Interview with Annette Temin  
4/16/80  
(at Mrs. Temin's home)

I knew at the point I got married that I was going to be interested in education all my life...because I knew at that point something which young people are just deciding, as a matter of fact...that though I wanted to be married and have children, that you had to have something else in addition. I thought that wasn't enough. And I felt that education was the most important area in which one could be active. And so after I got married I went to the University of Pennsylvania and got an M.A. in education, in which I didn't feel I was learning that much. As a matter of fact, I was doing educational counseling for Orphans' Guardian. Remember the Orphans' Guardian?...an organization which since has dropped out. And it was before there was any counseling in the school, and I was doing that kind of educational counseling for them. And I felt that in the practical way that I was operating, I knew more about it than the professor who was teaching the course.

(WMP: How did you get into it in the first place?)

I got into it because I knew the executive director of Orphans' Guardian. And I went there as a volunteer; I wasn't paid for it. Educational counseling meant helping young people to decide what courses they were going to take in high school, and that then depended on something about what they were going to do later on...were you going to go to college...were you going to another school...what are your kinds of plans. So really, with a college background, one could easily get the necessary information. I don't say that I was as professional as some people who knew a lot more psychology than I did, but I think it was an effective kind of theory. And the need for that kind of position in the schools was obviously being pointed out, not only through what we were doing, but other things. So that the whole counseling system, and college counseling in the schools started after that. Don't forget, I was married in 1930! So that's a long time ago.

And I did not do anything active, except for that, in public education until the years when my children went to public schools. Then I became active with the Henry Home and School Association...C. W. Henry I guess you'd better say...since there is another Henry School. They went there, and I became active in the Home and School Association and the Home and School Council, and was president of the Home and School Association.
And in those years, beginning around 1949 I think, I was also active with the Education Committee of the League of Women Voters. And we at the League of Women Voters were interested not only in quality public education...they didn't really get into curriculum, but in those days there were, as again today, there were problems in terms of money, communications, school board selection...the kinds of things that the League would get into.

And if you remember back to those days, those were the days in which there was communist and rightist attack on public education. The attacks were to censor what they were doing in the schools, to narrow the kinds of things you could teach. And the Ford Foundation poured a lot of money into a National Citizens' Commission for Public Education, which was designed to help communities and citizens in communities organize to fight that kind of thing. We didn't have any trouble in Philadelphia at that time, but we in the League, and I personally, picked up on what they were doing, and felt that it was very important that citizens did participate, did pay attention to what was happening in public education...that public education really was never any better than the community itself wanted, or expected. In other words, the politicians didn't give it enough money and interest because the citizens let it go. The priority really was our responsibility to see that education was supported and to see that it was the kind of education that we wanted, and that would give the young people in the community the kind of background that they ought to have.

So, using the League of Women Voters, through this education committee, I became active on it. Mrs. Eleanor Smith was chairman of the committee.

(WMP: Sam Smith's wife?)

Yes, Sam Smith's wife. She was chairman when I became active. And then I became chairman. Then with the years, she became more active in conservation than she did in public education. But that was when I first met her. And we responded to the National Citizens' Commission's directive, and at a time when the Evening Bulletin and the National Citizens' Commission came to Philadelphia and had a large forum at the Academy of Music to discuss public education in Philadelphia and its problems, we had flyers to hand out, saying that, in view of all this, let's us start a citizens' committee. And we handed them out at that meeting and we subsequently met with opposition from Dr. Wetter who was the superintendent and from the board and from the Home and School Council. That was very unfortunate. In other cities, the PTAs were really the backbones of these kinds of organizations and there was never any feeling that they oughtn't to have been the backbone of the organization in Philadelphia. The Home and School Council would have none of it.

