. I didn't believe in book burning and I didn't think you put a person on--you know, all the reasons you could imagine. I went down in glorious defeat, but it was interesting.

Gene had watched my election and followed it. That fight made him more interested in me than ever. He thought, "What guts." I was all over the paper and the news.

Chall: That was in the heyday of the McCarthy hearings.

Wyman: I just thought that was so horrible. My principles just didn't allow it. All my life, even though I learned to compromise, when I went down there, I was not much of a compromiser. I really found out you had to compromise. But on an issue like that, I never would have compromised. It was principle.

In some issues even though my constituency might be against it, I had to vote my conscience. Now in many cases, if it was a tossup, I would take the constituency's viewpoint, if I felt I didn't have a conscience problem. But on other things, I just could not compromise. As I say, I learned to compromise, and I did better for my district.

I got along with the men better. Eventually, they began to accept me. They knew I was really sincere. I was enjoying my work. I had learned. I wasn't trying to be a show-off, or whatever they thought I was going to be. My last term, I was elected president pro-tem, which is, of course, the second spot on the council.

I gave [Sam] Yorty a fit constantly when he got down there. The Dodger fight was, of course, major in my life. I led the Dodger fight. There's so much. I don't know what you want to talk about. I had three babies. There are stories about being pregnant; on getting married on the council; changing my name on the council; other humorous stories.

Wyman: We have a rule about being excused, for vacations and so forth. There are provisions for being away. There is no provision in the charter for vacation; obviously, you went. When I got engaged, they all knew I was going to come by and ask to be excused. They ganged up and voted against my excuse. I called Gene and said, "We're not going on a honeymoon." [laughter] There was some great humor with them. With the Dodger fight--

## Bringing the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles and Other Battles

Chall: What was the Dodger fight about?

Wyman: It was bringing the Dodgers from Brooklyn here. We had a referendum. We had a vote of the council. I was floor leader. It was a major battle in Los Angeles, and I led it. Later, it probably cost me some of my popularity.

Chall: Did you vote for it or against it?

Wyman: I was the leader for it. We took some land that had been originally set aside, for public housing. We moved Mexican families out of there. Although they were living there illegally, they'd taken their settlement. I think the scrapbooks--I don't know what shape they're in--have pages and pages filled with that story. The Dodger fight is major in my life and Walter O'Malley always calls the stadium, "the house that Roz built." It's like the house Ruth built--the Yankee Stadium, and this is the house Roz built.

I was pregnant. I let the newsmen, often the sports writers, know what our strategy was. I was the floor leader. It's a tremendous part of the history of the city of L.A., how the Dodgers came. I was highly concerned.

I was the first woman on the Coliseum Commission; very interested in sports. I was very interested in art--sports, which was very different--literature, music, art. I fought for the Greek Theater; made it into being something.

I never was without a battle. Usually to stay in public life, you don't take on all the battles, but I really felt I was down there to do a lot. I took the mayor on, Yorty, relatively early. I thought he was bad and I would attack him when I thought so. That cost me. Sam went out to beat me and he did. We had some ups and downs in our political career--sad points and happy points. Gene got active before long. We got married and Gene got active.

Marriage to Eugene Wyman

Chall: When were you married?

Wyman: August 29, 1954.

Chall: I see. He began pursuing you after you won?

Wyman: Not immediately, but it's an incredible story--how we got married; how we met. He had watched my election. He had a law firm--a very successful man.

Chall: By that time, he was successful?

Wyman: He was always successful. I never knew Gene when he wasn't a successful man.

Chall: Much older than you, wasn't he?

Wyman: About six years.

Chall: He had a head start then, professionally.

Wyman: Professionally, but most people didn't have their own law firms. And on the way, building what he built, he built one of the great law firms of America. Not only that, he did it himself. When he died, he had sixty-five lawyers in this office and there were offices in Washington, Paris, and London.

Chall: I didn't realize that.

Wyman: Oh yes, he's one of the most remarkable men I've ever known.

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Chall: If you don't mind, I'd like to back up a bit because I think it's important to the story of women in politics. I'd like to go back and pick up the thread of your personal life because it fits in with your political life. You were telling me about your husband, who was already well into a good law practice.

Wyman: Gene had followed my campaign a little bit. The interesting part of it was he was dating another woman his family was very unhappy about. Gene was special to a man in this town who owned Republic Indemnity Company, an insurance company, and Gene's first big client.

Chall: Republic Indemnity?

Wyman: Yes, and the man's name was Robert Kissel who was the president of it. Gene's mother and father caught my story in a little town in Illinois--Du Quoin, Illinois. The story was an AP/UP story. They kidded Gene. They said, "You like politics. Why don't you go meet this lady?"

He was here practicing. He was born here; went to southern Illinois; then went to college at Northwestern and Harvard Law, and then came out to California. His father always said, "Go back to California. Don't live here."

Chall: Where is his home?

Woman: Du Quoin in Illinois, southern Illinois. Gene had a remarkable life of his own. He was student body president of Northwestern, both in his junior and senior year. He went on to Harvard Law and graduated. Didn't even wait to graduate, he was so worried he wouldn't have a job out here. He worked for somebody and then started his own law practice in less than a year.

Where Robert Kissel comes in and Republic Indemnity--when he opened his law firm, they were his first client, big client in the sense that he was doing insurance work. Bob Kissel was not very happy with whom he was dating, et cetera, et cetera.

Chall: He cared that much about Gene?

Wyman: Yes, he really cared about Gene. So anyway, Gene, one day, shortly after this issue with the book burning which he had followed very closely, saw that I was speaking at the Beverly Hills Bar Association and Jerry Geisler was my host, introducing me--the famous lawyer of the time who was always a wonderful supporter of mine until he died. Gene's law firm was across the street from where I was speaking. I can't remember the name of the restaurant because it subsequently changed and is now a savings and loan. But it was at the corner of Beverly Drive and Wilshire. He decided he'd go across. He couldn't get anybody to go with him, but he decided to come anyway.

He came, and he asked me a question, which I subsequently don't remember. But he left the meeting and walked across the street and told his secretary, and his law partner, "I just saw the woman I'm going to marry." Now I didn't know this.

He had picked up from my conversation that I always was driven, and I always <u>was</u> driven. In my early days, if it wasn't a mechanic from the pool, it was either a friend or somebody, because the papers were watching me very closely. The <u>Herald-Examiner</u> had a kind of vendetta on for me for some reason, so I never went anywhere alone. I always wanted a witness to everything I did. I was really very careful.

Wyman: I was getting a tremendous amount of proposals. I was getting mash notes. I was getting anti-Semitic stuff. I was drawing all of it because I couldn't get out of the public scene. Obviously, after the big fight on the book burning, I had all the ultra conservatives--all the hate people. At the same time, I was getting love letters, mash notes--that whole bit--so I was really very careful. I decided it was very silly for me to go alone. My secretary, who was the mother of six or so, was very concerned that I not go alone. She always made arrangements. So, Gene picked up that I was driven every place I went. There's an interesting story, by the way, about how I got my secretary.

Chall: Yes, I'd like to hear about that when we're through with the story.

Wyman: Gene decided that he would get Bob Kissel, president of the insurance company, who was also president of the temple in the [San Fernando] valley, to invite me to be at a meeting at their temple, and if I accepted, then he would make arrangements to pick me up and bring me home.

Chall: You were still living at home?

Wyman: Yes, I was still living at home. He had the invitation letter written. At first I didn't know whether to accept it, but I decided to accept it. Then he had the rabbi write a letter saying that they would have somebody pick me up and he gave the name of the person who would do so--Gene's. He called me, somehow getting through easier than usual. My regular secretary was out that afternoon and I had a substitute secretary. He said that he was the young man who was to pick me up, and had I not gotten the letter from the rabbi? I was rude and hung up on him. I said to the girl who was my secretary, "Can you imagine that guy's nerve? He's using a letter from a rabbi to come get me."

During my early stages, when Mary, my secretary, was away, it was so wild in my office. During her absence, I never felt it was very smooth, until later on, when I got my feet down. But this was very early in my career. I had the wrong day on the calendar; I didn't know what this guy was talking about, and I had already accepted. But I was aggravated that he told me he was using a letter from a rabbi. So I hung up.

Sure enough, in the afternoon mail, comes the letter from the rabbi. I said, "You know, that guy was legitimate." I had so many nonlegitimate things, that I felt he was a phony. He was real! And I felt horrible. We always kept a phone message record when somebody called. I asked if by any chance, we kept his name and telephone number. The secretary said that yes, we had. I said, "We've got to

Wyman: call him back. That was terrible." I felt that the rabbi had written the letter; I didn't know anything about all this pre-planning. So I called him and told him, "I tell you what. I'm going to come from a meeting near here. I'm being delivered, but I would appreciate getting home. As long as you're going to be in the temple, I will be glad to have you come get me. It's very nice of the temple to provide me with a driver. Me, I'm legitimate with the whole thing.

This was on a Friday night. Usually, I'm exhausted by Friday night, because the demand for me to speak was incredible in the beginning, and I didn't have enough sense to turn some of them down. I thought you had to go. So I accepted the speech; went out to the valley, got through with the speech, and who shows up out there but my uncle. He decides he will drive me home. This, after months of planning on Gene's part--about three months to put this whole thing together. In the interim, he had tried to find somebody who knew me who would give him an introduction, and he never could make it. My uncle and he are wrestling about who's going to take me home. I don't know what this is all about.

Finally Gene won or lost. We walked out to the car, a powder blue Cadillac convertible. Gene looked very young; when he died, he looked very young. I said, "Whose car is that? Did you borrow it?" He said, "No, that's my car." I was amazed that a young guy, he was about twenty-nine, would have this sort of thing. But I figured, what the heck, all his money's in this automobile. When he got me in the car, he told me the whole story--how he was devastated when the letter hadn't come. He told me about the meeting and how many months it had been since that meeting; that he had almost lost me to my uncle. I thought that was really clever. Somebody cared that much to drive me home and I could at least be nice. I still didn't realize he wasn't a temple member. [laughs] That came very late.

He said, "I'll tell you what I've done. I've made a reservation for the Coconut Grove for tonight. I thought we'd go out and have a drink. Wel'll get to know each other a little bit." I said, "I'll tell you what. I am too tired to go out. I realize you've gone to a lot of trouble, but I'm really weary. It's Friday night and the week is long. I get very little time now to date and play. I'll take a rain check." He told me that Tony Martin was at the Grove and I happened to love Tony Martin in those days. I hadn't heard Tony Martin in ages, so I said that before he leaves, we'll do it. He drove me home and said good night.

The next day he called and said he had made reservations for the next--whatever day it was. [laughter] It was mid-week, as I recall. I said, okay. The night of the date comes and I had an

Wyman: accident on a corner in my district. Not me personally, but a child was killed. They had wanted a signal on that corner. I had listed my phone the whole time I was in public office. Gene, at one time, had said that was a little crazy, but I always felt you should be reachable. The neighbors had reached me and wanted me to come out to the scene of the accident. The child had been killed and I was really upset.

Gene was on his way over and I didn't even know his number to tell him I was gone. I said to Mother, "You'd better just keep him company." He arrived and I was about an hour and a half late coming home. I apologized to him but he knew I was in office and knew what my life was like. So we went out to the Grove and the next day five dozen red roses arrived and the note said, "Tony and I enjoyed your company." That was it. I never dated anybody else.

Gene had to get rid of his girl friends. But it's very strange. I cannot tell you when Gene proposed. He could not tell you. We knew we were going to get married. It just happened. I don't remember a formal, "Will you marry me?" We just started to date and were suited for each other. I don't know about anybody else's marriage but it was a great marriage. With two very dominant personalities, we had a six-month adjustment period, I would say. In fact, Gene packed up to leave the first month. Where was he going to? He was going back to my mother! [laughter] We lived in a motel at first because we were waiting for a house. Helen Douglas was one of the first persons we told. She was visiting here. We went out house hunting that day and told her we were going to get married. In fact, she knew before my folks did.

Finally, one day I called Gene at the office and told him I had told my folks we were going to get married. He was very nervous when he finally came over. My mother always kids. She says I was living at home and she finally decided, since I was on the council, she was going to get board and room and make me pay. Then Gene came along and took me.

He was so supportive of everything I did. Just a prince of a human being. He was so bright and loved his family, as busy a man as he was. Every crisis I got into on the council--over the Dodger fight or whatever it was--he always was there to help me and support me in whatever I wanted to do.

There was a point at one time where John Kennedy asked me to come back to Washington to be in the Kennedy administration, a very high position. Gene said, "Roz, if you want to do it, we'll make it work. I have a law practice in Washington and I'll come a couple of times in the month, at least. You can come home." We were trying

Wyman: to decide. I was very flattered and excited. I loved the Kennedy thing and knew everybody in it. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The key line was Gene saying we'll make it work if you want it to work. I could come and visit the kids or the kids could come to visit. The tears started rolling down my eyes. He said, "Well, I guess the decision is made." There was no question. I couldn't leave my home and my family.

I was flattered. The Kennedys were not known to like women, especially. The liked women but they didn't particularly like women in office or women in government. I got along very well with them and was an early Kennedy supporter. I was very close to Bobby--the whole gang. I really liked them.

Even to take me away from my home, if I wanted to do it, Gene would have supported me and he would have made it work. He was just an exceptional man. I've known a lot of marriages and I've known a lot of people--our friends, the family. I've never seen a man so devoted to his family. As busy as he was. His kids would call him and no matter what kind of conference he was in, he got up and talked to his kids. He was East, and it meant a weekend, but he would come home, even if it meant turning around and going back.

He was so respectful of me. He was just a rare guy. His death has been really--I've never really totally recovered from it. [January 19, 1973]

Chall: I'm sure it isn't going to be ever easy, is it?

Wyman: No. It's been four and a half years now.

Chall: When you have a marriage that is in all these respects so perfect as you made it sound...

Wyman: We did everything together. When he got active in politics, if he had a project, I carried it out half the time. We were always together. An interesting sideline on that: Liz Snyder is one of my closest friends. I took Gene to meet her. She was one of the first political people I took him to meet. We went together to a UCLA football game. I had an issue. Poulson had attacked Eartha Kitt, who was an entertainer here.

Chall: I remember an issue involving Eartha Kitt, but I don't remember the reason for it.

Woman: One of the leaders--was it Krushchev--had come to town; some Russian leader. She entertained for him. They thought her entertainment wasn't in good taste.

Chall: Now I remember.

Wyman: Poulson attacked her. Within the next few nights, we decided to go hear her at the Mocombo. The press heard I was coming. I didn't tell the club or anyone. We had made a reservation in Gene's name--it wasn't even in my name. When I walked in, because I was fairly well known in town--

Chall: You weren't married yet, were you?

Wyman: We were not married yet. The press flooded into the place. Was I taking a position opposite the mayor or was I supporting her? I was really very supportive. I said that's the way she entertains and I think she should do what she does on her own, and I didn't feel it was disrepsectful to him, or whatever the issue was.

The following weekend we went out with Liz and Nate [Snyder]. Liz took Gene over the coals: You know, "This girl has a future and we're very interested in her; we care about her. Why would you take her out to a place like that?" Liz ran him up and down. And Nate, the story later goes--which we all laughed at--when they got home, Nate said, "What did you do to that young man!? You really crucified him!" [laughter] Later she apologized to Gene. She said she just cared so much about me, and she wanted to know what his intentions were. It was really a funny experience, and he was a little scared of Liz for a little bit. Eventually we just loved Liz. Chris [Christina], her daughter, is in Gene's law firm.

Chall: That's what I heard.

Wyman: She's bright and sharp.

Chall: Must be quite a girl.

Wyman: Yes. She's quite a girl.

Chall: He married you knowing full well, or almost, I guess, what your life would be like. I guess it would take living with this pressure, this sort of fishbowl atmosphere, to realize the full import.

Wyman: I think only a very successful man, within himself, and a very secure man, really can take a woman in office. Now I don't know if all women in office have the amount of publicity and the press that I got, in the first place, because being the only one and being first. Not being a wallflower, either, but a public official who took stands.

Wyman: He was called Mr. Wiener, obviously, a lot, but Gene had all his own going for him. He was terribly secure within himself. He, in my eyes, was much more successful, than I ever was. I think that, depending on the situation and the woman in office and what is involved in it, I think a man who is very successful within his own right is the kind a woman really needs in order to have a total life--a married life.

The Children

Wyman: When we came to our first child, I lost my first baby at the convention in 1956. I lost the child at the convention where Adlai Stevenson was nominated and where John Kennedy almost made that run for vice-president against Kefauver. We were sharing a room with Liz and Nate, so Liz and Nate have been woven in and out of my life many, many times. I started to show signs of having the baby and I was just getting into the seventh month. So they took me to Michael Reese Hospital and, gosh, it was mad. The policeman didn't believe that I was having a problem and he stopped the cab which we made rush. Gene almost hit him, which was not like Gene at all. But I lost the first child. Shortly thereafter, I got pregnant again. When the child was born, I had all the pangs and pains of a woman who had to think--now should I stay home? Should I give up my career? Here's a child. What is my obligation?

Chall: What year was this?

Wyman: Betty is nineteen. My kids laugh about this. I can't remember the year they were born. I can't remember their birth dates. I'm the only mother in the world who has trouble.

Chall: You've got another one here.

Wyman: I get all mixed up. I don't know. [laughs] Betty was born April fifth, I think 1958. We'll see if it comes out right.

Chall: That would make her nineteen.

Wyman: Gene and I talked about it, and he was so wonderful. He said, "Roz, I married you knowing totally what your life was and what our life would be. You're an interesting, exciting, vital human being." I'll never forget that conversation. He said, "I can't believe that you want to stay home. I don't want you to stay home. We can afford help. I want to come home and have you tell me all the interesting things you tell me now, or share your life, or you share my life."

Wyman: He wanted a child more than I did. He was mad. He would have had ten probably. If we hadn't lost the one, and the timing, or whatever.

Gene had premonitions of dying young. I almost had a child when I was thirty-nine--the fourth child. He said, "I will never live to see that child grow old." Anyway, we didn't have that child. But he loved kids.

He said that he just felt that I was not a homebody and that I would dry up and I wouldn't be this vital, exciting human being that he married, if I stayed home and just reared a child. He said he was making it absolutely, completely clear to me that there was no reason to stay home. He said, "Knowing you, I'm sure you could manage career, home, child, me, everything." So that was it. It was never discussed again. We had three children.

Chall: It never created any problem for you then? You never felt pangs of guilt?

Wyman: Oh, sure--I felt always...

Chall: That was the period, you know, when women were staying home.

Wyman: There were times that I felt, well, gee, should I be home with the kids? Am I taking time away from them? But I'll tell you, not a lot, not a lot--Because , one, we shared everything. We both worked. Gene got up for the night feedings as much as I got up with the night feedings. He came home and he fed his children. He diapered his children. No matter what. We shared the rearing of those children. We came home, usually, almost at the same time. We had our weekends off.

We tried desperately not to do too much on weekends when they were little. We felt the time we spent with them was good. In other words, we tried to do what the kids wanted to do. I suppose I could rationalize it, but I think so often a parent who's home constantly says, "Go watch television. Go do something." We almost always took them on trips with us. We rarely took trips without them. In fact, we took so few trips, period, in our life. There was always somebody's election or my election. Or a problem regarding somebody Gene was working for. Some crisis in his law firm. We only made three major trips in eighteen years of marriage and we could afford travel.

Our kids were a vital part of our political careers. From little knee-high grasshoppers, they were at the table when we had political guests. They heard the political speeches and they went. There's a

Wyman: picture of the kids with [Lyndon] Johnson, when he was vice-president, at city hall. Look at the size of them--that's Betty and that's Bobby. Brad wasn't even born. In other words, our kids were a vital part of our lives. So, I really didn't suffer.

Obviously there's times when you think, should I be with my kids, or am I taking time away from them, or shouldn't I go out tonight? If we had to go out, we tried to have dinner with the child children before we left, or sit at the table with them. After all, they went to bed, they were little kids. Gene died when Brad was nine and a half and Betty was fourteen and a half, and Bobby was thirteen. We tried, with our busy lives, to really make the kids a part of it. Then I took them on a trip to Gettysburg and Washington.

Again, being in politics, Gene had a great philosophy, that we should try to instill in our kids what the Kennedys had instilled--that the political life is really honorable, and a good profession, important, et cetera. I'm not sure they totally feel that way. You'd have to ask the kids. But I know my last election was very brutal. I ran for city council again. I was kind of bored and thought, well, it's time to go again. Maybe I'd try. It was a brutal, brutal campaign and the children were really turned off. I'm afraid that some of the good we did was lost in that campaign. They hated it. I hated it.

Chall: When was that?

Wyman: It may have been '75. It was an odd year; it must have been '75. It was when Zev Yuraslavsky went in. The one candidate was the worst. I'd never campaigned in the fashion she would campaign in. As I say, I'm afraid the children got turned off a little bit. There was no Gene at that point. I just have to say that my mate was supportive with reference to children, and the rearing of children, and he never made it difficult. If anything, he made it easy. He wanted me to be active. In fact, when I lost, he felt part of it. My original loss in '65 was due to his political activities, because Yorty got on both of our backs.

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The Percodan Controversy

Wyman: I have a great ability, or habit, of forgetting what is bad. I can't remember the circumstances, if they were distasteful to me, or I was unhappy about it, or something. I am very bad. Gene used to say, "Don't get mad--just get even."

Chall: That's what Carmen Warschaw says.

Wyman: Well, he used to say the same thing: "Don't get mad--get even." But I am not a very good one at getting even. Also, I have totally put away in my mind lots of bad things. I can't tell you in depth bad Yorty stories because they're so bad--they were so distasteful to me. I can remember the Percodan incident with Gene and Yorty.

Chall: Which was that?

Wyman: That was brutal. Gene represented a company that made a drug, one of the big laboratories in the country, called Endo Laboratories. They made a drug called Percodan, which is one of the great pain killers. They make also Cumodan, which is the great blood thinner, and Hycodan. It's very first class.

Gene never lobbied in his life. In the first place, his law practice was too good. People used to say that Gene's law practice got bigger when he married me, which was such a joke. One, he never took a piece of city business. He never took a piece of state business. He never got a savings and loan account. Gene played it so straight, but they couldn't believe it.

Just like O'Malley. O'Malley, people would hint, had to build my house, or O'Malley had to do something for me because I was so for the Dodgers. I paid for my seats at the stadium, which nobody will believe. O'Malley has yet to give me a political contribution, which nobody would believe. I mean it's so different than what really happened, the way the minds out there work. Gene's law practice, when he got out of politics--when Pat Brown lost--made the biggest jumps that it had ever made. He didn't need it. He had big corporate clients.

Now, about this client and Percodan. There was a problem in the state legislature and they decided to put Percodan on triplicate prescription. This became a big issue. Actually, the pusher for that was Empirin compound because they wanted to be the one that wasn't on triplicate. Empirin compound and codeine. It became a battle between drug laboratories. It got so complicated because Empirin compound and codeine were fighting Percodan because Percodan was being used more by doctors as not habit forming, or whatever, I don't know. It was a better drug than Empirin compound. Empirin compound was trying to keep them--they were trying to keep something. It was so complicated I can't even remember it all.

They fought it in the state. Gene never went to represent the laboratory. He never sent a lawyer to represent. It was interesting. They hired lobbyists--the company. But because Gene represented,

Wyman: corporately, Endo Laboratories, Yorty got an infinitesimal tie. Of course, Gene when asked, "Do you represent Endo Laboratories?" said, "Yes, I represent Endo Laboratories." "What do you do for them?" "I am their corporate lawyer." "Well, they have a matter in the state legislature."

I don't know if I have the clipping because it's probably in Gene's scrapbook. The one and only time the Herald ever did a decent piece on us--which was totally owned by Sam Yorty. (I mean the Herald people were always backing Yorty--the Examiner, the Hearst chain. Well, the Herald interviewed every legislator on the committee handling this issue and said they had never spoken to Gene Wyman. They didn't know Gene Wyman was the attorney. It was unreal. Because Gene Wyman represented the company, the corporate end, Yorty said that he lobbied drugs. Yorty was wild! We heard Percodan until it came out of our ears, because Yorty held a press conference every day, practically. It got so brutal and I hated it so down there, when Yorty started.

They would go to Yorty and he would say something; then they'd run down to me. They'd repeat what he said--the press-and would I answer him. I would pick up the phone and dial Gene and say Yorty said the following. What do I do? Should I answer? Should I not answer? Then we'd write a statement together. It was brutal; it was just brutal.

He said he also represented gambling interests because, at one point, Gene represented a race track, Hollywood Park.

Yorty was just crazy mad at this point. He tied Gene's activities down to me. In fact, he was told you can't just attack the woman. You've got to make it the Wymans. Yorty, at some point, in some interview, admitted that he was told he can't just keep attacking me. So he made it plural. I was beating him in the council constantly. He had to get rid of me. To beat me, he was smart. His life became better when he beat me.

Ed Edelman, the supervisor whom I had helped get his last job in Washington, D.C. and with whom I went to high scool and knew very well, beat me. [1965] He put out a scurrilous piece of literature. I don't know if you've got any of that history.

Chall: No.

Wyman: We're one of the first people who sued all the way through and got a judgement. He stipulated, because he didn't want to go through the final law suit, and we collected $5,000 from him.

The Wyman-Hibbs Scholarship

Wyman: We put it into a scholarship at Northwestern; part of a scholarship that Gene had established. Again, the wonderful side of Gene. He had been on a scholarship at Northwestern and he always wanted to pay back when he could afford it. So he established a scholarship before he died, in his father's name and in his speech coach's name--from high school. It's called the Wyman-Hibbs scholarship. My son, Brad, is named for Hibbs--Brad Hibbs.

Gene felt that his success in life was due to his father and his speech coach in this little town in Du Quoin, Illinois. Hibbs spent hours and hours with Gene, speaking, and got scholarships for him, and money. He went to Northwestern. Gene, in later years, would write speeches for Humphrey or whomever. Gene wrote beautifully. He'd call Coach Hibbs and say, "Coach, help me write something." The coach wrote beautifully.

Gene was always grateful. He was one of the most pay-back men I have ever met. When Gene died, his will didn't say I had to complete it, but there were about two more payments and I felt it was so important to Gene that I did complete it. Bobby, now, is going to Northwestern, and he's going to be in the school of speech. [sadly] It's such a shame that his dad doesn't see that.

Chall: Let's see, let's get your other two children on the record.

Wyman: Bobby was born January 12, 1960. Brad was born May 13, 1963.

Chall: You said one of your boys has the name Hibbs. Is that a middle name?

Wyman: Brad Hibbs Wyman. And Bob was named for Bob Kissel, the man who introduced us. There was a double Bob. There was the claims manager at that insurance company named Bob Holbrook. He was the one who really convinced Bob Kissel that Gene Wyman was the only man to try their law suits. When Bobby was named, he was named for the two Bobs that affected Gene's life.

When the third child came along, Gene had named all the children. Betty was named for his mother. His mother died when he was a little boy. His father went back to the old country, to Poland, and married his mother's sister. So we named Betty for his mother whose name was Betty. Finally, when the third child came along, I said, "Could I name one of the children?" So I picked Brad. We all had Bs: Betty, Bob, Brad. The dog's name is Bingo and the cat's name is Bess. [laughter]

Wyman: Bess is named for Bess Myerson, our Miss America in the family. She's an incredible woman. Hers is a story of an incredible woman who started out as a glamour sort of person whom everyone figured had no brains. When you take Bess Myerson's background--her family--and what she's done...

Chall: She's really come out lately, hasn't she?

Wyman: She's really special. She did a thing on women that I understand is one of the greatest shows that has ever been done on women--it's a four-part series. I'm trying desperately to get a tape of it. It got such unbelieveable write-ups. There was a full-page ad in the New York Times. Bess is like my sister. I really love Bess.

Chall: How did you become such good friends?

Wyman: Through Mervyn Le Roy, who was very close to us. One of his dearest and oldest friends was a man named Arnold Grant, who married Bess. Arnold become Counsel at the Wyman law firm here, although Arnold was in New York. Bess and I met when Arnold dated her--just before they got married.

It was love at first sight between us. Bess and I just really clicked. There are so few women now that I can really give and take with--that you can intellectually enjoy. In 1972, Gene and I were honored by the Hebrew University, and a building is in our name.* That's one of the reasons I'm taking the children on the trip. Betty spoke at that dinner.

The children were all on the dais and they voted, among themselves, which child would speak. Bess was the MC for that dinner. Teddy Kennedy spoke and Sammy Davis entertained us. One of the great dinners. The award's sitting in there. You can go take a look at it. That was in December of '72. The next month Bess returned and gave the eulogy at Gene's funeral.

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*December 11, 1972 the Wymans received the Scopus Award of the American Friends of the Hebrew University. The Eugene L. and Rosalind Wyman Political Science Building is being built at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

# Wyman: Brilliant Young Leader Dies

EUGENE L. WYMAN
—Community Mourns

*B'NAI B'RITH MESSENGER*
*January 26, 1973*

## 2000 Attend Funeral Rites At Beth Am

### Wyman's Sudden Passing Shocks Entire Community

On Dec. 11, 1972, some 1200 friends gathered to pay tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Eugene L. Wyman as they received the Scopus Award of the American Friends of the Hebrew University.

Bess Myerson, a long-time family friend, was mistress of ceremonies. Rabbi Jacob Pressman, spiritual leader of Temple Beth Am, delivered the invocation.

ON JAN. 21, 1973 — just 42 days later — some 2000 friends gathered at Temple Beth Am to pay final tribute to Eugene L. Wyman, who had died on Friday at the age of 47.

Miss Myerson eulogized the brilliant young Jewish communal leader. Rabbi Pressman officiated.

WYMAN, former state chairman of the Democratic Party and one-time national committeeman, was one of his party's most skillful and successful fund-raisers.

Despite the pressures of his law practice and his political activity, Wyman emerged as a leader in Jewish communal life.

