INTERVIEW WITH CAROL AUERBACH

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INT: My name is Mina Gobler, and I am interviewing Carol B. Auerbach, philanthropic activist and family therapist. The interview is being conducted in Penn Valley, Pennsylvania. Have you agreed to this recording?

CAROL: Yes, I have.

INT: Okay. Let’s start with the very first question always. When and where were you born?

CAROL: I was born in Manhattan on January 19, 1943.

INT: Can we start out talking about your grandparents? Let’s do that first. I’d like to know their names and where they’re from.

CAROL: My mother’s parents, and I’ve never had the opportunity of meeting them, were Alexander Buscher and Gertrude Buscher. They lived in Cologne. I’m not sure exactly where they were born, but I do know that they lived, as did my mother, in Cologne, Germany. My father’s family was Jacob Fischer and Regina --I think her name was Regina -- but someone said that it may have been Johanna. My grandfather was born in Poland and moved to Berlin at some time in his life. The only person that I’ve ever had a chance to meet and it was only once in my life, was my paternal grandmother, who visited when I was four. She was living in Israel and she came to visit her family. But I never had the pleasure or privilege of meeting the other three.

INT: So the grandparent from Poland who was living in Germany had to leave at some point?

CAROL: They had a son, my Uncle Nathan who is still alive, who was an ardent Zionist, and brought the whole family to Israel, Palestine at that time, in 1932. My father then left Palestine in ’39 to come for the World’s Fair, met my mother in New York and married her and ended up not going back. His parents though remained until their death which, if you’re going to ask me exactly when they died, I’m not certain since I was very young at that time.
INT: Now tell me about your parents.

CAROL: My mother, Anneliese Fischer, was born in Cologne and died four years ago. She had lived there through Kristalnacht, and about six months after Kristalnacht occurred, left Germany via London in order to be able to come to the United States. She describes that it was a very happy growing-up. Her family was very German. I don't want to say assimilated, because I think they certainly knew they were Jewish, but I think they clearly felt they were German-Jewish rather than Jewish-German. My grandfather had had a very successful business. They lived in a very beautiful home with several servants, which was all dramatically changed when the Nazis came to power. I think her parents were permitted to stay in the house but needed to live in the attic, and then my mother lost touch with them. She had two siblings who were older than she. Her older sister had married and left for the United States with her husband and his family prior to Kristalnacht. I think her brother was still there during Kristalnacht but left Germany soon after via China and ended up in San Francisco.

My mother’s sister was the key in being able to get the papers for my mother so that she would be able to leave. She couldn’t do it directly from Germany, but went to England and worked as a governess for a year in a family until my aunt and uncle were able to provide the papers to bring her to the United States. I think it was a very difficult time, and she describes it as having been very wrenching, leaving her friends and her parents. When she was in London she said it was very, very lonely for her, although the people were very nice. My mother had had an active social life which changed very dramatically once in London. She had been accustomed to living in a very affluent household in Germany. When she actually came to the United States she had no money whatsoever and worked in a garment factory, earning some money to begin to support herself. Soon it was a very major shift for her.

My father was born in Berlin and it was his elder brother Nathan (who will be ninety-three and still lives in Israel) who went from Germany to Palestine, and brought his whole family to join him. This move very much disrupted my father’s education. He was the middle child in that family, and whereas his eldest brother had been fully educated in Germany and his younger brother then could be educated in Palestine, my father was caught in-between.

INT: So your father came to the United States for the World’s Fair.

CAROL: In New York. Unfortunately, when he came to the United States, he was unable to find a job as a photographer and became a furrier. He had worked with his father who made men’s suits in Palestine, so he was able to use those skills and started working for another
furrier. As an aside, he’s now on the Internet. He’s in the archives of the Hebrew University because his photographs really are wonderful, historic treasures at this point.

He was an avid tennis player, even until just a few years ago (He is now 91). He met my mother, who was just watching her sister play. I think the sister and the brother-in-law were playing with my father, and that’s how my parents met. My father was eleven years older than my mother. I think that for both of them it was a very happy fifty-three year marriage. They first moved to Manhattan and then after I was born, when I was four, we moved to Kew Gardens, New York, in Queens. That’s where I began my journey. My parents did not go back to Israel until I was seventeen or eighteen. As I had mentioned before, my paternal grandmother from Israel did visit us once when I was four.

INT: Do you remember anything about that?

CAROL: I do. I remember she didn’t like me or my mother. They were not very good memories. She unfortunately was beginning to be senile. She adored my father and liked my younger brother.

INT: You mentioned a younger brother.

CAROL: My brother Michael is a year-and-a-half younger than I. He lives in Schenectady, New York with his wife and two children, who are also grown, similar in age to my children. He’s an engineer and a wonderful person.

INT: Do you have any special memories of growing up with him?

CAROL: Well, we grew up in Kew Gardens in a very modest one-bedroom apartment. My parents slept in the living room on a pull-out sofa, and my brother and I shared a room that had a partition. We basically did get along. Our friends were very different. Because we were so close in age, one might think that we would have been closer, and we really were not. He had his set of friends and I had mine. In high school, there was a redistricting, so he never even attended the same high school that I did. But he’s a very solid individual.

He left Kew Gardens to go off to Rensselaer Polytechnic. I stayed and went to Queens College. And so he left New York, never in a sense to return to the city. He met his wife-to-be up there, went to graduate school, and has remained in that area. Loves the outdoors. He’s an adventurous kind of person. He likes to hike and canoe and kayak. He is a very solid, good person who’s really been wonderful with my father. I do not feel like I’m the only one having
to look after my father. Michael has been equally responsible when my mother was ill and
certainly now is also looking after my father. So we have a really nice relationship.

INT: Were there any other family members in the area?

CAROL: In Brooklyn. My father’s mother was the youngest of probably about thirteen, so all
the other aunts and uncles, or many of them, were in Brooklyn. We were particularly close to
an Aunt Selma and Uncle Ella, who didn’t have any children. My grandmother had been the
eldest and Uncle Ella was the youngest of the family, so it turned out that he was very close in
age to my father, maybe a little bit older.

I was the first child born into all of these families, so from what was described to me, I
was really doted upon. The siblings in Brooklyn many times did not necessarily get along well
with one another, but we always had a very close relationship. We spent every first Seder with
Aunt Selma and Uncle Ella along with some of the other cousins in Brooklyn. They lived in
Brighton Beach, and I remember the long schlep along the Van Wyck Expressway when you
knew that every Jew in New York was traveling somewhere for a Seder. Aunt Selma made the
best gefilte fish. I try always to emulate her gefilte fish. I realize that everybody has their
unique recipes and some families like it peppery. We liked it a little bit sweet, so I did get
something that is akin to her recipe. There’s no question that whenever I have made it, she was
clearly in my head.

INT: So you did have extended family. It’s not like you and your parents and brother were
alone.

CAROL: No. They were the ones that were closest to us. My mother’s sister also was in New
York and actually, the apartment that we lived in Kew Gardens had originally been hers. She
and her husband Kurt, moved to Easton, Pennsylvania. He turned out to be very successful and
became the owner or the founder of Delightform Bras and Girdles, and that factory was in
Easton. I was close with my two cousins, Eileen and Miriam, their children. I
spent many a summer, going for a week or so and visiting with them. But as a family, since
Easton was not so close to New York, we’d see them perhaps several times a year. My aunt is
still alive and lives in Florida. (she died in 1999)

INT: How were Jewish holidays celebrated in your home?

CAROL: We always celebrated the High Holidays and for many years Sukkot and Simchas
Torah. My mother took me to synagogue; my father did not like going to synagogue. He did
not like going for the High Holidays, when everyone at that time called cards, and you had to
publicly announce what you were going to pledge. He could not stand that. The wisest
investment my parents ever made was purchasing a summer home in Lake Hopatcong, New
Jersey. From the time I was four, every summer was spent there. To me, that was a lovely
house. I see pictures of it and now realize it was a fairly small house on the lake. On numerous
occasions we spent the High Holidays there. There was a synagogue, or a Jewish Center that was there which we attended. I remember, with very fond memories, breaking the fast. On Yom Kippur we always fasted and we always broke the fast with herring and cream sauce, challah, and a delicious apple cake that my mother made. My memories of the Jewish holidays were primarily food-oriented.

INT: How Jewish!

CAROL: We always celebrated Chanukah, and I remember that was an issue. As children, of course, we would take a look at the Christmas trees and I think sometimes my brother and I would ask whether we could have a Christmas tree. My father’s response always was very consistent. He said, "as soon as our gentile neighbors will light a menorah, we will get a Christmas tree. So there was never any problem. We never had a Christmas tree. That was our Chanukah. And the first Passover seder, until I was first married, was always spent in Brooklyn. The second night we usually had the seder at our home. Shabbat was not something I recall we really adhered to on a regular basis. I don’t really remember my mother lighting Shabbat candles. I do remember a blue tzedakah box, and so I suspect that we did a little bit of that. I went to Hebrew school very briefly. Part of that was my parents’ desire to go to Lake Hopatcong on the weekends, and they didn’t want to be bothered with me going to Sunday school. I think I only went for about two years, and then my father decided that he could teach me Hebrew better than the teachers could, so I was taken out completely.

INT: Did he teach you?

CAROL: Yes, he did teach me.

INT: What did he teach you?

CAROL: How to read Hebrew. It was not conversational Hebrew. And my brother continued going to Hebrew school until he was bar mitzvahed. At that time, women growing up with me were not bat mitzvahed or confirmed. As a teenager, I belonged to our neighborhood Orthodox synagogue because I was part of the cheerleaders for their basketball team. As a result of that social interaction, as a teenager, I ended up going to services in the Orthodox shul with a number of my friends. Those were pleasant years with pleasant memories. My parents did belong to a conservative synagogue until my brother became a bar mitzvah, and then they no longer continued their membership.