Their idea was, "We represent parents". But they didn't represent citizens, and it was a "company-controlled" organiza-
tion. In recent years, it's had a little more active leadership and it's not nearly as controlled as it was. But in those days...and I had had plenty of experience from my own association with it...to know that they weren't going to do anything which the administration or the schools didn't approve of. They weren't going to buck the administration in any way. As a matter of fact, they were ruled by the administration, and therefore, we would have been a stronger organization if we had had them. As it was, we started there in about '53, and in about two years in looking around, one realized that the goals of the Citizens' Committee on Public Education and of the Public Education and Child Labor Association, which had been in existence since 1880 or 1890...that their goals were the same. That organization had not lost its charter but it was non-functioning at that point. It was non-functioning because in about 1947 or '48, it had gone to the legislature in support of more money for teachers' salaries, which at that time were around $2,000. And they had been funded in those days by what we now call United Way. It's had several changes of name since then. And they had been thrown out because of the lobbying effort. And because it was a controversial issue. And they had no source of funds so that John Patterson who at that point had been the executive director, felt that he could no longer operate.

But Henry Walnut was on that board...

(WMP: Was he? I knew him; he was quite a character.)

Well, he was an associate of my husband's so I knew the connection, and getting a charter was a nuisance. So we suggested to them that they elect the board of the Citizens' Committee on Public Education to be the board of the Public Education Child Labor Association and we would take over the charter. Which we did. And then later, my husband changed the name of that charter to Citizens' Committee on Public Education. But it was that same charter. So that's why today Citizens' Committee on Public Education indicates that it really had started many years before this.

And of course, in the days when they started, some of the educational problems were the same, but the child labor problem was a little different. That was certainly different, and fortunately that particular piece we hadn't had to fight.

(HMcM: Was your husband also involved in education?)

No, my husband was an attorney. And he was supportive in the sense of helping us with legal problems, just as today my son who is on the board of Citizens' Committee today, is very helpful. And that suit that we now have against the School Board in relation to Marcase's*contract is being conducted by Miriam Gafni and my son, Michael Temin.

* Michael Marcase, present superintendent of Philadelphia schools.
back to your second question, one of the first problems...there were two things that we tried to do when we first set up. We tried to improve the board. The Board of Education at that particular time was appointed by the judges. At that time we had many fewer judges than we now have. And they were completely political appointments. The Republican judges got in...It was either the Republican judges got an appointment, and then the Democratic judges got an appointment...they didn't fight about it; they just alternated. And once somebody got on the board, they kept re-appointing them. It was still in the '50s that...I think his name was Greenberg...he was coming up for re-appointment...he was past 80, and he always just slept! They would nudge him, you know, and tell him to vote, and tell him what to vote. And one time I remember he voted incorrectly...that kind of thing!

And the Citizens' Committee wrote a letter to the judges, indicating that re-appointing this man would be a disgrace. And the Bulletin picked the letter up...I think we also sent it to the Bulletin as a matter of fact...but they gave it publicity, with the result that the Board of Judges really, in a sense, felt that they couldn't. And that was the time then when Mrs. Greenfield was put on the board.

(WMP: What did she do?)

Well, Mrs. Albert Greenfield was a useful member of the board. And the other thing that happened just about then...well, actually it had happened just a little before. In 1950 or '51, the Greater Philadelphia Movement had an interest in public education. And they issued a report on what was wrong with the schools and what changes should come about, including that there ought to be permanent taxing power at a higher level than the permanent taxing power had already been invested by the legislature in the board of Education. That, the Board of Education had picked up. But nothing else had been picked up. And now that I think back on that area, the League of Women Voters education committee went to the Greater Philadelphia Movement and said, "look, this is a good report, but what are you doing in order to get it implemented?"

Well they weren't doing very much, except talking very quietly to the board and very little except this one piece in relation to more taxes, or at least, permanency of taxes, was being attacked by them. And we felt that that was wrong because their suggestions were valid and would bring about improvement. So that again was one of our vehicles.

With all this, and with Mrs. Greenfield then on the board, what happened was that the then president of the board of Education who was Leon Obermayer, appointed a committee with Mrs. Greenfield as chairman to look at the school system and make recommendations. And that committee did act, and did come up with some rather interesting recommendations...again, which were largely ignored by the Board of Education.
By that time, Mrs. Lewis...

