

Narrator: Rita Brogan
Interviewer: Mildred Andrews
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Transcriber: Teresa Bergen

[BEGIN INTERVIEW]

Andrews: This interview is being conducted with Rita Brogan, on behalf of the Washington Women's History Consortium for the 1977 Ellensburg/Houston International Women's Year Conference's Oral History Project. The interview is taking place on March seventh at Rita's office in downtown Seattle, where she is the owner and CEO of PRR, Inc. The interviewer is Mildred Andrews. [Rita's name is Rita Fujiki Elway in IWY conference records and related publicity. At a later date, she changed back to her maiden name.]

Andrews: Welcome, Rita.

Brogan: Thank you.

Andrews: As a beginning, would you tell me briefly about your growing up years -- your family, your community, your school? In a nutshell, how you developed your ideas about your role as a woman at home and in society?

Brogan: Well, I am a half Japanese, half Irish. I was born in Tokyo, Japan, but came to this country very young, and lived in many parts of the country and the world as I was growing up. Went to four different elementary schools, three different junior highs, three different high schools. And my father was in the service and was away much of the time that I was growing up. And so I developed a real strong sense of identity with the Asian part of my family more than the Irish part of my family. Besides, I look very Asian.

In terms of my evolution as an activist, I would say that I, like many other people in the late '60s, was very concerned about the Vietnam War. That turned into a concern about Third World people and civil rights issues. So I was very active when I came to Seattle in the International District, working around a variety of social justice causes, and working for revitalization of the International District, and working for ethnic studies and all of those kinds of programs.

So it was from that orientation that I was then asked by Governor Dan Evans to become a member of the Washington State Women's Council. I was very young. I was probably twenty-three when I was appointed to the state women's council. And within a couple of years, I became chair of the Washington State Women's Council, and then was appointed by President Carter to the International Women's Year Commission. So while I was chair of the Washington State Women's Council, I was western Washington vice-chair for the organizing committee for the Washington State Conference for Women. And then was appointed by Carter to the national commission.

Andrews: Was that after the conference at Ellensburg?

Brogan: It was before the conference in Ellensburg, but it was while I was involved in helping organize for the conference in Ellensburg. And as part of that, Dolores Sibonga was also on the Washington State organizing committee. And so she and I got together and started up the AsianPacific Women's Caucus as part of the preparation for the Washington State Conference for Women, and trying to get a sense of the range of issues that were of concern to AsianPacific women.

Andrews: Well that leads me into my next question. I'd like to know more about the area's AsianPacific community, particularly about women. Can you tell me what some of the issues were?

Brogan: There were a number of issues that were of concern to our group. One of them was immigrant rights. And for immigrant women in particular, there was a very high level of concern about working conditions, because that was before everything came to be manufactured offshore. There were a lot of sweatshops in West Coast major cities, including Seattle, resulting in a very high incidence of black lung disease and other kinds of occupational illnesses. We were also concerned about the rights of wives of U.S. servicemen, many of whom were experiencing very high levels of physical abuse and emotional abuse. And there was also concern about the usual issues, racism, and sexism. - But much of our focus was more on concerns around social justice issues, concerns for immigrants, and concerns for low income and elderly people.

So it was a little different orientation than, I would say, some of the groups that were more dominated by Caucasian women, which focussed much more on male/female relationships and identity issues and all of that. Our focus was much more economic and health issues.

Andrews: You've covered quite a bit already, but what were your major affiliations and networks in the '60s and '70s?

Brogan: Well, let's see. In the late '60s, my affiliations were more with the anti-war movement. And then in the '70s, I moved here, and I became more involved in the Asian community here. I think it was January 2, 1971, or something like that. I was active on campus around student issues, was one of the EOP students, Equal Opportunities Program. I was the secretary for communications for, and a founding member, of the Asian Pacific Graduate and Professional Students Association on campus. I was also active against the King Dome that was going up at the time.

Andrews: Why was that?