● HE WAS chairman of the Los Angeles Committee for State of Israel Bonds during its most productive campaign.

● HE WAS president of the Western States Region of the American Friends of the Hebrew University during a period which saw an infusion of new ideas and programs. At his death, he was honorary president of the

## Wyman's Sudden Passing Shocks Community

with Mrs. Wyman, to go to Israel this spring to break ground for the Eugene L. and Rosalind Wyman Political Science Building at the Hebrew University.

● IN ADDITION, he was a member of the Board of Governors of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, a member of the Board of Directors of Reiss-David, a member of the legacy committee of Brandeis University and a member of the Board of Trustees of Temple Beth Am.

HIS LIFE was eulogized by Miss Myerson, a former Miss America who is now New York City's Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, as one of "quiet strength" that "renewed our own. His loyalty taught us the deeper meanings of friendship; his compassion drew us out of our own selves. He cared . . ."

Rabbi Pressman said, "That was the keynote of his life and Bess sounded it — he cared."

Jewish communal leaders expressed their sadness in statements:

● ED SANDERS, president of the Jewish Federation-Council of Greater Los Angeles, said, "The entire Jewish Community is saddened by his tragic loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with Mrs. Wyman and the children. We will all miss Gene."

● MICHAEL LITVAK, director of the Greater Los Angeles Israel Bond Organization, said, "Gene's accomplishments as chairman of the Israel Bond campaign in Los Angeles and the work he has done for us nationally are second to none. He opened the door to new avenues of funds for Israel, not only in California, but in Illinois, Maryland and other states of the nation . . . We will miss him immensely, try to remember what he taught us, and try to follow the advice he gave us."

● IN ISRAEL, Avraham Harman, president of the Hebrew University, expressed his "shock at the loss of such an outstanding leader at so young an age." He said he had been looking forward with great anticipation to greeting Wyman at the groundbreaking ceremonies this spring. "We will miss his spirit and his enthusiastic and unflagging leadership," Harmon said.

EUGENE WYMAN's record of accomplishment began early in his career. He was president of his high school class and was state debating champion for two years.

At Northwestern University he combined scholarship with politics — honor student and president of his class and student body.

He was also captain of the university's national championship debating team.

At Harvard Law School, he was a member of the scholastic honorary.

SERVICES FOR Wyman were held at the Temple at which he, his wife and family worshipped. Its spiritual leader, Rabbi Pressman, had officiated at the Wyman wedding in 1954. Joining with Pressman in the funeral service was Cantor Samuel Kelemer.

Active pallbearers were Stanley Beyer, John Factor, Alfred Hart, Eugene V. Klein, Sidney Korshak, Frank Rothman, Barry Sterling, Lew Wasserman, Lou Wyman and Paul Hibbs.

Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey was to have been a pall bearer, but illness prevented his attending.

HONORARY pall bearers included:

Rep. Carl Albert, Sen. Mike Mansfield, Sen. Alan Cranston, of Oklahoma, Justice Stanley Mosk, Rep. Chet Holifield, Rep. James Corman, Attorney General Evelle Younger, Mayor Joseph Alioto, Speaker Bob Moretti, State Sen. George Moscone, State Sen. Mervyn Dymally, Richard Nevins, Sheriff Peter Pitchess, District Attorney Joseph Busch, Undersheriff James Downey, Robert Strauss, Edmund G. Brown, Gregson Bautzer, Mariana Pfaelzer, Jerald Schutzbank, Milton Rudin, Thomas Kuchel, Lloyd Hand, Lewis Archie, Consul General Yakov Avlad, Norman Beck, Hugh Benson, Marshall Berges, Milton Berle, Master Robert Beyer, Burton Bernard, Mark Boyar, Robert Brandt, Sammy Cahn, Joe Cerrell, Dorothy Colton, Bill Connell, Marshall Coyne, Marilyn Fishman, Jules Glazer, James Doolittle, Dr. Sherman Holvey, Max Kampelman, Michael Klein, Robert Kissel, Mervyn Leroy, Peter O'Malley, Walter O'Malley, Master Brad Reifler, Daniel Schwartz, Jack Valenti, Bill Wiener, Lou Wenber, Erving Wolf, Stanley Zax, Supervisor Ernest Debs, Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, Councilman John Gibson and Herb Steinberg.

WYMAN IS survived by his wife, Rosalind, a former Los Angeles city council member; his daughter, Betty; two sons, Robert and Brad, his mother, Harriet Wyman, and two brothers, Dr. Milford Wyman and Dr. Melvin Wyman.

Groman Mortuaries was in charge of the services.

In lieu of flowers the family requested memorial donations be made to the Eugene L. and Rosalind Wyman Political Science Building at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

# Excerpts From Bess Myerson Eulogy Of Eugene L. Wyman

"Our lives are poorer today, not that Gene is gone, but how much poorer we would be, each of us, if his life had never touched ours.

"Whatever is best in us has part of Gene In it. His quiet strength renewed our own. His loyalty taught us the deeper meanings of friendship — his compassion drew us out of our own selves.

"He cared . . ."

• •

**"He was a brilliant lawyer and a concerned and active citizen — but the solid foundations on which those careers were built were his family and his home.**

**"That's where the love and compassion, which were evident in everything he did, had their deep roots — Roz and Betty and Brad and Bobby know better than anyone that this committed man had no greater commitment than as husband and father. No generation gap or human gaps of any kind ever came between the blessed members of this family circle.**

• •

"Roz and Gene set high standards for their family — for themselves as parents and for their children. No ideas were strangers in their home — and all shared the joy, the excitement and stimulation, as a family and as individuals of the widest variety of learning experiences — learning about each other and about the world and all its people — learning to understand and respect the ideas and work of the great men and women who visited the Wyman home and the anonymous, also, who found friendly and respectful attention there.

• •

**"One measure of Gene Wyman and Roz Wyman is their children, minds open with a sense of curiosity and adventure about all ideas and all people with the strength and the courage to accept individual and social responsibility and with the self-reliance to get done what must be done for themselves and for others.**

• •

"Gene will live in their lives, and in the lives of all of us who knew him and loved him and learned from him how to reach for a better world. There is no more meaningful legacy.

"He will be painfully missed by both those who knew him well and by those whose path crossed his only briefly — he will be missed as Husband, as Father, as Son, as Companion, as Partner, as Neighbor, as Concerned Citizen — and always, as Friend . . ."

• •

"And, when any of us in the future find ourselves in a rough spot, trying to choose the right way to go, and perhaps overwhelmed by the obstacles, I think we might hear again, inside our heads and our hearts, Gene saying what he said many times to each of us — 'You can do it.'"

## *EUGENE L. WYMAN*

WHENEVER one spoke of Eugene L. Wyman he spoke of the future, of projects for tomorrow, of great dreams that would most certainly come to pass.

For Gene Wyman was ever looking ahead. It was his way of accomplishing great things in the present.

It is so hard to believe that just six weeks ago, Gene Wyman — the man behind the men in the political arena — stood before 1200 of his friends and told of his aspirations for his family and his people as he accepted the Scopus Award of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

At 47, he had already accomplished more than most men of Mosaic years. A highly successful attorney, a man whose advice was sought by those in positions of government, a Jew who responded to the needs of his community.

His life was that of a man who understood, who cared, who believed.

In that understanding, in that caring, in that believing, he reached out to each of us and led us to do deeds for his country and for Israel.

Gene Wyman, the man of the future, is no longer with us. But the lessons of his life remain.

Eugene Wyman's Funeral: An Outpouring of Respect

Wyman: The day of the funeral--I can't remember it, but I read the eulogy later. Humphrey was going to do it and he became ill and was still going to fly across the country. I said, "Hubert, it's silly at this point for you to fly across, with a fever." Bess had already left to be on her way. I had said Bess was like our sister. If we wanted anybody to do it, it would be Bess. Bess said, "I can't do it. There's no way. I just cannot do it." She stayed with me upstairs that night and she wrote it; and she writes--ahh, you talk about somebody who can write! Bess wrote it and she said, "I'll never get through it." I'll never forget--there's not much I remember of those few days--but God, she--

Chall: She did it?

Wyman: She did it and she collapsed. She came into the family room. We had had it at the temple and she had to go out on a stage-like because it was such a mob. It was just unreal, that funeral. Gene had wanted nothing. We had talked about this and Gene thought funerals were barbaric. I said to myself during the funeral several times, "Gosh, is he laughing at us? What's going on with his funeral?"

Chall: It must have just grown, on its own.

Wyman: The temple itself was filled. The balcony was filled, and every room in the temple where there was a loudspeaker. Then they put a speaker outside to the street. The crazy part of it, as I've said, he wanted no fuss. I thought, "Oh, Gene, you're going to laugh at what's going on.

Then, as we left this house and went down Sunset to hit La Cienesa Boulevard, Pete Pitchess and Jimmy Downey, who were the sheriff and under-sheriff--Peter is still sheriff--met us with an escort of about twenty from their best motorcycle division--the ones who do those tricks. I didn't know about this. They met us at Sunset and escorted us down. I thought, Gene would not believe what's going on.

Chall: It was an incredible tribute. I can't imagine that it could be anything more than a tribute.

Wyman: It was an outpouring. The interesting part of it was that even though I had lost for office, the Jewish people in Fairfax had always voted for me and always watched us. They began to gather, as it later was told, for that funeral at nine in the morning, in order to get in. The funeral wasn't to start until 3:00 p.m. People we didn't even

Wyman: know. They just said there was so much trouble--those people who were trying to run the funeral--because people were arriving--these little Jewish people who had watched our careers.

Chall: They probably felt very much a part of the two of you.

Wyman: That's exactly what they did. I don't think I've ever been to a funeral, and I've been to some prominent people's, that compared to that funeral--in numbers, in--ahh [deep sigh] it was unreal. And it was very sudden.

Chall: There was nothing in his background to suggest this?

Wyman: No. He didn't drink. Didn't smoke. He jogged forty minutes a day. He went in seconds, and he was forty-eight years old. It's just not explainable.

Chall: What's the name of the man Bess Myerson married? I got Arnold--

Wyman: Grant. I've been trying to get her to run for office, by the way.

Chall: She hasn't run for office yet.

Wyman: I don't think she's ever going to run. She hasn't got the stomach for it. She keeps saying she can't be a senator because I want to be one. [laughter] U.S. Senator, that is.

## The Effect of the Press

Chall: There may be a good chance for you yet. You talked earlier about the newspapers and I would like to find out what it's like being in a fishbowl, as you were. You were so young. Perhaps if you had known what would have been involved, you might not have gone in and become a candidate. But once you got into it, how was that experience? You say the newspapers were always after you--that's one thing. When a newspaper like the Herald goes on a vendetta--that's what you called it--what does it do to the individual? What does it do to the office holder, as such? And what does it do to that person's family?

Wyman: At the time the Herald was at its worst, I didn't have a family. It was early in my career. Secondly, some of it was so absurd. They started running articles that I was--they tried to make me very left--a commie, almost. The funniest part was they ran an article the very last week of my campaign which said that I was active in the Communist party, or whatever it was, and which I had never been. I had never

Wyman: been anything but a Democrat. But, nobody had anything on me. I graduated from college and ran for office. I hadn't been in any trouble. There wasn't anything to use against me.

Chall: This was your first campaign.

Wyman: First campaign, yes. It was funny. We really had a ball with that. They wrote it about the last week of the campaign--they wanted to beat me so badly. They said I was riding a sorrel horse. All the inferences you could get. That I had been active in left wing groups, without saying the Communist party. They came as close as they could to saying it.

What we did was to bring my grammar school teacher out, because I would have had to be in grammar school during the period they were talking about. I would have been in grammar school! So we got a statement from one of my grammar school teachers that I was a very active student in school and I ran for everything, but I wasn't leading a cell block. [laughs] But it was so absurd. The period they were talking about were the war years--'45. I was in elementary school in '43. It was ridiculous, so we used that.

Then they were so angry that I won that no matter what I did they attacked me until the Dodgers came along. They were for the Dodgers, which was funny. They never supported me. That isn't true. In 1975, my last campaign, they supported me!

Nineteen seventy-five. The last one I lost. The Examiner supported me once. There was a wonderful man, the editor of the Examiner, with whom I became great friends, Franklin Payne. The young Hearst was running the Herald--the Hearst who's still running it.

Chall: George?

Wyman: George. He was always over there. Then there was a woman named Aggie Underwood, who was famous in political annals down here as a political editor. Not political editor. She had a bigger title than that. I think she was associate editor. She was really big and she didn't like me either. The whole staff at the Herald didn't like me. For one, I was too liberal. They had a man whose name I cannot remember who was in that period. He was so right wing, and the fact that I was a Democrat, and young, and spoke out for Douglas, or any of those sorts of things--it just was devastating, you know. Every time I did something, they just blasted my rear end off.

Wyman: One, I hated it. And, two, it was distasteful to me. I thought, there's no way to fight back. They, every day, had the print. The Times didn't like me, but the interesting thing about the Times was that I ended up being a Times Woman of the Year eventually. In my second campaign, the Times supported me.

Chall: They did?

Wyman: Yes.

Chall: Let's see, the first was in '53 and the second was in '57. You ran again in '61.

Wyman: I lost the fourth time.

Chall: I see. So you had three four-year terms. Nineteen sixty-five was when you lost.

Wyman: Yes. I lost the fourth time--The second term I got the highest vote I ever got in the city. I think I won with almost ninety percent of the vote. I became so well known, which had its pluses and its minuses. They did a survey and ninety percent of the people knew me, which is unreal.

Chall: Even if it was bad publicity, there was publicity.

Wyman: There was publicity. I probably had my best shot to run for mayor about the second time. Poulson, in 1961, decided not to run again and that was the beginning. When Poulson lost and Yorty came in, that was the beginning of my real troubles. Although the Dodger fight was so bitter that I lost a lot of support. The town was very well divided on that issue. I was the leader of it, and it got brutal during that fight. In fact, at one point, it got so bad I had to have policemen around the house and policemen around my chair. My life was threatened. I forget what we were talking about.

Chall: We were talking about the newspapers and the fact that you became well known.

Wyman: Yes, I was saying I was so well known. All the issues I tackled and the ninety percent name recognition had pluses and minuses. The people had strong reactions to me. They liked me or they hated me.

## Some Stages in the Gradual Erosion of Popularity

### Strong Positions on Issues and Candidates

Chall: The people who hated you, let's assume some of them were over the Dodger issue?

Wyman: The Dodger issue was one of the first and most controversial things I hit. Obviously, the conservatives in town hated me after my first initial fight. The Democratic registration wasn't as high in the city at that point as it is today. I was outspoken on unpopular issues sometimes. But I never backed down.

I also, for example, as an office holder, took positions for other office holders. In other words, I ran Stanley Mosk's campaign. [Attorney General, 1958] I became active for somebody else. That was resented. In those days, most people didn't get in other people's campaigns. But I wanted to support people I wanted to support. I was active in Governor [Edmund G.] Brown's campaign and in [John F.] Kennedy's campaign. A lot of people were resentful that here's a non-partisan office hodler who's taking as active a role. The Republicans got mad, obviously, in town.

One of the reasons I lost, eventually, was because of Gene's political activities. He became so active and took on Yorty and constantly fought with him. Also, Jesse Unruh and Gene had some big fights then because Gene supported the governor, and Jesse was out to show up Governor Brown. Gene was state chairman at that time. Gene said, "Look, Jesse, you're my friend, but I want the governor to win." Jesse said to Gene very clearly, "You've got to make a choice. It's either me or Pat Brown." Gene said, "Don't make me make that choice." He made the choice very clearly--it was Pat Brown.

What I'm saying is that we got tangled up in lots of things--with his activities. Gene always felt so badly. He felt I had enough problems and that his activity helped to bring about my defeat--which was <u>silly</u> on his part. It was coming.

### Resentment of Roz Wyman's Success

Wyman: One of the things that happened, which I touched on lightly ties in with the whole women's movement. When I was first elected, I was a single young girl from college. Everybody was rooting for me. When

Wyman: I got married, less rooted for me. I married a successful man. When I had children, I had less rooting for me--to be successful.

Chall: Among women?

Wyman: Women, mainly, because here they'd pick up the newspaper and read about Roz Wyman--the women and the men. Men would read about me and say, "Well, Jesus, look, she's aggressive. Isn't she good?" They're saying, "She brought the Dodgers here." The women don't like it. Some of the men say that she's too aggressive. She should sit back quietly down there. It was more resentful from women than from men.

The more successful I became in my life, rather than saying, "My God, she can walk into the White House and get us a piece of land out there"--using my influence with Kennedy. Rather than saying, "She's not that little girl we first elected." Rather than saying, "Isn't this an incredible success story, of Roz and Gene Wyman," it was resented. It began to be resented.

We were too successful. Rather than my just being and staying that little councilwoman, I thought you were to grow in life, and I did grow. I mean I grew a great deal on that city council. I was an effective public office holder, and I knew my way around. I used my office successfully for other issues in town, too, whether it was a bond issue that I believed in, or whether it was something else. I didn't think I had to sit stagnant and be a city councilperson. Lots of people resented that.

As I say, I wanted a piece of land from the White House. The fact that I could go to the White House and use my influence was resented, to some degree, by people saying, "Look how powerful she's gotten."

## Getting Tangled in Democratic Party Factions

Chall: I see. Going to clip her wings. This was resented by so-called nonpartisan members of the council, by Los Angeles citizens, and by Democrats who felt that you and your husband had too much power?

Wyman: Not so much the Democrats. The factions. Obviously we got caught in factions within the party. We took the issue of Stanley Mosk--that big fight of Pat Brown's--Don Bradley will tell you. When Stanley Mosk became national committeeman, knocking out Paul Ziffren. [1960] That was a big, fat, controversial issue. Carmen Warschaw was on our side in that fight, in fact. We were vitally involved with that. So we started to get into political factions.

Wyman: In fact, in Liz Snyder's election--I was the most prominent, popular office holder to help Liz get elected. Liz's election to state chairman was controversial. [1954] So controversial it was unreal. My in-laws had arrived in town for my wedding. That was the weekend before my wedding, and I left, which they could never understand.

##

Wyman: You know, for people who are non-political, this is unbelievable, if not unacceptable activity--I took off--I mean there were guests arriving all over the place--and I took off to be with Liz.

I went to every caucus. I was very popular at that point. I was new in politics. The minute you take on any political in-fights, you begin--I was almost at the peak of my popularity. I was new in office and I was hot; I was for Liz and I was good to be used. But it was the beginning of controversy, even though that one didn't hurt me too much. I took positions.

Then when Gene got active, he took more positions than I. The Ziffren-Mosk fight. And, obviously, the Carmen Warschaw-Gene Wyman national committee fight. Jesse Unruh and Pat Brown--we were in the middle of that struggle. We supported Sam Yorty, which was so crazy, for the Senate, over Dick Richards.

Chall: Oh, you did? Wasn't that the year of 1956?

Wyman: Yes. We supported him the second time, which was so interesting. That's why Sam was so mad when I refused to support him for mayor. Although we felt that in our life we had done more to help Sam than anything else. Sam had a woman named Eleanor Chambers, who was deputy mayor.

Chall: Yes. I want you to tell me about her.

Wyman: That's a fascinating story in my life. I would not have been elected to office if it had not been for Eleanor.

Chall: Is that so?

Wyman: And yet, at the end of her life we were not even speaking, which was a very sad part of my life.

Chall: First tell me how she happened to help you with your campaign and then how she worked with Yorty. What happened?

Wyman: When I first got into public office, I was active in I think it was--I'm not sure if the number has changed yet--I think it's the twenty-sixth Congressional District. I'm not positive. Sam Yorty ran for

Wyman: congressman from that district. It was the congressional seat he was holding after Helen Douglas. The number changed--I think it went from the nineteenth to the twenty-sixth. But Sam was the congressman from that district and decided to run for the Senate. When I first ran for the county committee, I met Eleanor Chambers. She had no children. Eleanor was very motherly and she adopted me. Just that simple.

Chall: What was she at that point?

Wyman: She was his field deputy; ran his congressional office.

Chall: Even at that time?

Wyman: She's done everything with Yorty. She practically started her career with him. When he was an assemblyman, she was with him. So she went from the assembly to the congressional office with him. When I ran for county committee, the congressman saw the internal politics within his own district better than anybody. Eleanor sponsored me to some degree and I became chairman of the district in my twenties. She pushed that. Then, when I wanted to run for city council, she did everything for me. Everything. She knew everybody in town.

Chall: That would have helped.

Wyman: She's the one who got the story on Marshery that I told you about. She had the tip and followed it through. But Eleanor would make phone calls for me to people to whom she was able to say, "Look, she's good. Listen to her. Give her a chance." She worked every single day in my campaign. She was terribly instrumental. On my election night, when I thanked my parents and a few other people, I thanked Eleanor Chambers. That's how close it was. When she was downtown, she was next door to me. I used to drive her home. Then I taught her to drive an automobile; she was fifty. We were really close friends.

When Sam lost for the Senate races, she then went to work for Tommy Kuchel. We became separated by distance. The funny part about it was that I wasn't excited about her going with Kuchel. Then Kuchel became a law partner of Gene's. Life is so strange.

We weren't as close. We'd write or we'd talk once in a while, but our lives were separated by distance. I can't remember--it may have been over the Kuchel race--because she'd been a Democrat all her life and then supported Kuchel. We got into a to-do over it. Then when Sam decided to run for mayor, she came back and ran his campaign. I told Eleanor I could not support him.

Arousing Sam Yorty's Ire

Chall: You didn't like Sam Yorty at that point, which was 1961?

Wyman: What happened was Poulson had been incredibly good to me. After our initial fight over the woman. He had daughters. I was, in the first place, very straightforward with Poulson. I would tell him when I was with him and when I was against him. Most of the people would not. They'd hem and they'd haw. We became very good friends. He knew I was honest. We became terribly close on the Dodger fight, because he was for it. I was so active in that. Poulson was so nervous and I was constantly holding his hand and doing various and sundry things.

Poulson had just given me--I can't tell you--there's a way a mayor can help a councilperson. His boards were told that if Wyman wants something, she gets it. He tried to help me in any way he could as mayor, after our initial donnybrook. Maybe it took about a year or two to shake that down. I told Eleanor, when she came down to run Sam's campaign for mayor, "I cannot support Sam."

Chall: He was going to run against Poulson?

Wyman: I said that Poulson had been so good to me. "I will not do anything to hurt Sam, but I want you to know I will endorse Poulson. If they want me to write out a statement or something, I will do it, but it will be positive on Poulson and never negative on Sam." Eleanor wasn't too angry, but Sam became very angry. He was mad.

Then when he got elected, I called Eleanor and said if there was anything I could do--the race was over. We'd been friends in the past; I had no vendetta in the campaign. She said fine. But according to her, and I don't know if that's fact or fiction, because Eleanor was the closest thing to Ma Barker you will ever know in your life, Sam said, "I'm going to get Roz."

She was motherly and had a following--a flock of younger kids always around her to be looked after. But I tell you, if it meant cutting anybody's throat, she could do it very easily. She was absolutely two different people. Motherly and grandmotherly; and loving and kind; and yet could cut your guts to pieces if she had to, politically. She knew all the secrets about Sam Yorty. She knew everything. How she didn't get into trouble over the money when that issue came up--the money that was given. The guy went to jail over that--Mel Pierson. Eleanor knew everything. But Sam supposedly said, "I'm going to get Roz."

Chall: Was he a vindictive man? I mean just from the beginning?

Wyman: From the beginning as mayor. He was vindictive all along.

Chall: Was that his personality?

Wyman: Yes. Sam Yorty's history. Guys in the legislature will tell you that in the men's bathroom--he would go in and close the door and listen to them; then go out and use what he'd heard. He was the first guy to be for fascism. He got up, remember, with that horrible state senator who was the biggest demagogue in the state.

Chall: Tenny? [John]

Wyman: He was buddies with Tenny. Sam has been all over the acreage. We were loyal to him because he had helped me, originally--or Eleanor. I always felt our relationship with Sam was because of Eleanor. At my wedding, I sat him--I was very politically tuned in--I sat Sam with the biggest money people, because he was running for the Senate at that point, to help him. But Sam said, "No way; I"m not going to forget Roz. I'm not going to forgive her. I'm going to get her."

The first thing they did was to try to win the council presidency, which they did do. At that point, I had some seniority, but I was purged. I was purged off the coliseum commission. The commission wouldn't even have been in existence without my work for it. I got a ballot measure on the ballot and got it voted by the people. It's the first time we were ever represented on the tri-party agreement. It was always the parks and recreation department, which I felt was wrong. They weren't elected. So I served on the coliseum commission.

There's a story about me bringing the Lakers to Los Angeles--the basketball team. Most people always remember the Dodgers. But I was vitally involved in the Laker fight. There are two major league sports I feel very responsible for.

Chall: By that time you had a reputation then, of going out and doing whatever you thought was important to do.

Wyman: I was the leader in the council. I really was.

Chall: They recognized you as a leader?

Wyman: There was no question about that from my colleagues. Sometimes they'd sit there--wouldn't move, and I'd do the homework for them all. I'd give them the papers and I'd say, "For God's sakes, do something; talk up; don't you care?!" I must say a couple of them said to me when I lost, "Roz, you cared and look what happened to you. You really cared." They used to say, "Don't take on those fights. You'll never last." But I used to think, what's it about if I can't? I never

Wyman: worried about reelection. I thought, I'll do something else with my life if I don't do this. It's not the end of the world if I lose. And I had a good husband supporting me and it wasn't a livelihood to me. In fairness to a lot of those guys--they get elected, then they get scared. What will I do if I don't have this income coming in?

Chall: How much is it?

Wyman: When I first started, it was $12,000. That's what I first got paid. But you know, that was in the fifties. Now it's full time.

Chall: It's an income.

Wyman: It was an income. And now, it must be $35,000--maybe it's up to $40,000. I don't know what it is. I suppose $12,000 in those days was considered a good amount. We got a raise, I remember, the first year I was there; I think it went to $18,000. When I left, I can't remember what it was, but I didn't need it as an income. Others did. Oh, God, now I don't remember what we were on to.

Chall: You were talking about Yorty.

Wyman: Oh, Yorty! I was saying Eleanor then became deputy mayor, and Sam just went out to get me. And he did. He was very successful.

Chall: And so he was. He got you out in four years.

Wyman: Yes. He threw me off my vital committee. But what happened was, in my last two years, we won again, and I became president pro tem. In other words, we recouped. It killed him. It was just killing him. I was beating him in the council. He had a year when he first came in, when I didn't do too well. The second year, we started to change it all around again because other people hated Yorty. It wasn't just me. He was turning everybody against him, in the council, at that point. We had a scandal going on at the harbor.

We had the Mel Pierson thing. Pierson was a Yorty appointee to the Parks and Recreation Commission. He was designated to get campaign funds from people who had zoning cases and other commissioners. This is all in the public record. I really, to be honest, cannot remember what he ultimately was sent to jail for after his trial. There were other charges. I exposed this Pierson matter and nobody would listen to me. I fought alone in those days to try to dramatize those things. Again, to the best of my recollection, someone came into my office and said are you aware of Mel Pierson's activities and left me some material which led to the investigations. Through my Governmental Efficiency Committee we did investigating, and after having

Wyman: proof, we still could not get the council or the committee to go along with me. But, as stated before, he was ultimately tried and convicted and sentenced.

I still attempted to expose what I knew and I recall I did have some kind of public hearing and the newspapers covered it, but nothing came at that moment. Nothing came as I have said before, until a couple of years later when some of the material I had developed was used in part of his court case.

I never questioned anything ethically under Poulson. There was no scandal. None of his commissioners were ever involved in anything questionable. When I took on Mel Pierson the council wouldn't support me up front. I beat my brains out trying to tell those councilmen, but they said, "He's his responsibility. I'm not going to take him on." I said, "You've got to take on these sorts of things." The man ended up going to jail! I was so right on these issues.

Chall: At that point you needed the press.

Wyman: Yes. And the Times was totally with me, of course. It was 100% against Yorty. The only time the Times supported Yorty, was when Jimmy Roosevelt ran for mayor. They didn't support Jimmy; they took Sam. But then the first time Bradley ran, they took Bradley.

Chall: Sam Yorty had, what, three terms? Ran in '61 and won. Ran in '65 against Roosevelt and won. Then he ran against Bradley and won the first time, in 1969.

Wyman: And Bradley beat him the second time. [1973]

Chall: So he had three terms. And all that time he wasn't liked, apparently.

Wyman: He was a minority-winning mayor to begin with. Jimmy Roosevelt was a bad candidate. I don't know if we would have beat him up there, but he barely beat Poulson. The reason he beat Poulson--Poulson had a cancer. They kept saying that he had cancer of the throat. He couldn't talk. He croaked on television. We told him not to talk. He'd lost his voice. All the rumors then. We kept him off television for a long while. Then he said, "I'm going to show them I'm alive and I'm okay." And his voice was gone. He's never recovered his voice to this day.

Chall: Was it cancer?

Wyman: It was not. They don't know what it was.

Chall: Maybe it's something like what Mildred Younger had.

Wyman: They never knew. He never got his voice back. He's an elderly man now.

It was really incredible, and Yorty won by less than one percent of the votes. The second time around, when he won, he won bigger, but Jimmy Roosevelt was a poor candidate, a poor candidate. We were vitally involved in that campaign. Trying to beat Yorty.

As I say, it was ups and downs. The saddest part was that a couple of times, I had Yorty. And because of my friendship, basically, even though it was very strained, for Eleanor, I let him get out of a couple of things. Once I had him on a case where a commissioner he had appointed to the--oh, I don't know--in those days we ran all the hospitals. We had the Health Department, that was it. The Health Department later went to the county. Yorty appointed a health commissioner. Under the Health Department in those times, were emergency hospitals. I was chairman of a committee at that point, or on a committee, which the Health Department was under.

We had testimony. I had tapes, and I had evidence about this commissioner going to various little hospitals--he was in public relations--and saying, "I could get you the contract, if you pay me a hundred dollars a month," or something like that. I had the testimony of the hospital people.