(WMP: Ada?)

Yes, Ada Lewis was a great girl, but she had been on the Board of Education so long that she had kind of accepted a lot of their problems. But a few years later, for instance, one of the things that Citizens' Committee on Public Education did was to start the volunteer program in the school system in the way we now have it...which is a volunteer program in which the volunteers are not only accepted by the school, but urged to come in by the schools, in which they're given meaningful tasks, in which they're given training and supervision...and which, on the other hand, the volunteers agree to come in on a regular basis and to work regularly for whatever time they do give to the schools.

When Mrs. Freedman at that time...

(WMP: Mrs. Abraham Freedman?)

Yes...which she had gotten from a foundation, made possible to Citizens' Committee, the sum of $50,000 over a three-year period, to do a pilot project....

(WMP: Where did that money come from?)

I think it was the Sunstein Foundation....when we went to Dr. Wetter, he turned it down!

(WMP: He did?)

So, then we went to Ada Lewis, and she went to Dr. Wetter and then he accepted it! In a sense, that showed you what a poor relationship Citizens' Committee....not only Citizens' Committee, but citizens, even as helpers, had with the Board of Education...and with the administration. They just weren't interested in that kind of thing.

However, that school volunteer program has grown and it's a fine program.

(HMcM: Was Doris Wilson in on it in the beginning, or did she come along later?)

She's been the only executive director that they've had. What happened was...when we started the volunteer program, we started it in one of four schools, and we had a director for the program, who was Virginia Lowell. At that time, the superintendent of District 8, who I think was....I've forgotten the name...was appointed chairman of a volunteer committee for the school board. And they tried to indicate that they really had a very large volunteer program in existence. And they started to look at what they were doing, internally, as well as what we were doing.
But as our pilot went on...it went on for three years and it was modeled after what had existed in New York City...they decided that it would be useful to continue the kind of thing we were talking about. And they set up a volunteer program. Doris Wilson at that point had retired maybe a year or two before, as president of the Home and School Council. I think many years earlier she had been a teacher, but at that point she wasn't, and she had been president of the Home and School Council. And she was appointed the executive director and there was an advisory committee set up to work with her, on which Jane and I both served. And in doing that, we were able to shape the goals and the programs with the components I've already mentioned to you, so as to have a real program, really using volunteers. And Doris Wilson has done a very good job in continuing along those lines. And the advisory committee worked for two or three or maybe four years after the program started, and then kind of faded away, because both the office itself had expanded, and the guidelines, the policy questions, which is really what an advisory committee can best work on, had really been solved. So both Jane and I resigned before it faded out, but it faded out soon after that.

Well, John Patterson...after all, I met John Patterson through the work that I was doing. And John said that he would not have anything to do with Citizens' Committee until we got a new executive director. He couldn't see it as a volunteer organization without any executive director. And for I think, eight years, I was executive director in a sense. And I really put almost full time into it. And we were very fortunate; we have never had to pay for rent, because we first had headquarters with the League of Women Voters. And then when we became a little too big and too active in office to combine with the League, Gus Amsterdam provided offices for us. And until this year, Gus Amsterdam provided offices for us. So he provided offices for the Citizens' Committee for a long time; first in the Land Title Building and then in the Bailey Building.

(WMP: I didn't know about that.)

Well, for many years he was very active in the organization itself. But, as I said, John Patterson agreed, of course, with the goals of the committee...otherwise he wouldn't have accepted our idea of taking over the Public Education Association. But he knew the depth of the problems. And he just felt that without an executive director we couldn't do an effective job. I don't know...I'd leave it to others whether in those years between the time we started and the time we did get our first executive director whether we had no effect at all. I can talk a little bit about the things that we did do there.