Brogan: That was in south downtown Seattle. King County wanted to build a stadium where the current stadium is now. There was a very strong concern in the API [Asian-Pacific Islander] community that it would cause major impacts on the International District. The International District was a somewhat different place at the time (even though it's still a historic district, and the buildings are still the same). But it was before

the big influx of Southeast Asian refugees and immigration. It was a place that was the historic focus of the AsianPacific community, but it was a dying neighborhood, because after Japanese-American internment, a lot of people didn't move back to the International District. There were a lot of vacant buildings and a lot of old men who lived there. I think the average age was 62 or 65 at that time in the International District -- almost all male, primarily because of laws that were passed that limited immigration, and also limited the ability of the men who had immigrated to work in American businesses to marry. So there were just a lot of old single men. During the period of anti-miscegenation laws, they could only marry somebody who wasn't white.

Andrews: Did you have family in the International District?

Brogan: Oh, no. No. My family lived in Hawaii. That's where I graduated from high school.

Andrews: Your education, were you in communications?

Brogan: Yes, I got my BA in editorial journalism, and then my MA in communication theory and methodology at the University of Washington.

Andrews: I'd like to hear more about how you became involved in the International District. You mentioned the old men there.

Brogan: I became involved in the International District at first when I was a student. I was really involved in AsianAmerican studies, involved in doing research around ethnic identity issues. And I was doing volunteer work on Beacon Hill at the Asian drop-in center. Because of that, became very involved in a lot of Asian community activist issues. One of the issues was to oppose the stadium, and to revitalize the community, so that's how I became involved, as a volunteer.

Andrews: And I assume that this is an automatic lead-in to the women's caucus?

Brogan: Yes. Well I think that what happened, frankly, was that the Washington State Women's Council was not that diverse, and they wanted an Asian. I think I was the only Asian on the women's council. And I knew people who knew the governor, and I'm certain that that's why I was asked to become part of the women's council, just as I was asked by President Carter to join the International Women's Year Commission a couple years later. I replaced another Asian person who had resigned, March Fong Eu, who was Secretary of State of California. I replaced her. So, you know, it was tokenism. Which didn't mean that I wasn't very supportive of women's issues, and women's rights, but I'm quite certain that that's why I was asked to participate in those groups.

Andrews: You certainly played a leadership role.

Brogan: Yeah. But I was always the only Asian. [laughs]

Andrews: The organizations that you've already talked about, was that primarily your involvement at the time of the Ellensburg conference?

Brogan: I was involved in lots of other things. Let's see, in the Asian community, Mayumi and I were the first co-editors of *The International Examiner*.

Andrews: Mayumi Tsutakawa.

Brogan: Yes. We were the first co-editors of *The International Examiner*.

Andrews: Was it new at that point?

Brogan: Yes. We were the first co-editors. It was a brand new newspaper at the time. Let's see, what else was I involved with? Asian Counseling and Referral Service. I was on the board and served as president. What else did I do back then? I co-chaired the first two-year capital levy campaign for the Seattle School District. I was a maniac. I was involved with all kinds of things. I have a long list. I can't remember everything that's on the list, but I can give it to you.

Andrews: Thank you. That would be great for our project's archives. How did you view women's role in the home and in society at the time of the conference, and did you see needs for change?

Brogan: Well, yeah. [laughs] When I chaired the state women's council, we did the first comparable worth study in the country. So that really pretty clearly documented that women were not getting equal pay for equal work. We were an ERA state, and so we worked very hard for the Equal Rights Amendment. Again, because of the disparities between men and women in terms of role in the home, I guess. It's really hard to say, because I've never thought of women needing to have a different role in the home than men. It seems to me that they should be involved in making a home. But I know what the traditional role of women has been, in the '50s, in the '60s, maybe even more so now, because I really wonder if there even is a feminist movement any more. But my motivation for becoming engaged was not because I was concerned about the role of women in the home. It was more around economic and social issues.

Andrews: Could you talk some about the women's council, and how it came about? What some of the achievements were prior to the conference?