Sam was new at that point. I went to Eleanor and said, "Eleanor, I've got this. I could put you guys away. I'm going to give you a chance to get rid of that commissioner." I had never compromised my ethics, ever. But I was nice because I thought we should bridge this gap. What good does it do? Eleanor then forced Sam not to appoint that commissioner. Rather than taking it where I should have, to the grand jury, at that point, I played it nice.

I had some other occasions. I finally said, "No more." Then I decided to call them as I saw them--Mel Pierson, the harbor, whatever. I didn't win them. They were won later, but I started them. Then there was no peace.

The interesting part was when Edelman got nominated, Sam got scared. Even though he'd supported and given money to Edelman, he wanted Edelman least of all the candidates he'd gotten. And he came to me at the very end and said that if I would support his budget--because I was killing him on his budget--that he'd support me, come out and support me. He would be willing to say, "She does know her business and she is responsible," and so on and so forth.

##

Wyman: What really got me was it was beginning to hurt my constituency. That troubled me. I didn't mind me, him going after me and throwing me off the committees. But when I had an issue that involved public works in my district and his commissioners were told, "Don't accommodate her; don't accommodate the fifth district," then I began to really get aggravated, because it was being taken out on my constituency. But eventually I figured he would hang himself with people who'd supported him. That's what happened, as you saw, that he began to lose vote after vote in the council. That came about [chuckle] just because of his arrogance with the council, because he originally had them.

Chall: I see.

Wyman: Now, I really became the leader of the council and the opposition, often, to him because there were things I just didn't like, and I questioned them. Eventually--it was interesting--I began to win, and win, and, win and win.

## Losing the 1965 Campaign for Reelection

Wyman: I don't even know what question you asked me.

Chall: It had to do with Yorty's campaigns against you and how the residue carried over to the 1965 election campaign--

Wyman: See, if you're blasted--Yorty blasted me or "the Wymans" [pounds fist in hand for emphasis] day after day after day. It got so bad. My office became so tense during those periods. He would blast me and the press would run down, and I didn't even know what he'd said. So finally we started taking tapes of his press conferences, so I really knew. Because if a press man runs to you and says, "He said this," you don't really know what the context was.

I never ducked the press, never ducked them, always answered them. But I finally then, instead of answering on the spur of the moment, I said, "Give me a few minutes. I'll call you back," or "Come in later."

I would pick the phone up and I'd say, "Gene--" He'd say, "What's bad? What'd he say today?" You know, we'd discuss it often; what he did say. And we'd try to come up with a somewhat intelligent answer, or decide if it really demanded answering. And he attacked us day after day.

Chall: I noticed that he was attacking. Naturally the two of you were quite vulnerable to the kind of attacks that were made. But he was attacking almost all the council. It looked as if it was a campaign to get anybody off the council who had fought and disagreed with him so that he could set up his own council, which in effect is what he ultimately did.

Wyman: He did do this, and it was smart from his point of view, but it was brutal.

Chall: I'm sure it was hard, but it was part of his whole method.

Wyman: Yes, but see before that probably I was kind of a really popular sort of person, and it really damaged us personally. It took a while for Gene especially--because I dropped out to some degree when I lost--to gain respect, really.

The very strange part of that whole thing is that in 1965, after Yorty helped finance those people he put in the race against me, and when the runoff election was Edelman vs. Wyman, then Sam got nervous about Edelman. Carmen [Warschaw], by the way, was part of that opposition. I don't know if she talked about it at all. But they supported Edelman heavily.

Joe Quinn, who was the other deputy mayor, went out to see Gene. Quinn said, "We're willing to support Roz now if she will support us." Gene said, "One, I don't answer for Roz. You know, a long time ago we tried to talk to you about treating Roz fairly. Roz tried to say, 'Just treat me fairly. I'm not asking for special privilege, but just treat us fairly.' At that point you had said you were going to try to, and then you went back and just hammered her to death, and us."

Gene said, "You've got to see her." Gene told me what had happened, that Quinn had come out to see him. I said, "That is what makes people hate politicians. If I took Sam Yorty's support now, or he supported me after condemning us, and haranguing us, and saying we're no good, and in a sense we're crooks, and so on and so forth..." There was no question. I mean Gene knew what my answer would be. But it was so distasteful to me; that was everything that I didn't believe in in politics--to think that I would suddenly agree to favors from my outspoken enemy to win an election.

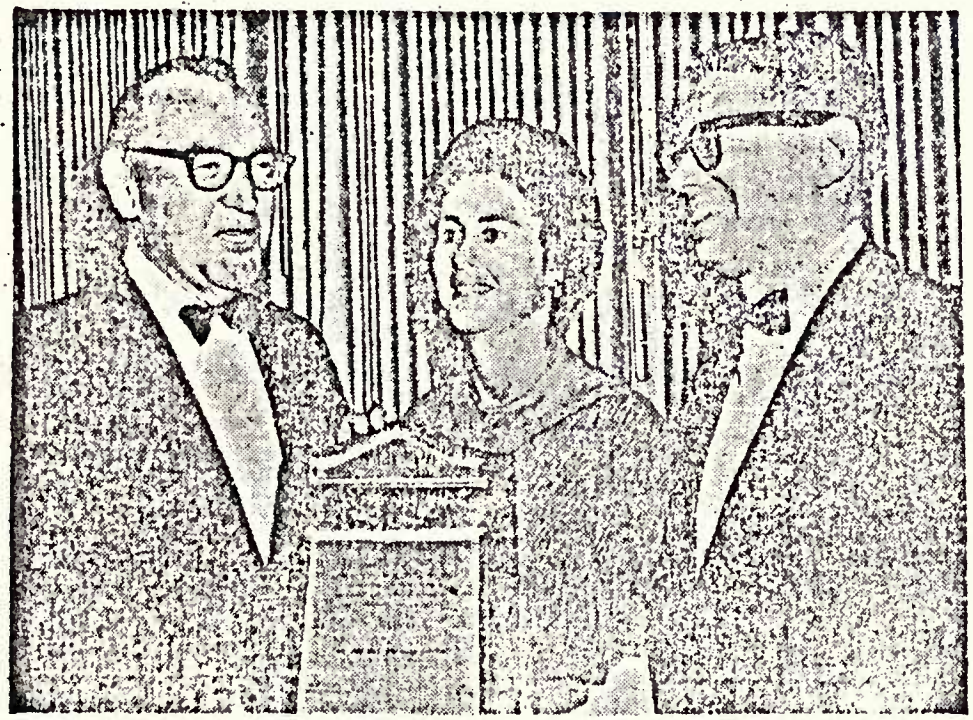
But by the way I also knew I could not win that election. I took a poll up front. I had to make a decision whether to run for reelection. Gene's advice at that point was, "Roz, don't, don't take it anymore. Quit." It was one of the few times that we disagreed. We agreed it's a one-day headline, to quit. Okay, Roz Wyman decides not to run,

# THE WORLD OF ROSALIND WYMAN:

***The following series of articles about Councilwoman Rosalind Wyman was written by Leslie Stevens, well-known playwright and author, whose Broadway hit, "Marriage-Go-Round" was made into a successful film. His production company, Daystar Productions, was responsible for the TV series "Stoney Burke" and "Outer Limits." "Roz On the Record" is the fifth of six articles by Mr. Stevens.***

## *"Roz On The Record"*

**By Leslie Stevens**



***COUNCILWOMAN ROSALIND WIENER WYMAN and her husband, attorney Eugene Wyman, currently hold the title "Mr. & Mrs. American Citizen" awarded by the Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Lodge #487. Shown here with Governor Edmund G. Brown are Mr. & Mrs. Wyman at the award dinner as they received the honor.***

As a homemaker, Rosalind Wiener Wyman's record speaks for itself. A successful marriage of over a decade; three delightful children and a sunny, spotless home. The Wyman warmth of family-feeling is made manifest by the fact that parental in-laws on both sides are not only included, they are welcome.

The care, feeding and contentment of so large a clan would be a major achievement in itself but Roz Wyman does not rest upon her family record. She extends her care of young and old far beyond the boundaries of her home to include her friends and neighbors—and, from there t is logical step for her to serve her home district as representative of all the people. Elected to the Los Angeles City Council twelve years ago, Roz Wyman has made it her business to serve the Fifth District second-to-none. Her representation is deeply personal, stemming as it does from her direct, personal knowledge of what is needed at the household level.

It is interesting to note that this efficient homemaker is Chairman of the City Council Committee on Government Efficiency. Concerned at first-hand with health and well-being, she also extends her personal experiences to the Committee on Public Health and Welfare.

What can a Councilwoman really do to better her family district? What achievements are really possible? Let' turn from the homemaker's record to the law-maker's record. In a well-ordered household, such mundane matters as plumbing must be attended to or sinks clog and drains become foaming Niagras. In a well-ordered district, the drainage systems are even more important due to the dangers of flooding and washouts. Roz Wyman, without applause or fanfare, has seen to it that storm drains have been installed throughout the Fifth District. And, since clogging of any kind offends a meticulous homemaker, she has also fought valiantly to eliminate time-consuming traffic jams. For three years, Councilwoman Wyman chipped away at civic indifference until at last a severe bottleneck at Santa Monica and Beverly Glen was broken by the construction of a new underpass.

With neighborhood children always in mind, Roz Wyman has seen to it that street crosings in the Fifth District have protected safety with proper traffic signals. Women who have worked in a kitchen know that hardware must be included in the budgets, shopped for, installed, supervised and kept in good working order. But few people stop to think that a traffic signal costs over nine thousand dollars which must come out of the city budget. Installation means a city work-crew must run wiring under the streets—and, to top it off, the bulbs must not be allowed to burn out.

Perserverance, patience and eternal vigilance are qualities needed to bring up a family. Those same qualities are needed in full-measure to attend to the work-a-day details of an entire district. But, lest it be thought that Roz's council work is limited to detail, a look at the size of her contribution to public well-being is an eye-opener.

Outdoor sports build strong bodies and what better inspiration than a great baseball team? Roz Wyman was instrumental in bringing the Dodgers to Los Angeles. Even the zoo concerns her and she has worked tirelesly to keep it a top attraction. In recognition of her vital interest in every aspect of the public well-being, her colleagues on the City Council accorded her a singular honor. She was elected President Pro-Tempora, which means that she became the first woman Acting Mayor in Los Angeles history. It is only fitting that the lady of the house be the lady of the city.

Her tireless activities include executive memberships in many community groups such as the L. A. Jewish Community Council, National Conference of Christians and Jews, L. A. Conference of Immigration and Citizenship, National Hemophilia Foundation, Blinded Veterans of Southern California, Diabetes Association of Southern California, the Salk Institute, President Kennedy's Women's Conference on Civil Rights—to list but a part.

Her awards and honors fill a solid wall, including the Los Angeles Times' "Woman of the Year," Mount Sinai's "Mother of the Year"—and she is the Mrs. part of B'nai B'rith's "Mr. and Mrs. American Citizen" award.

And yet, this extraordinary success story has not changed Roz Wyman except to strengthen her effectiveness through years of experience. Her husband, attorney Eugene L. Wyman is a success in his own right and there is nothing to prevent Roz from retiring from the political fray to a life of peace and quiet within her family. Instead, she chooses to run for re-election against a gang-up of hand-picked opponents who seem determined to take over her hard-won hard work.

Why does Roz Wyman want to continue her demanding job as Councilwoman from the Fifth District? Those with families will understand her answer, "The Fifth District is my home."

# THE WORLD OF ROSALIND WYMAN:

*The following series of articles about Councilwoman Rosalind Wyman was written by Leslie Stevens, well-known playwright and author, whose Broadway hit, "Marriage-Go-Round" was made into a successful film. His production company, Doystar Productions, was responsible for the TV series "Stoney Burke" and "Outer Limits." "I Take This Councilwoman" is the fourth of six articles by Mr. Stevens.*

## *"I Take This Councilwoman"*

By Leslie Stevens

How can a modern marriage succeed when both partners engage in full-time professional careers? Such professional partners in ten years of successful matrimony are Eugene Wyman, prominent Los Angeles lawyer, and his wife Rosalind, Councilwoman from the pivotal Fifth District. Not only is Roz a full-time politician but she is also full-time mother of three charming children. Not only is Gene a full time attorney, but he is also an important political fiugre, aerving as Chairman of the Democratic Committee — and, of course, he also fills the bill as all-time daddy to the three little Wymans.

Do the Wymans lead a normal family life?

"Very much so," answers Gene. "Roz and I spend a surprising amount of time with our kids. We're both under constant pressure in our professional lives and we need the change of pace. Youngsters tire most parents but for us they provide really welcome relaxation."

But what about a working wife? Isn't there a tendency to compete?

"Fortunately, we both work at the same thing. Roz and I share an absorbing interest in politics — not just abstract theory but practical, garden-variety 'Get-out-the-vote.' Right now, Roz is running for re-election in her District. The Mayor has openly declared his intention to defeat her and she faces a hard fight. She's got to defend the Fifth District from being taken over by hand-picked candidates and, naturally, I want to help her.

"It's a non-partisan race, so all I can do is help address envelopes, organize home-meetings and make up slogans for handbills. Most of my political activity has been at the National and State level — but Roz represents the grass roots — right at the most basic family level. And I must say, it keeps me realistic about down-to-earth neighborhood needs: new traffic lights, storm drains, street-repair, school crossings — you name it, Roz gets it done."

Doesn't the rough-and-tumble of city politics tend to toughen you, thicken your skin and make you insensitive?

"Exactly the opposite. If anything, the personal attacks rub you raw and leave your nerve-ends exposed. When I see the way Roz stands up under constant, petty, vindictive attacks, my heart goes out to her. And, when I see people go out of their way to try to help and be nice — it puts me away. I'm thin-skinned enough to admit that acts of kindness give me a lump in my throat that won't stop.

In a political - partnership-marriage, who is head of the house?

"It's a government of checks and balances. As the kids' father, I'm male head - of - the - house and I carrry out what you might call the Executive function. I work out the rules and enforce them when things get out of hand. Roz is a female-head - of - the - house — she represents the people: the kids, grandma, granddad, Hattie, the maid — she initiates legislation. We debate and work out what's best for the entire household. Dictatorship doesn't work in national government and it won't work in family government.

"The only extremist around our house is the dog. He turns those sad, brown eyes on you and gets his way every time."

High-minded theory is all very well but in practical fact you are human and subject to moods, fears and anxieties. Do you ever engage in martial battles?

"We may skirmish now and then, but no full-scale battles. We're both pretty hard-headed but we both believe in free speech. Roz may have a definite personality but she's flexible and intelligent and she always comes up with some sort of constructive compromise. And, besides, I love her."

If Roz Wyman is one-half the politician that her husband is, she is not only assured of being re-elected in the Fifth District, but she can rest assured that her happy marriage will last forever and a day.

*WILSHIRE REPORTER*
*February 24, 1965*

Wyman: quits. I said, "One, I'm under fire; we're under fire." We took a poll, and I said, "Even if it would take a miracle to win this thing, I'd rather go out losing, as hard as it is." And it was hard--to campaign every day--when you know you're going to lose.

I knew how hard I'd fought for constituents. They got things, under me, accomplished for that district that they'd never had. In fact, I often run into people to this day who often say, "It was unreal how people didn't support you," or they talk about what mistakes were made, or so on and so forth, whatever.

I thought the things that district-wise I had done were important, and those areas then didn't vote for me. The Beverly-Fairfax area was really the best area I had, and this area [Bel Air] which was kind of interesting. They never voted for me the first time, the Bel Air area.

Chall: You weren't in that district, were you, the first time? Was Bel Air in the district?

Wyman: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I didn't get two votes out here the first time. But Beverly-Fairfax always carried me. Population is determined by the number of people in the district and my district was so heavily populated, that I had to give up certain sections because you had to make a map based on contiguous districts and, therefore, the Beverly-Fairfax area kept getting lopped off from my area and my district was extending farther and farther west--toward Bel Air.

Older Jewish people always loved me, but it was the young group, my own group, who began to really dislike me. One, they didn't like our great success. Rather than saying, "My gosh, they've done it, and they did it alone."

But Yorty damaged us so. But I decided that despite that I was going to run. And it was brutal.

Chall: I've just got a few of the clippings to put in as examples of the kind of coverage that you got, both good and bad.

Additional Issues: Convention Center and Greek Theatre

Wyman: I started to tell you a story. The convention center would never have been built where it is today--which is a white elephant by the way for the city of Los Angeles--if it hadn't been for Yorty. I had a plan

Wyman: to build the convention center at the sports arena, which would not have cost the taxpayers a penny. I think it ended up costing $44 million or something like that. Our plan would have cost $12 million. It would have been financed differently.

Yorty, in my opinion--and others were of the same opinion--was playing a shell game. He appointed a citizens committee. I named out front where it would be built. Because Yorty was always a Hearst-controlled person, very close to the Hearsts, and because the Hearsts had sold the Examiner a piece of property, I was sure that's where it was going to be built. I said, "He will have a citizens committee that will pick three sites. That property will be one of the sites. He'll pick two other sites that will be so controversial that they will have to go with the third site."

The picked Bunker Hill, which was hot and controversial still, and they picked Elysian Park, where you get all the environmentalists screaming and yelling. So, by process of elimination, it went to the site that I said would be picked first.

Then I dared speak up against that site and fought for the convention center to be built at the sports arena because we could have gone underground. A convention center does not need windows. You need space, and so on. It would have been an ideal place for it. We would have upgraded, again, that area. The sports arena would have been used, which was owned by taxpayers, et cetera, et cetera. You wouldn't be having the bond debt, and you wouldn't be having the costs it's running into, et cetera, et cetera, down there to make a go of it.

He accused me of owning land around there. The only reason I could be for it was that I had to own land down there that I would benefit from. Now see, these are the sort of stories that were put out against us and repeated and repeated and repeated. So, as a coliseum commissioner, when this came up I said one day that if anybody can find a piece of land that I own in this area they can have it. Now that's the sort of thing I was subject to.

Chall: Yes, there was quite a bit of that. The press also never mentioned the Greek Theatre without mentioning your ties with James Doolittle, all the way through your history on the council.

Wyman: Because I couldn't just be for the Greek Theatre because I was for it.

Chall: But you had some connection with James Doolittle.

Wyman: Later. What happened was when I first went into office the Greek Theatre was a joke, and I decided to fight to make it better. At that point I took on Mrs. [Norman] Chandler, Senior, even, to fight for the Greek Theatre, although later we became great friends.

Chall: That's Buffy.

Wyman: That's Buff Chandler. At that point she didn't want the Greek Theatre. Jimmy Doolittle had been manager at the Hollywood Bowl, left the Hollywood Bowl. He'd taken the Greek Theatre and walked out of the Bowl. She at that point was pushing the Bowl. There was a disagreement over that between us, and I said, "This is city owned. There is certainly room for two music theatres"--this sort of thing.

But where we got involved with Jimmy Doolittle was he came to us and said, "They're going to tear down the Biltmore Theater." I'm interested in art and music. I've always been. He said, "Do you want to help save it? You're not going to make a dime." We had to make a judgment at that point.

I said, "Gene, I want to save the Biltmore Theater. Jimmy Doolittle feels that he could put a group together so that we could keep that theater going. We won't make anything, but we may not lose anything." In other words, it's a civic sort of project. It's like saving Carnegie Hall at that point.

Instead of being praised, Yorty or somebody raised the question... I had gone to the city attorney to find out whether I could do this. I was so careful, and Gene was so careful of everything we did. Yorty had private investigators on us to try to find things about us.

Nothing! We've never been accused of anything really that ever had any proof to it, and that's the sad part of our story. Never took political payoffs, Gene never lobbied. Yorty claimed he lobbied over something called Percodan. Oh, that drove us insane!

Wyman: But by that time Sam Yorty had had fifty press conferences on it. So you could never undo by the one-day story of saying the legislators up there said, "Gene Wyman has never come; the law firm has never registered in Sacramento." But we then became representing a narcotic, because Gene represented corporate-wise a company.

Chall: Was it difficult then because they could use facts and set up an implication based on--

Wyman: Half-truths.

Chall: Did they also make up--

Wyman: I told you the whole story of the coliseum was a totally made up story.

Chall: Yes, I see.

Wyman: We didn't own any land. It was made up. It was repeated. The story of my brother. We were so public. As I say, the most incredible story with Yorty was the Percodan.

Chall: Yes, I saw all that.

Wyman: Incredible, but Gene could not deny that he represented the company Endo Lab--"Yes, I represent Endo Laboratories." So, what do you do in those situations?

Chall: So, you decided, however, despite all this, to run, but you knew from the polls that you would lose?

Wyman: Yes, nobody knew except us.

Chall: But you did know.

Wyman: Yes.

Campaign Expenses

Chall: You were accused of having spent an extraordinary amount of money on that campaign. I forget--But it was $250,000, according to one source I saw.

Wyman: It was extraordinary what we spent. You know, my first campaign I won like on $13,000. So when you figure the last campaign--everybody was estimating.

Chall: But you still spent a lot.

Wyman: It was astronomical in comparison to what I had spent on other campaigns, I mean, to me. It was disgraceful. I had asked for a spending limit on one of my campaigns, and nobody would agree with it.

Chall: How about the one in '57 and the one in '61?

Wyman: Oh, so easy.

Chall: They were easy?

Wyman: I got the largest vote ever cast in a council district for an incumbent to that point. Now I don't know if that's been changed. I won by 90% or 87%. It was so high. I didn't lose a precinct.

Chall: I saw the press release in 1961 that you had appointed Mervyn LeRoy as your chairman. Those two campaigns, were they done with volunteers?

Wyman: Oh, a tremendous amount of volunteers.

Chall: Any professionals?

Wyman: I cannot remember. Most of my campaigns were not...Well, my first one obviously I had no professionals. I think my last one [chuckling] is when I hired the professional help--on the last one.

Chall: Yes, I saw that in the press coverage. I wondered whether you had had to before.

Wyman: I ran most of my campaigns myself. I think all I did was like hire an office manager or something like that. We did a mailing through the district. We did maybe two or three. In fact I think my second campaign was classic. I mean I had an ample budget. I could have raised as much money as I wanted to. I knew I was going to win easily. So I tried some experiments in literature.

I loved campaigning. I was a political animal. I helped run Stanley Mosk's campaign for attorney general. I was one of the very few officeholders, by the way, who would ask other people for money for somebody else. No other officeholders would ever ask for somebody else because they wanted it for themselves. But Stanley was my dear friend, and I wanted to help Stanley to be attorney general. I think I was probably very prominent in that campaign.

So anyway, as I recall, I put out some classic pieces of literature. I always wanted to do a cartoon piece of literature with cartoon caricatures and issues. For example, I had gone to Washington and gotten money. The first federal money we'd ever gotten for flood control, I got. So I had taken a caricature of the White House and me coming out with plans--I can't remember. It showed that I'd gotten money some way from the federal government. Then I had stood on my record, and it showed me standing on a record, and it was the shape of a record, the piece of literature. I had some wonder--

Chall: Do you have any of those in your files? They're not in your scrapbooks.

Wyman: I think I may have some literature.

Chall: It would be nice if we could get them.

Wyman: They were just classical pieces. My first campaign, of course, we did everything cheap. We packaged the bar of soap and used the sightsavers. That was a classic, by the way. The first campaign was brilliant when you realize everybody thought we were amateurs.

## Women and Stress in Politics

Chall: Yes. In terms of campaigning and also some of the struggles that you had on the council, did you find that there's a difference between the way men and women whom you've known stand up to the stress of difficult campaigning and/or controversy?

Wyman: Well--

Chall: They claim there's a difference. I mean there are people who claim women can't take the stress.

Wyman: I don't know if there's a difference. I think women are pretty forthright. In other words, they put it on the table. I think men might have a feeling...

Liz Snyder, of course, is the best. She was probably one of the strong women in politics. She always conducted everything very openly. In fact that was the first time, for example, that billboards, as I recall, were not handled by an inner clique of people. She said whoever came in with the money could have billboards. Well, that shocked the men in politics. I'll never forget that. Liz was so good in my opinion. You know, she's the first woman in America to ever be a chairman of a major party. She handled herself with such great dignity. She could handle anything tough that came along and handle it well.

And yet my first campaign I was with Helen Douglas. Now Helen Douglas's personality and Liz's is quite different. Helen was much softer. I mean Liz, in my opinion--I don't like the word tough--but could be tougher personality-wise than Helen. Helen was the actress, and Helen [chuckles] could use that flair. Liz would never use that flair. That's not her personality. Now Helen achieved things by being, in my opinion, extremely feminine. People worshipped Helen. She had the worship of a following. In the first place, she was a beautiful looking woman and a very imposing woman. As I say, I think if anybody ever used their femininity [chuckles]...

Chall: And yet she stood her ground.

Wyman: Oh, firm. You couldn't budge. There was a woman who was my...I don't know if we've talked about her.

Chall: Yes, you have.

Wyman: She was my heroine.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: She was the person I thought if I could be the most like...I think Helen in public life was the most, the best example of how one could stand up, no matter how bad the pressure was. And you stood up for what you believed, no matter what happened.

Chall: Certainly these two are unusual women, but you probably have seen since other women candidates and other women in tough situations politically, and you certainly saw the men on the city council. Is there a difference that's a sexual difference, or is it a personality difference in the way they handle stress--the stress of taking on a controversial issue or a hard campaign?

Wyman: I just think it's the difference in personalities. I think there are men and there are women who have difficulty making decisions, whether they're elected public officials or not. I saw some of my colleagues who had difficulty at times, where each pressure group made them nervous. I felt that one day they could swing one way and another day they could swing another way.

I made up my mind. I always felt it was so much easier to tell X group when they came in, "I'm sorry, I don't agree with your position. I've made up my mind." After I've had the facts. I mean they've all had their chance at me. But in other words, I think I would rarely change my opinion after I'd studied it. I thought that's an easier way in public life. [chuckles]

Chall: It takes away the stress.

Wyman: Takes away a lot of the stress. I find that when some of my colleagues would say, "I can't make up my mind; I don't know whether to go this way or that way," I think that is more difficult. Somebody might say, "Well, maybe they're more open." But I think that there's only so much facts you can get usually. Now somebody might come in and say, "Look Mrs. Wyman, when I saw you last I didn't have this material." Now if that material can come in and change you, fine. But I think in nine out of ten times you are so much better off to make your decision, because then these pressures don't drive you insane.

Chall: Now what about the stress of the campaign? You're under pressure all the time, probably very little rest and relaxation. Is that a physical matter?

Wyman: Yes. I had two very easy campaigns, and then the rest of them were very difficult. I do think that you're under pressure and strain, but, one, in this house we had children. Gene was under pressure and strain anyway.

I think Gene probably suffered more from my last loss as a city elected official than probably I did. He felt he was responsible for it to a greater extent that I was, which was unfair. But he said that if he hadn't gotten into politics and hadn't also taken Sam on, and some of the issues, that maybe I would have been more popular and stayed popular.

Gene was a very sensitive man, and a lot of people don't really know that. He was guilt-ridden his whole life. He's a typical Jewish male, that was very guilt-ridden; he always wanted to pay people back who were good to him. We have a Wyman-Hibbs scholarship named for his father and his speech teacher, because he loved them so much and felt his success in life was because those people put so much into him. We were entertaining every summer, the speech teacher. We went and had an affair for the speech teacher in southern Illinois.

But Gene had terrible guilt because I lost. He felt that my popularity declined because of his controversy, which was something he suffered with. I tried to make him feel--"Gene, I was the one out there taking those fights and taking the battles, and you know you didn't--" He really never entered into any of my votes.

Often I would discuss them with him, but I don't really think Gene ever said, "Why don't you vote this way," or "Why don't you vote that way?" He just didn't. When, as I say, Sam Yorty's people came to him, he said, "Look, I can't deal for her. You got to go deal with her yourself." Nobody ever approached Gene on my behalf.

So he suffered in the campaign. But we were both under stress and strain. But Gene had a tremendous law practice he was running, and you just can't come home and, say, be miserable all the time over it [the campaign]. And I had kids. My kids were young at that point. I think the most troubled campaign was that last city council campaign, because I had always tried to tell the kids that politics was good, even though, you know, there are times that are difficult.

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Wyman: I can't tell you how <u>dreadful</u> for my children.

## IV SOME FACETS OF THREE TERMS ON THE CITY COUNCIL

### Reviewing a Typical Day

Chall: I want to go back and talk to you about some aspects of your work on the council. How did you handle a day? The council then was considered a full-time position, wasn't it? And did you meet every day as a council?

Wyman: Yes, we met every day. Under the rules charter. [laughter] Every council that's ever sat is always going to change that. It's never been changed. It's always recommended almost every year.

Chall: To do what?

Wyman: To meet two times a week or three times a week, and it's just never been accomplished. Since it's in the charter, it has to go to a vote of the people; it can't be changed by ordinance. So, they just never got around to doing it.

Chall: Was the daily meeting difficult?

Wyman: Well, it really wasn't. Sometimes when the children were ill or something, I had conflicts. It's really very strange. There isn't even a provision for vacation in the charter, so theoretically you would work all year. Now, what they do though, they do make provision for a week. You have council rules, and then if you ask to be excused for two weeks or whatever, it's automatic.

Although I did have a funny experience. I asked to be excused. I had gotten engaged and asked to be excused to go on a honeymoon. They all knew I was going to come in with it. Sometimes, you know, in government the most important thing, I've always said, is a sense of humor.

Wyman: The guys had gotten together. I didn't know it. Oh, they got up and said, "Well, during that period, there is some very important business, and I don't think we can excuse you." And I didn't really know. I mean, I should have guessed immediately, but it was very serious business for me. And they all voted no, that I couldn't go on my honeymoon. [laughter] Oh, they got the biggest bang out of that! And so then, you know, they moved to reconsider. I went to call Gene, and I said, "Well, forget it. I'm not excused." He said, "Well, you're going anyway." [laughter]

But it is a five-day-a-week job. Council meets at ten in the morning and you usually adjourn by noon. Most committees meet in the afternoon, and you're chairman of one committee and serve on two others, so that you can regulate your afternoons pretty well. You either go to the district--or you have a meeting. It depends. There are people who I've served with who we felt never did any work. I mean, they didn't show up at committee meetings, and they missed a lot of council meetings.