But we did get an executive director because there was an old organization in Philadelphia that went out of existence and, with funds for disposal and left it up to the courts to decide who should get those funds who might be most in line with what the Citizens' Council had been organized for.
And Dorothy Gottlieb read about it, and I remember she and her husband Isadore, and Jane and Abe Freedman...we got together and we wrote a presentation and Abe presented it, and we got $10,000 from that.

(WMP: Abe was a great lawyer.)

Oh, he certainly was. And so with that $10,000, we hired Bob Blackburn. And Bob was an excellent executive director for us...the best we had, I believe. Once we had Septus Quinley who was much less effective than he was. But the Greater Philadelphia Movement continued their interest and they did another study on the schools at that point.

(WMP: Who was the executive of the GPM at that time, do you remember?)

It's on the tip of my tongue and I can't remember. He went to the Department of Welfare afterward...in Harrisburg. And he and Bob Blackburn were very good friends. And what we were hitting at in those days was home rule...changing the method of electing the Board of Education, and setting up a home rule charter for the Board of Education in Philadelphia. And the GPM spearheaded a movement which brought that about.

(WMP: The GPM was pretty enlightened on things.)

Well, GPM in the first place, had an education committee. They were interested in it and they talked about it, and there was a very firm friendship between the executive director of GPM and Bob Blackburn. So that all the things we learned about it got fed into it. And Citizens' Committee had an important part in shaping all this and working with it. But if it had not also had both the backing and the funds of GPM, it never would have happened.

(WMP: I guess Abe Freedman helped to work that out, because he was on GPM.)

Yes, he was responsible for it, and Elias Wolf I think, was chairman of the education committee at that time. But it was the executive director...that's terrible to have lost his name...I apologize; it's very well-known and you and I both know it.

***Interruption due to changing of tape***

(WMP: One of the questions I want to get to is, what happened with the Board of Education that these people got in and have their own automobiles and drivers at their disposal?)

Well, they still have automobiles. I think they got rid of the chauffeurs, but I'm not sure!
(HMcM: That's a step in the right direction, at least!)

(WMP: I think that symbolizes the breakdown of the whole system...the standards of the Board of Education, to have those kinds of people on the board. Who put them on there?)

Rizzo. They're pretty much all Rizzo appointees. We have an undistinguished board at the moment, who seem to be a disaster.

(HMcM: Are you optimistic that Mayor Green will be able to turn things around at all?)

Well, it's hard to know, because I'm still not willing to have the city administration have too large a hand in what's happening at the Board of Education. However, both Green and City Council have one weapon, and that is that the board is in need of extra money. And they can use that weapon in terms of getting some changes in the school system. And it is our hope that they will do that, at least in good ways. We don't think that the internal workings of the Board of Education should be dictated by City Hall. And you can't just do it because now you like this administration. That's really what happened last time, was that it was dictated by City Hall and it's been disastrous. And we need changes. We certainly need a new board, but how we're going to do it, I don't know.

(WMP: But you're working on it?)

Well, we had a long discussion at our meeting the other night, on the budget of the Board of Education. One of the things that we try to do is to get the board to give us information.

Citizens' Committee has been very much interested in the management, in accountability, in how the budget was spent, in capital programs. But in some things we've had no impact. For instance, years ago, when we had a big capital program under Dilworth, because no building had gone on for many years, and then there was a big capital program and many new schools were built... they were being built too large. And we did a very good study, which I'll drag out of here, on physical standards for the public schools, which indicated that particularly the size of junior and senior high schools and elementary schools was much too big. It indicated other things as well, but the size was a very important factor. The school district then issued some of its own figures, in relation to size of schools, which was somewhat larger than the figures we had, but were still smaller than the figures that they actually used when they built the schools. And one of our real problems, particularly middle and junior schools, is that they're too big...they've got too many kids together. And in the high schools, too. And the result: some of the problems that we have, particularly in those middle years, are problems that come directly out of the size of the school. And one of the reasons that the alternative programs, which are wonderful ideas, for treating young
people, work, is that they're small units. And they get rid of not only the overhead bureaucracy, but there's an intimacy and a feeling of working together, which adds to and makes possible a great deal of learning and a setting up of the right kind of atmosphere so your peer pressure is in terms of learning, rather than in terms of drop-out.