INT: Jewish education sounds like a pick-up basketball game.
CAROL: It was. And I have to admit that still is lacking within me. In the future I am interested in learning more, making up for that void in my Jewish education. I’ve taken Hebrew classes over the years, first, when I was married in New York, and then here at our synagogue, to make me more comfortable with the prayer book. My Hebrew has improved, but I am definitely not terrific.

INT: First of all, were there many Jewish families in your neighborhood in Kew Gardens?

CAROL: 99% were Jewish. I really always felt so comfortable being Jewish there...it was like a mini Israel. It was a very European community. I got culture shock when I was first married and moved to Manhattan. In Kew Gardens, on every Jewish holiday every store was closed and everyone was walking down the street, so you really felt as though you were part of this Jewish shtetl. I felt a very intense Jewish identity. That was something that my parents, definitely my father in particular, instilled within me. It was only when I moved to Manhattan later on in my life when I realized the world really went on during the Jewish holidays, and that there was this difference in Kew Gardens.

INT: Where did you go to schools?

CAROL: I went to PS 99, which was a few blocks away, and then a middle school opened up in Forest Hills when I was ready for that. It was Junior High School 190. I then went to Forest Hill High School for four years. Since my parents were not in a position to afford it, and fortunately I lived in New York where the city colleges were so wonderful, I attended Queens College both as an undergraduate and as a graduate. I did the four years and then they started a school psychology program, which I attended and graduated from in 1966.

INT: And that was-

CAROL: That was a school psychologist.

INT: That was your certification?

CAROL: My Masters was in school psychology.

INT: What made you select school psychology?

CAROL: Well, I loved working with children. I didn’t want to be a teacher. I did want to have a whole classroom of children to deal with and I didn’t want just to be in one single place all of the time. I was determined to do something constructive with my life, which I believe
was connected to a trip I made to Israel when I was in college. I had gone to visit my father’s family when I was eighteen and that was a very life-changing experience for me. 

As I said, my father was a furrier. My parents were very decent people and they had nice friends. It wasn’t a particularly intellectually stimulating household. Somehow, the three weeks in Israel were an eye-opener for me as to what life could be for me. My mother’s cousin, Judith Shaltiel, lived with her husband, General David Shaltiel, in a beautiful apartment in Jerusalem. He was the general who had lost Jerusalem in 1948, and he became Israel’s ambassador to a number of different countries. Judith was a practicing clinical psychologist. They had invited me to their home several times during my visit, and I was like a sponge. My visit was after the Adolf Eichmann trials and there was something so special about all their guests that stayed with me. I couldn’t get over the quality of the people there, all doing really interesting, exciting things with their lives. It was a mind-boggling experience. I realized all of these people had done something meaningful with their lives. I didn’t know how that was going to translate for me, but I thought I would like to be able to do something meaningful in my life. I thought helping others because I like children so much and really enjoy working with families, that that would be a good beginning for me. So becoming a school psychologist seemed a natural for me, professionally.

INT: During this trip, did that make a significant impact on you in terms of feeling connected to Israel?

CAROL: Absolutely.

INT: So it was that as well.

CAROL: In addition to my experiences with the Shaltiels, I was intensely moved by the stories my aunts and uncles told me. My aunts and uncles showed me the Jerusalem that they had fought for, and I heard the stories of their intense passion to make this their homeland and what it required, the commitment that it took on their part, and the sacrifice. Many times they went hungry when there had been blockades and food couldn’t be brought to Jerusalem.

I remember as a younger child, during the time that they were struggling, there must have been a chocolate store in Kew Gardens that sold coupons or sold dried food. My mother and I would go in very regularly and have them send packages to my cousins in Israel. I was always told I had to eat and finish what was on my plate because my poor cousins didn’t have food. When I went to Israel they were much fussier with their eating than I ever was. I do remember, however, sending dried milk and dried eggs. Those were some of the things that we did do.
Visiting Israel then became an even more powerful experience. I could not believe what had been accomplished in so few years. During my visit, I traveled from Haifa to Eilat, and took many side trips. I was so impressed with the people and the fact that I guess my family was even considered well-to-do in Jerusalem. They lived in Rehavia and still do, but at that time they had a telephone and I think one uncle had a motorcycle. That was already considered a big deal...and that was in the 1960's. It was either in '62 or '63 that I actually went there for the first time. I realized that people could do with very little and yet know they were powerfully connected to the creation of Israel. There was such pride within them for what they had created in this country. To this day, I’ve always wanted to recapture for my children the feeling that I had gotten that first time, when my uncles took me to show me No Man’s Land. We couldn’t get to the Old City. We could just see it from a distance.

INT: Like Moses.

CAROL: I went again with my first husband before ‘67 and again right after the war in ’67. On that trip Ben and I were able to visit Hebron, the West Bank and the Old City which was unbelievably exciting. But that first trip was definitely pivotal in my Jewish connectedness to Israel.

INT: Getting back to school, is there anything else in your life that happened while you were in college?

CAROL: It was actually when I graduated from graduate school and started my first job in Elmont, New York as a school psychologist.

INT: Tell me about your first job.

CAROL: Kew Gardens, Forest Hills High School and Queens College were predominately Jewish. Making the decision to work in Elmont, New York, which was predominately non-Jewish, was an introduction to me to the broader world. It wasn’t that I was uncomfortable. I certainly was able to function very easily, even within that district. I got married during that time and then became pregnant while working in this school district. They had me working in one of the Catholic schools and I remember I was going in on Ash Wednesday. There I was, waiting for the priest. I was the only one without the black mark on my forehead. I was ready for him to zap me. It was my first encounter with the non-Jewish world. I became aware that not everybody was Jewish and that there were differences in life style and values. It was a very different experience for me. I remember that a number of my colleagues would go to have a drink at a bar after work. It had never occurred to me that people did this on a regular basis. No one in my family had ever gone to a bar. I don’t even remember them drinking wine with dinner. It was just not that kind of a household. We had sweet wine for the holidays, but that
was the extent. Maybe my father would have a schnapps, but that was it, so to go drinking at a bar was very different. I felt sufficiently uncomfortable that I never accepted their invitations to join them.

It was during this time that I was introduced, on a blind date, to my first husband, Benjamin Barg, who at that time was working at the United Nations. We met at the end of August. I just found my calendar from that year. We started going out in September and he proposed on New Year’s Eve of 1966. He was, similar to my parents, eleven years older than I. I was twenty-four at the time that I married him. We were married in March of 1967.

I met him and I had lunch with him at the UN. He was really very nice. He led a very busy life and I was convinced that he would call again, but only when he got around to it. You can imagine my surprise when he called the next day. We dated very intensely during the next few months. He was very special. He had come from Australia, had made aliyah to Israel after graduating from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, and he had traveled extensively to the United States during that time. He had established the Australian Jewish Student Union Association, which was a major accomplishment, and he was asked to speak throughout the United States to Jewish youth groups. He was an extremely articulate man. He loved speaking and lecturing and was an effective activist and an organizer.

His parents had come from Poland, from Bialystock. They had met on a boat coming to Australia and they married and made Australia their home. They too had been displaced, a bit earlier than my family. They were a more observant family than mine, actually Orthodox, and kept a strictly kosher household. His father’s family came from a long line of rabbis from Bialystock. When Ben established his own home in the US he opted for what he termed kosher-style. It meant that we never had pork products or shellfish in our home but did not buy kosher products. When his mother came to visit with us, however, we prepared kosher food for her. His father died just before I met Ben so I never had the pleasure of meeting him, and my son, Philip, is named after him.

INT: Do you think that coming from your background with parents who had started out in Europe, with him having the same experience, was that something that bound you?

CAROL: It’s an interesting question. I really don’t think so. I always considered myself first generation American, which I think was pivotal in terms of my realizing that had fate had it a different way, I really truly might not have existed. It was really just fortuitous that my parents, my mother in particular, should be able to leave safely and that they would meet in New York, and that I would even be born. It was a real twist of fate that I don’t take for granted. I never had those kinds of conversations with Ben, and possibly that was because his parents had left for more economic reasons earlier than my family.

Ben had actually made aliyah to Israel, and while he was there he applied for a scholarship to attend Harvard Business School. He was accepted, then came back to the United
States, got his MBA at Harvard and then a doctorate in economics at Columbia, and started to teach at Wharton at the University of Pennsylvania. When I met him he was working at the United Nations, because he, too, was wanting to change the world, if that was possible. He lectured, in addition as an adjunct at NYU.

We moved from Manhattan to Larchmont when Philip was young. Ben had befriended Rabbi Nadich of Park Avenue Synagogue and Rabbi Nadich insisted that he marry us and we became members there, of that synagogue while we lived in Manhattan. We joined another synagogue in Larchmont where we each became involved. And then behind the scenes, (which I only found out after he died) he did a great deal for Israel. I think the name “Barg” was not necessarily thought of as being Jewish and I was told that he had been quite helpful to Israel in some behind-the-scenes manner.

INT: How long were you married?

CAROL: Just under seven years when he died.

INT: What was the cause of his death?

CAROL: He died of a massive heart attack. Heart disease ran rampant in his family. The year before he died he had suffered a heart attack at the age of forty. There was a question as to whether he should have an angiogram, but it was the very beginning of that technology and he didn’t want to take the risk and the doctor didn’t press it. He didn’t smoke. He didn’t drink. He was very lean. But his genetics were not in his favor. We were on our way with the children to Australia (because the UN sends you home every other year) when he died at the airport. He had a massive heart attack at that point. It was in the midst of the oil embargo in January, 1974. That was a disaster. My parents, fortunately, had taken us to the airport. Rachel was two-and-a-half and Philip was five-and-a-half. My parents had brought us to the airport and so they brought the children back to Larchmont and I went with the ambulance to Jamaica Hospital—I will always remember. They pronounced him dead. Then I couldn’t get a taxi to take me back home because of the gasoline crisis. I was fortunate that a neighbor’s son was on winter break from college, and he agreed to get me. I remember Jamie came and picked me up at the hospital to bring me back home. We even had to schedule the funeral so that people would be able to buy gasoline for their cars. It was a very snowy winter. It was not a terrific time.