Chall: I see. You mean some of the members of the council?

Wyman: Yes. We often had members that we thought never really did their work. Some give more in everything; I mean, no matter what issue you're in, a working situation or whatever. But we often felt some of them didn't do their work, you know, committee work. Or they didn't want to show up at a meeting, if you had to call eight o'clock in the morning meetings, or whatever. It just depended.

But if I felt the children were ill or something like that came up, and I just felt I couldn't go, I wouldn't go. But it was rare, because I did have help, and I, you know, would run down usually to a meeting and then leave. But obviously I also had three babies while I was on the city council, so I had to be off for them. [laughter]

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: There are some funny stories about my engagement, my wedding, my babies.

Chall: Yes, I saw those in the scrapbooks. But it was a job, then, like any other job. You would go most of the time in the morning and stay until--what--four or five o'clock?

Wyman: Yes, usually. Yes. Sometimes in sessions we'd get into big hassles, and sometimes you'd run until ten o'clock at night. But that was rare. During budget hearings that would happen, maybe, or the Dodger issue sometimes kept us in--you never know. Something extremely

Wyman: controversial would start a fight and, you know, you'd stay in or some such thing. But it was rare.

Chall: If the council met at ten, it means that many, many people who would be concerned with issues couldn't be at meetings--your constituents.

Wyman: That is very true.

Chall: Did you take that into account?

Wyman: Yes, we tried a couple of times to have night meetings and, believe it or not, they weren't very successful. Some of us often were concerned that--like on the budget where they would scream once they got their tax bill, and yet budget hearings, you know, are open to the public.

The City Council of Los Angeles--and I can't speak for now, I don't know if they've changed any of the rules--is probably the most democratic organization in the sense that the public can come up any time and ask to be heard. All they have to do is send a motion through any councilman or request the president to do it, and, I must say, it was extremely rare that somebody ever asked to be heard in front of us that we didn't hear them.

I mean, often we said they would wander up from Pershing Square, which used to be the key downtown [area] for free speech in the early days. [laughter] And, you know, if older people would be bored, or if somebody wanted a forum sometimes they would come up. Sometimes it was absurd what we would listen to, that really didn't have anything to do with what we were talking about. So then we, in my period, tried to make some rules and regulations that it should be on the topic, or at least, if it wasn't on the topic, we should have some notice or something. But we were very, very generous with hearing from the public, extremely generous.

And then there's a law called the 1911 Act which deals with assessments. For example, if you're assessed, you know, for street work, or you're assessed for sewers, gutters, you may appeal. And so we sued to have what we called separate hearings every single day; so that if anybody wanted to protest their assessment, protect the zoning, protest--we just would listen.

The Process of Making Decisions

Chall: Yes, I see. How did you evaluate what you would be concerned with? You know, the issues that I saw running through those scrapbooks were quite monumental, and one has to have time to read, I suppose, about what may be going on in other communities, of like things, or evaluate what the pressures might be. When could you do that, or did you try?

Wyman: I had very little trouble evaluating. I felt my colleagues often had--that all the pressures got to them. I felt that it was not difficult to make up my mind, and I think I lived easier because I could make up my mind fairly easily and live with my decision.

We had enough staff; now the staff is doubled, tripled, probably, from what I had. We had what we called the legislative analysts who were attached to the city council; they were solely for us, and if we said we would like some material on X, Y, or Z, they would produce it for us.

Then the special lobbying groups. You know, the public is very apprehensive, I guess, about what they call lobbying groups, but in a lot of instances lobbying groups are very helpful. You can take their documentation. For example, the police and firemen often had issues before us on salaries and various things, and they would go out and spend their own money to have actuaries come in--very reputable people--to try to make their position. And then we had what we called the chief legislative officer of the city, who kind of worked for the council and the mayor, more for the mayor. He has an independent staff, and he's supposed to do an evaluation of money and various things on almost every program, actually, that comes in. And departments would develop material for you.

So that, for example, let's say the police and fire were at issue with the chief legislative officer of the city. Those reports, let's say--one said their salary should be 10% up, and the chief legislative analyst said it should be 5%. Well, you took that documentation and you read it and you were prepared. I must say, I prided myself in being a very well prepared public official. Often, on the issues I cared about, I prepared for my colleagues, and some were resentful of that, and some were not. Some would often say, "Gee, how do you have time to get this all out?"

But I felt that some of them didn't care enough on issues, and that I would at least try to prepare something if I cared enough. My staff worked like dogs.

Chall: I see. How much of a staff did you have?

Wyman: Well, it depended. It changed over the years. When I first went in, I had one full-time and a part-time secretary. Then as we went on we were allowed to add a field deputy and then I had a field deputy, and I added two other secretaries.

When I went in, I had more mail than all the other fourteen put together. It was just unreal, the volume of mail I got when I first went into office, and it continued because I was controversial. Often my colleagues would say, "Don't get involved in those things. You know, you get people mad." And often I got advice that, "If you stick your neck out too far, you won't get reelected."

I never worried about getting reelected. Eventually, of course, I got beat. But, one, it wasn't a job for a living for me. I think that makes a basic difference. I was not afraid that: What would I eat? What would my family eat? I think often in politics people get involved--think that they own the job, rather than that they're really working for the people.

I just couldn't stay out of things that I believed strongly in, and I was very controversial, extremely. And so, therefore, I did prepare, and I often prepared for others, and I would say, "You've got to care." I mean, I was frustrated sometimes because they really wouldn't care, I felt.

Chall: They didn't care because they were afraid to--

Wyman: To be controversial.

Chall: To stick their necks out.

Wyman: Or they would just vote and not speak often, or not take a lead on anything, that sort of thing.

Chall: I see.

Wyman: I found that true of my colleagues. But, as I say, basically most of them worked very hard, but they obviously stayed out of a lot of controversy if they could. They just didn't want to get into big controversial issues. They'd, you know, try to keep a low profile if they could.

Chall: Yes. What does that mean for the city, the development of the city, if changes require or bring about controversy, and the city council members are afraid to get into it?

Wyman: Well, I think that that's often the problem with most legislative bodies, that sometimes they're so afraid of change or to take a tough stand, and sometimes that stagnates growth, in my opinion, if you don't face the issue you've got to face. And often, as a leader, you may have to take an unpopular stand.

The only time I had real conflict is that if the people had voted on something and they had spoken--let's say it's a referendum. Obviously the Dodger referendum was very controversial. It just won. It <u>just</u> won.

Chall: I noticed that, yes.

Wyman: And I think, I mean, that was not a moral sort of issue. I felt strongly for the growth of the city of Los Angeles--we had to have major league baseball, we had to have the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, we had to have theater, we had to have all these things as a growing city. But those were not moral issues.

Where I had trouble was with moral issues. For example, I introduced the first FEPC bill in the city of Los Angeles, and that was <u>terribly</u> controversial. When I introduced it, there were only two of us the first time who voted for it--Ed Roybal and myself. He is now a congressman, and he was of Mexican extraction. And then the state pre-empted the field.

But if the people had voted on that, and they had voted opposite of my stand, I think on something like that I would have had to go against the people at that point, because I would have felt I had to be a leader, and it's going to come. Of course, it's long come and long past.

But, like the Dodgers, I might have had terrible trouble. I <u>know</u> it's good for the city, I <u>know</u> the people are going to enjoy it, I think it's growth. The Dodger controversy as to how you put it together will always be a controversy. But when it comes to certain issues, as a leader, my moral being fought with my role as a representative of a constituency. In other words, it seemed to me there were moral issues and things I believed in, fair play--FEPC is one of the best--that I would have troubles over.

Chall: Yes. Deciding whether to follow your constituents or--

Wyman: Your conscience.

Chall: Or your conscience. I see.

Wyman: Yes. That's where I think you have a real problem. And, as I say, I would probably have followed my conscience on certain issues, even if it was adverse to what the people were saying.

Chall: I see.

Wyman: Then I, you know, obviously became very controversial. Now, that happened in very few instances. We never voted on FEPC, but I know that had we voted on it and they'd gone one way, I would have still felt I had to go the other way.

Chall: And the campaign on fair housing, Proposition 14, was that something that you took any public stance on?

Wyman: I just think I joined a committee for it. I don't think I was really too active in it, but it was obviously something I believed in.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: I'm trying to think of something else that came along that I got involved with that was an issue along those lines. Maybe I'll think of it. I can't this moment.

Chall: In terms of your philosophy--

Wyman: Oh, I know. The year I ran, 1953, public housing was an issue.

Chall: Oh, yes.

Wyman: That's how Poulson beat [Fletcher] Bowron. Poulson was a congressman at that point, and he opposed the public housing measure on the ballot. What later became the Dodger land was to be used for public housing. In that campaign, I supported public housing as a candidate, which was terribly controversial, so that threw me with Bowron because Bowron had taken that position. That was defeated overwhelmingly--they wanted no more public housing in this community. The Dodger land had already been semi-cleared for that purpose.

And then when I supported the Dodger position, some of the public housing people were angry at me because they thought, well, they still should have it. Well, there was no way under the law that you could have public housing in Los Angeles without going back to a vote of the people, and that land was rotting.

The controversy had been fanned because of the hillside terrain in that area, and the fact that plans were for building these big high-story things which had never been considered for public housing in L.A. Those Elysian Villages and some of that stuff were all low. So that was some of the controversy that occurred in that '53 election.

Wyman: And Bowron lost. One of the reasons was, in my opinion, and I guess history would have to go back and dictate it, was his stand on public housing. Now, I won despite taking that position. But some of the public housing advocates later got so angry at me because I had been pro-public housing. But the people had spoken there, and I didn't see how you could fight that situation any longer. By the way, Poulson and I started out really not friendly because of that position too.

Chall: Oh, I see.

Wyman: But we ended up being great friends, and I got into controversy with Yorty because I became such a good friend of Poulson. [laughter]

Chall: [laughter] You can't win.

Wyman: Can't win.

## The Necessity for Specialization

Chall: Was the work on the council, your committee work--did that mean that you more of less specialized in certain areas?

Wyman: Yes, I think so.

Chall: Most or much of your activity where you got into controversy was with the Dodgers and the zoo, and that seemed to be part of the recreation issue. How about such things as oil drilling? Was that in any of your committees? You took a strong stand on the matter of oil drilling.

Wyman: Oh! Well, I did. It was interesting. I thought I was supporting the people in my district on the oil stand, and I don't know if you saw how they switched.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: And I was hanging out there alone. And the oil barons, for ten dollars, had gotten to them to sign up and they were all going to be rich. I tried to explain to them that they never were going to be rich when they were joining the oil barons of the world.

But it was interesting. When I started out they were adamant against oil drilling, adamant, and then they switched, and I was holding these files. [laughter] And then they came and had a mass

Wyman: meeting and were ready to hang me because I had not allowed these oil things to go in. So it's interesting, you know. As I say, the suede shoe boys got around to them.

Chall: I see. That came as a surprise to you?

Wyman: I think you do specialize, but yet you vote on everything, and you vote on everybody else's district. There's an unwritten law down there that you take the lead of the councilman--when voting on such matters as zoning--who represents the affected district. I found that sometimes I disagreed. It was sometimes difficult, but, you know, we'd sometimes take field trips out to see the zoning matter in another person's district. We were terribly busy and there was never enough time, basically because of the daily meetings. Some of us really thought we could learn a lot more about the city if we didn't have to meet so much, and then we could have time to get out and see more.

When a controversial zoning question came in another person's district, you had to vote on it. You had to vote on it just the same. And you often, if you didn't get out there or weren't familiar with it, you did lean to that person, figuring, "Well, what the heck. They're speaking for that area," you hope; you've got to honor them; they've been elected as you have. I felt zoning, especially, I didn't get around to.

As for my interests--I loved recreation. I felt that the city of Los Angeles never had used its potential in recreation. The zoo was a joke to me, even when it finally got built, and that was one of Yorty's big boondoggles. And I think the zoo today is a joke for L.A. It's one of the saddest things, because I thought, again, that's great growth for the community, and I became an expert. I went across the country and I really studied zoos.

Chall: Oh, you did?

Wyman: Yes. I took a trip, and I saw the best zoos in America. And [sighs] I really envisioned something. I was really terribly disappointed, although I was very active in the bond issue to get the money for it. Then we got the money, and then, of course, we changed mayors along the line, and that was one of the things that really disappointed me.

Chall: I see. Changed mayors from--

Wyman: Poulson to Yorty. And we lost what I think is a great zoo over that change in office at that point. With Poulson we never would have built what we ultimately built, because that was a whole different

Wyman: group that came in then with Yorty. I felt that we had really people dedicated, that their whole lives had been dedicated to animals. One of the issues they fought with him was the fact that I felt he favored, you know, certain architects and certain concepts that were just not what we had believed and envisioned for it.

Chall: Oh, I see. As I recall, you were in favor of some group called Friends of the Zoo.

Wyman: Yes.

Chall: As opposed to allowing the city to handle the design and building. Was that it?

Wyman: Well, that was part of it. I really felt that the Friends of the Zoo were real, real experts, and I did not think the recreation and parks commissioners or the department were very well versed in zoos, whereas these people had spent their whole lives being devoted to this sort of thing. Some of them had great collections. Some of them had, you know, spent their lives with animals and learning. I just felt that they should have been the prime movers in this sort of thing.

But then a whole different group moved in with Yorty, who I didn't feel had spent much time on it. Yes, they had supported him in his campaign, and that's the way the political ball goes sometimes. But I really was just sick over what we built up there, because I didn't think there was any modern thinking. I didn't think there was any great imagination. I didn't think that we had done anything that I thought we could have done.

## Organizing the Staff

Chall: About your staff. There's a feeling around that staff persons, men and women, don't like to work for a woman. I'd just like to know how you developed your own staff and whether you had any difficulties of this kind.

Wyman: I had tremendous difficulty. When I got elected, under the civil service rules, there were fifteen what they called executive secretaries, one for each councilperson. And when somebody lost, there had to be either a shuffle--there were fifteen to choose from. That was all that was certified at that point. So that if X lost and Y lost, the secretaries of X or Y had to take the two new councilpersons who were coming in. You met them, and if they didn't like you, you tried to make a switch with the other person new that was coming in.

Wyman: Well, when I came in, the person that they wanted for me didn't want to work for me. She just made it clear that she had no intention of working for a twenty-two-year-old woman.

Chall: That would have been part of the problem? Your age?

Wyman: Yes, my age. I think my age probably was more serious to me than being a woman at that point. Obviously, nobody talked about women's lib or any of that sort of stuff. But I think there was such resentment by my colleagues at first and by everybody that a twenty-two-year-old should win. It was the age. And the person who was going to work for me just didn't want to do it.

So the civil service people didn't exactly know what to do because they hadn't certified anyone else; there was nobody else to choose from. In the interim of trying to figure out what to do for me, I said, "Well, let me bring somebody from the outside who is bright enough. Let them see if they can pass your tests, and then certify them." And they said, "Oh, well, gee, that's breaking down the whole rules of the world." You know. Now they do lots of that sort of stuff since.

But the situation occurred that a councilman died during the interim between my election and being seated. I told you the whole incredible story about that. His secretary became available then, and she had reared five children, and she was a kind of an angel of a person. She went to the civil service people at that point because she knew this one person, Ann Bennett, didn't want me. And she said, "Heck, I've had five kids. What's the difference? I'll take her." [laughter] I mean, it was just that way. She said, "What's the difference? I know how to handle young people, and I've had five, and so she'll be like one of my kids." And it was with that attitude that she offered to take me.

I turned out to be a tremendous break for me because, one, she was really liked in city hall. And, I must say, those women really knew their way around in those days. She'd been in city hall many years. She had worked for a really kind of tough guy to work for; I mean, very tough. And she had been a great protector of him. It was really a break for me, as it turned out, to get her. Mary Zins was her name.

And then we needed an extra person. When we were allowed to hire an extra person, we just found, kind of, somebody. Then, after I was in a while, everybody wanted to work for me.

Chall: Why was that?

Wyman: Well, for one thing it was a very exciting office. I mean, most offices were really dull compared to mine. Everything was cooking out of my office, you know. I was in controversy, and I was in politics, and, I don't know. Either my personality began to show and they liked it, or, I don't really know what--but there was lots going on down there. And so when I needed ever to advertise or look for somebody, I then, after a while--when we were allowed to hire some more--never had any trouble getting anybody after that time.

Chall: And that was always from the city civil service rolls?

Wyman: Yes, always, always. The only time I got an exempt position was when we finally got to have a field deputy.

Chall: Yes. Then how?

Wyman: And then I took--I guess my first field deputy was an old dear friend of mine who had been with Helen Gahagan Douglas.

Chall: Oh.

Wyman: And I had known her--

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Chall: Did you hire mostly women field secretaries?

Wyman: No. I hired one woman, and then I hired a man. I hated to write. Writing was a pain in the neck to me. It still is. When I have to write something, it takes me a lot of time, and I'm never satisfied with it. Gene was a brilliant writer, and often he helped me write things. He wrote so beautifully. So, when I looked for the second person, I looked for a news person.

Chall: Oh, really?

Wyman: Yes. I was always letting out press releases. [laughter] And I really liked help in writing. So, the second person was a news person at that point. It just happened to be a man who was recommended to me, and his name was Bill Zelinsky. I can't remember if Bill's still alive. Anyway, Bill wrote well, and that was a prerequisite. He had a pretty good personality. One of the things you really needed in the office was the ability to handle people. I'm not sure he was as great at handling people, maybe as Evie [Evelyn] Chavoor, my first one.

Chall: Oh, you had Evie Chavoor the first time?

Wyman: Yes. That was my first field deputy. And then I had Bill. But you went out to the field a lot and you dealt with problems there, so the field deputy was really an added extra person that was wonderful. I used to try to see a lot of people, but it just gave me an extra person to see them.

And sometimes you had to be very diplomatic. Mary Zins was wonderful in the office with people. She always spoke to them nicely and really did well. Some of the younger people we had weren't so patient. You know--it's always a complaint kind of type who calls [laughs softly] and you really have to have a certain personality to handle that.

I tried to take an awful lot of my calls. I've always hated calls to be screened. It's irritating to me, and I've always done a lot of my own dialing. I don't know why people have to be so officious that they say [in harsh tone] "Who is it?" You know. And the secretaries became very officious. I hated that.

Now, there's no question that because of the controversy, because of the personality, whatever, an awful lot of people did try to get to me, and from not my own area. Sometimes people would see me from out of my area, and I was really sympathetic to their position, but felt that I really couldn't handle it, that it had to go to the councilman of that area.

Chall: You had to be careful, I guess, of not stepping on another person's toes and irritating...

Wyman: That's right, irritating other people. And I had a terrible problem, because of all the press I got too, of resentment from my colleagues. I was so much younger; I was the only woman. There was so much that they will never know about how careful I was, and how much outside press or coverage I turned down because I thought, I've got to get along with these people, and they're so resentful, at the beginning, of me.

Chall: I wasn't even aware that there were fourteen persons on the council because not only did you get a lot of press--and that's in your scrapbook--but for many of the votes that were taken in controversial issues, the headlines or the first paragraph detailing who did what would never mention more than half a dozen names, if that many. There were only a few of you, apparently, who ever were involved.

Wyman: Yes. They took polls during my period, and I had a 90% recognition factor in the city of L.A., which is unbelievable. And if you go today and take a poll, you'd probably find, city-wide, maybe a 20%

Wyman: recognition of some of them, and Bradley maybe having a high, high recognition factor because he's mayor, and obviously because he was controversial being black, the first black mayor, et cetera. But that kind of recognition has got pluses and minuses.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: And it's very interesting. You can get reelected often by not being so well known, and I had such a recognition factor that it was just unreal.

## Understanding Budgets and Other Special Problems

Chall: Yes. In addition to the expected problems of an office holder, do you think that it's a problem for women to work with a staff, and to handle budgets, and all the other necessary duties that come up with handling a public office? On a big organization like the city here or the state legislature, many people feel women can't understand budgets, and that they can't understand the big issues that come up in legislative matters of this kind--finances. Do you think that's a sex matter, or is it just because women haven't had the opportunities to learn? Can they learn?

Wyman: I find that ludicrous! [hearty laugh] I mean, I can't--

Chall: From your point of view, I'm sure--

Wyman: From my point of view, it's just unreal!

Chall: Yes, but that has been claimed.

Wyman: Well, it just doesn't make any sense to me! I mean, a woman's intelligence is just as good as a man's. Now, there are good women mathematicians, and there are good men mathematicians. There are good women economics people, and there are not.

I hate numbers, for example. My mother laughed when I first got elected, and she said, "I'll never confess that you can't balance your checkbook. Now you're going to vote on millions of dollars." And let me tell you, that was not my forte. In college, I majored in public administration, minored in political science.

I had a class in statistics. That was the worst class for me, to get that into my mind. My mind doesn't function in statistics and math and those sorts of things. I had municipal finance courses

Wyman: that I did fairly well in, by the way. But when it came to statistics, I want you to know I was lost. In fact, the professor used to say, "Does Miss Wiener understand the example?", because he figured that if I got it, everybody got it. And he used to really harrass me to death. Now, the funny part of that was that I barely passed that course.

I went down to city hall as a freshman councilperson, and one of the first things we did was sit with the CAO [Chief Administrative Officer] who was a man named Sam Linsk at that time, a brilliant, brilliant man. He sat with the new councilpeople to explain how the salary survey was made, and they came in and gave us all this statistical--the weighted average, the mean. And, do you know, for the first time I understood statistics.

Chall: [laughter] I see. It made sense.

Wyman: It made sense. And I was brilliant with that group, and I thought, "Impossible! My prof will never believe this!" [laughter] But I'd just graduated college, you know. In the first place, a lot of these men had been away, and I am sure that was a factor in my favor.

Chall: They had studied it anyway.

Wyman: I must say that some of them certainly were a lot smarter in math, just sheer numbers, than I was. But I had studied, and I had the material in front of me, and I think that I understood it. As I say, my forte didn't necessarily have to be city finance. But there is no reason, if you've got any innate intelligence, that you cannot learn. And you've got experts also, if, for example, that's not your field. You can learn the field.

And every man sitting around that counter or around our semi-circle was not expert in those fields either. You know, some people's forte is numbers, and some people's forte is not. But if you have the background material, anybody can learn, in my opinion. Anybody can take those issues. And I think it's ludicrous, I think it's belittling, I think it's demeaning to say that a woman doesn't have exactly the same ability to learn any subject. And I don't think a man goes in necessarily expertly prepared unless that happens to be his favorite field. I mean, a lot of men hate math, just like women hate math. It's not that a woman hates math; it's just that a person hates math.

I have a very dear friend who's a very successful producer. She hates math. And when it comes to making the budget for the picture, she hates it. Creative-wise, she's brilliant. But she can sit down

Wyman: with a budget person and make it. It's just, as I say, some people's forte is numbers, and some people's forte is not. But there's no reason you can't learn it.

Chall; Did you find the men on the city council as concerned about learning the background of issues and budgets as you were? Did they work at it as hard?

Wyman: Well, it's not fair for me to say, you know, really. As I said earlier, I felt some of us worked harder at it, at the job, than others did. Some men were practicing law at the same time, had law practicies going. Some had businesses going. So, in other words, even though it's a full-time job, they still had other incomes and other things they were devoting some of their time to.

Chall: I see.

## Making Government Work for the People

Wyman: In my case, it was a 100% full-time job, even though I had a home, a husband, children. It was really my main occupation. I loved what I was doing, even though sometimes the controversy got to me, and I was certainly super-sensitive. I was sensitive to criticism. Sometimes, I mean, I was really down from some of the things that happened to me. And yet, I really felt I was a good legislator. I felt I really was made for that sort of thing. I mean, I just really loved it, and I really wanted to learn. And I don't think I went in knowing about government. I learned as I went along.

I felt I understood compromise, and I felt I knew how to work it, and I felt that I could bargain for votes. [laughs] I felt that often if I had to take a department on when they were wrong that I tried to do it diplomatically, sometimes; sometimes, no. Sometimes it's like you really had to hammer them, and I did if I felt so.

And there came a point when I felt I knew how to handle the problem. I mean, I remember once a case of a little constituent that came in. Sometimes it just aggravated me, because in the book, or on the page, it was written that this is exactly the way it has to apply, and sometimes I felt the department didn't know how to bend to make a situation work. I always wanted to know, and I'd ask the lawyers or the heads of the departments, "Tell me how to--let's make it work for these people." That problem with bureaucratic rules aggravated me in government the most.

Wyman: But I remember we had a zoning problem once. It concerned a house where they wanted to add onto it to take parents, elderly parents, in. It was a situation where they were poor, the parents. You were going to put them on welfare, possibly, if this family didn't want to take them in. And I went to whatever department--I think it was zoning regulations or something--and I said, "This is not speculative. This is what government should be for. We should help these people, rather than putting these people on a roll." They'd wanted to add a bathroom or they wanted to add an extension to something that in that R-1 zoning theoreticlly you couldn't do. I was so aggravated I couldn't stand it. Finally I won that battle.

But I think that some of those sorts of fights that got no press and got really no publicity were <u>really</u> what government is all about. There's nothing more exciting and important than government. I'm just sorry that the Watergates of the world and some of the admittedly corrupt things that are common, cause everybody to feel that politicians are on the take and that they're all no good, and so on and so forth. <u>Government</u> is <u>really</u> the most exciting thing today, and it was then, and it still is the best thing to make things work for people, if they really are dedicated to the people.

## <u>Handling Criticism</u>

Chall: You said that you found that criticism was hard to take. What went on inside of you if you were criticized when you felt it was unfair or uninformed criticism?

Wyman: Well, you know I was troubled. I would go home and I'd be <u>down</u> sometimes. I had kids too, and being a working mother, I was very concerned about the time I spent with my children. I must say, I guess working mothers always justify that they are more interesting people because they work or whatever [laughter], but I must say I really looked forward to seeing my kids. I really looked forward to being home with them, and I always felt that the hours I spent with them weren't necessarily...I mean, we really planned things to do, and tried, because Gene was very busy too.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: And so I think that sometimes for working parents, the time you spend with children, you know, is a little more important; and how you plan it. And I think that you really do enjoy them. For example, I think that even the best housewife, when she's got the kids under-foot all day, has got to get a little bored with them because they're

Wyman: not the most stimulating creatures. In the young ages and so on, you love to watch them develop, but, you know, if they're your total companions, there are times, I'm sure, you want something a little different. And I was fortunate enough that I went and came and had something different.

Some Ramifications of the Dodger Issue

Wyman: But criticism. For example, I felt one of the things that irritated me the most was the whole Arichiega thing with the Dodgers. That was the family, the Mexican family, who had decided not to move out. They had been paid for their land, accepted the money, under condemnation. You see, as I said, the land was condemned for public housing. So, a great deal of it had already been cleared; the people had been paid and had left.

Now, there was a family that lived up there for six years, free. They had never moved out. They'd never paid any taxes. They'd been paid for their land. Then the sheriff finally went up to move them out. And I'll never forget how some of the "theoretically responsible" --quote, unquote, press people helped them stage this camp-out.

It was claimed that they had no place to go, and that here was this mother, theoretically, throwing them out on the street. I think I was pregnant at that point--this hard-hearted woman. And, in fact, policemen had to come and protect me around my seat at that point, the hostility became so strong. There was talk about having protection of my house; it had gotten so out of hand.

I really felt horrible to think that these people did have no place to go, and I was troubled. We decided to take a collection for them in the city council. We all took up money. And then we got a postcard that came through the mail, unsigned. I used to think that anything unsigned you really don't pay much attention to; it isn't worthy of answering. It said, "Check the map division," or "Check the ownership of umpteen-number of parcels. They're owned by the Arichiegas."

We gave it to a friend of mine who was a reporter at the Mirror that later folded. He checked that and found that the Arichiega family owned eleven pieces of property in Los Angeles. The staging of this whole thing for television--how they camped out, how they had no place to go. The whole big press thing. By the time you found that they had a place to go, they owned eleven pieces of property, they'd lived six years free--I mean, it was disgraceful.

Wyman: And yet the whole press for days had been saying how bad that the sheriff had gone up to move these people out. Well, most people don't live free anywhere in the world, hardly. We had been so taken in by it, and I had been so condemned. I never pulled out of that sort of thing.

In fact, one of the things that hung over me the most was the Dodger fight.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: And, obviously Walter O'Malley had to pay for this house [sarcastically] and I had been paid off, and all this sort of thing. To this day, I think that we were very careful. We paid for all our tickets. [laughs softly] The free tickets councilmen got, I never used. I sent them out to all my service clubs and let them raffle them for charitable purposes. I don't think I ever used a free ticket during that whole period. Are you going to get that noise? [sound from lawn mower coming into the room]

Chall: I may. I'll see. I'll let it come in and see what happens.

Wyman: Also, Gene always felt that someday elected public officials were going to be taxed on those tickets. Now there's a very strict law as to how much you can take in, free tickets or not. The O'Malleys have yet to give me a political contribution.

Chall: Oh.

Wyman: Which nobody would believe. Nobody would ever believe that! And when we would go to dinner with them--we really loved the O'Malleys, we learned to love them as friends--we tried to make sure that we always picked the bill up.

Chall: I see.

Wyman: And nobody would ever believe those sorts of things.

One day we had a fascinating story. My brother was at a dinner party, and somebody who was very adverse to the Dodgers thing was sitting at a table where my sister-in-law was sitting. And this woman said, "Do you know that her brother got the parking concession up at the Chavez Ravine, that it was given to her brother?" And my sister-in-law let them go and go and go, and finally she said, "I'm married to Roz Wyman's brother." She said, "He's a schoolteacher and if he's got all that, he's certainly hiding it from me." And she said, "Would you like to name your sources, because if that be true, I'm sure Roz would like to take that information to the grand

Wyman: jury." "Well, uh, well," the people were stuttering, which is typical. People want to believe the worst of anybody. They cannot believe you can really be for something because you think it's right.