Brogan: Well, as I mentioned, one of our biggest achievements was this comparable worth study, which was the first in the country. We did a lot of things that were really considered pretty cutting edge at the time. We monitored legislation. We did a lot of consciousness raising. I was on radio shows, call-in shows. We were very active in trying to systematically identify where there were inequities in state law. I also tried to raise people's understanding of how certain regulatory issues, certain licensing issues, were discriminatory against Asian women, how there were certain language barriers to the tests that would discriminate against immigrant women. So those were some of the kinds

of things we worked on. It was a very long time ago. I haven't thought about this in a very long time. One of the other things that we were really trying to do was reach out to all women. We were trying really hard to be inclusive. We had conservative Republican women on the women's council, as well as very progressive women. As we were trying to organize for the state women's conference, we again tried to reach out very aggressively to church women and so on, and they really didn't want to have too much to do with us until, of course, they all showed up in Ellensburg. And we were really surprised by what we saw.

Andrews: There were quite a few milestones in terms of legislation prior to the Ellensburg conference.

Brogan: Yes. Yes.

Andrews: The change in credit laws, ERA. Abortion rights.

Brogan: Yes.

Andrews: What role did the women's council play in it?

Brogan: We were involved in all of it. I mean, we did a lot of lobbying and advocacy with the legislature, state legislature. And we did a lot of outreach in public education around those issues. It was a heady time.

Andrews: Did you encounter strong opposition?

Brogan: Yes. All along the way. When we were organizing for the state women's conference, one of the women who had a really interesting story, her husband was a bigamist. She was a single mom as a result, and lived up in Edmonds or Everett or something. She had a cross burned on her lawn while we were doing the organizing for the state women's conference. And whenever we went on these talk radio shows, there would always be people who were just extremely hostile.

Andrews: So this cross burning— Is that why there are occasional references to Ku Klux Klan?

Brogan: Yeah, that's right.

Andrews: Could you say a little bit more about the woman from Everett?

Brogan: I'm thinking she was from Everett. Oh, it was Christine Pratt Marsten.

Andrews: Oh, she was a welfare mother.

Brogan: Yes. And her husband, her ex-husband, was a bigamist.

Andrews: So why was there a cross burning on her lawn?

Brogan: Well, I imagine that people, whoever it was did not approve of her participation. I wonder whatever happened to her. You'd have to ask her about it.

Andrews: I think she's still around. I'm hoping that I can talk with more people, who were connected with the IWY conferences, and get more of their stories on the record. So, were there any specific events that spurred your thinking about changing roles of women, other than what you told me?

Brogan: No. That's enough.

Andrews: And did you become involved in the Ellensburg conference primarily because of your association with the women's council?

Brogan: Yes.

Andrews: So what was your role in helping plan for Ellensburg?

Brogan: I was western Washington vice chair. A lot of my effort was in doing outreach to Asian Pacific women, to get their involvement in the conference. But I was also involved in a lot of the planning meetings for the conference. But it was a long time ago.

Andrews: Yes, I know. You have a good memory. How many women were in the Asian Pacific Caucus?

Brogan: Well, it was pretty loosely organized, but I'd say we had about fifty or sixty women who participated regularly. We met to basically develop a statement of our interests, and that was our primary focus at the time. But we also took positions on various things. It became more formalized over the years, but in the beginning, it was mostly meeting in the ID [International District], or meetings in my house. Trying to get ready, trying to encourage women to come to the conference, and educating people about issues of concern to us.

Andrews: Was this something new, for the Pan-Asian group to come together this way?

Brogan: No, but it was new for a group of Pan-Asian women to come together this way.

Andrews: I think we'll move on to Ellensburg itself. I'd like to have you tell a little bit about the logistics of getting there, staying there, what the atmosphere was like, what you encountered.

Brogan: Well, I carpooled over with some friends. It was the strangest thing when we drove up, because there were so many Utah license plates on cars, and all these women with these bands around their arms. And they all looked like they were going to church. They had frocks on. And we thought this is very, very strange. And then we found out, of

course, that conservative Christians, primarily Mormons, had mobilized to try to take over our conference by importing lots of women from outside of the state, and also inside the state, to come to the conference.

Andrews: Did you see out of state license plates?

Brogan: Yeah, Utah license plates. Lots of Utah license plates. And trailers, too, because they were so organized. They had these men who were trainers, and they would gather in trailers to get their marching orders. I got reports back from some women who decided to disguise themselves as conservative Christians, to go into the training sessions. And they were training them on how to disrupt meetings, how to lock arms so that other people couldn't get into the room, how to make noise to drown other people out. They were very anti-democratic.