INT: So here you were, a widow with two young children. And then what happened?
CAROL: Well, that was really interesting and that has a Jewish connection, too. He died on a Friday, and we had left ostensibly for several weeks in Australia so there wasn’t any food in the house. When I came home Friday and sat down on the kitchen floor with Philip and told him that his father had died, his first words were, “Well Mommy, if you’re lonely, get married again.” Then, since it was, as I mentioned Friday night, I felt that we needed to “celebrate” Shabbat as we always did with the lighting of candles, and the blessing over wine and challah. Philip immediately wanted his father’s kiddush cup which had been a special wedding gift to us. We probably had Pepperidge Farm bread somewhere which we used, because we didn’t have challah. We said the Motzi and Philip used that kiddush cup, which continues to be his. When he was married and when Rachel was married, that kiddush cup was a part of each of their wedding ceremonies. That kiddush cup has a great deal of significance in our family.

INT: So now you had to get a job.

CAROL: Fortunately I had been teaching as an adjunct at Queens College at that time one or two classes a week.

I was very cognizant that a tremendous trauma had occurred in our lives and I wanted to be as available as possible for the children. The Queens College people were really lovely and offered me a sabbatical position. It was a full-time job for the following year. In academia, full-time is three or four courses. It permitted me to be around for the children and yet to do something professionally, and to augment my income. Ben had been unbelievably organized and thoughtful, so he had taken out life insurance policies. Between his UN pension and Social Security and my working, I was able to keep us living in our home. We lived in a very lovely home, and I didn’t want to have to move. We had sustained enough in terms of loss, and I wanted, if there were some way, for us to stay. When he first died, I was very uncertain as to how I would be able to manage.

I happen to like to bake and I thought, “How am I going to earn money? Maybe I’ll have to go into the baking business.” Fortunately, everything came together during the first few weeks and months. The bank was very nice and I didn’t have to pay the mortgage for a few months until I could put things together. But I did. People were wonderfully supportive. I learned things about investing money that I had never taken care of before. We had had very modest amounts of money, but I think that in many ways, thanks to Ben’s foresight and planning, we had enough so that I could manage to stay with the children in that house.

I did come to realize that if I wanted to have any normal life I needed a live-in person. People had started inviting me to their homes, and the kids needed a babysitter. I could pick up a babysitter with them in the car, but I couldn’t really take someone home. So I hired full-time help to stay with us for several years. I felt that was worth it for me, otherwise there wouldn’t have been any kind of social life for me.
The children were adjusting, but it was not easy. Rachel did not have the words at that
time to express her thoughts or feelings, but every time my father or any other man would
come to visit, she would want to play doctor. She had witnessed the heart massage being done
to Ben, so for the first six months, she would always recreate the scene she had seen. It was
her way of working this trauma through even though she did not have the appropriate words.
There was a lot to deal with, but I felt that I couldn’t collapse, because if I collapsed, two other
children were going to collapse with me. Here I was; I was thirty-one. When I look at
someone now of thirty or thirty-one it always brings me back to that time.

INT: People are just starting to get married at that age.
CAROL: My son is thirty. At that time I had the responsibility of two children and a large
house and had to manage all of it—it’s mind-boggling. But you know what? When you’re thrust
in the middle of it, you put one foot in front of the other and you just do it. And I really do
think that my mother was a wonderful role model for me. She had never complained about
what had happened to her although she had sustained many terrible losses. I saw her as a
brave, courageous woman. She made the best of her life. She seemed pleased with where her
life had taken her and grateful for that which she did have. She never lamented, “Poor me,
I’ve been victimized,” or was angry at what had happened. Sad, yes, but not angry. And truly,
she lived very differently with my father than she had been accustomed in her growing up.
However, she never complained about it. I think that was probably very helpful on some
unconscious level for me in coping with my situation. You just sort of went and you did it. I
had wonderful friends and my parents tried to be there for me. I think that they were
overwhelmed because they felt that they couldn’t financially help me. But friends were
wonderfully supportive and we made it.

INT: So what happened next?
CAROL: Well, I worked for several months, and then took the children back to Australia to
visit with their grandmother because I was worried about her and I wanted her to see that life
continues. Ben had died in January and in June we went to Australia to visit.

Actually, Isaac, who was my second husband, had known Ben through his work at the
United Nations. One of Ben’s projects had been the use of computers in developing countries.
In the Office of Science and Technology, which is where he worked, he brought together
expert international panels to deal with the subject matter. Isaac had been the founder of the
International Federation of Information Processing, and had access to all of these experts. I’m
assuming that Ben, at one point, realized that, called him up and they became friends. I came
together with Ben—I remember being pregnant—to Philadelphia, because there were some
meetings being held, and Isaac had invited us to come. He was married at that time and living
in Merion. We became friends, so much so that he and Nina came and stayed overnight at our
house in Larchmont. Ben and I made several visits to their home as well. Just before Ben died,
Isaac came and spoke to his class at NYU. They always maintained a very cordial, warm
relationship. One time, when Ben was thinking of leaving the United Nations, one of the
positions he contemplated was as president of Isaac's publishing company. It didn't work out for Ben and I think he was very disappointed.

Now that I think about it, Isaac would stay if he had a business meeting or if he was coming to do something with Ben, he would stay in our guestroom in Larchmont. So the children knew him. He even helped Rachel crawl up or down the steps for the first time. There was certainly a friendship that existed. He came to pay a Shiva call after Ben died. At that point, he still had a company that had offices in Australia, and he was going. He paid the first Shiva call to my mother-in-law, came back and called me and said that she was in very deep mourning. Ben had been her absolute favorite son, and I think it was just an unbearable loss for her.

INT: And she had just lost her husband, you said, before you got married.

CAROL: That's right. It was a tremendous loss for her. And Ben was absolutely her ideal. She had come just before he had that first heart attack. She had visited with us for several weeks or perhaps even a month, so she had spent time with us when we were married and had the children. It was important for us to visit her even though she was in deep mourning. The children and I spent three weeks with her and then returned to New York.

I began to date during the summer. Then early September, I received a telephone call from Isaac telling me he was coming into New York for a meeting, and asking whether I would meet him for dinner. Since I considered him a good friend, I agreed. I remember I had a Hebrew school meeting to attend for the children and he was going back to Philadelphia so we had an early dinner together. He went on his way, I went on mine. The following November he called to say he was coming into New York again. He was going to Bloomingdale's. Could I meet him? And I said, "Sure." I asked him how was his wife and he said he had just separated from her. That's why he was going to Bloomingdale's, to put his new apartment together.

That was the beginning of a very wonderful time in my life. Isaac was twenty-one years older than I and had no intention of remarrying. He had been married twice. The first time for a brief time and had a child, also Philip, who is named after his father. He remarried Nina, who had two children from her prior marriage, and was married to her for ten years. Isaac felt that marriage probably was not going to be something that he should be doing again. But there really was a tremendous amount of chemistry between the two of us and he took the risk. I always say he took the risk with me early on in his life, because I was thirty-two when we started dating and he was in his early fifties. Eddie, who was at the time the youngest of their children, was graduating from high school. There were no obligations in terms of children or
anything. His natural son was in college. He really could go and do whatever he wanted with his life and here I was with two very young children. I called us “the package deal.” We were a threesome. Yet, somehow, within three years, we married and he imported me into Philadelphia. That’s how I got to Philadelphia.

He was really a wonderful, wonderful father to the children. We legally changed their names. We hyphenated their names when we were first married so that they were always Barg-Auerbach, and that’s when I changed my middle name so it would be reflective of theirs. But after we were married for a number of years (we were married for 16 years when he died), Rachel, while in high school, told him she thought it was time for him to adopt her and Philip. Philip came back from college and that was one of the nicest days in court that any one of us had ever had. Even the judge commented on how special it was. So he legally adopted the children and although they still have Barg somewhere legally in their names, it is Auerbach.

INT: Describe Isaac.

CAROL: From the moment I met him, I just thought he was a very special, warm individual who was very involved in... I met him when he was involved in his professional activities, so I didn’t know him as much in terms of his Jewish life until I got to know him better. He was a very devoted brother to his two sisters. His parents had died when he was fourteen. He was the eldest. His maternal aunt and her brother-neither were married-took in the three children and raised them. So he was very devoted at the time also... Uncle Mack had died before I came on the picture, but I did get to know his Aunt Bertie, who was a very special woman, who served as his... although he never called her mother. He had been devoted to his mother. She had died of cancer and he had attended to her very lovingly, and also to his father, who I think was quite a bit older than his mother but died of heart disease. It was during the Depression and Isaac would always describe how his father’s eyesight was going, so he would drive in the car with him. He owned real estate and they would go from place to place to pick up the rents. He described his mother during that time as always having some food. If there was someone at the back doorstep, there was always something that they would be able to give to someone to eat. I think often people couldn’t pay in money and they gave cans of food, so that their pantry in the basement was fairly well stocked. She sounded as though she was a really special human being.

He described, too, how his parents established a synagogue around their kitchen table, which is a major synagogue now in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. It is now the large, preeminent synagogue, and he said it was started around their kitchen table. Jewish activities were very much a part of his life. When I got to know him, I learned that even when he was in college, he was involved early on with Technion University in Haifa. He was always beyond caring just
about himself. He was a very successful businessman, major entrepreneur, very involved with the computer industry from its inception. He had been on the team that developed the Univac at the University of Pennsylvania, and worked with Eckerd and Mauchley who are credited for that invention. I found him unbelievably charming, not egotistical. I knew he was tough and other people had said to me at that time and since that there had been a hardness about him. I truly never experienced that with him. I had always seen this other side that had been very caring, and he had always been very loving to me and to Ben and to my children. So that was the person I married, and others who had known him really felt that I did something for him, which certainly makes me feel good. Certainly, I think we helped...not helped one another, but-

INT: Complemented?