When I first ran, on my little piece of literature, a little three-by-five card, I had said I was for major league baseball in Los Angeles. I never knew how complicated it was going to be! [hearty laugh] Walter O'Malley often tells the story--I don't know if Walter would talk to you, but it certainly is an interesting period --that the day he stepped off the plane, he was served with a notice [laughs] that it was going to go to court. You know, I mean, it got so controversial.

Betty is twenty years old. The Dodgers have been here twenty years. And over two million people a year, almost three million, have seen them play every year. It's probably one of the biggest tourist attractions in Los Angeles. They pay one of the biggest tax bills for their land. You see, that was one of the controversies-- whether the city owned it or they owned it. As long as they own it, they pay taxes on it; as long as we owned it, we got no taxes. We'd own the stadium. We would have to refurbish the stadium. We would have to keep it up. And it's a one-purpose use, a baseball stadium.

He hardly can rent it with the zoning, which I think is wrong, by the way, for other major things. Once a year they may have a trailer show up there, or they could have a major fight, or a concert probably. And with the baseball teams moving all over the country--the Giants want to leave. They don't own that stadium. Milwaukee moved out of their stadium. And so [sighs] a lot of people will never admit that it was probably one of the best deals for a city to have the Dodgers own that land, pay taxes on that land, no matter how cheap it turned out they got it for at that point.

Airlines are given subsidies. We subsidize the docks for boats. I mean, there's so much subsidy, really, for major business. And for what that's meant to this community, as controversial as it was--I think it cost me, quote, the "liberal" vote that I started out with in many instances in this community--yet I still think it's been one of the great assets of L.A.

So when you say, have you made a contribution in your political life, I feel there are many. Look at the joy in the Little League. My mother's a county probation commissioner. She gets Peter [O'Malley] to give her tickets for Dodgers games so the kids in juvenile hall can go to Dodger games at different times of the year.

# Colleagues in Council Praise Rosalind Wyman

## Gibson Points to Her First Election at Age 22, Notes Intelligence She Showed

L.A. TIMES, June 1965

Councilwoman Rosalind Wyman's colleagues paid her a touching tribute Thursday after a stormy City Council session climaxed by the adoption of the new city budget.

And Mrs. Wyman, who will end her 12-year career on the council next Wednesday, responded with tearful appreciation.

Councilman John S. Gibson Jr. began the tribute by introducing a resolution, pointing out that Mrs. Wyman was first elected in 1953 at the age of 22, becoming the first woman in 36 years to serve on the council and the nation's youngest legislator at that time.

The resolution praised her for serving with "distinction, courage and acumen far beyond her years" and said she had brought "credit and honor to all women by intelligently and comprehensively serving as one woman among 14 men on the council, while successfully combining her career in public life with that of wife and mother."

### Holds Composure

In the hushed chamber, Mrs. Wyman, defeated in the May 25 primary by Edmund Edelman in her bid for a fourth term, held tightly to her composure during the resolution reading. But she broke into quiet sobs when John C. Holland, dean of council members with 22 years' service, rose to make his remarks.

He said simply, "I've had a 180-deg. change of opinion over the years of Mrs. Wyman. She not only has youth and beauty, but she has brains, and I appreciate her."

Mrs. Wyman got to her feet and, with tears streaming down her face and her voice breaking, responded: "I didn't want this to happen, but I want to thank John. I have enjoyed my 12 years in the council as an exciting adventure."

Then showing some of the spark and fire that has characterized her career on the council, Mrs. Wyman added "I hate to leave you but I'm excited at leaving. I'm not dead yet, although some people in this hall have that idea."

This was an obvious reference to the "corner pocket," the office of Mayor Samuel W. Yorty, with whom she has often disagreed and who backed her opponent for the council seat.

### Expresses Appreciation

She concluded by expressing her appreciation to all council members for "the opportunity to serve with them and for having this great adventure."

A native daughter, Mrs. Wyman is a public administration graduate from USC, and during her career had many "firsts": She was the first woman to preside over the council as president pro tem in 1963; the first woman on the Coliseum Commission and the first woman to serve as acting mayor here on Nov. 8, 1963. She was a Times Woman of the Year in 1958.

Mrs. Wyman's term expires June 30. Edelman will take office July 1.

Wyman: I know what the Dodgers have meant to L.A. It was the first time this city ever unified for anything. We were so divided and dispersed. We had something that was our own; it was major league. It was the same as before we got the music center, which I fought so hard for. We became major league. It's part of a growing city. I never went to baseball games, but I thought it was important to have it for the city.

Chall: How did it ever come up? Why in the world did you take it on? Why wouldn't some of the men? Or why wouldn't any man?

Wyman: Some of the men did then. But they just sat, which happens so often. Nobody made an aggressive move to try to talk to them to come here. Supervisor Kenney [Kenneth] Hahn, now on the [Los Angeles] Board of Supervisors, was very active in that and we worked together. Kenny was very vital in that whole situation, too. I got the heat of it because it was from the council. Actually, because it was city land they went to.

Chall: But when it comes to criticism, you just can't do very much about it then?

Wyman: You have to work with it. You have to take it. If you want to shed a tear over it privately, you may do it, and you think how unfair it is. But if you're a public figure, you've got to take it.

## The Later Campaigns

Chall: Did you learn how? I mean, did it come more easily after a time?

Wyman: Well, no. Well, I don't know. I think I took it. I think with the support of Gene it was easier. When I ran for office the last time [1975] and was beaten, and I saw the brutal campaign, I really had a harder time taking it then than I did before. It was a special election when Edelman ran for and won a seat on the Board of Supervisors. Well, obviously, I didn't keep any scrapbooks up to that period. It was one of the most brutal campaigns I can ever remember.

Chall: Was it worse than your 1965 campaign?

Wyman: That was pretty brutal. I think they were about equal.

Chall: I see.

Wyman: And I was stunned, and especially that a woman candidate was responsible for most of it.

Chall: And did she win?

Wyman: She won in the primaries and lost the finals.

Chall: She lost it to Zev Yaroslavsky?

Wyman: Yaroslavsky, yes. She's one of Bradley's deputies, a woman named Fran Savitch.

Chall: Oh, yes.

Wyman: And if you probably want to find somebody--why, I'll never know--who really dislikes me, that's probably one of them.

Chall: She?

Wyman: Yes. And that's a long story in itself. I almost pulled out of that campaign because it was so--I couldn't believe it. I was really so stunned with the untruths that were being perpetuated at that point that I just thought, "My kids are too old now to go through that." And I think in my press statement I tried to say that, and then I went out to help Zev beat her, and I was really helpful, although Zev was brutal to me. They all picked on me in the primary because they thought I was the winner, and so they somewhat ganged up. But the most responsible person was Fran Savitch.

I'd known her husband for years, and when I originally started to run it was kind of a two-faced situation, and, you know, she then turned out to be a candidate. I don't know. It's a very complicated situation, and I was really stunned by it all.

Chall: Did you run for another office after 1965?

Wyman: Yes, I ran for school board and lost that.

Chall: L.A. school board?

Wyman: L.A. Community College, and I lost that too.

Chall: When the first community college board was being set up? In '69?

Wyman: It was about the second election. No. Jerry Brown ran in that first group, and it was the next time around. I ran for a vacant seat, and I should have won that too, theoretically. But, again, all the controversy hung over me, and everybody always went after me.

Chall: What's your opinion about limiting the terms of office for public officials, let's say three terms or something of this kind. Do you

Chall: think that would spread the opportunities for public service around and change the composition of councils and legislatures for the better?

Wyman: I don't know. I just don't know. I always think if somebody is good enough to keep getting reelected, they should. They're obviously doing something right, or the people are comfortable with them, or unlike my case [chuckling] they stay out of controversy.

But I think that basically people really don't take enough interest in the people they do elect, and that in most cases they just don't care. They go and perfunctorily vote. I think that if just the citizenry ever became more active--but that's why it's a democracy, because they don't have to--that if they ever became more active you'd just get better people. When they know and they get interested in something, sometimes they remove people. Watergate agitated them. The feeling is different when people care.

I don't know. I hate to limit terms. I'm really not for it. I think the president, by limiting terms, has become totally ineffective in his last two years of office. I think it's dumb, in that case.

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## V CAREER OPTIONS AFTER 1965

### Possible Government Appointments

Chall: Why is it that you wanted to get back into politics? You say you're a political animal. Are there other areas where you could use the skills you have and have acquired? Now you're in business, I take it. You might tell me what you're doing right now.

Wyman: I think that my ability to negotiate and my ability to give and take was something I learned in being an elected public official.

Chall: Can that be used in business and in corporations?

Wyman: I think that knowledge of dealing with people is good anywhere, but I feel I'm profession-less, and that's one thing I've stressed with my kids. "Get a degree in something. Get a profession." I'm profession-less. I have spent twelve years in government which really didn't make me equipped for much, really, except for handling people, and negotiation ability, and maybe how to compromise, and do a few of those things.

Chall: How about appointments to government office?

Wyman: Obviously, I would feel equipped in government. Kennedy asked me to come back and be in his administration, but I didn't. Gene--again I just had an incredible husband--he said, "Roz, if you want to do this, it may be an opportunity only once in your life; we'll make it work."

Chall: What was that?

Wyman: They left it kind of open to me. I was offered an undersecretary of state situation for like domestic affairs, where you would explain to the country, kind of. It was going to be a marvelous appointment. Or they said if that didn't appeal to me, would there be something else I was interested in. I just thought Jack Kennedy was really so

Wyman: exciting and the decision to be a part of it was very difficult to make. I debated that for a little bit. Gene and I went back. We met with Larry O'Brien. I knew all the Kennedy people. I was very close to them. Kennedy himself didn't like a lot of women. I was, I think, one of the few women in the country that Bobby felt comfortable with, Larry felt comfortable with, and I think the president did. I think they had respect for me.

Gene, as I said, said, "Look, let's talk it over." He said, "I have a Washington law firm. I can be in Washington often. Obviously the kids would have to stay home." We were talking with a friend--we were talking this out--and when he said, "Well, you know, the kids, you would have to come home and visit or the kids would have to come and visit," I started to cry. That decision was made. I could not leave my family, and Gene was really the breadwinner. I was not. Even though he had a Washington law firm, still Gene didn't go that often to Washington. It was just made. I didn't want to separate from Gene and my kids.

Chall: What about in the present?

Wyman: The Carter people made a couple runs at me, but, one, they weren't interesting enough, I don't think. Secondly, subsequent to the time of the Kennedy administration, we had a tremendous amount of deaths. Gene has died, and my brother died. My dad died. My mother is eighty-five years old, and I could not, could not leave. I am all she's got really. I just couldn't run away from the situation. So I think that's one other reason why people have said, "You must live your life. You must go ahead. You're forty-seven years old, and she's eighty-five." But I couldn't live with it. I knew it, when it came down to it. They said, "Well, it's a plane trip if she's sick." But it isn't a plane trip. If she's ill you have to take care--I know all the things I've taken care of since my dad died. As I say, I only had one brother and he's gone. So, I just decided that I had to do something at home.

Chall: So what are you doing now? Before I even ask you that, have you given up the idea of a political career?

Wyman: Yes. I know more. You must be able to lose. That's the most important thing when you run for public office. You've got to lose. I cannot lose. I am no more built to lose a public election. I can no more take the abuse I took, and I cannot face my children to take it. I can't take it. It's just that simple.

Chall: You're a winner.

Wyman: Oh, no, no. I'm a loser. I'm a loser.

Chall: You're a loser of some elections, but I mean, you need, with respect to your personality--to be a winner.

Wyman: I've won and lost, but I cannot...You have got to go in to be able to take a loss. Now I must say it was demeaning for me in my last political race, the council race. I think what had happened to me, and I had not realized it, is that I had become a civic figure even though I was not in public office. I had been a public figure all my life. I serve on the Music and Performing Arts Commission. I serve on the Center Theater Board. I serve on the Jewish Community Council. I think what had happened to me, and I had not realized it, is that I had passed public life in the sense that going door to door and standing on street corners had honest to God passed me.

Chall: Yes, and you changed.

Wyman: I had changed, and it was embarrassing. It was embarrassing for me to ask for money at that point. It was embarrassing to stand on street corners. People would often come up to me and say, "Roz, what are you doing this for?" I really don't think I realized it; I was willing to do it to get reelected, but it was difficult. But then when the smear started on me and I had to face my kids night after night, I couldn't do it.

## Trying Out the Corporate Structure

Chall: So what did you do after you lost your council seat in '65? What change came about in your life? You were not a housewife full time.

Wyman: No, and I never have been.

Chall: Your children were still quite young, so it didn't really have to affect them.

Wyman: I went to work in Columbia Pictures.

Chall: I see. Doing what?

Wyman: Oh, I had a big title. I can't think of what the name of it was. I was, oh, some big title, vice-president in charge of public affairs [chuckling] or something.

Chall: Was it a really challenging job?

Wyman: No, and I left it because it wasn't challenging. The studio was fun and I had two great bosses. In those days Screen Gems was the television arm of Columbia Pictures. My real boss was Jackie Cooper. Then after being hired in a sense by Jackie, then the Columbia Pictures side wanted me to do what I did, whatever I was doing--which was hard [chuckling] to describe--but they wanted me then for the Columbia Pictures side.

In those days you kind of were hired for the television side or the motion picture. I was one of the few people then that were asked to do both sides of the street, as we say. It was divided. The television side was literally divided by a street that had been closed years ago. So we used to say I'd worked both sides of the street.

My boss was Jackie Cooper, the former child star, and he is just one of the great human beings of the world. I thoroughly, absolutely, enjoyed working with Jackie. But it just wasn't enough of a challenge out there. Jackie offered me the position. He says, "Why don't you learn to be a producer, and I'll make you assistant producer, or if you want to work on a show, or whatever." At that moment--I wish now I had done it because I probably would be producing which might be great fun--but I said, "No, Jack, I think I'm going to leave, you know, at some point," because I just wasn't challenged enough.

Chall: It would be hard to be challenged after what you'd been through.

Wyman: Yes, I just really wasn't challenged. Then through our very good friend, at that point, I went over to work for National General. That had been a controversial issue--the Carthy Circle thing. I didn't know Gene Klein at the point, of course--of the Carthay Circle. In fact he hated me, which the people never believed, because I cost him hundreds of thousands of dollars by keeping his zoning from going through at Carthay Circle. But because later we became friends, you know, there was always doubt as to that--that he hated me.

But Gene Klein asked me to leave Columbia Pictures and come to him, work for him. I really was hesitant to do that because we were socially good friends by that time. Gene Wyman then represented National General at that point, and I just didn't know if that was a good thing. But Gene finally said--my Gene--he was called Little Gene. Big Gene was six feet some inches, six feet five, a big, big man. My Little Gene was little. So they were Little Gene and Big Gene, and we became very, very close friends.

My Gene said to me one day, "Why don't you at least answer Gene Klein. You know, this is our friend, and Roz I really think he wants you to work for him." So finally I did go over to see Gene. He had a project he wanted me to undertake, and I said okay, I'd do it. I

Wyman: undertook that project for him, which was to develop child care centers across America, which had nothing to do with the theater business that they were in at that point, or some of their other things.

I must say I'm one of the few executives in the world that ever went to a company to abolish the position I was holding and what they wanted to do. I'm very proud of myself for finally fighting through the corporate structure and saying, "Listen to me. Listen to me. This is going to cost you millions of dollars. You're not going to achieve it--what you thought was this cadillac that you looked at, of child care centers." I said, "It's not running a theater, and it's not the difference of giving them bad or good popcorn. These are kids. You cannot make the money you think you can make by franchising these things." That was the idea.

It took me months, a year at least, to convince them to get rid of this conviction. [laughs] It was really an interesting experience because Gene Klein in a sense was the president of the company, and I dealt with like a vice-president of the company, and he wanted me to deal through him. I had such a hard time making this man realize that this...He kept saying, "Go forward. Buy land. Get these things going!" And I just knew this wasn't going to work.

Finally one day we were out socially with Gene. I said, "Gene, you've got to listen to me. I'm an employee of yours. Now listen to me. I want to meet tomorrow with you and Sam Schulman. I want to lay this thing out in front of you." They finally then agreed with me, and I abolished my position.

Chall: Did you make a study of child care centers so that you understood the problems involved?

Wyman: Yes. Oh, I understood it! They had seen one in Nashville that was a cadillac. I mean it was beautiful. There's no way you could give the services they were giving and charge the amount of money they thought they were charging, and then make a profit.

If you ran it like that you'd lose nothing but money. I said, "If you cut back on what you say you're going to give people..." I said, "These are kids that you're dealing with." Land was expensive, and then we looked at different kinds of buildings. It was a good experience for me. I had a good experience doing it.

But I must say the corporate structure...You know, I've always found that people are so critical of government. I often find that when you bring real businessmen into government they don't understand it at all. I could understand why sometimes, after being in the

Wyman: corporate end of the world, why there was trouble with businessmen coming into government. Always the biggest businessman does not make the best government official.

Chall: Can you articulate that?

Wyman: Well one, they don't understand, in a sense, that you just can't--you just don't clean it all out. And often they're determined that this is the only way it can work, on the premise that, I have had a business experience and I know how to make money, and therefore government's got to be run on the same theory as that of making money.

But government doesn't run to make money. Government is a service and totally a service. When you are structured to make dollars, all you can see is cutting X, Y, or Z out or doing this to accomplish that. Maybe I'm not articulating it well, but you're orientated toward being cost-conscious. Now government may cost as much as you want in order to run it, but services are what you're giving. It's not profit making. Therefore, to give a certain kind of service it's got to cost umpteen number of dollars, and the people demand that.

You might say, the taxpayers, when they get the bill--that's the corporation you're dealing with. But they are just differently structured. The structure is entirely different.

Chall: How did you find yourself fitting into the corporate structure?

Wyman: I had problems. I've had problems all along in fitting into a corporate structure in a sense. For example, I've, a couple of times, contemplated having my own business. Every time I talk to some of my friends they'll say, "Roz, you're just not dollar-wise, to make dollars. You're not orientated to making dollars. You keep wanting to give a service."

I almost started an insurance company with Liz, for example. This friend of ours thought our idea for a woman's insurance company or for a woman's agency would be good. He was sitting there with us, this very dear friend of ours. He said, "Liz, Roz keeps saying, 'What can you give someone?' [chuckling] He says, "You got to give her something else. She's just not orientated"--and I never have been--"profit-wise."

If you're in government you're structured differently. I'm not motivated to make money, that's my basic problem.

Politics: A Commercial Venture

Chall: What happened when you left the nursery school affair?

Wyman: I went, and I didn't do anything for a while. I'd done some spots for Hubert Humphrey's last campaign when he ran in '72, I guess it was. A friend of mine had helped me with those, who was a friend of Gene's who had been in television his whole life, or the entertainment business--a very creative guy. Hubert had come to town, and he had no spots for California. It was unreal, and he had like a day to do them. They hadn't pre-planned. Oh, it was just unreal.

Gene, which often he did in our political life, turned to me. He always had the ideas and I used to always carry them out. He said, "Roz, get some spots done for Hubert." So we got together with Al Burton. This was this friend of Gene's. It was volunteer totally, but Al kind of directed them because we were dealing with tape. We didn't have time to put anything on film. We had to do tape.

When we got through Al later spoke to Gene and he says, "You know, Roz has really got a marvelous knack for this sort of thing. She really knows what she wants." Then he says, "I think we could do commercials." He said, "Maybe she'd be interested in forming a company with me."

So I went into a company. We formed a little company called Tel-it Productions. The theory was to do political spots and maybe to develop entertainment-type features. He had been very youth orientated. He used to run a thing across America called Teenage America. It was very successful. So we put a company together, and Gene originally said, "I'll give you the first ten thousand to start it." Gene was very concerned that I was not being fulfilled at all.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: In other words, family and home was not enough for me. He was just the most supportive guy in the world. So he said, "Let's try this, if you want to do it." He said, "I'll loan you up to ten thousand

Wyman: dollars." So, to make a long story short, we got a client so quickly, and Gene only had to loan us a thousand dollars, which was really very good.

We took over a camapign. There was an issue in California--I can't remember the proposition--where they wanted to censor movies and we got, from the major studios, we got the contract to do the TV spots, figuring that my political know-how and my background in politics, and the fact that Burton was really a TV expert in filming, and so on and so forth, would produce a good team to defeat that issue.

So we pulled off that big contract, and we got paid a tremendous fee from the industry. It was an industry-wide thing. It also could have affected censorship of magazines. It was a big issue.

Chall: I think it was 1966 when Reagan first ran.

Wyman: No, no, it was later than that because it would have had to be either in '71 or '72, it seems to me. We got John Wayne to do a spot, and Reagan came out against it. He was ready to kill Wayne. But Wayne had been in the industry, and so we got Wayne to do a spot for us.

We did some brilliant spots, by the way. We showed how censorship could affect movies, TV and radio, and magazines. Wayne's spot was that the industry isn't all perfect, but this is not the way to control it. It was a big issue.

The crazy Bircher that's running for, I think, attorney general, had put this issue in, and the Mormon Church had put in a lot of the petitions and stuff, which they weren't supposed to. But the industry was really up in arms. As I say, it was our first big account.

Gene died, and I then at that moment didn't know what I wanted to do. I didn't know whether I wanted to go on with this. We struggled then a little bit. We had developed a thing with Norman Lear called Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman.

## Special Assignment: City-County Consolidation

Chall: Oh, yes.

Wyman: I owned a piece of that eventually. I did not do anything other than I took a position. I took a money position because I did not want to go on with the show. So I just took a financial interest. Because

Wyman: of this, Al Burton eventually went to work full time for Tandem Productions [Norman Lear], and we disbanded the company. [Tom] Bradley asked me to go down and become a special consultant for him on city-county consolidation. I decided that I really loved government, and it had been one of my big issues as a city person, and so he asked me if I'd do that.

Now Bradley had said that he would really back that, which later turned out that he didn't, because it's a very gutty thing to back. So he couldn't get anything going. I immediately went down and I had such good rapport with city officials and county supervisors at that point. Anyway, I got his first beach consolidation through, and I saved the taxpayers a lot of money.

Chall: How long did you stay on this assignment?

Wyman: I stayed roughly a year, but with time out to campaign. Tom had really been most encouraging to me to campaign. That's why it was so bitter that his person working for him ended up campaigning, and then Bradley wouldn't help me. I just really felt I had helped him a great deal. That whole last council experience was just terrible for me.

Chall: And you didn't go back then as a consultant?

Wyman: I went back to finish up, but I told Tom I did not want to stay, because one, I didn't feel comfortable in the situation, because his people, even though he had said, "I will stay out of it," had not stayed out of it. This Maury Weiner who had been his deputy and who had gotten fired over the morals issue. That's a whole other story. But Bradley and Weiner had then supported Fran Savitch. Even though they denied it, they really went out to help her.

I obviously did not feel comfortable going back in that situation. I said I would finish up my consolidation. I would get that supported. I'd get the county to support it. I just told Tom, "You stay away from the council on this. I'll get it through." Got it through by a unanimous vote. He was stunned because some of the council were not supporting the thing. I got the supervisors--went over to see them--and they supported it.

I must say, I guess it was the second year, or third year, or whatever, he took great credit for saving the taxpayers all this money on beach consolidation. But anyway, I'm really good at those things. I could get the county people together; I could get the city people together; I understand those functions.

Then when I left there I didn't do anything for a while, up until last November. So that had to be, as I say, the council race must have been '75, is what I'm thinking.

Wyman: By the way, Ed Edelman and I have become friends again. We were originally very close friends. I had helped him get his last job, and Gene had helped him. That's why the Edelman-Wyman thing became so distasteful to us too, because Ed had been a friend of mine.

Then we sued him, and obviously for years we never spoke. But my mother had been a county probation commissioner appointed by Ernest Debs. Debs did not run then, and Ed took his place.

Chall: Oh, that's the vacant position.

Wyman: Yes, and so I had asked Ed, as a personal favor, to reappoint my mother. She was eighty-some years old. My dad had said, "You know, Roz, if she's not reappointed--it's just so important to her." So, it was difficult for me, but I did go to Ed. Ed and I had a little peace after--you know once the money was paid. We'd run into each other; and when Gene died he sent me a note.

It was difficult. But if it was that important, my dad felt, for my mother, I called Ed. I said, "Ed, would you please--?" I said, "I'd really consider it a favor. She's eighty-four years old. I don't know how many years she's had, but she loves it so." And he said sure.

In fact, tomorrow she is being honored by the County Probation Commission, and a chapel is being named in her honor. So we're all going downtown to have the chapel at Juvenile Hall named for my mom.

Chall: Great.

Wyman: I was very grateful to Ed to have done that. He sent out all the invitations for tomorrow. So that gap, you know. Time takes care of strange things in politics.

Chall: It's a good thing it does.

## Producers Guild of America

Wyman: Yes. So anyway, we are at the point of last November, '77. Producers Guild of America came to me.

Chall: What is that?

Wyman: It's like the Writers Guild or an Actors Guild or the Directors. It's what you call one of the above-the-line, in the industry, organizations. I think I'm going to have to take another pill. I've just got such pain.

They came to me. Their executive director had become ill and they were looking for a new person to be head of their guild. I said I wasn't interested at all. They didn't take no for an answer. At this point I also was toying with Carter. As I told you earlier, I didn't know which way I wanted to go, whether I wanted to go with Carter, whether I was ready to leave home, you know, pick up stakes, whether I can leave Mother.

Then I finally made the decision, from their first visit to me to the second visit, that I was not going to leave L.A., and that maybe Liz and I would go into business. I began to kick around a lot of things.

Then they came back to me and they said that they felt there were some challenges here, and would I consider reconsidering. Then I laid down what I thought were horrendous conditions--that I would consider it if promised certain things. One, Gene's former secretary had worked for him for thirteen years. I wanted her as my administrative assistant. [Marilyn Fishman] Two, I would not keep regular hours. I was past that stage of life. I'm not going to go to an office at nine and leave at five. I just won't do that. I have a son who's active in sports and he likes me to go to his games and I want to go to his games. I serve on lots of civic things. My music commission takes half a day once a month. I'm on the Democratic National Committee. I go back East four times a year.

In other words, would they agree to all these sorts of things? Money was secondary. I never even negotiated the money because one, I'm fortunate, Gene has left me comfortable. I have to be kind of careful till the children get through college. I've got two in two private colleges right now. But there will be no problem, obviously, when I sell this big house.

Widows do one of two things. They either keep spending at the rate when their mate is still alive, or they pull back. Well, I got petrified when Gene died, and I pulled back so tight I almost strangled us all. But finally I began to handle our money. It's interesting. I voted on millions and millions of dollars, but when it was my own dollars I felt inadequate.

Gene had handled totally...I am the typical widow. Even though I am very worldly I never handled a dime of any of our investments, our property. I didn't know what we owned. I am the worst wife's

Wyman: story of a man who's a busy lawyer who's always worrying about everybody else's property. He used to say, "Roz, I've got to sit down with you. We've got to go over this." When Gene died I knew next to nothing.

I don't think I banked in fifteen years. I never even went to the bank. Secretaries would do it or he would do it. When we first got married I paid the bills, and then he said, "It's silly. I've got five times the help. I'll pay the bills." So I didn't even pay the bills from the house.

But I finally learned that I think I will have plenty of money. I am careful. But I never was a spendthrift. The biggest thing Gene and I ever did was buy this house. I never liked diamonds. I never liked furs. He bought me a fur coat five times and five times in our marriage it went back. I just wasn't extravagant. Certain things we liked. We liked home. We entertained at home. We entertained fifty-two weeks out of the year.

Chall: Somebody told me that you had open houses in here almost every Sunday night.

Wyman: Oh, it was just unreal, every Sunday night.

Chall: I'd like to hear about that, as soon as I get the Producers Guild of America.

Wyman: I'll show you the kitchen that we built for that. That's why we built the projection room.

Chall: I'd like to know about how you did entertain and whom--

Wyman: Everybody. This was the biggest entertaining house in the world.

Chall: It's a beautiful, beautiful home.

Wyman: It was built to entertain. That's exactly what we did. We redid this house completely after we moved in.

Chall: I see. But now what does the Producers Guild--?

Wyman: The Producers Guild is responsible for the operation for the producers in television and motion pictures, in the industry. I became its executive chairperson. The biggest challenge facing me is...This is so complicated for somebody not in the industry. They have what they call industry-wide contracts. In other words, the screen actors have a contract with all the studios, and it's negotiated with what you call the AMPTP, the Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers.

Wyman: It is really a misnomer. It should be the Association of Motion Picture Companies. Columbia, Warner Brothers, Fox, all the major studios are a member of the AMPTP.

##

My responsibilities are the daily operation of the organization. I deal with the heads of the two studios with which we have an existing collective bargaining agreement--Universal and Paramount--if there is a dispute with reference to credits, pay, or anything in the form of a dispute or conflict that may develop. If a conflict should arise between a producer or producers and one of those studios, I would be asked to participate in the decision making regarding the solution.

The members of the Producers Guild are television and motion pciture executive producers, producers, and associate producers in the industry.

I also serve on the Inter-Guild Council which is made up of two representatives of the Screen Actors, Writers, Directors, and Producers Guilds. The representatives are the Executive Chairperson and the president of each of the guilds.

I took this position because I felt it was a challenge to try and get for the producers an industry-wide contract. The actors, directors, and writers all have what is called an industry-wide contract which gives them the basic benefits with all of the major studios and the television networks--MGM, Columbia, 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros., United Artists, and NBC, CBS, and ABC. The producers I represent only get the basics such as health and welfare and pension from Universal and Paramount. My goal is to be able to negotiate some day in the future an industry-wide contract which will bring us parity with the other guilds I have mentioned.