Andrews: How did the women disguise themselves to go into these meetings?

Brogan: I don't know. I think they just looked more mainstream than, because some people were, you know, over the top, and others were pretty moderate looking. So, again, my focus was primarily with Asian Pacific women and other minority women. Asian Pacific women got together. Minority women got together. And there were a couple of, I believe they were, Mormon women, who came to our caucus meeting. We were not very happy about that initially, but there weren't that many, because I don't think they (the Christian organizers) really cared about us that much. There were just like one or two of these women. It turned out that they had adopted Asian children, and so they came because they really cared about their children. So we involved them in our discussions.

We decided to load all of the other conference issues into the minority women's resolution. We were proposing a substitute resolution, because the national conference gave us a draft resolution for minority women that didn't have anything to do with what we were interested in. So we came up with a substitute resolution for minority women. But we put gay rights, and we put the ERA, and we put everything in there.

The Christian organizers had almost enough conservative women to dominate the conference. There was a slate of people being nominated to be representatives at the national conference. I know I was in that list. It probably was members of the organizing committee, I don't remember. But as it turned out, there were very close votes on everything. We ended up having, I don't remember how many slots there were, like thirty-two slots, something, that were for the delegation for Washington. I don't remember. But the bottom two ended up being conservative women that were voted in by the conservative participants.

Andrews: The only conservative delegate that's listed there is Kay.

Brogan: Kay Regan, yeah, yeah.

Andrews: All of the alternates were conservative.

Brogan: Right. Right. I forget how that voting thing worked out. And a lot of the resolutions got overturned. But as it turned out, I mean, it was so close. And the Mormon women who came to the Minority Women's Caucus meeting ended up coming over and siding with the progressive women. So it was a very emotional thing, and these women ended up, I think, getting a lot of grief about it, ultimately.

Andrews: Would you talk a little bit more about how the Minority Women's Caucus came together? Obviously it wasn't just Asian Pacific.

Brogan: No, it wasn't. Well, Lilly Aguilar was doing a lot of outreach to Hispanic women, and Thelma Jackson and Dorothy [Hollingsworth] were doing a lot of outreach [to black women]. We all knew each other really well over the years, and we worked with each other to pull everybody together.

Andrews: Had you worked together before the IWY conference?

Brogan: It's a small world, small town. We all hung together quite a bit before that.

Andrews: Then you talked about drawing in others into the minority caucus. Lesbian women, and—

Brogan: No, we didn't make a specific effort to draw them in. We just decided to include their issues in our resolution, because we knew that everything was being threatened, all the other resolutions. Because the resolutions, as you remember, were organized around different issue areas. There was one for welfare, and one for equal employment opportunity, and one for this and that. I don't remember how many. There were quite a few. So we decided to just load up the issues that we knew were going to be controversial with the conservatives, and put them into the minority women's resolution.

Andrews: What were some of those?

Brogan: Gay rights. ERA. Those were the two that I remember. Abortion rights, of course. We thought we were being pretty clever. So anyway, it all ended up being adopted, even though it ended up being part of the minority women's substitute resolution.

Andrews: Then, of course, you were one of the delegates that went on to Houston.

Brogan: Yeah. Except I ended up being on the national commission at that time. So I was sort of going back and forth between the national commission stuff and the Washington delegation. I don't remember if somebody ended up replacing me, like they ended up having to have a conservative woman on to replace me, or if I ended up having dual membership, I don't remember exactly. But all of a sudden, I was drawn into this whole different scene because I was the token non-celebrity, as well as being the token Asian, on the national commission.

Andrews: What did the national commission actually do?

Brogan: Well, it was chaired by Bella Abzug, and the national commission was responsible for organizing the conference in Houston, as well as for pulling together the platform of issues that was then discussed at each of the state conferences.

Andrews: How long did you serve?

Brogan: I don't know. I think until after the Houston conference.

Andrews: What I was leading into was what did the national commission do after the Houston conference?