CAROL: Complemented, and were very, very good for one another. He was a wonderful father. This was not an easy thing to do, to take on two little children. But he did it and did it well and was supportive of me in terms of the work that I ended up doing. He was responsible for getting me involved with Federation, because he was involved with the Jewish community. It was somewhat of an adjustment for me moving to Philadelphia.

INT: Let's talk about that was like.

CAROL: That was not easy. In New York, I never even had to ask for a job. Jobs always came to me. Someone would call and say, "Would you like to do so and so?" I didn’t know anybody in Philadelphia. So that was a real jolt. The children obviously went to school, so their life had a structure, and Isaac had his work. So I, for the first time, didn’t have any part-time job and was not involved in a synagogue. We did join Nes Ami, because we wanted something small, similar to the kind of synagogue we belonged to in Larchmont. We also thought it was probably better not to be in the same synagogue that Isaac had been in previously. He had been a member of Har Zion.

The first thing I did was get involved here with Penn Valley School, which my children attended, and within a year, was president of the Home and School Association. I took some courses at Penn. Freida Herskovitz, a psychologist and good friend of Isaac’s, lived in Merion, took me under her professional wing. I looked to her as my mentor in Philadelphia. She took me to some professional conferences, and then, ultimately, introduced me to Moss Jackson in Ardmore, who’s another psychotherapist and with whom I then started to do some work. I was able to take my school psychology background...he did a lot of work in consulting with schools, and begin my professional career in Philadelphia. I didn’t want to become a school psychologist here. In Pennsylvania, it was very limited and restricted just to do psycho-educational testing, and I had been accustomed to having much greater latitude of working with groups and seeing individuals. Since I didn’t want to be pigeonholed into just doing testing, it worked out beautifully for me to begin a part-time practice with Moss and his other associates.
I decided to take additional training as a family therapist, so I was able to start to work and do therapy with Moss. At that time there were two other male therapists, and I was the first female working with them. I was able to work around the children’s carpooling schedules. I had aspired to working part-time, which is really what I continue to do until the present.

Isaac was fabulous. He was a wonderful teacher. People loved him. He was a tough boss to work for, but as everyone said, “Oh, he’s unbelievably fair.” He always felt strongly that it was important to give back, that if one was lucky enough, as he said, to have your eyes, your ears, your mouth and to be able to have additional monies, it really was imperative that we somehow contribute money, so certainly we did that through Federation. When I met him, he was involved with Boys Town Jerusalem and Ben Gurion University. These communal institutions were part and parcel of our household.

INT: I remember him just physically being very handsome, very charismatic.

CAROL: Yes. He had a great dimple, a wonderful smile, was very handsome and spoke beautifully. I found him actually to be quite modest. As I said before, my parents adored him. To give credit to both husbands, my parents were very lovely but simple, not well educated people, in the traditional sense. Both husbands were very brilliant but never talked down to them and were always also unbelievably caring about them. I think that always made an impression, on them for sure, and on me as well. Isaac most often treated people, I think, very nicely. If he didn’t like you...Isaac did not suffer fools particularly well, he could be a little bit harsh with some people, but for the most part, if he liked you he was unbelievably loyal, unbelievably giving and caring for family and for non-family. His employees respected him immensely. Even after he sold the publishing company they continued to have reunions and absolutely insisted that he attend. One year they gave him something he truly cherished, a plaque describing him as a fabulous teacher. He was particularly touched by this description and we ended up modifying it for his tombstone. He loved growing people. He loved growing plants. He loved growing companies.

INT: He was a nurturer.

CAROL: He was tremendously nurturing in all that he did. That little plaque that his employees gave him several years after he sold the company meant an unbelievably tremendous amount to him.

INT: So he’s responsible for having gotten you started in your activities in Federation. What was the first thing that you became involved in?
CAROL: I think the first thing was a task force on family with teenagers. He was at Federation and told them that his wife, a psychologist, had something to offer. I was not a fundraiser. Nor was he, actually. I did not want to go in and be involved in Federation and work on campaigns. It was a matter of finding something in which I could feel as though I was making a contribution beyond just a financial one. To this day, I do not get myself involved, I would say 99% of the time, on any committee or in an organization where I don’t feel as though I’m bringing something non-financial to the table.

So, I started with this task force on teenagers, and then moved on to their Human Resources Committee. A department of Human Resources existed at Federation until, unfortunately, 1993, when it was disbanded. How do you develop people? How do you provide programming for leadership training in our Federation community? I was very involved in creating some of those programs, bringing other people in and then ultimately even chairing that entire committee. The committee provided a venue for discussing succession issues, lay-professional relationships and career ladders for our volunteer leaders. We tried to identify appropriate committee placement depending upon the interests and expertise of the volunteers. At some point, in one of the Federation administrations, it was determined that we no longer needed it and that Campaign would assume it. I suspect that now, with this new strategic plan, hopefully it will be brought back because I think it is necessary and was missing.

I became involved in that and in Jewish education, special needs, in particular. For me that was a very exciting committee since, at that time I was working with a number of learning disabled children in my practice and it was clear that lacking in our Jewish community was any resource possibility or any kind of education that could be modified so that someone with special needs could take advantage of their Jewish education, both in the day schools and also in the supplemental Hebrew schools. That committee was absolutely exciting to work on, because we were able to get some money and provide resource rooms for every day school. This endeavor started at Federation, within the committee I just described and ultimately was moved to ACAJE, the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education. There, under the direction of Dr. Sharon Shanzer, special needs children are being served in our Jewish community in ways never before undertaken. More synagogues are trying to modify their programs.

INT: Our synagogue has Bright Horizons for preschoolers, and it’s such an amazing program because not only has it helped the children who are in the program, but the children who just are normal children are interacting with these children and learning a lot about how to relate to these children.

CAROL: It’s exciting. I’m certain that that will continue. It’s wonderful just to know that there are so many Jewish children who can now also participate fully in Jewish activities and in Jewish learning. I remember—it was probably my very first client—a young boy who had major, multiple disabilities. Other than my son’s Bar Mitzvah and my daughter’s Bat Mitzvah,
attending his Bar Mitzvah at Main Line Reform was probably one of the highlights in my life. Rabbi Hausen was particularly sensitive in dealing with him; took him under his wing, and it was obviously a special event for the Rabbi as well as my client. At that time, we didn’t have special needs classes in any of the Jewish day schools or supplemental schools, and he had attended a special needs private school. It’s nice to know that there are more Jewish possibilities for children now. My next major Federation involvement was sitting on the Committee on Allocations and Planning. After Isaac died in 1992, they asked me to be on the Executive Committee of Federation, I believe because Isaac had been a Vice President and was a member of both the Cabinet and Executive Committee. After a short time I was asked to serve on the Cabinet as well and become one of Federation’s Vice Presidents. (End of tape 1, side 2)

INT: We were talking about your activities in Federation, so why don’t we go on with those. CAROL: Until this year I continued to serve as one of the Vice Presidents, but just gave up that role. Although I was asked to serve, I told Michael Belman that since I was going to be moving to New York I wanted to give that position to somebody else. I realized that in addition to those committees that I have mentioned, I was also involved in the Continuity Commission, whose role it was to oversee special grants that were given within the community. The possibility of developing some innovative, creative programs within and among the agencies as well as non-traditional Federation supported groups was very exciting to me in terms of what could be tried to energize segments of our Jewish community.

The Endowments Committee has been another one of my areas of interest and activity. Once Isaac and I established our own family foundation I became more interested in independent funding and grant making, above and beyond making an annual contribution to Federation. I think that for many people, in order to feel good about their philanthropy, they need to touch and feel what they are contributing to. It is important to feel that your contribution is making a difference in the lives of people. I think that we need to encourage that more as a Jewish community in its totality. People most often look at endowments as what happens when you die. I feel strongly that creating endowments is something that can be done while alive as we endowed the Central Agency. There are many opportunities within one’s lifetime to be able to make special gifts and have the pleasure of seeing them come to fruition. I tried to make these points to the Endowments Group. My other major areas of involvement within Federation have been Jewish education and special education, and the Human Resources Committee, which I chaired for several years until it was decided to disband it, which I still think was a major mistake.

After Isaac died another area I attempted to deal with was the use of technology and the internet in the Jewish community. I had made a trip to the former Soviet Union, probably four
years ago. I’d gone with the Cummings Foundation and a group of other small foundations. As I went from place to place, I would ask if people were on the Internet. Since Isaac had been so involved in technology, I felt that that was an area I wanted to continue. It’s not my area of expertise, but I knew that in the coming world, the role of technology would become increasingly important. I approached Michael Belman about putting Federation on-line. He thought it was a great idea and suggested that I ask Ed Goldenberg, who really loved computers and was much more knowledgeable than I, to work on this project. So we co-chaired this project which was to develop a website for Federation. That was done. I haven’t been involved, nor has he, for two years. It changed direction and I don’t think that with the new leadership it has gotten much of a play. Since it started and it is there, I’m hoping it can be utilized in the future, and it probably will be resurrected. That project was conceived as I wondered what would Isaac do in this area were he alive. I suspect, were he really alive, it would be up and running and it would be far more successful than it is. But it was not something that I could push since I was not that same person. That was really exciting and I suspect that the Jewish community will see more of that in the future. Those were my major involvements with Federation. I don’t know if you want me to go into CAJE.

INT: Please, yes. Tell me about CAJE.