Chall: Is that challenging to you?

Wyman: That's the reason I went in because I felt there was a challenge in it, because just to run the operation, day-to-day operation, is no challenge at all. I enjoy the industry though, and I've always felt comfortable with it. I know all the people in it, like the heads of the studios. And I love negotiations.

Chall: Yes, so there you are.

Wyman: I'm back in, would be back in give and take a little bit, which I think I'm very comfortable with, although I would have a lawyer obviously, who would be on the team for negotiations.

Chall: This is not an area where there are too many women.

Wyman: There are no women. I probably am one of the only women in America, other than probably the waitresses' union or something like that, to head a major organization like that.

Chall: The person whom you were taking over from, was that a woman executive?

Wyman: Man.

Chall: Oh, so you've taken over a man's job. I want to ask you whether you had appointed women, when you were in office, to boards and commissions. Did you encourage women?

Wyman: We had no appointive powers whatsoever.

Chall: Only the mayor?

Wyman: Only the mayor. All we could do was beg him [laughs] for somebody. We'd confirm. One of my early fights, as you probably saw, was against the woman who was appointed to the library commission. I got one vote, Eddie Roybal's, on that fight, which to me was unreal--with Poulson. That he would appoint somebody to go on the library commission who was for book burning.

# Rosalind Wyman Named to National Endowment For The Arts

President Jimmy Carter has appointed Rosalind Wyman, Executive Chairperson of the Producers Guild of America, Inc., and former Los Angeles City Councilwoman, to the National Endowment for the Arts, it was announced by the White House.

Her appointment has been sent to the Senate for confirmation.

Upon confirmation Mrs. Wyman will attend her first meeting of the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C. on February 9, 10 and 11, 1979 at the National Gallery.

"I am honored and pleased to serve," Mrs. Wyman said, "and I hope that I will be able to help the growth of the arts in Los Angeles as well as the nation."

She added that, "I am presently working for the consolidation of the arts in the City of Los Angeles and hope that the new Cultural Affairs Department will be adopted by the City Council in the very near future."

Senator Alan Cranston said he was delighted with the appointment and noted that Mrs. Wyman has had a long involvement in and deep commitment to the arts since her early days as an elected public official in the City of Los Angeles.

Mrs. Wyman presently is serving on the Los Angeles County Music and Performing Arts Commission and the Committee for the Center Theatre Board to obtain the Aquarius Theatre for a second space for new and extended runs of Mark Taper Forum theatrical productions.

For further information, contact Rosalind Wyman at (213) 651-0084 or Hal Dash at Cerrell Associates, Inc., (213) 937-3500.

*Wilshire Reporter*
*January 24, 1979*

## VI THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THE ROLE OF THE WYMANS

Chall: I'd like to ask you some questions now about the Democratic party. I saw all that material [in the scrapbook] about your going back in May, 1954, to a big Democratic party dinner, at which I guess Truman was being honored, and you were the star it seems. Most of the headlines said that you upstaged Truman. You always were active in the Democratic party.

Now what led up to Gene Wyman's interest in being in the leadership of the Democratic party? He started at the top in a sense.

Wyman: Yes.

Chall: How did this come about? Who helped him?

Wyman: It came about because Gene had an extremely successful law practice and needed something more than the law. Gene always had to have a challenge. At that point in his life his law practice was extremely successful. He knew it could and would run, and he needed something extra in the sense of a new challenge. He'd always loved politics, and so he decided that what the heck, he'd get into politics.

Chall: I see. So he became vice-chairman, south, as I understand it.

Wyman: Yes. I think he started out the vice-chairman, south. [Vice-chairman of the Democratic party, southern division]

Chall: Did he replace [William] Munnell?

Wyman: There was a vacancy occurring. Bill Munnell, I think, went to the bench.

Chall: That's right.

Wyman: Gene had been a little bit active at that point.

Chall: You know, usually these people work from the bottom up.

Wyman: Oh--! In fact, I kept saying, "I stuffed envelopes. Look at you. You always start at the top!" We kidded him to death.

Chall: Who helped him get the appointment?

Wyman: Stan Mosk helped. Liz Snyder helped.

Chall: Did the Warschaws help?

Wyman: I can't remember. They might have, up front. I just don't remember, but I think we all started out as friends. Later--I mean Carmen must have said--Did she? Did you ask her?

Chall: She said that she had in the early days helped him get into that party office.

Wyman: It could be. You know I don't really know why he wanted to do that, to tell you the truth, except that he wanted to get involved--serve. In fact he really debated whether he wanted to hold any public position in the party. Later, as he went on, he said that you could do more, he realized, by not holding a title.

House-
Keeper: Mrs. Wyman, do you want anything?

Wyman: Right. Do you want some coffee?

Chall: Oh, that would be nice. [Conversation resumes over lunch]

Wyman: You're a creation of the people, and as a young college girl, making it that way, I was really loved. When I got married, I already had something going, and then I not only got married, I married a successful man, and I had three great kids, and we grew. I could use the advantage of Washington--In fact there's a park today [chuckling] which I must say Ed Edelman took the credit for, which we never would have had in West Los Angeles, if it hadn't been for the Kennedys. I played my cards for my constituency in the city of L.A.

My constituents, especially our peers, our own age group, had troubles realizing I was one of the few who had grown in office, that in other words I had not just stayed a city councilperson. I had become nationally known and I had taken my place in some other councils as had Gene, and that it was beneficial. I had so much going for me. There was terrible jealousy among women at that point.

Digression on New York City Politics

Wyman: Bella Abzug lost today, which was interesting. Well, I must say, you run for this and you serve, and then you run for something else and you quit. It's interesting, finally, because the registration in that district is ten to one or something, Democratic. To lose that seat to a Republican is incredible.

Chall: I guess it's difficult to judge the mood of the public, and some people like Bella Abzug, for all her great qualities, become a caricature sometimes.

Wyman: Bella's very tough. She represents probably the toughest woman politician you'd ever meet. Barbara Jordan is tough, and yet you don't feel the toughness in Barbara Jordan.

My friend, Bess Myerson, could have become governor or anything else she wanted in New York. It's interesting, how, because she finally took such a leadership role, she became, in the public eyes, a little tougher, because she helped Ed Koch so.

Chall: Oh, I see, the mayor.

Wyman: Yes. I guess you've read some of Bess's publicity. But Bess is probably the best-loved woman in New York. Polls were taken on her. She could have just run away with the governor's race, the mayor's race, the last Senate race. They just love Bess--as a person because she was woman personified, and she could speak so well, and look so well. Yet she couldn't run because, one, she said, "I don't want anybody to ever say anything bad about me."

Chall: That won't do.

Wyman: That won't do. So, she never ran herself. Then Ed Koch ran for mayor and he was considered the least likely to win in that field of candidates. Bess turned...It's one of the very few cases, by the way, in public life where a woman, especially, where a popular person turned their popularity totally into somebody else. Normally you can't transfer that. You could endorse somebody, but it never is transferred.

Ed Koch, pollwise, wasn't known by twelve percent of the city of New York. He was running sixth out of seven candidates on all the polls. Bess became his chairperson. She polled the highest for mayor, and was loved. She became his chairperson and his spokesperson. She did all his spots. She campaigned up and down the streets for him. Most people thought Bess was running! It was really an interesting thing.

Wyman: Then the press began to attack him and attack her. First time Bess had ever gotten attacked. I said, "Look! You got attacked and it wasn't even you. You might as well have gotten attacked for running yourself."

We're very close. I don't know if I've indicated that. We're really close.

Chall: You told me, yes.

Wyman: A brilliant woman.

Chall: But he won.

Wyman: He won, and the publications that came out about it, said that it was unbelievable how Bess Myerson had transferred her total popularity.

Chall: That was recognized then?

Wyman: Was absolutely and completely. The stories on his race are unbelievable. In fact, some people said, "Bess wasn't running?" [chuckling] They kept looking for her on the ballot. When they went to vote she wasn't there.

Chall: Has he given her any position?

Wyman: Oh, she could have anything. She doesn't want any. Then they said she was going to marry him, which she isn't going to do, and then that she was going to be his official hostess. I think she will be a hostess for him often.

He got charged with being a homosexual and that just really got Bess so upset. I mean really so upset. It's just unreal what happens in campaigns.

Chall: Oh, that's right, he's a bachelor.

Wyman: A bachelor. A guy with very simple tastes. There's a wonderful story about the day after he got elected. He lives in a bachelor apartment, I guess, and doesn't cook, or whatever. Every morning he goes to a little delicatessen and has a bagel and coffee. I guess the coffee is put out, and you go and get it yourself. The first morning he came in, and they said they wanted to serve him.

He says, "Oh, let me be, will ya? Just let me get my own coffee." [chuckling] You know, they wanted to serve him. He also didn't move into Gracie Mansion. It's interesting.

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# Assembly
# California Legislature

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BOB MORETTI
SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY

Sept 28, 1971

Dear Gene,

Really, what can I say? The words "thank you" are so overused and inadequate. Your friendship is both valued and valuable to me. Not only have you and Loz been gracious to Marilyn and me but you have allowed me access to people I would never otherwise meet.

Suffice it to say that I never forget people who are nice to me, nor am I ever satisfied to receive without giving.

In spite of what I wrote above, and lacking better alternative ——— thank you, thank you.

Bob

Chall: Like Brown.

Wyman: Jerry Brown. He says, "I don't know what to do in that big place. I have a little house, a little apartment. I know where everything is. I don't want to rattle around there alone. I'll use it for entertaining at least." He's not, as much as Jerry is. But he says, "I, I just can't live there." So, he moved out. Some people do have simple tastes.

## Eugene Wyman Becomes Chairman of the California Democratic Party, 1962

Chall: We were on Eugene Wyman and the Democratic party. So, I think what he did was to come in as a vice-chairman (1961) replacing William Munnell.

Wyman: He started at the top. There's no question about it.

Chall: Then he immediately became, after a year or so, state chairman. [1962]

Wyman: And then national committeeman. [1964-1968] He was a tremendous success.

Chall: Did he enjoy this?

Wyman: His first affair was typical. He never, you know, put a stamp on an envelope, which I always kidded him about. "Those of us [chuckling] Gene, who have worked up from the ranks, deserve these sorts of things." He took a lot of kidding, from me especially.

He decides to have a big affair, where he wants a mob of people. He's going to have all the candidates running for statewide office. I can't remember if it was the first election of Governor [Pat] Brown, or maybe the second time.

Chall: Let's see.

Wyman: I don't even know his years.

Chall: I have them. He became state chairman in '62, which was Governor Brown's second election.

Wyman: Then it would be the reelection campaign in 1962. So he decides to have all the candidates, and we'll have a big to-do at the Statler Hilton Hotel, and take the big ballroom. He wants all these people. All of a sudden he gets the idea and he says, "Now Roz, you do it. You carry it out."

Wyman: And I said, "Gene, oh God! That's not easy." I had great contacts, and labor, et cetera. I called all my labor friends, and I said, "Look, we've got to bail Gene out." [laughs] I said, "You know, statewide candidates are coming. First thing, he's got television he bought. We've got to have a room."

So I made them all come by bus. I had a bus thing we started. I made all my labor people [laughs] put people on buses, and I organized this whole thing.

They had the dinner, this dinner, prior to it. I said, "Gene, I don't know if this is going to work because you started so late with this idea. When I realized that you hadn't really thought this thing out...You know, by just putting the word out people just don't come." To make a long story short, there was a window in the room where he was eating dinner. I said, "I'm not coming into dinner." I was really nervous. I was more nervous often for his successes than, you know, for mine.

But we had a marvelous relationship. We really complemented each other. If you put us in a computer we would have come out perfect.

He was a very nervous man, much more nervous than I was. But when something like this occurred, I would get nervous because I wanted it to be a success for him. It was the first big thing. I would walk by the room, and he'd look--[whispering]"people." [laughter] We had it somewhat timed that the buses would arrive, and oh God, it was like a half-hour away, and there was just no people. I mean I began to panic.

But we filled those buses! Man, oh God! those buses came in. Labor came through for us. It was interesting, later when Gene was ...Well, I don't know what he was holding at that point--but, we had such a great rapport with labor. A couple of times labor needed his help as a lawyer, and he just gave it freely, and the use of his office to help them. Bill Bassett, who was the head of the Central Labor Council, was a very dear friend. Bill would call upon Gene. Then when Hubert ran the last time and Gene needed labor, God, they just came through like gangbusters. He had such contacts, nationally, et cetera. But they had kind of been a great ally of ours.

Gene was just a tremendous success. He had a great ability to raise money. Liz was, I think, a great chairman, but she worked so hard at it with so little help. First place, he had a huge law firm. He was one of the few people I've known who used his clients. Usually a man who represents somebody, and they're paying him money, he doesn't ask them for favors. Gene never hesitated. This was

Wyman: rare in political fundraising. All his clients got hit. Gene could sell you or talk you into anything. He could sell a Brooklyn Bridge if he wanted to.

Our dearest friends, like Gene Klein, said, "You know, Gene could sell me anything." He said, "I was determined when he hit me the tenth time I wasn't going to go for it, but there was no way."

He always came up with gimmicks, how to raise money. Poor John Factor, for example, had just been hit and hit and hit and hit by Gene. I mean, God, the poor man was so good. We were being honored then by a charity. I didn't want to do it, but the Hebrew University came to us. We had gone to Israel in '71, or I guess maybe '70 or the early part of '71. We knew '72 was going to be an election, and he wanted to give a year to Israel. So we decided it had to be '71 because '72 was an election year. I don't know who he'd all hit for '70. I guess it was the presidential election in '70. It must have been Lyndon Johnson's election. Seventy, was it?

Chall: No.

Wyman: I don't know. Somebody's campaign was--

Chall: Lyndon Johnson was '64.

Wyman: Yes. And '68?

Chall: Hubert Humphrey.

Wyman: Well anyway, Gene never stopped hitting the same old people, which was really dreadful. Something had come up and at least it was a charity which was deductible. Remember this, politics is non-deductible dollars, and there was no limit that you could give. Gene would go out for $25,000 contributors and $100,000 contributors, you know, big, big money.

I don't know, as I say, how many times he'd hit poor John Factor who just loved Gene like a son. I'm digressing, but Al Hart, the banker at the City National Bank, when they did the interview on Gene for the Wall Street Journal, I think it was Al that said in that interview that he'd give, I think, $150,000 to send Gene to Seattle, because he would be ahead if he could get rid of him. In a sense, you could save money.

Gene came home, and he decided that we were going to be honored. It's a fund-raising gimmick. Your poor friends have to give again. I said, "Oh Gene, how can we do this? We're not Rockefellers, and we'll be paying for that building the rest of our life. Why do

Wyman: we need a building named for us?"* Because we never had that kind of money. Gene had earned all of his money, and it was all after taxes and the tax structure was so horrendous. We never had really big money. It was only in Gene's death, I think, he was considered wealthy. Then it was because of the insurance and everything--he carried a tremendous amount of insurance--that we really had the amount of money that we did have.

So he said, "You know, I got to figure out a way that I can really hit John for the building. He's been so sweet. I just hate that..." Gene finally had conscience pangs! We always said he never had conscience pangs, because he always figured everybody could afford it. He never went to anybody, even to sign a note. He says, "They're all big boys. They can afford it, and if they never get paid back it really doesn't matter. They've got plenty."

He always felt life had been so good to so many people, like us, that we gave a great deal because we were lucky. Gene never went to sleep at night without saying a prayer, how lucky he was and how grateful he was. He used to say, "If I should not wake tomorrow I've had a great life, great wife, great kids." He was just an unreal kind of man.

Anyway, so one night we were lying in bed and he says, "I got a great idea. John Factor loves the Kennedys. He loves Rose Kennedy." He had sat next to Rose Kennedy at a dinner. Gene says, "John admires her and what she's done with her family and how she's held up." This was obviously after Bobby's death and after John's death. We'd had a dinner, I guess, for the Kennedys, I don't know--for some charity. John Factor had sat next to her, and he kept saying he had just never met a more interesting, charming--whatever it was.

Gene says, "You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to ask John to make a contribution in the Wyman building of a Rose Kennedy chair in political science." [laughter] He <u>always</u> could come up with just the perfect idea.

Chall: An offer that couldn't be refused.

Wyman: Yes. He went to John, and John just loved that idea, that he could name it for Rose Kennedy. When Gene died John gave a half a million dollars to Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Gene's name for a heart wing. It's rare that you do it in somebody else's name. You always do it in your own, your own family.

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*The Scopus Award of the American Friends of the Hebrew University. The Eugene L. and Rosalind Wyman Political Science Building of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Chall: That's right.

Wyman: He loved Gene, just loved him.

Chall: His rise in the Democratic party was--

Wyman: Phenomenal. But once he started, he really produced.

Chall: Yes. Mainly it was fund raising?

Wyman: Mainly fund raising, mainly functioning. He'd put together quite a staff. I think he put together probably the most intensive full-time staff that they'd had. Liz had tried, and Liz had been one of the first. Then there were interim years when there was really nothing much done. Bill Munnell's years were not very exciting, you know--no staff and that sort of thing. Gene felt you had to work at it all year. You couldn't do it just at campaign time. He worked very hard at it. Gene didn't do anything halfway.

Chall: He took time out from his business? His practice didn't require his continual presence?

Wyman: It's interesting. No one ever felt Gene cheated anything because he did something extra. His family never felt cheated, and his law practice certainly never felt cheated. It's interesting. People always, as I say, felt that Gene's law practice grew because of all of these activities. When he stepped down, out of all political office, and he had time to devote full time to his law practice, the increase in the revenue from the law practice was phenomenal.

Because he'd had it then. He'd decided that holding public office in the political party was nonsense. He had originally thought someday he'd like to run for office, but as he saw more and more of it he absolutely had no interest in running for office ever.

He decided that you could do more by really, in a sense, not holding office. You could raise funds, you could do anything...I lost my train of thought.

Chall: When he left office--

Wyman: When he left office he then decided, "I've had that experience now; I'm going to go back and build my law practice." He went back, and as I said, the increase in the revenue in the law practice was phenomenal.

Chall: The fact that he was not only a state party leader but then national committeeman, did that give you more access--greater access--to the national leaders than you would have had otherwise?

Wyman: I would think that...I had always had great rapport, either because I was elected so young and my career had developed. It's hard to say this so that it comes out humble. But in political circles I had always been sought out for panels, for speeches, whatever. My first Truman speech had captured a lot of people. I had been to every national convention since I'd been twenty-one. I just became--fairly well known in politics myself.

Gene's success was much more phenomenal than mine, in everything, whether it be his law practice, or whether it be in politics, or whatever. I think we had more access, except that he always felt the Kennedys--no matter what he did for them--He said, "They always loved you the best." [laughter]

Kennedys were very loyal people, by the way, to their friends. When I had problems once with Yorty over the park, et cetera, Gene was in Washington. Yorty was saying that I couldn't use my cards with Kennedy, for that park, you know, that I was full of bull, in a sense.

Chall: What park is this?

Wyman: This was this park out in west L.A. where I wanted some surplus piece of land behind the Federal Building. It was fascinating. Gene was in the White House and he said, "Gee Larry, Sam is trying to embarrass Roz."

Larry said, "What can we do to help her?" Just that simple. "What can we do to help?" So, they called me and said, "What do you want us to do?"

I said, "Well, one, I want that piece of land. I want it declared surplus. They're dragging the feet between the GSA [General Services Administration] and the Veterans' Administration--who owned the piece of land. GSA had to get involved to declare it surplus so we could buy it cheap. Then we could afford it. Otherwise we couldn't afford it as a city.

I said, "Larry, I've got to get that piece of land! I really <u>want</u> it for my district." I said, "<u>My</u> district, on top of it. Not only the city, but it's mine. I've been really <u>dreaming</u> about this park out here."

So he says, "Okay, I'll tell you what. Do you want a meeting in the White House?"

I said, "I guess that will show those departments that you mean business."

Wyman: He said, "Okay. Schedule it."

So, I went back to Washington. The meeting was held in the White House with the head of the GSA and the administration. So, Yorty had a terrible time saying that my friends, the Kennedys, had forsaken me or whatever.

There were certain relations. I had known Hubert from day one. Hubert was one of our, my dearest political friends. Gene had been very active in the Johnson years, much more active than, in a sense, I was. But, you know, we did everything together. And yet he ran around more, and he ran back to Washington more, and all that sort of stuff. I would say his success was more of a phenomenon. It was really a phenomenon how successful he was. It was talked about all over.

I think that yes, we probably did more when he got active. For example, Hubert's last campaign. I must say I think the stress and strain on Gene was just unreal. Gene is not alive just because of the general stress and strain--not Hubert's campaign--but you put his law practice on top of it.

Gene was like a doctor as a lawyer. He sat up with people if they were in trouble. He would carry their troubles home. When his real good friends were in real trouble, he got a nervous cough. He'd go [imitating the cough]. You knew that somebody close was in real trouble.

Gene used to sit out in that yard, and he used to say, "If I could only get the weekend, where I can put myself back together again to face the week." Gene used to average about a hundred to a hundred and fifteen calls a day. And he'd make them. Late at night he'd still be making calls. If anybody called him, he needed him. He went out of the house at night like a doctor, and he was a very successful lawyer. He could send associates.

But he really, really never would turn anybody down. When somebody died, the family would call Gene. Gene used to make more funeral arrangements. It was unreal, Gene's concern about people. He never had a criminal practice because he couldn't stand it. He had no stomach for it.

Frank Rothman, his partner, was really a brilliant attorney, the main trial attorney. They eventually did some white collar crime [cases]. But I remember the first real criminal case that they got because of Frank's great ability to try, a man ended up going to jail with a family. Well, I thought Gene would die, really die. He went down to see the guy in jail. I mean, you know, worry about his family.

Wyman: Gene, as I say, was really a very sensitive man, which the outside world didn't ever know about. Few people had gotten through to see it. Liz Snyder knew a great deal about Gene because of his closeness with Chris, her daughter. That sort of thing. But Gene was the most incredible lawyer. As I say, the only way to describe him is a doctor.

Chall: I see. So, he then if he were working on a campaign, a tough campaign--

Wyman: Oh, it was so intense. Hubert's campaign in '72...

Chall: Well, no, '68.

Wyman: Primary.

Chall: Oh, the primary in '72, yes.

Wyman: Well, '68--But, '72 was just brutal.

Chall: I see.

Wyman: You know, he was the only one that went to the national convention in Chicago in 1968...His was the half-vote. It was the famous California vote. Everybody voted, and Gene...They kept trying to get Gene, force Gene...They made Gene's life miserable. Jesse Unruh made Gene's life very difficult.

**

Wyman: It was sixty-eight one way and half-vote another, for Humphrey or Humphrey's position, or whatever it was. This was in 1968. In '72 we got kicked out of the convention right away. You know, that was the disputed California delegation at Miami Beach.

Chall: Yes.

## Hubert Humphrey and the 1972 California Primary

Wyman: But in '72 Gene was somewhat of the architect on the debate. Hubert challenged McGovern to a debate in California, which McGovern later said helped, he felt, cost part of his election.

They [Humphrey campaign] came into the state, and they had no money. Gene had raised some money. In that campaign they had a policy where everything was sent to one central office in Washington. Gene was really for that because he thought that would save operation

Wyman: money and there would be one unit. It turned out to be a horrible mess. But Gene, in a sense, was worried that they'd come into California with nothing--which was the biggest primary--and they would have dissipated themselves on half those little primaries. That is exactly what they did do. They came into California and Hubert had no voice and they had no money. We were just sick.

We kept saying, "California's the ballgame, Hubert," and to Hubert's people. He came into the state and he had no spots, as I told you, which was unreal for California. He had no money to put spots on. Now Gene had saved, I can't remember, so many hundred thousands of dollars. He began to see what was happening, so he put it aside. So when they came he had not sent the entire amount back. I mean he had the checks ready to go, but he decided to hold back in a sense.

When they came here, a crisis occurred. Like two or three days before, we made the spots, and then Gene had, oh, let's say $250,000 put away to buy time. They [Humphrey campaign] didn't know about it at that moment, but Gene had already contacted somebody and said, "Let's buy the time, you know, so Hubert will have something in California and we'll have this challenge." Great story about Gene meeting Hubert at the plane so he wouldn't change his mind driving downtown. Hubert, you know, could have changed his mind [chuckles] he was so sweet.

Then actually when they had decided about the challenge--Hubert had left, was going to come to California. I don't know if Hubert ever knew the story. It turned out that Hubert was going to fly on the same plane with McGovern, a commercial plane. The people close to him called Gene and they said, "Oh my God, if Hubert gets on the plane with him, he'll never challenge him to debate [laughs] Hubert will say, 'Oh, I love George McGovern. I can't do that."

So Hubert never knew that the day he left Washington they changed his schedule. They called the mayor. I forget what mayor it was, a wonderful friend, either in Cincinnati or someplace. Hubert had to switch off the plane at the last minute. It made a stop. He never could understand why he made that stop [laughs] but that was to get him off that plane.

So, Gene just kept saying, "Oh my God, I'm so thankful I've got this money because they've come in broke." There was a crisis that occurred whereby Hubert had not, or the campaign had not, paid some travel bills, and the creditors were threatening to sue if they didn't come up with a certain percentage of money. There was going to just be a horrible mess that would hit the papers, that here's irresponsibility; they hadn't paid their debts, blah, blah, blah.

Wyman: So, Jack Chestnut, who was campaign manager, came to Gene and said, "You know, Gene, I don't know what to do. We're going to be hit with this."

Gene came home that night. God, he was so troubled. He said, "Roz, I'm just sick. I've saved that money for the spots which is the most important thing we could do. Jack Chestnut told me about this problem. I'm the only person who's got any money. They don't know about it. You know, I've already tentatively said we'd buy those spots. I guess I got to tell Hubert I have.." I can't remember what the amount was, $150,000, $250,000, or whatever it was. It was a good sum of money. It at least would have made a dent in spots, not great coverage for a state this size, but at least you would have had something on.

He was sick. All night he was up. That was typically Gene. All night he wrestled. He says, "Roz, what am I going to do? I guess there's nothing to do. I have to go to Hubert, tell him I have this money; I'd saved it for the spots; it means he will have no spots in California, if he wants the money to go."

So Gene went to Hubert. I guess, as the story goes, [chuckling] Gene talked to him in the bathroom--it was the only place he could get him alone--and told Hubert he had the money and what did he want him to do. Hubert suffered over the thing too, and he said, "Gene, I guess we've got to take the money and pay the thing." And Gene was sick, just sick. He said that we didn't have a chance in California.

At that point they were saying that already Hubert was ten, eleven points behind, which we knew was incorrect. By the way, Gene made a whole issue about pollsters in campaigns, attacking them because they could hurt. When the national press came here, because this was the last big fight, they kept quoting it. People then don't vote if they're for somebody and they think you're ten, eleven...We took a poll and found out they were two to three points behind. We were sick.

We think the difference was the incorrect polling--You know, Hubert lost this state by an infinitesimal number of votes.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: So Gene gave him this money and was really sick. [softly] I've never seen Gene so sick over anything. He then got mad. He said, "I'm going to go out and raise that much money in one day."

He went out and he called everybody. He says, "Hubert's not going to have any spots." Told them the story--that he had to give up the money. [chuckling] And I would say in about six hours he

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
WAVERLY, MINNESOTA 55390

July 27, 1970

Dear Gene:

Thanks for your note and the clipping from the Los Angeles Times. There is an old Biblical saying, "Ye shall reap what ye sow". I guess Jess is finding that out.

Once again, Gene, I am so grateful for all of your help. We desperately need it. My opposition is flooding this state publicity -- radio spots every 15 minutes on each station, ads every week in weekly papers and in every daily paper every day. Will you ask those who made pledges to get their money to us as quickly as possible? I hesitate to sound like an alarmist, but we really do need the funds as soon as we can get them.

Sincerely,

Hubert H.

Hubert H. Humphrey

Mr. Eugene L. Wyman
Wyman, Bautzer, Finell,
Rothman & Kuchel
9601 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 726
Beverly Hills, California
90210

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
MINNESOTA



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

May 16, 1972

Mr. Eugene L. Wyman
Wyman, Bautzer, Rothman & Kuchel
9601 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 726
Beverly Hills, California 90210

Dear Gene:

I am in basic agreement with your letter to me of May 13.

There is just one addition. I think we ought to have our main attack on Nixon; in other words, to stake out the role of party leader, party spokesman, and the man that can rally the party to defeat Nixon.

In California we should be using the theme: Who can defeat Nixon -- McGovern or Humphrey?

See you soon.

Sincerely,

Hubert H. Humphrey

Wyman: replaced that money. It was just unreal. But he was so angry that they would take that away--his last shot. He said, "That's Hubert's last shot. Hubert should have that shot. It's just mis-management. He was sick. He was just sick, and he was so determined.

I said, "Gene, there's no way you can raise that money."

He says, "Well, I'm going to try." And he never got off the phone, I think, for six, seven hours.

Chall: He really was a hard worker.

The Backyard Fundraiser at $5,000 a Couple

Wyman: Oh, he was unreal. We had a party one day in our backyard, in 1972, after McGovern was nominated. Gene was not too excited about McGovern, but he wanted to do something. So he decided he would do something for the congressional candidates. Bob Strauss had called him and said, "Why don't you do, Gene, something for the congressional candidates?"

We were lying in bed. I'll never forget it. Lights were off. And he said, "I really want to do something different. I think we'll have a fundraiser, $5,000 a couple." I turned the light on. I said, "Gene, you're a crazy man! Nobody's ever had anything at $5,000 a couple."

He says, "That's why we'll do it. I'll have to decide how to do it." That's a phenomenal sum of money for a political thing. He went to work; called me later. He says, "I've decided how we do it. The Speaker has to come out; Mansfield has to come out; we have to get all the key chairmen to come out."

I said, "Where are we going to have this affair? I guess I better start scouting town for an incredible, different something."