Brogan: A lot of documentation. There were reports, and there was a book called *What Women Want*, which was biographies. So I was in that book, one of the chapters in that book. There was advocacy for implementation. But I resigned shortly after the Houston conference, because it was just taking up too much of my time.

Andrews: Logistics would have been difficult.

Brogan: Yeah. It was an expensive proposition. They'd ask me to these receptions at the White House with the first lady, but I was supposed to pay my own way. I said, "Well, sorry." [laughs] It would be nice. I guess it's easier if you're on the East Coast. It was a very East Coast-centric organization, and Bella Abzug was really a pain. Oh, she was really arrogant and single-minded, and intolerant of anybody who disagreed with her. So there were things that we ended up not agreeing on, like her desire to forming a cabinet-level women's department. And she was adamant about doing that, because I think she wanted to be appointed to head it. I was just this little kid, you know. I was twenty-five.

Andrews: Here's a picture of you. ["Houston: The International Women's Year National Conference." *Pandora: A Washington Women's News Journal*, December 1977-January 1978, photo on page 11].

Brogan: Yeah. Look how young I was. Look how skinny I was. [laughs] I think she really thought how dare I disagree with her, you know. I mean, I was supposed to be a token. I wasn't supposed to speak up. [laughs] So, anyway, I'd had it with them. I'd done my job. But, you know, I'd get calls every once in a while because Gloria Steinem was still very much involved in the documentation. So she'd call me to get corroboration about things. After that, I moved on to the next phase of my life, which was working for the Seattle City Council, and getting my doctorate in higher administration, which I never finished. So between those two things, it was enough. And I was kind of burnt out.

Andrews: So it was a major sacrifice.

Brogan: It was. It was. I mean, those conferences alone, you know. I don't even remember sleeping in Ellensburg. I don't remember even being in a bedroom in

Ellensburg. But I remember in Houston, there weren't enough rooms for everybody. I had a room, because I was a commissioner. I had about six to eight women sleeping on the floor in my hotel room, because they didn't have anyplace else to stay. [laughs] One story about Houston that, again, there was an interest among the minority women in putting together a substitute resolution. So Gloria and I reached out to—

Andrews: Gloria Steinem?

Brogan: Yes. —all the various caucuses to craft a statement. It was amazing, because we were all working hard to figure out what should be in, what should be out. Gloria was sitting at a typewriter. It was pre-computers. We were typing this thing out. We were editing. There were four microphones on the floor. So we had to do this sort of place holding, to make sure that we were at the microphones at the right time. And we were going to have this delivered in four parts, by a black woman, by an Asian woman, by a Hispanic woman, by a Native American woman.

There's a congresswoman from California who was going to start it off, a black woman, but Coretta Scott King was standing there, asking how she could help. So I said, "Would you mind if Coretta Scott King took your role instead?" And I felt really bad, because this was a great opportunity for this congresswoman. But she ceded the microphone to Coretta Scott King, and that was a very powerful moment in the conference. You know, she had that wonderful voice, "Madame Chairman," and everybody went crazy. That was wonderful. So, that was good, because we all got to advance issues. The commission never would have been able to, had even thought of, the issues that were of concern to minority women as they were organized back then, because they didn't have a clue. So we were able to advance issues of concern for each of the groups.

Andrews: Prior to the conference, were there efforts to organize nationwide?

Brogan: Yes. I was working with a woman in New York, very aggressive Chinese woman, but I can't remember her name now, to create a national Asian Pacific Women's Caucus. We had a reception once we got to Houston, and each of the caucuses did the same thing. Each caucus had its own issues.

Andrews: And what do you feel was accomplished by Ellensburg and Houston?

Brogan: I thought a lot more would have been accomplished. I was really disappointed. When I came back, I was getting interviewed a lot. A lot of the more conservative stations were saying, "So, this thing happened. Big deal. It's really not going to affect women on the street." That was the angle that they took. And I think it ended up being true, that there wasn't the will to move forward. I don't think the commission itself was able to sustain any sort of momentum to implement systematically. I think many of the things that we had on the list were implemented, but they were never implemented in any organized, united way. They were implemented piecemeal, you know, just like a lot of change is implemented.