CAROL: Ted Seidenberg, I think, was president of Federation, but it was Mimi Schneirov and Ed Rosen and Ted and Sid Margolis, I believe, and Sam Karsch, who I think was president of CAJE at the time, who knew of Isaac’s and my interest in Jewish education. They, as a group, approached us and told us of Philadelphia’s great need to have new facilities for this agency in order to improve the state of Jewish education within the city.

INT: And what is CAJE?

CAROL: CAJE is the Central Agency for Jewish Education. It consults with the congregational and day schools, providing Jewish educational materials and resources, convening conferences and workshops on all issues confronting the various schools. Their work revolves primarily around teacher training. They have specialists in special education, family education, the teaching of Hebrew, pre-school education to name a few. The reason Isaac and I decided we were interested in endowing the Central Agency was because we were aware from our own Hebrew school and our children’s, how dissatisfied everyone was with that whole experience.

Our purpose was not to have a building named for us. We felt that it was so important that there be some vehicle by which more creative ways, more innovative ways, could be used, so that, hopefully, at some point, and I don’t think that we’re there yet-the children going to Hebrew school will say, “Oh, that’s terrific, I’ve learned a lot and it is fun,” and really want to go and not continue to moan and say, “That’s not relevant” or “It’s not fun.” I think the Agency has been doing a wonderful, wonderful job, but it continues to need a tremendous amount of attention. There is always more to do.
INT: It’s part of a national program, isn’t it?

CAROL: Right. But I have to say, being out there in the national Jewish world as well, I get tremendously positive feedback about our Philadelphia Central Agency. The work that Helene Tigay and group are doing is being used as a model in numerous other Jewish communities. Jonathan Woocher, the executive director of JESNA, tells me every time I see him how they highlight ACAJE. They have Helene coming and speaking to the national organization in order to let Jewish educators know what we’re doing in Philadelphia.

Neither Isaac nor I had any interest ever in a building per se. The programming was important for us, but we realized that money was fungible. There was an important need in the Jewish community. We had recently established a foundation. We felt that a particularly meaningful way to give back to the Jewish community and provide for the future of our Jewish community was to do something for Jewish education for our youth. We decided to go ahead and permit our name to be used, a little bit uncomfortably. My kids still say, “You know, you said you don’t want buildings named after you.” I think Isaac felt that he was going to dedicate this to the memory of his parents, so that it wasn’t us, per se, but his parents. But I think the community looks at it as ours, and hopefully as a gift of Isaac in particular, because he loved working on the building plan. We had the dedication six months before he died. He knew he was ill. There had been some thought of having the dedication in the fall. He knew he was ill and he said, “You know, I’m okay now and I think that if you’re wanting to do it, do it now...” So we had a beautiful dedication of the building in June of 1992. He was extremely proud then and I think he’d be very proud of what they are currently doing.

INT: I think it’s important that his name is attached to that. It’s a lasting memorial to him.

CAROL: Absolutely. Obviously, when we were first approached, we didn’t know he was ill. I think that’s why it was a little bit more awkward. In retrospect, you’re 100% correct. There couldn’t be a more fitting place for him to have his name. As I think about it, if there would be any agency, any institution, this one dealing with Jewish education, with teaching of children, whom he adored, is perfect. So I am proud to have our name affiliated with it and continue to be involved. I promised that even with my move, I will continue to come back to Philadelphia. So I’ll have a reverse commute. I won’t be there for every meeting but I really do intend to stay involved, and, hopefully, my children after that.

INT: Are there any of your activities that you would like to talk about?
CAROL: More recently I had wanted to join the Joint Distribution Committee. When I thought about what I wanted to do nationally, outside of Philadelphia—possibly because of my first generation status and the whole issue of rescue and relief—I was always very impressed with the work being done by the Joint. When I had gone to the former Soviet Union with the Cummings Foundation, I had an opportunity of meeting some of the Joint people, and seeing what they were doing in the FSU. It was really incredible. There are over a million-and-a-half Jews there, most of whom probably want to remain, many of them elderly. The whole issue of feeding them...We visited homes that were in such horrible condition. I’ve never seen people living that way, ever. We think of our homeless, but to see Jewish elderly living in a one-room hovel...I saw a woman who was so infirm that she was not able to get out, living on a pension that was, I think, maybe $14 a month. The food packages provided by the Joint as well as meals being brought in and medical services being provided permits these people to live with some sort of dignity. They were embarrassed for us to come and to see them, and would cry that anybody should see them living in the way they were being forced now to live. Although it was sad, there was something very exhilarating and hopeful about so many people wanting to be Jewish while still remaining in their homeland.

I remember coming back and writing an article for the Exponent, indicating that people contributing to Federation should feel very proud because a portion of that money does go to the Joint. I think most people in the Jewish community, when they’re not more intimately involved, really don’t recognize how and where their Campaign contributions are used and the actual people that are affected. The Joint is something that I continue to be involved with and believe in. This whole issue of the Ethiopian absorption in Israel is one that is interesting me. When I go to Israel in November, I’m planning to go take a look at what they’re doing there.

The Jewish Funders Network is another organization with which I have been most recently affiliated, which came about as a result of Isaac dying...When he died and left me to deal with our foundation I felt a real need to be as knowledgeable as I could about Foundation work. Although we belonged to Delaware Valley Grant Makers, it was a secular group and it was meant for everyone. I went to a Federation event in Washington, and someone suggested that I might want to attend a conference of the Jewish Funders Network, which was a group of individual funders, made up of individuals as well as foundations who gave a minimum of $25,000 a year to either Jewish or secular causes. I went down to Baltimore in March of 1993 or ‘94—it was traumatic. It was one of the first things that I did after Isaac died. He died in December of ’92, and I remember it was March. They had had several meetings before, I think two meetings before this one. I was absolutely blown away. I thought that the people were wonderful. They were very thoughtful about their philanthropy. I went primarily because I wanted to learn about ways of including my children more effectively as trustees of the
foundation. JFN also was a place in which intergenerational issues came up and were openly discussed.

So each year I had became more and more involved, so much so that last year I co-chaired the annual conference, which was in Florida, and then they asked if I would co-chair the organization. It has now become a national membership organization whose mission it is to promote effective, strategic philanthropy. Membership is available to anyone who contributes $25,000 or more each year to either Jewish or secular causes. We don’t tell people where they are to give or even how they are to give. We try to educate people to think about more constructive, more effective ways of contributing their money. Revson and the Cummings Foundations are among our members. They are serious grant-makers. To be in the same room with them and learn how they strategically think through issues has made me a more thoughtful person in terms of developing the mission statement for our Foundation and working with the children. There are so many worthwhile things that one could fund, but we are a relatively small foundation, unable to be able to do it all, so the question is what do we want to do.

I think that Isaac and I did some innovative things early on which most foundations I work with do not necessarily do. We developed, for example, a matching grants program for our children. We wanted them to learn about tzedakah. We felt that we could do it by saying, “Okay, you decide what you want to give to, you have to contribute your own money, but the Foundation will match it.” I thought we needed to write some guidelines, in order that all the children would be clear about what we were and were not willing to fund. Isaac and I developed guidelines which we shared with all of the children, and that was the five children—his natural, two stepchildren and my two. They all participate in this. To this day, we still engage in this matching grants program, and somewhere along the way—there are three grandchildren which I would like to involve in some way.

This Jewish Funders Network provides an opportunity for people to meet together, to find out, for example, if there are funding interests. We have affinity groups, so if someone is interested in Jewish education, people can meet together, see what they’re funding, and even fund joint projects. This coming year’s conference is going to be on collaboration and partnerships and we will explore how you can leverage your contribution making it that much more powerful. Another issue of great interest is accountability and the evaluation of grants. It has taken hard work to make available whatever money is contributed, and I think that we all want to know that it is being effectively spent. I think that it’s time for everyone to begin to engage in this process of evaluation which larger foundations have been doing for some time.

Our Jewish community has not been as effective, I don’t think, in looking at this whole evaluation area and seeing which of our programs are working—are they making an impact, are they not, could they be modified, should they be disbanded. What have we learned from what we’re doing to be able to continue developing programs? I have discussed the importance of evaluation with ACAJE. I want us not to just assume that because we run a workshop or a series of them, that it is necessarily going to do what we had hoped it was going to do.
Evaluating the short and long-term effects of such workshops will be essential if we are to take seriously what ACAJE is able to offer. Getting back, however, to the Jewish Funders Network—it is there that we deal with developing grant-making skills as well as helping funders to take a look at critical areas they may consider funding. Our programming includes Jewish areas of interest such as Jewish education, the arts, Israel, the FSU as well as secular issues such as social justice, women and girls, and children and families. We live in a big world, and the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam, repairing the world, encompasses both Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

We have found that particularly for young people who feel disenfranchised from the Jewish community and Federation in particular, the connection to Tikkun Olam makes them aware of the Jewish connection. They are often more comfortable to contribute to homeless shelters and abused women and children than to the Jewish community. However, making the connection to Tikkun Olam makes them more comfortable with their Jewish identity. It appears to be one hook, a beginning, some return back that provides greater comfort in working within and hopefully contributing to the Jewish world.

I can think of several people I’ve met who stated that coming to JFN has made a tremendous impact on their Jewish identity. Some of them have come from families—and I won’t mention names—unbelievably Jewishly connected, and they, as children, have been totally disconnected. But as a result of the Jewish Funders Network and of being more liberal and really wanting to help all people and not just the Jewish world, they’ve been able to come back and see that there’s merit even in the Jewish world as well. It’s fascinating.