He says, "No, I think we'll have it in our backyard."

I said, "Gene, you're mad. Who will come to our backyard for $5,000?"

He says, "I will put it together so that nobody can refuse. It'll be so sensational." He said, "I'm not asking you to sell one ticket. All you have to do is make the most beautiful party you've ever made in your life."

Wyman: And I tell you! I had an unlimited budget. It was the most beautiful party I ever put together in my life. He never stopped. He got the most Democrats of prominence to ever leave Washington, other than for a convention. It was here in my backyard.

As I recall, I think we raised three quarters of a million dollars in our backyard that evening. And it was beautiful. I had waterfalls, and I brought in trees. Oh, it was something. Everybody was here.

But he was brilliant. That's how he did it. Then he brought any chairman that was of any substance. Wilbur Mills was at his height at that point. During the daytime he worked those guys like nothing. He made them go around and have lunches. He made them meet with people. [chuckles] You know, so that there was some personal contact as well.

Then the party was gorgeous. I had strolling violinists out there, and then I had a band. I had, I think, thirty prominent people from Washington, and I moved them so that they moved three times during the night. We changed their settings and Gene says, "It'll never work." He got up and announced it. He says, "Well, if this doesn't work it's my wife's fault. If it works great it was my idea." So that people got to meet more than just a few people.

Chall: Were there tables all over?

Wyman: Yes, and as the people left that party they said it was one of the great parties they'd ever been to in their life.

Chall: Do you like working on that kind of project? That takes a tremendous amount of organization, knowing who can put together the various parts of such a big affair.

## Sunday Night Dinners

Wyman: Entertaining was never a problem. I got bored with it. Gene loved it. He never wanted to leave the property. He wanted people to come here. He loved the Sunday night dinners that you read about. That was his joy. We put the movie projector in so we could run movies and have dinner. The dinners were very special. People would call from Washington and say, "I'll take an early plane. Is Sunday night dinner on? Can I come?" We used to have twenty to thirty every Sunday. Some were regulars who'd say, "Can we come?" We made a gold card and you got ten dinners punched. It was just a gag. Though people would say, "Can I come to dinner?" And you never knew who was at the table.

Wyman: Finally I'd say, "The table is full." Gene used to say, "Oh, we can get two more in. We can get four more in."

Chall: Would that be the table in that dining room?

Wyman: That table.

Chall: It would hold all those people? That one?

Wyman: Well, we would break it up. The table comes apart.

Chall: I see.

Wyman: Then sometimes we would have oh, like a long board with, oh, those things you see on the street. What are they called--that you set things on? [sawhorses] You just don't know what we did.

See, our dinette matches, and so we'd push that back, or we'd put some in here, or...But some Sundays I would get very tired, you know, and say, "Oh, God, again!"

Chall: I was wondering. That's quite a bit of work every week. If your husband said, "Oh, I wish I had a Sunday just to think things through..."

Wyman: Well, he would enjoy sitting in his yard, but that was fun at night for him because it was informal. He never dressed.

Chall: He still had to be meeting people all the time.

Wyman: Yes, but he really loved that. He would rather do that than have to go to a party. We went out very seldom. The things we had to go to, we'd go to. We would always go to somebody's birthday party or somebody's anniversary. But most of our friends would call and say, "We're having a dinner party and we know you don't want to come, but if you want to come, you can come." We didn't drink, either one of us, so they'd say, "We know you don't want to come for cocktails. Cocktails are from seven to eight. If you want to come--"

We were always the first to leave. We were, in a sense, anti-social, but only our friends knew that, and they totally accepted that. We would go past the cocktail hour, we would stay to dinner, and Gene used to always have to see the eleven o'clock news--be home by the eleven o'clock news.

When there used to be two papers out, even though we got it delivered in the morning, he used to have to run to see what was bad, what was the news, who was blasting us, or who was after us, or what.

Wyman: Most dinner parties we really didn't like.

Chall: But you entertained a great deal.

Wyman: At home. He loved to entertain at home.

Chall: These two chefs that were mentioned in that article, were they here just for Sundays?

Wyman: They were personal friends who did this as a hobby. They were not professionals.

Chall: And they would do this every Sunday?

Wyman: Almost. I built the kitchen for them because they didn't like my old kitchen. I had help around them so that they always had somebody to wash the dishes. They didn't have to do anything except cook. One is a producer, very successful producer who serves on my board, who I met when I was at Columbia Pictures. He's a real character, Hugh Benson. He said, "I'm the greatest cook in the world." You know, how you get to know somebody.

Jackie Cooper assigned him to break me in, and we got to talking about everyone--just a sweet man. Hugh Benson kept saying he was the greatest cook, and I said, "I have a friend of mine whom I met in my last political campaign..."

One night I couldn't get home in time--the help had quit or something--and Mother wasn't available. This was a woman that had come in to volunteer for me. Her children had grown. She was kind of bored. She said, "Well, let me go home and cook at your house."

I said, "How can I ask you to go and cook in my house?"

She didn't say she was a great cook at that point. She says, "I can cook. It's easy for me." That night we came home to the most incredible dinner I had ever eaten in my life, and she'd like prepared it in an hour and a half or something. I couldn't believe it.

So, it happened again. Now, the second time I wasn't so hesitant because I figure everybody's got a great meal. I wanted to see if she could do that again. [laughter] I was fascinated. She was probably one of the greatest cooks I have ever met in my life--all hobby.

So, Hugh Benson said to me one day, "I'm the greatest cook." I said, "I have a friend who is the greatest cook, Hugh. You're not the greatest cook."

Wyman: He says, "I want to meet her."

So we put him on the phone. On the phone together--it's a phenomenal story--they said they'll meet in my kitchen the following Sunday. I was to get twenty people. They had never met each other.

He came in with a suticase of knives, and forks, and plates, and everything. They met in my kitchen. She planned the menu. She always did the shopping and planned the meals. The two of them shook hands and started. [laughter]

The first day he cut his finger off and I had to run him--not off, but cut it--I had to run him to UCLA. So the first night he's out there cooking like this [demonstrates working with bandaged finger]. It was like a ten-course Italian meal that was unreal, unreal.

She was also a dessert chef. We used to have ten desserts some nights. He finally admitted that she was a greater cook than he was. Now, they came almost every Sunday.

Chall: I see. So that's how it started?

Wyman: Yes, it started as a fun thing. It went on for years. Then when we'd have a dinner party, like the vice-president or something, and we'd have maybe more than thirty, we'd have fifty or sixty, and we'd say we're getting professional caterers, they were angry with us. They said, "What, we're not good enough?"

We said, "You're better! But, we can't do this to you." One time when we had the vice-president they sent us a wire and said, "We're quitting." [laughter] People got kicks out of them.

They worked like dogs in there every Sunday! When they would finally sit down or something people would applaud, or we would say what they did tonight, or we'd present the desserts in some special way.

They got some satisfaction out of it. Otherwise, they wouldn't do it. They used to call Gene The Boss. [snaps fingers] He liked everything on time. If you wanted cocktails you had to come at a certain time because we served dinner promptly at seven. So, if you wanted a cocktail you had to come between six-thirty and seven. There was only a half-hour of cocktail hour, because at seven o'clock, as Hugh Benson said, "I get the eye from the boss. 'Why isn't it done?"

At eight o'clock we had the movie. After the movie, because Monday was a workday, there was very little social talking. Everybody left. So, it was fairly routine.

Chall: People didn't just come in?

Wyman: Some would come for dessert. We had some regular friends who knew that. I finally got to the point that I said, "Gene, I can't call everybody you want every weekend." So, what we did was when he had special people and our friends would call and say, "What's the movie?", I finally got him to say, "You've got to call and find out what the movie is. If you want to come, fine. Just tell us." They'd say, "Well, can we come to the movie and dinner?"

Now, sometimes we'd say, "It's all business. It's no guests." Our friends just understood. We'd say, "Look, no guests tonight. It's business night." He was entertaining for business purposes or something, a client maybe, or a group of people for some reason he wanted to put together.

Some nights we'd say, "If you want to come to the movie, come to the movie." Then they would come in at eight o'clock. Sometimes when the table was full and it wasn't a business night, was just regular Sunday night dinner, as we called it, they would begin calling on the weekend and say, "Can I come to dinner and the movie?" The table would finally fill. We kept a little list, and we'd say, "We got twenty now. That's it. The table's closed."

Now, Gene was terrible. If you got Gene on the phone, like Sunday, and they'd say, "Gee, can I come to dinner?" he'd say, "Roz says the table's full, but let me go see." You know, he'd come up and he'd try to bargain with us for a few extra.

Chall: Were these friends of yours who really remained friends, or were there some who were just freeloading on Sunday?

Wyman: I'll tell you what happened. When Gene died I really realized that Gene was really the power within this group. Of the two of us, he was really the prominent one. I said, "There's going to be a lot of friends that I'm not going to see anymore." And that's exactly what happened. But I think I was as prepared as a woman could be for that situation.

I would say a good half of what we called the regulars, I don't think I ever see now at all. But Gene was, quote unquote, a powerful person, they thought. The fact that he had a big law practice made people gravitate to him, and that he wielded the power in the country they thought he wielded, and so on and so forth. A tremendous amount of it quit.

I must say, as much as I was prepared for some of it, I found some of it shocking still. A tremendous amount of our friends, quote unquote, I don't see at all. Social climbing or the social thing has

Wyman: never been either one of our interests. If we were invited to things that were, quote unquote, with certain blue bloods of this town, I mean it was never as important to us as some of our friends have been to us. Despite that we did move in incredible circles.

Gene began his work in the party in 1962 during Pat's second campaign. I think Pat Brown credited Gene with his victory over Nixon more than any other person. He's said so publicly. Pat Brown was polled twenty points behind Nixon when he started. Gene decided he wanted to go after the Hughes loan with Nixon, and he was the chief spokesman for Brown, and took on the networks, and asked for equal time and filed the thing. Gene did most of it.

It was interesting that we got hit back by Republicans later who went after us. See, it wasn't just Yorty. Sometimes you forget, but the Santa Monica Outlook did a lousy story on us--a series. They later had to retract it because it had half-truths, and Gene...You know, at a point you finally get tired of just turning the other cheek.

We always felt that occurred because of Gene's tremendous role in Pat Brown's campaign and going after Nixon, and they were just so angry. Gene was just so effective. He was a great trial lawyer. Gene was a success at whatever he did. He had a drive. Either he knew he was going to die young and he had to do it all, or something.

But Gene came from a little town in southern Illinois--born here, left here, which is rare, and they went back to southern Illinois. He fought the battles of the blacks in that town in southern Illinois. His father was worried that the people wouldn't come in his store, but yet he wouldn't stop Gene. His father and mother always gave--for the poor people--gave the clothes. His father had a little ready-to-wear store. But Gene really went public with it.

Then he became a radio announcer to help support himself through school. Then he went to Northwestern, and he not only was student body president his senior year, but he was student body president his junior year, junior and senior year, which is really rare. Here's a school which was very anti-Semitic, and here's a Jewish boy, non-fraternity, who sold programs on scholarship and slung hash to go there, and yet was elected the student body president his junior and senior year. Then came out here and started--worked a year and then started his own law firm.

He was such a success. And yet he was so kind. He was just a phenomenal person. [wistfully] I have not dated since Gene died. I can't come to it. I just can't get to it. I don't know when it's going to occur.

Chall: It will.

Wyman: Maybe when the children are not around. Others are just such mediocre people compared to Gene.

Chall: It's not going to be easy.

Wyman: You're not supposed to compare, but I don't know, if you've had success and a happy marriage they always say it's easy to remarry. But I don't know. I just have never met another Gene Wyman.

Chall: You may never do so. And that probably is what you'll have to decide --that you won't. Once you've made that decision the rest of it may be a little easier. I can't say. I doubt it will ever be easy. But something--you know--it will come. I consider you quite young, and basically strong, and you have years ahead in which you can resolve these agonizing problems and move your life forward.

You have spoken of gaps being bridged, and I wonder if you would care to discuss briefly what happened between the Wymans and the Warschaws in 1964, and again in 1966 when Eugene Wyman broke with Carmen Warschaw over the selection of national committeewoman, and later over her campaign to be chairman of the party, a position which she thought she had earned. Did the breakup of a long-time personal friendship and political alliance upset you? Could it have been avoided?

Wyman: We had been old and dear friends. The friendship goes back many years. They came to our wedding. Of course I was upset that our friendship ended as a result of a change in political alliances. But in politics alliances change; there are unhappinesses in politics; sometimes you get trapped.

Gene felt he had no choice in 1964 in terms of balancing Northern and Southern California, that he never had a choice at any time but to go with the governor.

Carmen is much tougher than I am. As a human being she is just tougher. I'd be interested some day to hear her side told. Gene is not here to tell his side.

Chall: I guess you're the one who will have to do it.

Wyman: I can't tell you a great deal of it. Joe Cerrell is the one, if you ever want to get a third party who was vitally concerned. He was the most active in that period. You have probably heard of Joe. He's a political consultant. A lovely guy. He could probably tell you. He knew more about the insides of that than I did.

Rosalind Wyman, Chairperson of the National Congressional Dinner, 1973

Wyman: Gene had agreed to chair a national dinner in 1973. After he died, I then chaired it.

Chall: Yes, I wanted to ask you about that. You had to go back to Washington and organize that dinner?

Wyman: Yes. I really had said no. But, see they knew that, like our party in the backyard in '72, we had done two together and so the national Democratic Congressional Committee asked me to take it on. Then they got hold of a couple of our friends who they knew had influence on me. They all decided it would be good for me to do it.

As I look back, I don't know how I ever did it now. I was really not functioning. I tried to function. Gene's death, obviously, was a shock and was very sudden. There was no warning. There was no anything. I must say I don't think I've really ever been put back together again. I think I have functioned in the manner that I was supposed to function. I think that I've done as well as I can with the kids. I've been very close to the kids. I came home for a while. I didn't do anything. The kids, as much as they may need me, I think I needed them worse.

But how I did that dinner--he died in January--how I did it in April I'll never know.

Chall: That was in April of the same year?

Wyman: Yes. It was either April or May of 1973. I can't remember. We moved the dinner. We changed the date. It may have been May. But I made, oh, four or five or six trips East. It was the most successful dinner they ever had. A tenth of me was going at that point. But again they had never had anybody with such organization. The day Gene died he had dictated an outline for the dinner that was in his secretary's typewriter. We had talked about the dinner.

He had asked me to go back anyway with him, to help make all the physical arrangements, like the invitations, and like the room, and what I wanted for entertainment, and all that. I had already agreed, because he was extremely tired when they asked him to do it.

He debated. He was exhausted, just exhausted. He said, "I'll only do it if you agree to help."

Wyman: I said, "Of course, I'll help, if you want to do it. I really wish you wouldn't, but if you want to do it...I just don't think you need this at this point."

Chall: This is a major fund-raising affair in Washington, D.C. to raise funds for congressional races? Is that it?

Wyman: Yes. Senate and congressional races. This was the first time a westerner or anybody outside of the eastern establishment had ever been asked to chair that dinner. Then when I was asked to do it, I was the first woman ever to chair the dinner.

They had never raised a million. Gene's goal was three million, or two million at least. Had he lived he would have raised two million. I raised a million, which was the most they'd ever raised. As I say, if I could have functioned full blast...They asked me to do it again the following year and I turned them down.

I ended up doing it again in 1976. I didn't really want to, but Alan Cranston--Man, I got some real pressure. I said, "Ah, what the hell." Because, as I say, if you had a triumph, you never go back. I didn't want to go back to do it again. I didn't have a president. I didn't have anything.

The Republicans were in that year--It was just after Watergate, and everybody was petrified to give money. I bet anybody who raises money this year is insane, you know, to try even. They had raised $350,000 at their dinner, and they had a president. They had [Gerald] Ford.

I thought, "My God, I'm going to fall on my face." Well, I raised about $750,000, which was really unreal for that year with everything else that was going on.

The following year, '77, Chuck Manatt took it, and he had a president. I kid Chuck because he only raised a million, three. I said, "God, in '73, Chuck, I raised a million! What's the matter with you guys?"

But anyway, I have a very warm, warm relationship in the Congress. In fact, I think I probably am the only person for whom the majority leader, whip, et cetera, asked the president for a major appointment. In fact, one of the blowups of Tip O'Neill--I don't remember if you remember back when Jimmy Carter first went in--Tip really got mad at him. One of the reasons he got mad had to do with me. I had wanted to be chief of protocol. Tip had supported me for this, as had Bob Byrd and <u>everybody</u>. Each person supports somebody in their own

Planning the National Congressional Fund-Raising
Dinner for the Democratic Party, 1976

*Photo by Dev O'Neill*

Roz Wyman being honored for her successful work on the dinner

*Photo by Dev O'Neill*

Wyman: state, but they had to admit nobody had the Senate and congressional support I had had for that position. They then offered me the second spot, which I did not want. At that Tip blew his stack. He said, "Roz is the only person this entire Hill has asked you to support.

Chall: Chief of protocol down here?

Wyman: No, in Washington.

Chall: I see.

Wyman: To tell you the truth, I thought it would be fun. I did not want something in HEW. I did not want something that...At that point in my life I thought I'd like to have some fun out of politics. I figured the trips--I could travel. I was very mercenary at that point. I thought, "Well, if I'm going to go, I want to have some fun." I thought the traveling would be fun, the prearranging of the president's trips. He traveled first class. I thought it would be fun, and I knew I would be really good at it.

I told them. I said, "In that position I also can help you on The Hill," because protocol invites the embassy sort of things. I said, "I know how to weigh the political problems and I can help you on The Hill. I'll see that certain people get invited to the things they like--" the wives, you know, et cetera, et cetera.

Then the other thing I was interested in was something in culture. I was considered at one point for the Nancy Hanks' spot. But again, they did not want to give me the top spot. And I didn't want anything else.

Chall: Is there any reason for it, do you think?

Wyman: I think that really Carter was getting such pressure at that point, that although he ended up picking somebody that probably didn't have much more background, he was having such problems. Senator Pell had been kind of the father of some of the legislation regarding arts, et cetera, and Pell had a man that he really wanted.

Pell said he would support me for the second spot. I really, at that stage in my life figured, "I either take the top spot of something, or I don't want it at all." They made me two or three offers, but I just didn't...I must say, to most people they were fairly prestigious. But for me, I just...I don't really need anything from anybody. I have to do it for myself at this point to be satisfied.

I really never wanted to live anyplace but California, never been excited in a sense at living in Washington. I'm a real Californian. I hate cold weather. I thought, "If I'm going to make the sacrifice

Wyman: and leave Mother and all those worries, it's got to really be something I want. Just to go to Washington for what they think is a great position and some of my friends may think is a great position, I can't go. I don't want to go for that reason."

Chall: It's a good idea to know yourself well enough to know that.

Wyman: Yes.

## Politics as a Career

Chall: Did your children come to all these dinners on Sunday night? Were they a part of it?

Wyman: Our children participated in everything. If the vice-president was here, they participated. If Hubert was here campaigning, he'd played ball with them. He swam with them. No matter how little they were, they were totally a part of everything. When I did the dinner in Washington they flew back for the dinner. Our children absolutely were a part of everything we did. We did not treat them as little kids, and we thought it was important that they be subject to this. Sometimes we debated--was it over their heads? We wanted them to hear the speeches, if somebody spoke. Our kids are so politically tuned it's kind of unreal.

Chall: Would you like them to follow in your footsteps, that's yours and Gene's?

Wyman: I don't know at this point. At one point I thought I would really like them to go into politics. Now, I'm not sure. I think the heartache of my last campaign especially was so devastating.

Gene had a very interesting attitude. He used to say, "Don't get mad; get even." I never--I can't remember the bad things. I may have told you that once.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: I can't. But now as I look back, that horrible last campaign was so distasteful to me. As I look back now on some of it, my early years were really exciting and fun and I wouldn't probably give them up. I wouldn't trade them, except that I really think I would have been better off had I entered law school, as my life turned out, and had gotten my law degree, rather than being elected to public office, because now I would have a profession.

Wyman: I am so strong about people getting professions now. I suppose everybody can't, but the one thing I'm screaming the most at my children--I don't know if I'll be successful--is, "Get a profession." If my daughter wants to be a teacher, be a teacher. Be something. Be equipped. Because even though I had twelve years of public life, and I have a certain respect, and I have been asked to serve on things, boards, et cetera, I really am not prepared for a career.

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## VII WOMEN IN POLITICS

Chall: I wanted to ask you some questions about women in politics, and I think I'll look through this scrapbook with the letters and see if I can pull out a few of these for examples. Then I think you'll probably send me--

Wyman: Nothing.

Chall: You'll find a picture or one of your children will.

Wyman: My children won't look. I'll have to put Marilyn on it. Marilyn would be the only one. Gene's former secretary who's with us now.

Chall: Oh, yes. She probably knows exactly where it is.

I'm going to ask you questions about women in politics generally. I think you probably can compare some of what you saw at a city level and also at the Democratic party level. What I'm wondering is, is there a difference in the way women work and are treated, in local politics and government and the way they work and are treated at the party level? You've had an opportunity to watch women both at the local official elective or appointive level and at the party level.

It's been said, as you know, that there's only one place for women in politics, and the only reason they're there is because of sex. Does this seem to be what men think of women in politics?

Wyman: What? [Puzzled]

Chall: That they're there only for sexual purposes. That's the only reason why they're there or should be there.

Wyman: You mean they're there because they want to be with men?

Chall: Yes, or they're somebody's mistress or they wouldn't be there.

Wyman: I have never heard that.

Chall: I see.

Wyman: That's funny. I don't think I have ever heard that.

Chall: Really? Well, then that's something you may have missed.

Wyman: One, most people who know me say I'm probably the squarest person who's ever been in life. They don't even know how I had babies. But, I don't know. I must say, I never look for those sorts of things.

I guess the women that I've known have been active and made a success of it, that that's probably the least thing, you know, I'd be concerned about from them.

Chall: You've never heard any innuendos from men about what women are doing in politics?

Wyman: No, really I haven't. I've heard men say they don't think they're great fund raisers. Also, I must say, I think that's one of woman's real downfalls in politics. They've always been afraid to raise money, to ask for big money, to go out for big money, to try for money.

I must say, to be there for sexual reasons, I think that in the Young Democrats-- probably often you join clubs for a social reason. But I think some of the young men join for the same reasons that swinging singles probably join. I think that when I was young it was a social activity for many people, and that the political, the fact that we were electing candidates, which always seemed to be my goal [chuckling] as a Young Democrat, and issues and so on and so forth may have been for some, secondary. But I do think an awful lot of people joined because it was social. We'd have parties and we'd have some of that. Now, I found that certainly, and I think even maybe at senior party clubs, that if there are single people it's social. I don't think you can make a generalization, because I think some people are turned on by issues and like to be close to the action. I think there's a lot of action in politics and people get caught up in it. Most people, you know, who work in politics, never get past the stamp things or the calling on phones. It's thankless.

There's been such a change in politics. Many women of recent vintage are campaign managers, although in my early days there were a couple women who were very good campaign managers. There was a co-campaign team in the fifties of a husband and wife team--Ruth and Ed Lybeck. They were brilliant. Suzie Clifton was one of the early campaign managers. I don't know if anybody's ever talked about Suzie in California.

Chall: Yes, she has been interviewed.*

Wyman: But Suzie was one of the brilliant early women campaign managers. Those women weren't interested in sex in politics. Those women were working back, way back. As I say, I think a lot of people do a lot of things for the social companionship as well as the issues. But I have not personally been aware that people are in it for sexual reasons.

## The Toughness of the Women in Politics Today

Wyman: I found, of recent vintage, that the women are much tougher than the men.

Chall: I wondered if you'd seen a change in women during the past few years.

Wyman: I've seen such a change that it's unreal. I think in the Democratic party that the women are so militant that they scare the men at this point. There's just no sex. In fact I think the men look at them as asexual at this point. There's no femininity to them. Sometimes they're so hard and so tough that they...

You know, I've never been considered shy, I think, but I'm somewhat amazed at some of the toughness of the women. I always thought, you know, I had to be somewhat tough in city government. I'm fighting or believing in something. I think some people probably thought I was tough because I'm sure that through the tube I would come through hard when I would be battling. But I find that I think that I'm so meek compared to what I see today. That's in party politics as well as in running for office, too, I think.

Chall: Are they overcompensating for what they think was the image of women as passive, behind-the-scenes helpers?

Wyman: It's not just women by the way. I think it's true of minorities too, and minority-group women. I think that minority women are so tough that it's unreal. Those who get into party politics in the sense of the Chicano movement, or the black movement, or these sorts of things. I guess they feel that it's been so long before they got recognition that maybe they have to make up for it that way. I'm not quite sure.

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*Interview with Florence Clifton, "California Democrats, 1934-1950," California Democrats in the Earl Warren Era, 1976. Courtesy, The Bancroft Library.

Wyman: But I've been in party situations where it just seems with everybody, or perhaps it's just the changed attitudes--as if something has passed me by the way. Even though you may consider me young--I've been in it since I've been eighteen, really, active. I find the women of today so militant--that hard, tough militancy. I don't know if you achieve more. Maybe you do. I think in national party activities at the Democratic convention that women have really been the toughest. I think that the women's movement could be hurt by that sort of thing.

Chall: By their demands in conventions on women's issues like abortion rights and fifty-fifty representation?

Wyman: I think they argue tough. I don't think the issues are wrong, but I think that you turn people off. I think [Phyllis] Schlafly is successful because she's very feminine about what she says. I think that that sort of appearance is helpful and constructive.

You don't have to get up there and be tough. You don't have to look like a truck driver because you're in politics. You don't have to act like a truck driver. In other words, I'm not sure that that's necessary. And obviously the tube plays the toughest ones too. I think that if you become so hard as you come through and you pound the table and you become fierce, then you lose some of your effectiveness.

Chall: Are they behaving differently from the way men behave or are we expecting something different from women?

Wyman: I don't think men necessarily are that tough either. The successful men politicians. Jack Kennedy--Bobby was considered very tough--but Jack Kennedy in a sense--I don't think his public image was tough. I think that, in other words, your projection to the public is what you're trying to sell. Lyndon Johnson was considered very tough as the Senate leader, and I guess he was considered tough as a president. I don't know whether it's different women versus men.

I think there are tough situations. I suppose that in any negotiation there becomes a point where you become very firm, but I don't think that necessarily you have to change your personality. Now, in some cases I find that there seems like a different personality. If you and I sit and talk we behave in one way toward each other. Yet in a political situation, if you and I are arguing, it seems that we become different persons sometimes.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: I don't necessarily think you have to become a different person.

Chall: Did this happen on the council? Would you be conversationally at ease with some of your fellow councilmen, but if you were at opposite sides over an issue, did you feel that your personalities changed?

Wyman: I don't really feel mine changed at all. In other words I really think that I was basically the same person. I think in the heat of an argument you may get a little different, but--You know, I'm speaking about myself. I think maybe to the outside I might have been tougher in their thinking because one, I was successful and I think if you are successful people think, well, you've got to be tough. I don't think with my colleagues I was tough at all. I really think that I didn't gain anything by being tough. In fact I would think that I was just most natural. Not that I ever used any femininity, because I really wasn't the most feminine person. I always tried to dress very properly, you know--the outside image. It was really interesting about that. I always wore dark clothes. I never wore bright colors because I didn't want to stick out from them. I always wore browns, blues, grays. I never wore a bright color.

But, as I say, I don't think any tricks of femininity were ever used. In other words, I never felt they had to yield the floor to me, although when I was pregnant they said, "Oh, Roz, if we get you up, if you want to get recognition and you stand up, we've got to let you have the floor now." [laughter] But, you know I must say I don't think they treated me any differently being a woman. As I go back--I always felt it was my age that was their biggest difficulty in accepting me initially.

I don't think there are any tricks to use as a woman, but I do think that if your personality is not tough, and I really don't think most women have a tough type of personality, then it seems to me sometimes when they get in these political situations they become so hard, and so tough, and so non-movable, and non-compromising, that, it seems to me, they lose sometimes.

Chall: You've watched women during, at least, the last two presidential conventions in '72 and '76 when they have really tried very hard to get some acceptance of their issues, you found them to be tough in their ways of working toward these goals?

Wyman: I found them to be very tough in their negotiations. I don't know whether maybe that's the way to be successful. I think that women's issues in the Democratic party have almost been totally accepted. I think they've had great luck with the issues that they've raised at our convention. I think they've won most every battle. I think that on the Democratic National Committee--I think we have a fifty-fifty representation now on the Democratic National Committee. I think that

Wyman: affirmative action has been solely put in. I think there's a real issue to try to get equal representation--we may not ahcieve it in every place, but I think there is, at least at the top, there's a realization that it must be done.

American Women and the Equal Rights Amendment

Wyman: I think the most shocking thing to me--I guess it is to most women who've watched anything politically--is the ERA thing.

Chall: Shocking because it hasn't passed?

Wyman: I'm stunned. I really am. I can't believe it! It's just that simple. I don't know any other way, to--[clock chimes] What time is it? Two?

Chall: It's two.

Wyman: Oh, my watch stopped.

Chall: You can't believe there's that much opposition to it around the country?

Wyman: I can't believe that there is that much--that they're not ratifying it. I find that amazing! All the momentum, all the focus, all the stuff has been for passage. And yet the fact, it seems to me, is that there's a mass out there of women who totally don't accept it--who are not vocal. Despite the fact that, I think, it is a minority opinion that the Schlaflys of the world represent--they obviously are getting through that mass of American women who totally don't understand it yet.

So that maybe where I'm saying a woman should not be so militant, maybe she has to be militant. Except I think that you lose that mass. That housewife does not understand the homosexual or a lesbian, the gay rights thing. That mass just doesn't tune in to that--despite the movement, and that they think people are accepting. They just don't understand that issue, and question why is that involved with laws for fair pay, et cetera, et cetera. I don't think you'll ever make that mass understand that. So therefore, when I say I can't understand how it's not passed, I think that the things that the press stress--and something like that is a much more colorful issue--that seeps through. The bra burning which went on for years, the press kept talking about.