And I think that the death of the Equal Rights Amendment really took the wind out of the sails of a lot of folks in the women's movement. I don't know if that's true. That's just my observation.

Andrews: The national Equal Rights Amendment? Not our state—

Brogan: Right. Right. That's what I'm talking about, nationally. I'm talking about the national feminist movement, which still exists, but it's much narrower than it was at that time. The conference for women really reached out and engaged women of all persuasions, political persuasions, every other persuasion. But it sort of went back to being driven by NOW and a few other groups that were focused primarily on women's issues. And the rest of us, who had other things going on, went back to doing whatever we did beforehand.

Andrews: How do you think the national scene compares to Washington State?

Brogan: On women's rights?

Andrews: On women's rights.

Brogan: Well, I think we're more progressive than some places, and less progressive than other places. [laughs] I don't know what else to say.

Andrews: This brings me to something else. Of course there was a conservative backlash to Ellensburg, the demise of the women's council.

Brogan: Yeah. Yeah. That was really interesting, because when Dixy Lee Ray was governor, that's when the council was disbanded. It became a commission, I think, and then it became disbanded by our first woman governor.

Andrews: There was actually a referendum, Referendum 40.

Brogan: Oh, yeah. I think that the ERA and our movement may have been the impetus for, you know, sort of radical religious conservatism and its growth in this country. People were so threatened by the idea of equal rights. But, I still can't quite understand why it was so threatening. And the only thing I can think of is that we were convenient, and there was an interest by conservatives in organizing this disaffected, angry group of people. And we were a good symbol for all the change that they didn't like happening. And I think there are a lot of people who really didn't care that much one way or another about God, who took advantage of that.

Andrews: And what about Governor Dixy Lee Ray?

Brogan: Well—

Andrews: Were you still on the women's council at that time?

Brogan: I resigned. I resigned before it was disbanded. I resigned once she became governor because I did not approve of her. [laughs] I didn't agree with her on a whole bunch of stuff. So I didn't really want to be advisory to her.

And again, I think a lot of the people in the women's movement were not necessarily supportive of each other. I remember feeling, and saying to somebody back then, that they eat their leaders. If you were in a leadership position, there was always somebody who knew better than you what you should be doing, or what you should be saying. And I was so young, and probably more thin-skinned back then than I am now. Or maybe I'm still as thin-skinned, I don't know. But I felt that there were other ways to spend my time that would be more supportive, and more affirming, and more productive. So I ended up turning my attention back to the Asian community, and to having a child, and being a mom, being involved in environmental issues.

Andrews: Were there significant advancements in the Asian community?

Brogan: Not that were any different than the advancements that were occurring elsewhere. We didn't have the same kinds of polarizations. There weren't men in the Asian community who were mad at us for being feminists. That was never the issue! [laughs] That never came up.

Andrews: Did Asian women generally agree on the issues?

Brogan: Yeah, we agreed on issues. I mean, we were basically all pretty much in agreement that every human being should have equal rights, you know? And our issues were less ideological and more economic. And we never set ourselves up as saying, "Oh, Asian men are screwed up," or "Asian men oppress us." That was never part of our thinking. And I think as a result, everybody was pretty supportive of everybody else.

Andrews: In your opinion, what were some of the positive and negative outcomes of the conferences? Anything that you haven't already mentioned.

Brogan: A positive thing for me was that I learned an awful lot. It was like going to leadership boot camp. And if I had only had the wisdom and maturity then that I have now, I feel like I could have done more. But I also feel that I was thrust into this leadership position at a point in my life when hardly anybody would be ready. I mean, who do you know that was twenty-five? So, had I known then what I know now, I would have worked harder on the maintenance of the coalition, on implementation, that sort of thing. But you know, when you're twenty-five, you don't think about stuff like that.

Andrews: The role models weren't really there.

Brogan: No. I never managed anything before. I was twenty-five! So I think a lot of the political insight that I have now, I got as a result of that effort. And a lot of the leadership skills that I got are the direct result of the experiences that I had, and the people who I had a chance to work with. I learned a lot.

Andrews: Were there any negatives that you haven't mentioned?