The idea of engaging the next generation is very important to me. We’ve gotten a great deal of positive response and we’re in the midst of convening a next generation group. Our hope is that it will provide a venue for young people to come in and talk about what it is like for those who are inheriting money. The issue of inheritance is very complex both for parents and their children. People think it’s always very easy to have money. It’s not so easy to have. Many parents struggle with how to educate their children in terms of financial responsibility. They don’t want their affluence to negatively affect their child’s motivation to work. I’ve frequently been asked, “Do your children know how much money you have?” My response is that I don’t tell them exactly how much money I have, but the fact that we live in houses and live a lifestyle that lets them know that we’re not poor conveys a great deal of information. Yes, there have been discussions along the way with my children. Specifically, I can recall that as a young teenager my daughter wanted a number of Guess jeans. Rachel would try to persuade us by telling us that so-and-so has fourteen pairs of Guess jeans. My
response was that it was not as though we couldn’t afford to give her fourteen pairs, but it’s not within our value system. I don’t have fourteen pairs of jeans. I would rather give the money away to someone who needs it.

Teaching important values requires ongoing discussion that needs to be started early-on with one’s children. I recently heard of a very exciting program that was started in a San Francisco day school with their bar and bat mitzvah class. Do you engage the next generation and make it something that experiential? The Jewish Funders Network is now going to explore whether we might be able to bring this kind of program to other communities and teach bar and bat mitzvah children the art of grantmaking with a portion of their bar and bat mitzvah money.

INT: Mazon has already done this.

CAROL: Yes, but I believe this approach would encourage youngsters to learn about grant-making which would include making site visits and evaluating the impact of their grant.

INT: Children have a natural desire to help others.

CAROL: Absolutely.

INT: With the homeless thing, and you had children wanting to give.

CAROL: It’s a perfect beginning, and I think that we don’t do enough to capitalize on children’s early interest in wanting to help others. Everyone laments that their children are not getting involved. I think that part of it is that we just have to start earlier and make giving meaningful to them. We have to permit kids to make a decision about what they would like to contribute to and not be so concerned if they don’t necessarily start out giving to exactly where we’re wanting them to give. Control is another issue we deal with at the Jewish Funders Network. It does create a certain amount of stress in families. As you can tell, I’m finding my involvement with JFN to be a wonderful opportunity and experience for me. JFN is headquartered in New York, so for me, going back to New York...There will be no lack of things for me to do.

INT: I don’t think there’s a danger of that.

CAROL: And Federation in New York has already made contact as well.

INT: They probably have your name on the stationery already.

CAROL: Not that far, but I know from a variety of places that they are waiting for the appropriate time and then we’ll decide what I might want to do.
INT: Well, your resume lists many, many projects, both civic projects and projects related to Jewish community. We certainly can’t go into all of them. Needless to say, what comes through from reading your resume is that you’ve never done anything just to bring your name to it. It’s who you are and what you bring and the difference that you can make. I often think of the power of one and I wonder what that means to you.

CAROL: I think that you’re right. I’ve been involved with the Institute for Mental Health Initiatives for over fifteen years. Our mission is to promote mental health and we, at one point, had used a motto—each one reach one. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if each person would just reach out to one other person in our world.

As a person, I am aware that I am not going to be able to change the world. When I started my therapy practice, I wanted to help my clients change their lives. Someone admonished me and gave me some good advice. If you could make 10% of a modification in someone’s life, that was going to be very significant. I feel that even as an individual, stepping forward in any capacity, doing whatever we think is important can be meaningful, but can also be a slow process. Years. I wish I could say I had a prescription for curing the ills of individuals and institutions. However, I have come to learn there is no quick fix. Change requires stepping forward and being willing to take a risk, but knowing pragmatically that change is a process—most often a slow one. I have learned, that if one does not take the risk, then nothing will happen. Only by stepping forward and taking some amount of risk is there the possibility of something happening. I think that’s the critical piece for me. I would like more to happen, but I’m pragmatic and realistic. It’s one step...there is that Jewish phrase—We’re not here to...

INT: To complete the task, but we need to get started.

CAROL: Right. And each one of us being willing and able to participate is really critical.

INT: Would you say that that was the overarching organizing principle of all of your activities? How would you describe that philosophy?

CAROL: I think that that’s probably true. Isaac certainly felt that way in terms of his involvement. He really was a wonderful mentor for me, a wonderful teacher. Many of our discussions at home had to do with values and philanthropy and taking a look at why we were doing the things that we were doing. I certainly am not interested in having my name on a letterhead just to be mentioned. That’s not the reason for me to do anything, and I won’t permit myself to be on any committee or group where I’m a rubber stamp. I have gotten off of those boards. It really is important to feel as though I’m there for a reason. Not that the group always has to agree with me, because that’s not the point either. But I can at least participate. What I have to say or what I have to offer may or may not be valuable, but at least I feel I have something to bring to the table. The naming business is definitely not the reason for my involvement.
INT: Well, before we get to some of our retrospective questions, you’ve spoken about your children and I wanted to make sure that we record their names and their ages at this point and what they’re doing right now, what they do for careers.

CAROL: Well, we start with the youngest. Would you like me to go through the stepchildren as well?

INT: Sure.

CAROL: Let me start then with the eldest, because then I’ll end up with mine. Philip, or as I refer to him, Philip the elder, is Isaac’s natural son. Philip Auerbach who is forty-five years old, lives in San Francisco with his wife, Sands, and ten year old daughter, Aria. She attends a day school there, and Philip and Sands have been very involved with that. He has been involved in a number of Jewish activities. Before dialogue with Arabs and Palestinians was particularly fashionable, he was starting to do that, much to Isaac’s chagrin at that time. These dialogues were very important, however, to Philip.

Ronald Harris, who is Isaac’s stepson and the son of Nina Kaleska, is also out in Los Angeles. Ronnie must be forty-two, I think, at this point. He has two children, Jeffrey and Laura. Jeffrey is eleven, will be twelve, and Laura is eight. They are ones who are unfortunately maybe-I don’t want to say lost to the Jewish community, but he did marry someone who is not Jewish, and they have opted not to educate their children in any religion. (End of tape 2, side 1) Somewhere along the way, when they’re a little bit older, probably taking them to Israel or so will be my job to do, and I suspect he will agree to let me do this. He does celebrate the High Holidays and Passover with them, but they definitely, at the moment, do not participate in any Jewish educational programs. Bar and Bat Mitzvah are not being planned.

Edward Harris lives here in Philadelphia. He just turned forty and recently married a very lovely woman, Jill. They don’t have children. They live here. He’s a teacher. I have to say that we’ve all been close in terms of their growing up, and even with Isaac’s death, have remained close with them as well.

And then there are my two natural children, my birth children. Philip-again, and Rachel. Both Philips were named after their respective paternal grandfathers. When Isaac adopted my children, my Philip had to change his name legally to A. Philip Auerbach because the two Philips would have had exactly the same initials which was too awkward. Philip is thirty and was married for a brief time, and is now divorced. He is now working in New York
for Donaldson, Lufkin and Jenrette, and is really loving what he’s doing. He, of all the
children, is the most involved in the Jewish community. He asked me for the name of the
president of New York’s Federation. He called Judith Stern Peck. She got him an interview
with someone who heads up Young Leadership. Philip will be fine. I have to say that both
children, Rachel and Philip, were also very involved in communal activities even during
college and high school. He went to Friends’ Central where community involvement was part
of their program. Rachel, who attended Harriton High School, was involved in teaching
reading to children. So each one of them were involved in activities which were meaningful to
them. When Philip was at Colgate he called us and said, “The Jewish student union there needs
money for a Jewish lectureship. Do you think that the Foundation could support it?” So began
his involvement with our family foundation. He has also participated in funding a Jewish chair
at Colgate and our foundation matches his own contribution. I’ve taken the children with me to
the Jewish Funder’s Network. Philip believes in the Federation system and he was very
involved here in Philadelphia in Young Leadership and I am certain he will become involved in
New York’s UJA-Federation Young Leadership.

INT: It would be a good way for him to get back into the social stream.

CAROL: Absolutely. He sees himself as “conservodox.” I had taken him to B’nai Jeshurun in
New York, because I love the music, which is an integral part of their service. We went to say
Kaddish for Isaac, so maybe the timing was not terrific. The music was not something that
appealed to him. He found that kind of a “disconnect” for him at that time. We both agree that
we’re each going to have to go synagogue shopping in the next few months, but it will be
interesting to see what he does. For him, clearly, it will be to marry somebody who is Jewish.
He kept kosher when he was married, and I think it’s something that he would easily want to
do again.

Rachel is twenty-seven, was just married to a very nice young Jewish man by the name
of Garrett Hyman. He just finished his medical internship. She’s in the midst of a doctoral
program in psychology at Rutgers, but they are off now for ten months of traveling the world,
feeling this was the only opportunity they would have for many years to come. She took a
leave of absence, and he will be doing his residency when he comes back. They will be living
in Seattle for three years, and she will complete her dissertation and her internship when they
return in July. They’re in Japan now. They’ve actually visited our family in New Zealand and
Australia, and now are spending time in Japan. They will go to China to teach English for
three weeks. Their final destination will be Israel where they want to spend two or three
months. They are considering doing something there as volunteers, but those plans are not at
all clear. I think that Rachel is clear about being Jewish, but is not as involved as Philip has
been. I think for her it’s going to be more of a journey, and it will be interesting to see what
happens when they have children. I think it will be important. Garrett has come from a family
where his mother had kept kosher because of her parents, but there was minimal family
involvement in the Jewish community. They celebrated the Jewish holidays. It will be
interesting to see how Rachel and Garrett practice their Judaism.
CAROL: Yes. We definitely have a complicated family.

INT: How much Judaism did you have in your home that you and Isaac had together?