That's an important thing, but the board was always convinced by somebody or other that there were economies in large size, which I think were wrong, and actually one could have proved that wasn't true. But the economy resulted in a poor educational environment. I don't think that was a good thing.

What other part of this would you really like me to talk about?

(HMcM: Let's see. You touched on number six; which administrations in City Hall were most concerned and sincere about developing good quality education in public schools? I think we've touched on that negatively! Can you say something positive about any particular administration?)

Well, the particular positive one, of course, was Mark Shedd's. I really think that that was our most positive administration.

(WMP: What's become of him?)

I understand he's not well, but the last time I heard he was head of the state department of education in Connecticut. And you know, that in numbers, is the same number of students we have in Philadelphia.

(HMcM: For the whole state of Connecticut?)

Yes. But I understood he wasn't very well, so I don't know if he's still in that position or not.

(WMP: Graham Finney. Didn't he do something with the schools?)

Graham Finney did something with the schools...well, he's done lots of different things. He's moved around a lot! But Shedd brought in a lot of very interesting people....and Dilworth too,...interesting people who worked with him and brought in new ideas. Whittier was not a bad superintendent; he just wasn't imaginative. So I really can't comment other than that.

(HMcM: You mentioned earlier that reading was one of the prime interests of the Citizens' Committee. How do you feel about these back-to-basics programs? Wasn't it the Fitler School that instituted that in this area?)

Well, that's what's called the academics. I feel that it's absolutely in the wrong direction, or at least that people don't really understand what is basic. And as a matter of fact, in early childhood education, which is the area that I'm working in mainly these days...because as I've explained,
I'm not into reading except I'm on the Pennsylvania Advisory Council for Reading at the state level. But the idea that through teaching the decoding of reading that you're going to teach children to read...it just doesn't make any sense. People don't really understand that in teaching reading, you're teaching thinking, you're teaching the meaning....until children understand what's happening around them, until they have a vocabulary which stems out of experience so that they know what the words mean, there's no point in reading the words.

A child who reads the word "hill" and has never seen a hill doesn't know much about it. And the same thing is true for much that goes on. And one of the things that has happened now is that we have put such concentration on evaluation through standardized tests, that we are teaching skills. It's like...if you teach driving and you had to learn how to shift, and in order to learn you have to do the things, but some people can get it almost immediately and then they can't do the steps in between. But the testing tests all those in between. So very often you have children who don't know what a diphthong is but they can pronounce the diphthong very well.

But the vocabulary has been missing, and so then they miss it on the exam. And all of this, I think, is wasteful of human effort.

And what is basic for young people to know? Reading is important, knowing math is important. But it can be, and it must be taught through experience...it can be taught through art, it can be taught through music, it can be taught with movement. There are all these things which are most important for child development, which need to be incorporated, which are as important to children's development as the mechanics of learning to read or learning to write. And we are pushing children too early because of this. In other countries they don't start school on a compulsory basis before seven years of age. Here, we pushed trying to teach them the alphabet, trying to teach them one-to-one correspondence which Piaget says, really, you don't get until seven years' old. You're trying to teach it to the three year olds. Well, some of them do get it, but it isn't necessary. I mean, those children that do get it early, I don't think you should deprive of having it, but we shouldn't be pushing it the way we are....because we are losing creativity; we're developing conformity...we're developing dependence and not independence. We're eliminating creativity. What kind of people are we bringing up for a democratic country? It doesn't make any sense at all.

And one of the things that I'm working on these days, with the school district, is education for parenthood as part of the school ... the regular school curriculum ... for everybody.

Many years ago, there were lots of opportunities for people to observe little children and to see how you brought them up. These days with small families, and people moving away from
where there are young children and all the rest of it, many children don't understand what's happening...or may even have poor models to follow. And one of the things that we can do in the schools is to provide the kind of atmosphere and to give the children the understanding of early child development, which also means some understanding of yourself, which will make them better parents, when they become parents. And it's not too early to start.