Wyman: The woman at home--and I've always respected that woman when I was in office too--who really enjoys home, who really is a good housekeeper, who really enjoys cooking, who really takes pride in her house being cleaned, and can do some of those things--There are a lot of people who are content at doing that. I think they should be respected more than they are. I think that the women's movement totally negates those people.

I remember just recently talking to a friend of mine, and she absolutely couldn't understand. She said that's not today. I think it is today. I remember I lost my first child. I didn't moon or brood over it. I had lost the child. I've known people who carried on, but I never really held that child which at seven months I lost. Everybody has to handle their own situation.

And yet I was just saying the other day, I felt inadequate as a woman that I had not had that baby. She said to me, "Well, that's not today." I said, "You are wrong." I said, "I was an elected public official. I had a husband who totally supported me in everything, and yet I had inadequacies, feelings within myself, that 'How come I couldn't have a baby?'" You know, I am a woman and why couldn't I produce a baby?

I didn't brood over the fact in the sense of, "Oh my God, I never--" I didn't hold my own child. You know, some people carry on, "I can't have a child." I knew I could have another one. I was determined to have another one. But I felt inadequate, and I just said that to somebody the other night, and they said, "Well, that's not today."

I said, "If you think that's not today, you just don't understand, that it still <u>is</u> today." Women have certain things that they're <u>always</u> going to feel, whether the woman's movement comes or the woman's movement doesn't come. I think there are certain things lacking in the women's movement--that they really don't understand that the mass of women out there will never understand some of the issues and yet want certain things.

Chall: Yes, at least understand that there are many women who do not care about a different style of living, but still want some of the changes espoused by the movement.

Did you ever pay much attention to the women's division in the Democratic party? Do you have an idea of how effective or useful, needed, a woman's division was?

Wyman: I never really spent much time with the women's division. If they would ask me to help them, I'd be glad to help them if I could in my office--if they wanted a check, or if they wanted something like that. I was never active in the women's division.

Again, I have friends who have said that I really don't understand the woman sitution because I just went into a man's world. Because men come to me and ask me to be the head of the Producers' Guild, or I would go to a studio, that I had not fought those battles. I said that I feel I really fought the battles, because I fought them alone as a woman and tried to do well, as a woman, with no real support.

But I just can't say I have ever been associated much with the women's divisions of anything. I'm really not even totally comfortable with women's organizations. I hate charities in a sense because they want to hold a charity affair through committees. I can make all the decisions and run it. Why do I have to sit with a committee to vote on what we have to eat, or how the program should be done, or all those sorts of things? I have no patience for that. So, I'm not good in a lot of the women's sort of things.

## Getting Into Public Office

Chall: Do you see any change in women who are running for public office? That is, does it seem to be easier for them to run for office?

Wyman: It's easier to run, but it's not easier to win. I don't think there's been phenomenal success. If you take the Congress or the Senate, it's obvious. [chuckling] Muriel's in the Senate because Hubert died. It's easier, I think, on local levels. It's easier, I think, on school boards.

In fact, I'm not sure, but at some point, I wouldn't be surprised to see a majority of women holding a lot of those local offices. I think that it's easier to run, but overall, I think other than on the local scene there isn't too much success. I just don't know what the statistics are, but if I was a betting woman I would bet that overall women are doing better on school boards, and on city councils, and water districts maybe--things like that--and not on state and national elections.

Chall: What do you think makes it difficult for them?

Wyman: One, if it's a statewide race, they just don't know how to raise the money. For example, Yvonne Burke running. It'll be interesting to see what happens in the attorney general race. She's probably as acceptable a woman candidate as you may find to run for statewide office. Yet I don't know if Yvonne is running for the right office, in the sense that I don't know if people are ready to accept a black woman as attorney general. But I think as a statewide candidate she probably is as good a candidate as you'll find to run. I think it's a tragedy that a Bert Pines and a Yvonne Burke will run against each other. That's really tough. But she obviously feels she's got the capacity and the capability. I think Yvonne will probably turn on the women as much as anybody will because she's been in the forefront of the women's movement and women getting involved.

I think women are very militant, and I think Jerry Brown's appointment of women judges and the Rose Bird appointment have been important. I'm not sure Jerry really wanted Rose Bird to be chief justice. But I think that, in a sense, whether she got through or didn't get through, the fact that he was willing to put her forth, I think he did so, in my opinion, basically because of the fact that he felt those who are active in the women's movement are really militant and will work hard. They would be grateful for his giving a woman such an important appointment, and even if she didn't get through, they would help him in any of his future campaigns.

I don't know what their overall effect is though. For example, I think that militant women have no effect on the Republican party. I think militant women are very active in the Democratic party, but I don't think they've made any goals at all through Republicans.

## Do Women Make a Difference?

Chall: Do you think that women bring any special assets to an office?

Wyman: Not really. I think though that if they should be married and could look at it as not a living--I think that's an asset. In other words, I can do what I want because I don't have to worry about getting reelected. I would hope that is how they would be able to think about their stand on issues. As I've expressed, I think an awful lot of people are worried about, "What do I do from here?" The woman who has security at home, who's supplementing an income maybe by serving et cetera, so that she's also not worrying about, "Gee, what I earn in this position."--I think she brings <u>that</u> with her.

Wyman: I don't think that women have any more...You know, we've heard so much about, "Well, women are more honest," or "Women would be more direct." I don't think that's true. I don't really think they have better characteristics than men. I just think there are good women and there are good men, and there are bad women and there are bad men. I just don't think that they add...I don't think that if you got women running the government, that overall they would be any better than men.

Now, somebody said, "Well, they wouldn't send them to war." I think if the circumstances were such, in your country, and you had all the best advice of your associates who said that this was the only thing you could do to protect your country--I think, given the circumstances, the women would go to war just the same as men. If they were in the position of having people they had picked to advise them, and believed in them, and they were told that the best advice you could get was that you've got to protect your country by doing X, Y, Z, they're going to do it just the same.

Chall: And other aspects of life like schools, and welfare programs, and an understanding of the needs of families...

Wyman: See, that's again your background.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: If I was tuned, as I grew up, to be in tune to social programs, and I got elected to office, I am going to be tuned to social programs. If I come from a reactionary background and I feel that those people should be out working and that the welfare state is bad, and I'm a woman, I'm going to feel the same. Now, I do feel, that she might feel--now that she's achieved--that women should certainly get equal pay. I think of certain issues that women feel that they're taken advantage of. But my God, abortion. I can't understand how a woman could be against abortion, and yet look at the mass of women who are against it, and they aren't all Catholics. So, just because you're a woman I don't think it automatically means you can make such sweeping generalities that women will run the country better, or women will see or do things differently.

##

The Impact of the Women's Movement

Wyman: I think that the woman's movement has probably had a tremendous impact in giving women courage, that they wouldn't have had. If I had to sum it all up I would say that maybe the woman who is really happy at home, but has some ability to do something else, or would like an outside activity other than the home, or might like to say, "I disagree" with her mate on an issue, or who has been hesitant to participate in something--I think that the woman's movement overall has given people who maybe never would have an impetus to do anything else--it has given those women a tremendous chance to do something that they might never have done and to express themselves which they might never have tried to do before.

I think social legislation that the woman's movement is for, that a great many women would never feel that they could have been for, even though they may be housewives--they'd like to see passed. These issues have great support from women.

I do feel above all that the most dramatic movement in this generation, other than the black movement, has been the women's movement. I don't think Chicanos still have come to what they should have come to at this stage, but I do think that the blacks have been very exciting, and I do feel that the woman's movement is probably the most exciting thing, and I do think it has given courage to people who might never have been active.

I think that the activists in the women's movement probably would have been activists in something anyway, because it's the leaders and followers again. I do think that a lot of those people who might now say, "I want to go to a convention," would never have said before, "I want to go," even just to participate. It's just given a new outlet to women's thinking, and hopes, and aspirations, if they have women there. I think there's been a fear of women to do a lot of things. Women have lost a little fear.

Chall: Well, that's important. Do you think that, on the other side of the coin, that men are beginning to respond to the needs or the desires of women?

Wyman: A man who is secure within himself will have no trouble responding. A man who has insecurities will always have difficulties responding.

Back to ERA. I am now so confused as to what that mass out there, of women, really want, and I think that the men are confused because in most of the cases they're in the majority in the legislatures,

Wyman: and in those states that are not passing it I think that they are confused by what the mass of women do want at this point.

When they see the opposition movement. I tell you, I don't care what anybody says, the fact that government paid for all the delegates to go to the women's conference, and that mass of opponents also had their rally, caused me to be stunned, just stunned.* I didn't think she'd [Phyllis Schlafly] have a handful. I thought well, sure, all the people within the local surrounding area--that few might show up.

Chall: You didn't know they were being bused in from all around the country?

Wyman: From a standpoint of organization and I've always had great respect for organizational skills--I was stunned. I think that sort of thing has confused a man who's in a position to vote.

Chall: Yes, I'm sure it has. Do you have any thoughts about requiring a fifty-fifty representation, or close to it, of women at the national conventions?

Wyman: The Democratic party has almost, or is trying to achieve that. I was on one of the committees that changed the charter. I want to say that we say fifty-fifty, but now I just can't remember if we did.

Chall: It isn't quite so explicit.

Wyman: Maybe you know. I don't know, but I do know on the national committee itself it's fifty-fifty.

Chall: Yes.

Wyman: But I don't know if we've achieved that in the convention.

Chall: Not in delegations. I think it's supposed to be getting close. I forgot the phrasing of it that I recently read. ["...future conventions shall promote equal division between delegate men and delegate women from all states and territories."]**

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*The rally at the First National Women's Conference in observance of International Women's Year," Houston, Texas, November 18-21, 1977.

**Jo Freeman, "Something Did Happen at the Democratic National National Convention," Ms., October, 1976, pp 74-76.

Wyman: I think you have to try to achieve equal representation, and I think it's involved with minorities, and women, and so on and so forth. The Democratic party is trying very hard, and I must say the women who were active in the national committee or the national convention, or any I've seen, they're really very capable and very militant, as I say, tremendously militant.

In most cases they can really just run circles around the men in organization. They're so much better organized, it's unreal. They're caucusing. They've got a women's caucus; they've got a black caucus; they've got a minority caucus; they've got a labor caucus; they've got labor women's caucus. They're organizing themselves...

Chall: To achieve their goals.

Wyman: To achieve. And the men who never bothered with it are somewhat amazed when the women come in and say, "We want a plank," and they're all prepared with their speeches and they are organized. Those who are participating actively in politics are really organized, and they are no wallflower ladies! [chuckles]

Chall: I think we've done quite well today despite how ill you felt. Thank you very much.

Wyman: I have just been so sick.

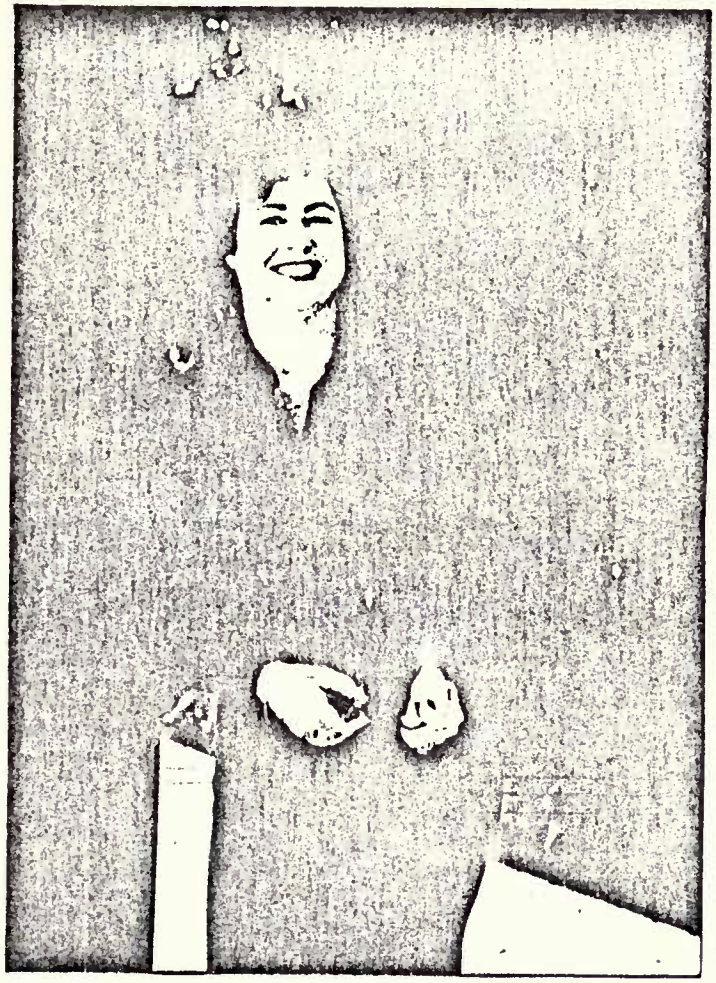
Transcribers: Teresa Allen and Marie Herold
Final Typist: Marie Herold

Home Q&A

# rosalind wyman

by marshall berges

**drawing on a reserve of strength and enthusiasm, she tackles controversial issues and gets the job done**



To an outsider her assertive manner exudes strength and self sufficiency. During a career in Democratic politics she has often been tagged controversial.

But Rosalind Wyman is only trying to get something done, to help make the system work better. Plain-talking and direct-mannered, with large sympathetic dark eyes and an easygoing friendliness, she gravitates toward tough controversial jobs. A longtime city councilwoman and major national fundraiser for political candidates, she is currently an embattled negotiator working on behalf of independent film producers who are employed by major motion picture studios.

"If I have a strong image, it's sort of a joke to me," Roz says. "When I take a controversial job it's because nobody else wants to get involved. Deep inside I'm just a little girl who often feels completely lost. But I try to learn, to find my way, to make solid decisions and rise to challenges. There's simply no other way to proceed from here to the future."

The most difficult challenge of all struck with thunderbolt force six years ago when her husband Eugene died. "To say I was completely unprepared is stating it mildly," she says. "The only thing I knew was that I had plenty to learn—about being a single parent, about survival, about problems I just hadn't been aware of before."

Rosalind Wiener Wyman had an important role-model for problem-solving during childhood in Los Angeles. When during the 1930s depression her druggist father could not afford to employ assistants, her mother studied nights at the University of Southern California and became a graduate pharmacist to share the workload.

The Wieners also struck up an early involvement with politics. During the 1932 presidential campaign they displayed a Roosevelt-Garner poster in the store window, and peppered their customers with reminders to support the Democratic ticket. "It made some people angry but my folks didn't worry about that. They were concerned with social reform and politics, and their concerns rubbed off on me. I grew up listening to FDR's fireside chats. Somehow even as a youngster I understood it was possible for me to make a difference in people's lives, to deal with substantive problems, to find ways of making things work.

"My girlfriends were mostly tuned in to having good times, and they found it hilarious that I was interested only in politics. They wanted to be movie stars or whatever, and this was fine for them, but what I found meaningful were political issues."

At the University of Southern California, where Roz majored in public administration and political science, she joined the campus Democratic club and enlisted students to support Helen Gahagan Douglas in a bruising 1950 senatorial contest against Richard Nixon.

Roz's graduation two years later coincided with the nomination of Adlai Stevenson for the presidency. "Like many people, I idolized him and wanted to work for his election," she recalls. Instead of entering law school she signed up as a campaign volunteer and rang doorbells.

Following Stevenson's defeat Roz joined a group of Democrats who were mapping a general campaign for city council. "We interviewed a number of prospects who might run from our district and the candidate selection committee kept disagreeing. Finally someone said to me, 'You talk a lot—why don't you try it?'

"It sounded crazy, but it was a beautiful challenge. I couldn't afford a campaign headquarters, so my parents let me move the furniture out of our dining room and set up a headquarters there. Some college friends came in and helped. We found a gimmick. We went door to door handing out tiny bars of soap, urging people to vote for me and thereby—according to our campaign slogan—'clean up the city.'"

Roz ran ahead of eight other candidates and at age 22 gained nationwide recognition as one of the youngest ever elected to public office in a big city. Fame brought invitations to speak at Democratic fundraisers across the nation. Fame also brought suitors. One ardently romantic pursuer, Eugene Wyman, an ambitious intensely serious and politically involved young lawyer, carefully arranged for mutual friends to introduce him to Roz. They soon married and gathered friends and relatives around them in a kind of extended family. Roz and Gene also rose in political power, often surrounded by controversy as they scrapped not only with Republicans but also with fellow Democrats. Roz served three terms on the city council, and Gene—who built a major Beverly Hills law firm—became California's Democratic state chairman and national committeeman.

Entertaining wealthy Democrats at home—the price of admission to a Wyman dinner party occasionally amounted to a political contribution of $5,000 per couple—they raised millions of dollars for the presidential campaigns of John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, along with gubernatorial, senatorial and congressional candidates. Six years ago, shortly before he had a fatal heart attack at age 47, Wyman was named chairman of a national Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner with a fundraising goal of $2 million for a single event.

With her three children—Betty, 20; Robert, 19; Bradley, 15—Roz lives in a Paul Williams colonial house, built in 1930 and occupied over the years by Robert Montgomery, Peter Ustinov and Pat Boone. When the Wymans bought it 15 years ago, they remodeled the house extensively, replacing walls with glass, expanding the kitchen and dining room to facilitate large-scale entertaining. But for a time following Gene's death, Roz debated whether to sell the house and adopt radical changes in lifestyle.

**Q. How did you go about making decisions?**

Roz. Mostly in a daze. I'm sure the shock and grief of a mate's death is the same for all women. The first reaction is: Will the sun rise tomorrow? Does the rest of life go on? What does one do?

Beyond the deep pain and terrible sense of loss, I found there were suddenly mountains to climb. Gene happened to be a strong, dominant forceful personality. He encouraged me to be involved in areas that interested me—city council during the first dozen years of our marriage, and of course national politics. To let me be involved, he took over a great deal of the day to day decision making.

For example, because he had staff help at his office, he took care of paying bills, watching investments, dealing with accountants. In 18 years of marriage I don't believe I ever wrote a check or paid a household bill. I didn't go to the bank. There were simply great gaps in my knowledge.

L.A. Times Home Magazine
December 10, 1978

**Q. What did you know?**

**Roz.** How to get things done in government. Back in city council days I was busy fulltime helping people deal with their problems. For example, if cars were moving too fast at a residential intersection and stop signs were needed, I'd roll up my sleeves and get those stop signs installed.

Or take the time a man appealed to me with a special crisis. His father had died and it was necessary that his mother live with him and his family, otherwise she'd be put on public welfare. But to take her into his house he needed to add a bathroom plus a private entrance to the house, so she could have some independence. In a narrow sense this became an apartment and thus conflicted with local zoning laws. He was stymied.

Well, it's always seemed to me government is supposed to work for people, not against them, and it should try to get people off welfare, not put them on it. I battled for months to help that family. I finally carried the fight to a zoning appeals board where we won the case.

**Q. Did you usually win?**

**Roz.** Lots of times and it gave me tremendous satisfaction to help make the system work, to know I could make a difference in the quality of life.

I knew how to deal with these problems on behalf of constituents, but I didn't know how to deal with my own situation, the crisis of suddenly becoming a widow. Right off, I panicked at the prospect of spending money. Except for food, I didn't buy anything for a year. I knew nothing about investments or economic survival.

**Q. How did you learn?**

**Roz.** I went back to school. I took extension courses at UCLA in financial planning, taxes, investments. I asked a million questions, plenty of dumb ones, but I was starting with a zero background.

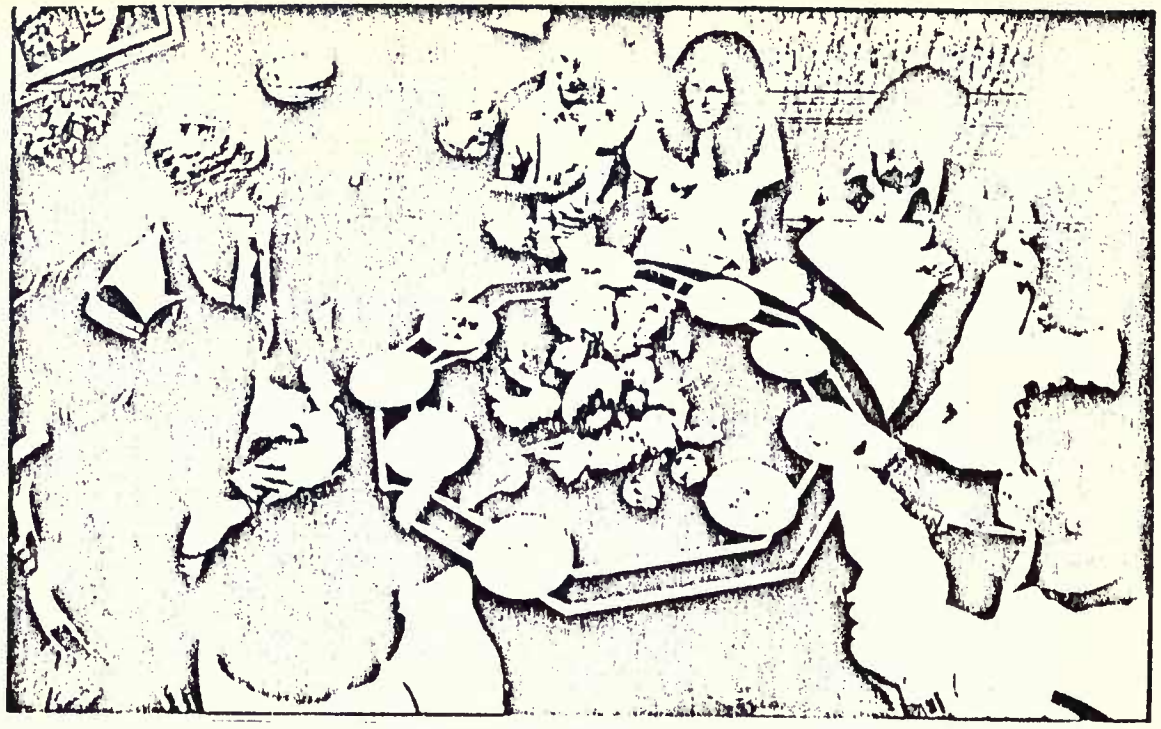
For example, I debated whether to sell the house. But I found because we'd bought it 10 years earlier, our mortgage loan was more manageable than if I bought a smaller house. I also learned it was the best investment we had. Besides, the children had already suffered a terrible jolt. I felt it was important to give them some continuity of environment.

Along with all these decisions, there was another big challenge to face.

**Q. What was that?**

**Roz.** Gene had always been the disciplinarian. Now I had to learn how to be firm. Could I be tough enough to provide direction?

I sat down with the kids and said, "Look, we're going to have certain basic rules. I will have to know where you are at all times—whether you're at a friend's house or you've gone to the movies. Secondly, we may all be going in different directions during the day, but I want us to try to have dinner together. Thirdly, I'm somewhat old-fashioned about sex and morality. I know times have changed. But I haven't changed. So if, for example, you have overnight guests, they're going to stay in separate rooms."



At the same time I encouraged them to be alert to the pitfalls of peer pressure, especially involvements with drugs and liquor. I urged them to keep in mind, regardless of prodding or taunting from their contemporaries, the horrible truth about drugs: they're illegal, dangerous and destructive. And I felt it was important not only to tell but show.

**Q. How did you do it?**

**Roz.** I took Betty, along with a group of her classmates, to the Sybil Brand detention center where they eyeballed a young woman in a straitjacket coming down from a drug experience. I don't believe any of them will forget it—or get involved with drugs.

Bob and Brad didn't see it, but they took Betty's word for it. The most widespread problem among teenagers, however, is drinking.

I've told mine, "If you drink, make sure you can handle it. But keep in mind you can also handle peer pressure. You can deal with it by speaking up, by saying that you don't care to participate." I also deluge Betty, Bob and Brad with articles on drugs and drinking. They'll see me walking toward them, waving a clipping, and they'll start laughing. "Oh, great, here comes another story from Mom."

**Q. Do you laugh with them?**

**Roz.** Sure, they're growing up fast. Betty and Bob are in college, and Brad's on his way. We have lots of laughs together. But a parent has a tough responsibility.

But I don't want them to feel any guilt about staying with me—I'll have failed if they feel that way.

I know some parents become terribly reliant on their kids, but I intend to push mine out of the house. I've told them, "Look, I'm responsible for you up to a point. But at some stage you have to make your own decisions and sail your own ship. I don't think you'll find it a difficult adjustment."

**Q. Have you made the adjustment to a widow's life?**

**Roz.** Perhaps I never will, completely. Now, let me say very quickly, I've been luckier than many women, with 18 marvelous years of marriage and three great kids. I have a job and I haven't gone on welfare, so there's no self-pity in what I tell you.

There are some terrible adjustments, like traveling alone. Or trying to change from an extremely busy social life to one where many times your best friends don't know what to do with you—a single woman is simply an awkward person to deal with.

But I've also learned during these six years that I can survive without a mate. Certainly not as well. My goodness, how I miss the love, cuddling, affection and companionship, the strong partner who made decisions and disciplined the kids. But I'm a very up person with plenty to be thankful for. I have lots of good friends and an interesting job. I'm very open to the future.

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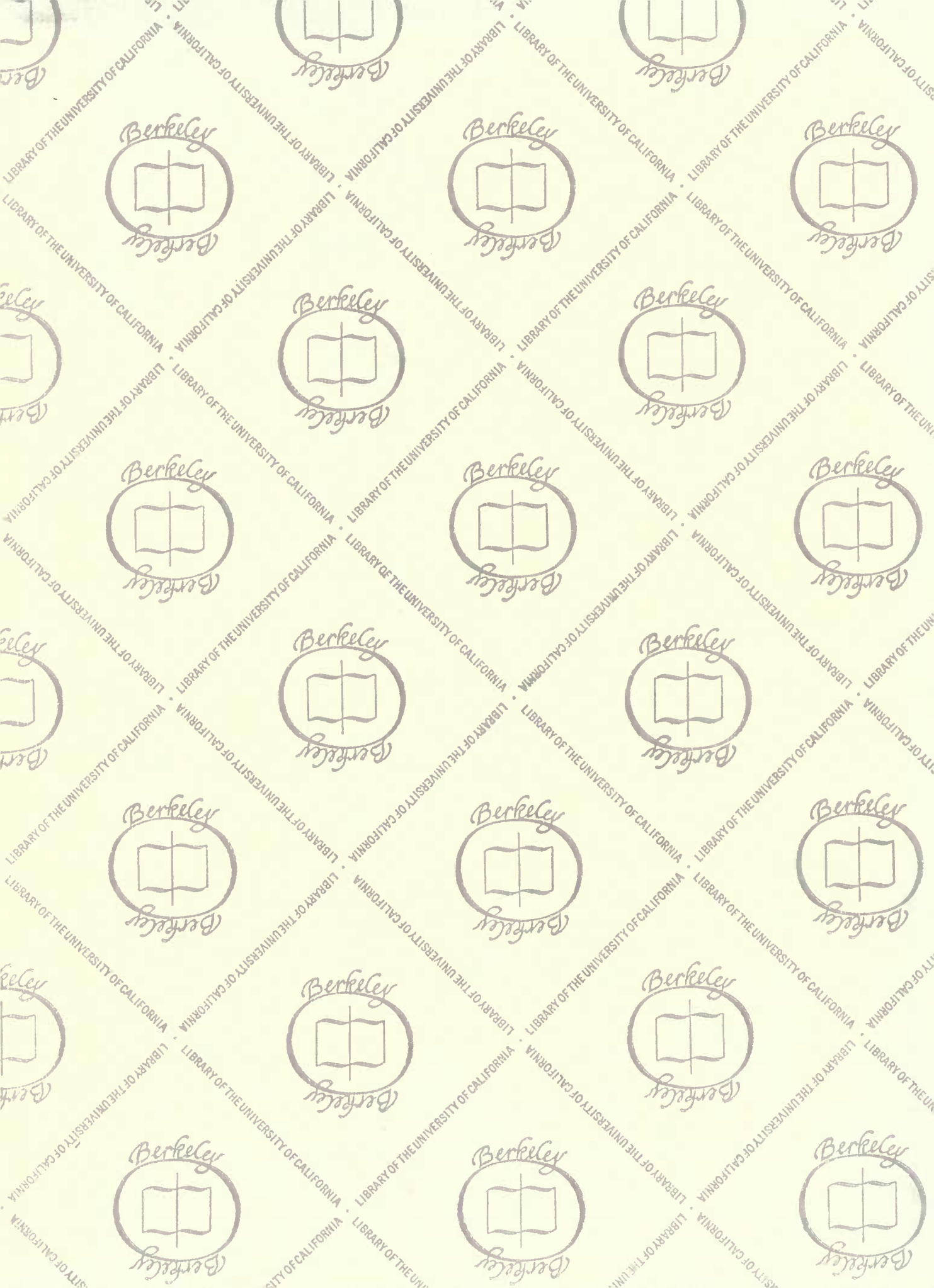
Malca Chall

Graduated from Reed College in 1942 with a B.A. degree, and from the State University of Iowa in 1943 with an M.A. degree in Political Science.

Wage Rate Analyst with the Twelfth Regional War Labor Board, 1943-1945, specializing in agriculture and services. Research and writing in the New York public relations firm of Edward L. Bernays, 1946-1947, and research and statistics for the Oakland Area Community Chest and Council of Social Agencies 1948-1951.

Active in community affairs as a director and past president of the League of Women Voters of the Hayward Area specializing in state and local government; on county-wide committees in the field of mental health; on election campaign committees for school tax and bond measures, and candidates for school board and state legislature.

Employed in 1967 by the Regional Oral History Office interviewing in fields of agriculture and water resources, Jewish Community history, and women leaders in civic affairs and politics.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