CAROL: We attempted to celebrate Shabbat. I baked challah, but I think in retrospect that we weren’t strict enough to make Friday night a must-stay-home and have dinner together. We were a family who did have dinner together many nights. We did not disburse for the entire week and then need [Friday as] the only night that we were to meet. But the kids would say they wanted to go out with their friends and we would permit that to happen. There’s a piece of me that’s a little bit sorry we did that, because I see in other families how beautiful it is and how meaningful it has been for so many where Shabbat dinner was a weekly family experience. So could we have done more? Yes, we definitely could have. We always went to services on the High Holidays. The children knew that they had to go to services. And we always celebrated the Jewish holidays. We were not particularly diligent about going to services on Shabbat, and yet, after Ben died and also after Isaac died, we did attend services regularly to say Kaddish for many months. I think I and the children needed it, so they did participate with me. But after a period of time the need dissipated, both for me and for them. Philip will go more frequently on Friday night. He’s even gone down here on a Friday night to his friend, Shraga [Sherman], to the Lubavitch. He is the most frequent synagogue attendee of our family. Rachel really is not as interested, but once they have children, I would not want to venture what will occur.

INT: It’s too soon to tell

CAROL: Absolutely. On a recent trip to London, I made certain to bring back an old kiddish cup for Garrett so that he would have one for their future use.

INT: Looking at things retrospectively, what special qualities or talents have you brought to your participation in the Jewish community?

CAROL: It’s hard for me to talk about my talents. I’m better when other people talk about them.

INT: It’s a women thing. Pretend that you’re a man telling me this.
CAROL: I think that is part of it. I think my absolute sincere caring about issues, the concern that I have for people in particular. Yes, I know it’s important to raise money. That’s not the area that I’m particularly interested in. I wouldn’t say I’m particularly talented in it, and it’s not something that I care about. What I believe I am good at is bringing people together and networking. I love doing that. I also enjoy working with people and determining what their expertise and interests are, and then matching them with a committee or project that will be satisfying for them.

INT: Make “shidduchs” (matches).

CAROL: Make shidduchs in terms of community involvements, or try to engage someone who’s moved in more recently, and find out, “What are you interested in?” What are some of the things that we might be able to offer in the Jewish community? My people skills, more than anything, are my greatest skills. I believe that starting with Isaac, but certainly continuing since his death, I have a vision about philanthropy and about giving back to the community which is probably more flexible than many people in our organized Jewish community. I try to engage people where they are rather than where we assume they should be. My psychological background has had something to do with this attitude. If you can accept and say thank you for what people are willing to do, you never know where it will lead. In some sense, this attitude requires risk-taking and a belief that people will do “good” if given the opportunity.

INT: What have you learned about yourself and the Jewish community through this process?

CAROL: I’ve learned that it’s a slow process to make any change within the Jewish community, and that you have to be persistent and not take some of these things personally. If you make a suggestion and it doesn’t go your way immediately, it is important to not take that as a personal affront. It is frustrating. It has been frustrating for me sometimes. But I can see some slow and steady progress in certain areas. In this whole issue of independent giving, I think there will be more of it in the next few years than there had been. I hope also, along with that, the acknowledgment to people that they don’t only have to give to Campaign, that you really should permit people to cultivate what they’re interested in, not only in their involvements but also in their giving. I think you can find people who would be far more satisfied and philanthropic.

I think what I’ve learned about myself, too, is that I probably-again, this is a woman thing-am more capable than I had thought. I was married to two very strong men. I know that I am and was a strong woman emotionally, to be able to do what I needed to be able to do, both in living with them and surviving their deaths. But I also was a woman who was very comfortable in being beside...I won’t say in back of, my husband. When I first married Isaac I said, “You know, were going to be vice-presidents of this relationship,” and Isaac said, “I’ve never been vice-president of anything in my life.” So I said, “Well, then we will be co-chairs,” because I also was not going to be the vice-president of his presidency. So we did have a relationship that approximated co-chairing. But other than in those areas like education...
and mental health that was really mine, I was very comfortable in letting him take the lead in our Jewish community endeavors. When he died I needed to think about what role I was going to take.

Carol Karsch was very helpful to me too, and Mimi Schneirov has been unbelievably helpful as a sounding board. Carol has said, “You know, you have something to offer as a woman,” I realized it’s the same thing. I have not necessarily been comfortable being honored either individually or as a couple, but I realize that putting yourself in the public, permitting your name to be used, is important in motivating others to come forward and be willing to be counted. It’s uncomfortable since one does not know how many people are going to come or will the organization raise the money that they had hoped for. But, by your taking a stand and committing your name to be used and putting yourself forward, you could make a difference inasmuch as you might encourage others to do something that they hadn’t thought about doing. I think that my role as a Jewish woman, now having to stand very much on my own two feet, is to permit myself to speak up at meetings and absolutely say what I am wanting to say, even though it may not be terribly popular, and taking a stand.

INT: It’s a lot different saying it when you had somebody alongside of you.

CAROL: If there was something uncomfortable or if we were advocating something, Isaac would be the spokesman and I could be the good person. It’s like the good cop-bad cop.

INT: Now you have to be both cops.

CAROL: Yes. He could be the one who could be tougher. He could say that certain things should be done, and I could smile very pleasantly beside him and agree. But it wasn’t me that had to say it. And so I had to make a choice. It was something that I thought about, and it was tough. I realize, for the most part, I say it nicely. I mean he did, too but...there are ways of saying things and of standing up for what you think is important. It’s been an interesting journey for me.

INT: What has been difficult for you and how have you overcome those difficulties?

CAROL: I think that there is some difficulty in being a woman in our Jewish community. Although I am a vice-president of the Philadelphia Jewish Federation and I feel as though I have evolved within this community, I think with it all, this is still a fairly male-dominated community and world. I think that the challenge has been to be heard as a woman. To be heard.
CAROL: Listened to. Sometimes I might say one thing and a man will say something very similar at a meeting. For me, what has been frustrating—and I’m not sure how I’ve said it, or whether it’s been me—but again, when someone is reiterating what has been said, it’s most often—not always, but most often—it is the man who is quoted. And you sometimes think. “Am I invisible? Have I been listened to?” So that has been, and continues to be somewhat of a challenge.

On the other hand, when you say how have I overcome it, I’m not sure I have overcome it. But I realize that unless you stick in there and stay with it, it’s not going to be overcome. So I think that’s why it’s extremely important for women to participate in top leadership positions. I think Mimi Schneirov has been a phenomenal role model in our community, and I think that there are other women who also have been phenomenal. I’d like to see more women as presidents of Federation as well. Part of it may be our own doing. Mimi has always said, and I agree with her more and more, that every woman joining any organization should join in the finance committee. So often men, and maybe women, make an assumption that women can’t read a budget or won’t know what to do with the financial well-being of an organization. If we can prove that we are capable in the fiscal area, along with other areas, then maybe we would be taken more seriously. Certainly, I feel as though I have been taken seriously. I can call up Howard Charish. He will always meet with me. I think he genuinely appreciates most of what I have to say. How that gets translated is a more difficult question. The Federation community is a tremendous bureaucracy. It works slowly in the best of circumstances, and that’s not a gender issue. It’s just the reality of it, and I think there are many male entrepreneurs for whom it’s too frustrating. Decisions just don’t get made quickly. I think it is easier for most woman to deal with process and consensus building. For me, the major issue remains that of being listened to, heard and respected as a woman who brings definite skills to the table.

INT: What does it mean to you to be Jewish and a female in the twentieth century?

CAROL: I love it. It’s a phenomenal opportunity because I think that women are beginning to feel far more competent in all areas of their lives. We have options that my mother didn’t have in terms of education and in terms of communal organizations. Women, I guess, were always involved, but primarily in women’s groups. We have an opportunity to work in and be counted in a variety of mixed groups including being counted for a minyan...I have always felt an equal as a Jew. I feel very strongly that women definitely need to be counted. We create a home. That, I think, is pivotal in the life cycle of our families. Without us, life would be very, very
different. I think it’s a wonderful opportunity to work together with men, and I don’t think that it’s an either/or.

I think of myself definitely as a feminist but not as a strident one. The feminist movement started when my children were young, and I would go to all these meetings at the Home and School Association. I remember standing up even then and saying, “I think it’s fine for women to do whatever they would like to do and have options.” But I honestly do believe that the two most difficult jobs are being a teacher and being a parent. If a woman decides she would like to stay at home with her child, I think that’s every bit as professional as going and becoming a physician or an attorney. And I still believe that. I feel that this is about options that we have, and feeling fulfilled as a woman, and that there are many different ways to play that out. And if anything, I see a movement back towards women feeling more comfortable about staying home, being a mother, and taking pride in that as well. I always did. I was lucky enough to be able to work, to have my professional life fulfilled by my part-time work. That always made me feel competent in that area. But for me, it was very important to be a wife and a mother. As I said, I feel very privileged because I’ve been able to do that.

**INT:** As women’s roles have evolved and changed, what is your hope for the future of women’s involvement in the general community and the Jewish community?

**CAROL:** I hope that they will continue to become even more active leaders. I think it’s easier for me to say this because I am now in this single, widowed position. Owning one’s finances, owning one’s ability to give even when you are part of a partnership—I think is important. Isaac and I were true partners in our relationship. He was unbelievably supportive of me in terms of asking what I would like to contribute to. Although I realized that this was the money that he had earned, he was really willing to share that with me. Actually, I did contribute money of my own, even to the Foundation, and I still do, because I feel as though that’s important. It’s not enough just to be given the money. The same way that I want the children to participate, it’s only appropriate for me to do the same.

I think that, as women, we could take on more leadership positions in the Jewish community or the secular community. It is important to be willing to give up one’s time and money. Very often you hear that when someone calls a woman, she will say, “I have to talk to my husband about that.” It is a statement reflecting how insecure we are in making philanthropic decisions on our own. I think increasingly, and I’d like to see that for the future, a woman will say, “Oh, I would like to do...” and then go back to her husband, if that’s the case, and either have done it from the money that she has earned herself and say, “This is the decision I’ve made,” or say, “This was something that was really important to me,” and work those things through with him. As we become more comfortable in our own capacity, involve
ourselves financially and emotionally, we will take on greater leadership positions. I think that this is a world in which we need both men and women working together in a respectful way.