(WMP: At what age?)

We're developing a curriculum which starts at kindergarten. But you bring in a little bit about the difference between how you are now and how a baby is, and how loving care is very important, and you really need to love a baby. Maybe that's what you do in kindergarten. And you go on so that by the 6th grade you have some of the important concepts of what is important to child development...the need to talk to babies to develop language. That's a basic, you see. And if we do that, and children develop language, and have good language, then reading is a much easier thing than when they don't.

And I have some of the experimental curriculum that is being developed right now at the board, and it's really very exciting.

(HMcM: I remember, when I was doing some substitute teaching in the late'60s, I believe it was at one of the vocational schools in South Philadelphia...is that where Bok school is?)

Yes.

(HMcM: And there was actually a nursery school that was part of this vocational high school. And neighborhood families could drop their children off at 8:30 or 9 o'clock in the morning. And the children would be cared for in this nursery school program. Some of the high school children were responsible for looking after the children, preparing meals for them, observing them, and so forth. That was actually part of their curriculum.)

Well that is still true in about half the high schools. There are what we call child development laboratories in half the high schools in Philadelphia. And there are child development courses given, both in the....

(WMP: For parents?)

No, not for parents, but for high school students. But that reaches a very small percent of the children in the schools. And it doesn't reach any boys, and boys need to know how to be parents just as well as girls.
One of the real problems in Philadelphia is that we have too many teenage parents. And many teenage parents have no idea about what it means to have a child...or anything about child development. The teaching of sex education in the schools is controversial, and at the moment, can only be done in 11th and 12th grade, with parental consent. Hopefully, that will be pushed down in years to come to lower grades, because it is the young teenage parents who are the greatest problem, and the numbers of those are large.

But education for parenthood is divorced from that, and is not controversial, and is something all children...everybody's going to have some contact with young children, whether they are parents or not, and they need to know some of these things. And if you learn it at this point, then it's part of your equipment at the point when you do become a parent, or the point at which you have contact with young children.

(HMcM: How about number nine; for what distinguished service did you receive the John Patterson award?)

Well, my contribution to public education was chiefly in the development of the Citizens' Committee on Public Education. And within the Citizens' Committee on Public Education I've done a variety of things. One of the things this Citizens' Committee itself has been very much interested in administration, in management, in accountability as I've said, in the budget...and I've participated in all of that kind of thing. But personally, I've been much more interested in something else. The volunteer program, in a sense, started because of some things that I did. There's a language arts-reading camp program which is still in existence that included a language arts component in an informal basis in day camps. It's not run by the Board of Education; it's a co-operative program between the Board of Education and, at the moment, the Federation of Settlements...the Delaware Valley Federation of Settlements. Settlement houses run them.

Several years ago the teachers who provided the extra language arts component were paid for by the Board of Education. The last two years the board has not found any money to pay for it, even though that money stretched tremendously because it was only supplementary to what other people were putting into the day camp situation. But that particular program last year had seventeen camps that included this language arts-reading component. We call it LARC for short. And during this last year, some of the informal techniques for teaching language arts and reading which were incorporated in the summer camps have been included in tutorial programs which many of these settlements have had as supplementary to schools for after-school work. So those were two programs that I was very instrumental in working on.

And in recent years, as I say, the education for parenthood,
I think, in future, is going to be a very important contribution. That didn't have to do with the Patterson Award because that's been moving along since then.

(HMcM: In what year was that that you received the Patterson Award?)

1977, I think.

(WMP: How many times has the Patterson Award been given?)

Well, let's see. There was Mildred Wilson....I was about the fourth. And it's been two years since then, this is the third year, so....seven or eight years.

(WMP: It seems like a good thing.)