Brogan: No, not that I haven't mentioned. [laughs]

Andrews: Were there other follow-up activities that you participated in, in the short or the long term?

Brogan: I don't know if they're follow-up or not. I mean, I continued to be very active in the community. After the conference, I continued to be an advocate for human rights and for women's rights, and for the rights of people of color. I probably had a little bit more gravitas in doing so, because of the roles that I had played before. And I continue, to this day, being very involved in all those areas.

Andrews: In terms of political activism, did you ever run for office?

Brogan: No. But I've been active in the Municipal League. I was president of the Municipal League. People have asked me about running for office, and, you know, maybe someday. I don't know. I'm not hankering to do it.

Andrews: From your perspective, how have women's lives changed since the late '70s, the time of the conferences? How have they stayed the same?

Brogan: I've been thinking about this. It seems to me that what was sort of an affirmative, ideological commitment that you had to make to feminism back then, you don't have to do anymore. And I see young women who are so fearless, and who are just willing to go anyplace by themselves, or do anything by themselves. And I think, I could never have done that back then. I could never have done that. But I also see young women who dress like hookers, and seem to be so focused on the most superficial aspects of being a woman in a far more extreme way than we ever would have, back then. That doesn't seem very healthy, to me.

So I think society is sort of devolving, our sense of community is devolving, and sense of responsibility that people have for each other is diminishing. We're becoming more stratified. And as a result, I think there's growing self-centeredness, and also a diminishing sense of connectedness to and responsibility for other people. I don't think that's healthy for people. I think people need that sense of connectedness to feel that they have worth beyond what you look like. So that's armchair sociologist. That's what I think.

Andrews: If there were specific issues that concerned you during the Ellensburg conference— let me rephrase that. There certainly were specific issues that concerned you. How have these been resolved? Or are they still being debated?

Brogan: Well, I think the issue of working conditions for immigrant women is diminished now because of all the gentrification in the areas that once had the sweatshops. The sweatshops aren't there; they're all in India or China now, instead of

here. But that wasn't because of what we did. [laughs] I think that there continue to be issues of inequity for wives of servicemen, but since our efforts, there have been a number of support groups that formed. There are much better, more culturally appropriate mental health services than there were back then. It's more accepted that there should be culturally appropriate services.

I'm so pleased that there are more and more and more young Asian Pacific men and women who are comfortable admitting to the fact that they are gay or lesbian than there were back then. That never would have happened back then. Who knows if what we did caused any of that. It seems like there are, you know, all these things happen and then there's a tipping point, so can't take credit for anything.

Andrews: I think I've asked most of my questions.

Brogan: Okay.

Andrews: Is there anything else that you would like to add, in summary?

Brogan: I'd love to see some of those folks who we worked with sometime. That would be great. You know, I thought about them over the years. Dee [Boersma], in particular.

Andrews: We're hoping to orchestrate something that--

Brogan: That would be cool. Have you talked to Lilly Aguilar?

Andrews: I don't know how to get in touch with her.

Brogan: I don't, either. She might have gone back to Yakima.

Brogan: Who have you spoken with?

Andrews: Oh, I have a list here. I'm supposed to interview half conservatives and half liberals.

Brogan: [laughs] Oh, interesting. Well, it's so funny, because the folks we thought of as being so conservative back then now seem very moderate. [both laugh] So, are we done? Should I take my microphone off?

Andrews: Thank you so very much. It's been a pleasure talking with you.

Brogan: You're welcome! You're welcome.

[End Interview.]

Following the interview, Andrews asked Brogan for information about PRR, the company that she purchased in 1989, when it had only three employees. Brogan provided the following written paragraph:

“Today, Rita Brogan leads PRR, Inc., a 47-person, full service, mission-driven public affairs and communications agency dedicated to civic growth and the environment, with offices in Seattle and Washington DC. PRR offers strategy, marketing, research and constituency building for clients nationwide, and has received numerous local and national awards in marketing and public relations. PRR has been listed in five out of six years by the *Puget Sound Business Journal* as one of the 100 fastest growing privately held businesses in Washington State and by *Media Inc.* from 2001 to 2007 as one of the 100 largest public relations firms in the United States.”