INT: Do you have any advice or warning to give to daughters or your successors as they become involved?

CAROL: I guess, “Stay the course.” I think that this issue of money and control and power is a very sensitive one, and really needs to be worked out in terms of the marital relationship, probably early on. Clarifying one’s role in that relationship and feeling comfortable in that relationship will also give them the staying power outside of the relationship, to feel comfortable in whatever they’re doing. I don’t know if that makes sense but... It’s not feeling as though your husband controls you or is the one who decides how much you’re permitted to give or whether you’re supposed to know about the family finances. I want my daughter to know what assets she has, to participate in the investment of those assets. I don’t want her to feel that her brother is going to do that for her or her husband is going to do that for her. I want her to know to ask the questions and to feel that she can participate. It’s not that she can’t ask for advice and assistance... and that leads to another issue...

I think what’s important, too, is knowing how to ask for advice from others, and using others that you respect as sounding boards. You do learn a lot, and I think that none of us can do it alone. There are certain people, men and women, who are friends, who are people you sort of latch onto as mentors. I think that they’re valuable people. I think of people for me that have been unbelievably supportive and helpful.

INT: But you have to be comfortable enough with yourself to be able to say, “I would like this help from you.”

CAROL: “I need your opinion.” Right. That’s what I’m saying. You really have to know that that’s also part of it. It’s standing up for yourself to begin with and clarifying your role within a relationship. Then the next is also feeling comfortable enough to say, “What do you think?” or “I need your help with something.” None of us live in a vacuum.

INT: What would you count among your greatest successes?

CAROL: I think being a really decent-more than decent mother, and also, I think, a special wife. I think that my role in both of those probably gives me the greatest pleasure. I certainly have enjoyed what I’ve done professionally, and I think all of that has some bearing on what I do in the community. I am a very nurturing person, so now that I’m not married at the moment-I won’t say that I’ll never be married, it would be very nice if that would happen again—but my children are grown and the nurturing that they require is different. I guess all of
my involvements are in some part my attempt to be nurturing of others. It really is a caring for what is going on around me. I am proud of that as well, that I'm not interested in just going shopping. It will not bring me satisfaction. I need to balance my life perhaps a little bit better in terms of permitting myself to be a little irresponsible at times, and not only responsible. I have really loved...and maybe in a nutshell it is the nurturing of both my family and friends. I feel very privileged in terms of the people that I know. I know I'm going to miss those in Philadelphia, but I maintained relationships with those that I left in New York. I am confident that there will still be continued relations with the people here too. The world expands, it does not contract.

INT: You just need a bigger address book.

CAROL: Right. And E-mail. I have E-mail, so that part is really nice.

INT: In terms of what's happening to you next, I know that you'll be moving to New York City. So just tell me a little bit about that, your plans.

CAROL: Well, I think I have finally reached a point at which I am comfortable with moving to New York. When Isaac died, I was not comfortable about making any major changes in my life. I needed to stay here in Philadelphia and adjust to my new life as a single woman with grown children. The children needed for me to stay here too. I think they needed the stability of this, although Philip was already out of the house. Rachel finished college and came and lived back here at home for a year. She got a job so quickly that she didn't have time to find an apartment and she said, "Mom, this is going to be the one opportunity that we will have to live together again." I think she needed it too, because she had been away for much of Isaac's illness, so there needed to be this grounding, which certainly did occur here. And then she went off to graduate school. So for the two-year period that she was here, we were here together. When she left for graduate school, I realized that this house was just too big. It's a wonderful house but it wasn't being used in the way I felt it needed to be used. I loved raising the family here. My needs have changed and I was ready to do something different. So when I was ready two years ago, I bought a one-bedroom apartment in New York to test it out and I ended up really loving it. When I decided that I was ready to sell this house, the choice was Center City or Manhattan.

INT: What a tough choice!?!?

CAROL: In Manhattan, it will be totally different. Here I am known. I can go to a concert—I went to the Philharmonic the other day. I went with my friend Miriam Spector and I sort of laughed. I said, "Well, I don't know anyone here." She laughed because by the end of the
evening, there were at least two couples that I had met before. So she said, “You know what? I’m really not worried about you going off to New York. I think you really will be fine.” “It’s a little bit of an adventure. I’m really looking forward to seeing how it will evolve. I don’t know...Similar to when I went to Israel and said I wanted to do something meaningful and I didn’t know exactly how that was going to unfold. I don’t know exactly what will happen in New York. I know that I’ll be involved with Jewish Funder’s Network, the Joint Distribution Committee, and certainly doing something with New York’s Federation. And I do continue with my mental health activities. All of that will continue.

And I’m hoping just to have some fun. That’s the other part. I really would like to do some more in the field of art. It’s exciting, and I am definitely looking forward to it with a certain amount of nostalgia. I sat here on this sofa yesterday, realizing I love this room and it was my last Sunday to do that, just looking around at the trees here. I really have loved this space and I hope that the next family that comes in will love it equally. (End of tape 2, side 2)

INT: Interview with Carol Auerbach. We were just talking about her move to New York. I wanted to be sure to mention something important that took place here in Philadelphia, that Carol was awarded the Louise Waterman Wise Award of the Pennsylvania Region of the American Jewish Congress, and the award was for leadership, activism and philanthropy. I just wanted you to tell me a little bit about what that experience was like.

CAROL: It was phenomenal. It was really overwhelming and very emotional for me. As I had said to the group—it was last Thursday—and I had been waking up almost every night thinking about what was I going to say. Again, for someone who is not accustomed to being in that kind of limelight, who’s accustomed to giving a luncheon for someone or honoring someone else, and of never having been honored on my own (Isaac and I had been honored together), it was very special. I’m usually very laid back and very easygoing. I was really nervous that morning. There were about 120 people representing almost every organization that I am involved in. People came from New York, from Baltimore, from Connecticut, from Washington, D.C.—from all walks of my life. It was very exciting, and I was thrilled that the speaker was Jeff Solomon, who had been the exec, or the chief operating officer, of the New York Federation until he left recently and is now the executive director of the Charles and Andrea Bronfman Foundation. He sits on the board with me at Jewish Funder’s Network, and he and I have had conversations about the need for independent philanthropy in the organized Jewish community, and the issue of the next generation. So I was thrilled that he agreed to speak, and as Mimi said, “You know, you’re always wanting to teach. You’re always wanting to get your point across.”

The feedback has been terrific with people saying this was the best luncheon, because the speaker and the honoree sort of dovetailed together. Jeff spoke about the next generation very articulately and very beautifully. People really listened. It was great. And we did have people there from the non-Jewish community. It was very meaningful for me. As a Jewish woman, I realize how important it is to be a role model—as uncomfortable as I may have felt
presenting myself as one. But I think we need more role models. Maybe I’m a role model for my daughter and my son—and I’m happy on a more private level to be that for them.”

However, if I can do that on a more public level, then it’s something I’d like to be more comfortable with and I am beginning to feel that way. I think it was on that level that I really felt good about some of the statements that I made in terms of women standing up and being counted and permitting themselves to go through that journey. Throughout the day and the next day, people kept coming over and talking about how meaningful it had been for them to hear what I had said about women taking responsibility for their own lives, becoming knowledgeable about their financial well-being and not just assuming that somebody else was going to take care of that. I did talk about my Jewishness and getting involved in Jewish philanthropy, but the issue for me is what have I learned as a woman, and of working out some of these issues personally. Although it’s not always comfortable, we have to strive towards it.

It was a fabulous luncheon. The only thing I missed, and that made me really sad, is that my father couldn’t come because in the midst of all this packing, for him just to come for a day or two is too difficult, and I really didn’t have the time to give him. He would have loved it. And then my children were not able to come. Rachel is in Australia and my son is in the midst of his training program at D.L.J. Rachel e-mailed and she called, and Philip called in the morning and called in the evening.

INT: Did they tape-record [the event]?

CAROL: No. You know, we really didn’t do that, but they’ll get some of the written comments. I knew that they had to be where they had to be. But I think that they, as much as I, would have loved to have been there, too.

INT: It was really a fitting closure to this part of your life.

CAROL: Right. And I think that when they asked me to be the honoree, they really didn’t even know I was moving, so it was only when someone mentioned to Ruth Laibson and she said, “And do you know, she is moving,” that it really all came together. So yes, this has been a wonderful chapter in my life. Philadelphia has been very important in helping me to grow. And I do think that on some level, I have also made an impact here. Exactly how that will translate, I’m not sure. I can think of when there was a young woman who came into our cabinet meeting and she was very quiet for the meeting, and I went over to her and I said, “I noticed that you’re very quiet.” And she said, “You know, I’m concerned I don’t have anything to say.” And I said, “Yes, you do. I just want you to know there is nothing that you can say or ask that will not be appropriate.” I said, “You weren’t given the position that you
were given because you have nothing to say, you have nothing to offer.” So the next meeting, she started talking. So I think that’s the other thing that women have to do, to be mentors to other women. I think that we have to do it to men too. But for women in particular.

INT: So you had to give her permission to give herself permission.

CAROL: Right. But it’s all part of a process. Philadelphia has been wonderful and I will miss it, and I thank you for giving me this opportunity also.

INT: Well, my last question is: Is there anything else you would like us to include in this oral history that we have not as yet addressed?

CAROL: I think the fact that you’re doing this oral history to begin with, and are earmarking and really identifying women, says a great deal also about where we are in this community and also in the world. I would say just continue.

INT: I want to thank you very much for having been so forthcoming with both your personal and philanthropic history and just for sharing all of this with me. It was my pleasure to get to know you in this way.

CAROL: Thank you. (End of interview)