I think it's a very good thing. And I think that, on the whole, we have tried through the Patterson Award mainly to honor people within the school system who have contributed to improving education or to good education within Philadelphia. I think this year's recipient is an excellent person, Dr. Alexander Tobin, who in the math department has done tremendous things, many of which haven't gotten publicity. One of the reasons you hear more about reading and less about math, is that the math department's done such a good job in many ways that there is less problem in the teaching of math than there has been in the teaching of reading.

And one of the things that Dr. Tobin introduced is the math competition at junior high and senior high school levels so as to give those young people who excel in mathematics the same kind of kudos and encouragement that we give to athletes.

(WMP: That's a good idea.)

Yes, well I think it's a very good idea. Unfortunately, it doesn't get as much publicity as athletics get, but it ought to, because it's a fine thing.

I want to go back to this back-to-basics thing just a minute, because we on the early education committee are really very much concerned that the whole approach....child development approach to learning, particularly in the early grades, has been thrown out in favor of an academic approach. When you forget to look at the child when you are teaching, and you only look at what you want to teach, you're not going to do a good job. I think that you need to make it clear...and what's more, it has to be made clear not so much to school people as to the public at large...to parents...that the schools are doing a good job when they allow children to play. Play is a way in which children think. And playing in an atmosphere which has been set up by the school, by the teacher, with things that they're manipulating and things that they are working with and questions which the teacher is stimu-
lating children to think, and then writing about them, this can be a much more effective way of teaching many things than sitting little children down when it's very harmful for little children to sit down at a long time and doing these dreadful workbook kinds of things.

But there is a tremendous amount of public pressure to start these things early. So it's not only a question of the school's responding to it, it's a question of the public. And it's because of the public's lack of understanding of child development, and how it is that people learn, and what it is that we're trying to teach. To read and not understand what you're reading, you know, to be able to de-code it, that's not going to do anybody any good. You've got to be able to understand it. And therefore you have to have experiences in order to know what it's about. And you need that vocabulary.

(HMcM: Are they still using the open classrooms that were popular in the late '60s and early '70s, or have they been abandoned?)

Nobody dares even talk about that anymore. There are such classrooms in existence because there are teachers who got that training and have continued teaching that way. But the imposition of standardized tests, the need to teach these foolish little skills, in a sense, that I'm talking about, in limited ways, has hampered many teachers, particularly in the early years...not so much in the later years. And I think it's a shame.

But there's one very exciting thing that's happening in the Philadelphia schools...in addition to what might be happening, the special education explosion is a very interesting thing. And I'm not sure of all the things that're happening with that...whether all of it's good or all of it's bad. I'm sure that it's a mixed bag; I really don't know too much about it.

But there are a group of teachers called the Philadelphia Teaching Co-operative. And most of those teachers, I think, were teachers who were open education teachers. But this is a group of teachers who get together once a week and who have been influenced by Pat Carini who is with the Prospect Archives in Vermont, and who has developed some techniques for teaching teachers how to support each other, for helping teachers to observe the children in their classrooms and record it for evaluation purposes and for diagnostic purposes. And by utilizing the kinds of techniques that she has devised, teachers can present a case of a child that they're having problems teaching, to a group of other professionals. And through the presentation and through the discussion that follows, that teacher will be getting support and help for handling the situation. And other teachers who well might have just similar problems also will get help for themselves. And it's a wonderful thing.
Well, no, it's not too widely spread. There've been about twenty-five teachers who have been involved in it, many of whom had known each other through the Philadelphia Advisory Center, which was the advisory center that was up here in District Six.

We really have some wonderful things happening in Philadelphia. And we still have, as a matter of fact... you asked about open education... they call it something else now... humanistic education or something. But even last summer, one of the workshops that was given in co-operation with Temple University did teach teachers how to use more creative ways of presenting material. And that kind of workshop with Temple University and the staff development group of the school district has been continuing. But actually people just keep quiet about what they're doing.

(WMP: Why?)

Because of this emphasis on the basics. It's the kind of thing that, for instance, I saw a film the other day which one of the kindergarten teachers in the Philadelphia School System has just made for her doctorate at Temple. It's a film to show how through movement, you can teach math. Really, to have to justify movement for kindergarten teachers, through teaching math... it's pretty bad. And yet, that's exactly what we've come to. And some of what she has done in this film and the way she's done it, has been forced. But some of it is just natural movement. This woman is a superb teacher; she's worked very well with her children. You can see how, in the beginning of the film, she had tight control of the class, and only allowed them a little. By the end of what she was showing, that class was so used to the kind of freedom that she was giving them, that they didn't need a tight control from teacher; they had self-control. That's something we've got to teach children! Isn't that an important thing?

And so, on top of that, she includes that whole business as to jumping in and out; which is in and which is out. Children who have good vocabularies, by the time they're five years old know what's in and what's out, and what's up and what's down. She did do some counting in various ways, and that was good. Well, there's no reason not to; you know, counting the individuals... within the hoop, without the hoop, and how many were there, and counting the things. But it was the movement that was so wonderful, and that was so wonderful with these children, and that they were enjoying so much, and that she was able to elicit from them through the gradual way that she worked into it. But I felt very badly that she had to justify it by saying it was for math.

To answer your last question, about my children, I can say that all my children did very well, and that my children who
went through the public schools in Philadelphia were not handicapped, did very well in college and beyond that. So I have no complaints at all about what is happening.

And I do think today, in many situations in Philadelphia, children can still get a good education. And my own feeling is that the more people will stay in and work with the schools, particularly today when in local schools there is more attention paid to what parents say and what the community is saying, that it is possible for young people to get a good education.

But this is an enormous school situation. There are good places and there are bad places. but even in private schools and in suburban schools, it's all not so wonderful either. So you have to remember that. We have tremendous problems here. And I think it's important that young people meet a variety of different kinds of people. I sent my youngest child, who in third grade went to private school; I had meant to have him go to public high school. But his two brothers were valedictorians of their class...one after another. And I just thought it was unfair to put him in that situation. However, it was a goal he still had in mind, even though he was in another school. But at least the teachers didn't have that example ahead of him. It turned out that he was just as bright, if not brighter, than any of the others but I didn't know it!

(WMP: I should think you would have known it!)

Oh, he did well, but we had high expectations for the children, particularly my husband. They did very well, but it's not just getting the highest marks in school that's important. It's important to learn how to live in this world. And public schools can do that for you. We now have something which we didn't have in those days...programs for the gifted. Unfortunately, what I don't like about programs for the gifted is that, what they do for the gifted, I'd love to see for everybody, because many of those programs, all normal children ought to be exposed to and could get. So I feel badly that it's confined, as it were, to the gifted. But at least, you have more challenge for those youngsters and you don't have them drifting off, because what happens if a bright person drifts off, that's when they get into mischief, that's when they get bad study habits, when the wrong things happen.

(WMP: What contribution is made by private schools?)

I think private schools very often point the way. The Friends' schools, for instance, during the years that they had the summer programs in creative education, opened those courses to public school teachers. That was a tremendous contribution. Maybe it was only a hundred and forty different teachers who had that opportunity, to study in the summer with those teachers both from here and abroad, but it was a tremendous and
an important contribution. Right now, in education for parenthood, they've been able to move ahead much faster than the school system is moving ahead. And I think that their experience will be useful in our work. Germantown Friends' School has always had, in the last years, an interesting relationship with some of the other public schools in the area that I think has been beneficial to both of them. Other than that, in Philadelphia, I don't know.

But it's important to have a variety of schools, but I think it is also important to have an excellent public school to which most of our children in the area go. And I think it is awfully hard to know what I would do if I were starting out again, so I don't want to make any predictions or say anything about anybody. But it is not just book-learning that is important; it's life itself and the diversity of people in this world. This is something all of us have to learn to live with, and learn both our similarities and our differences and how co-operatively, we could make this a much more workable democracy than we now have.