

Narrator: Dorothy Hollingsworth
Interviewer: Mildred Andrews
Date: January 31, 2007
Place: Seattle, Washington
Transcribed by: Teresa Bergen

Andrews: The following interview is being conducted with Dorothy Hollingsworth, 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 January 31, 2007, in downtown Seattle, and the interviewer is Mildred Andrews.

As a beginning, Dorothy, would you tell me briefly about your growing up years? Something about your family, your community, your school, and how they helped shape your ideas about your role in the home, in society.

Hollingsworth: Well, Mildred, I grew up in South Carolina. Really was born in South Carolina. And at an early age, my family, my mother, moved to North Carolina. And then my father had died, so I was without a father. And the family members helped out. So we had relatives who lived in Washington, DC. So after living in South Carolina, we went to North Carolina for a brief period. And then went to Washington, DC, where I started school. And stayed there for a few months, actually. And then moved to North Carolina with another uncle who, actually it was my mother's brother. So I lived there, and went to school. Finished high school.

When I was fourteen, my mother married again, a widower who had no children. My mother and stepfather, Mr. John, set up our home and we became more stabilized. My stepfather appeared happy with his ready-made family of three children. He had little education, but believed that education was important to gain success. He worked in the tobacco factory along with my mother. He was very supportive of us, encouraged us, and inspired us to achieve. I was the oldest child and the first to go to college. My sister died at age fifteen of pneumonia. My brother was called to go to World War II, as a soldier. He was injured in service, and returned ill, and later died.

When I was in the eighth grade, there was a young woman who came to talk to the class about roles and what you want to do, and also your career. And it was a woman who began to talk about helping people. And I became interested in wanting to be a social worker in the eighth grade. So I finished high school. But knowing that you go to high school, then there's college, and after college there's a degree, another degree you have to have. So I never allowed barriers to stop me. I've been one who's always looked at how do you resolve the problems, and what can you get out of them, and how can you best deal with them. So, even after high school, I didn't know how I was going to college, but I always knew that I wanted to go.

So there was a woman who came, from the same church that I belonged to, Mrs. Ida Perry. So she came to my home after I graduated. She came to visit one afternoon. And oh, it was pouring down rain. She was actually one of the missionaries at the CME church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. At that time, it was the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. It has since changed to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

She belonged to the missionary society at church, and they were having a regional meeting at church. And they had mentioned scholarships.

Hollingsworth: And I was active in church. We didn't have a telephone. So she came through the rain and said, "You know, Dorothy, the missionary group is going to give a scholarship to Paine College, Augusta, Georgia." This was a CME school, college. And she said, "And I'd like for them to consider you."

And I said, "Well, how nice." [laughs]

So we lived next door to what we called the Bethlehem Center. That was a social service center. And so she said, "Well now, they're going to be over there this afternoon. And they're going to have a lunch, supper or something. And you could go over and talk to the woman. And maybe you could offer to help."

And I said, "Well, okay," and I did. So I talked with the woman, and I've forgotten her name. But anyway, just before school started that fall, I did get a letter saying I had been selected for the scholarship. And was this anything I needed? They would be sending me clothes and whatever. I was the first one in my family to go to college. That was certainly something. And I got ready and went on. My mother bought me a trunk so that I could have a place to put my things. And a few clothes. By this time, she was working. There were three of us, and I was the oldest. So the main employment in that area was the tobacco factory. So my mother worked in the tobacco factory to help us. And then we stayed with my uncle. And then the family helped out.

So anyway, I went off to college, to Paine College, Augusta, Georgia. And really, my friends, I had a friend, it was this woman's daughter, who was there, also. And she said, "Well, you know, you can apply for a job." But in the South, you didn't have the skills of knowing how to type, or any other skills. So the only skill I had was washing dishes or doing housework. So I applied, and got a job in the kitchen. And I worked drying dishes and helping in the kitchen for a year. And that helped to pay my board, you know. So I worked there.

And at the end of the year, the president called me in. and he said, "You've done well. And now you have a job. But you're also getting another scholarship. So I would recommend that maybe you should give your job up, and let somebody else who needs a job have that job. And then use your scholarship." Well, that was fine with me.

So I gave that job up. Because I had a scholarship for four years to help me out at college, which I took. And that went well. And I did well in school. And one day, the dean of women said to me, "Dorothy, we need someone to pick up, or someone to gather the laundry for the cleaning shop." And they were giving me so much, and all of your cleaning and your laundry. It sounded pretty good. So I worked there. I mean, I did that, until it was time for me to get out of college.

So then, during that time, apparently, I demonstrated skills of leadership. Because I became the, was elected YWCA president, and also the debate club representative. And became involved in community activities.

So, that summer, I went home for the summer. And my mother was the kind of person, she said, "Well, you worked hard. So while you're here, we're going to let you just stay at home." There really weren't any jobs to get except in the tobacco factory. And she wasn't anxious for me to work there. It was a job that would really tie you down. If

you worked there, your ambition stopped, because you weren't going anywhere else. So she didn't want that to happen.

So after the summer, I went back to school, with this scholarship help. And then I worked at the Bethlehem Center, working with the young people, and helping. So that was my job then, helping out. Then it was time to graduate, later on. So I had done well. I became a member of the debating team. And we were able to travel to Florida and to North Carolina, to A&T, other colleges. So that was certainly inspiring.

So I went on and after four years, I graduated. Got a job in Georgia at Eastman, Georgia. And worked there two years. And then I had a friend who recommended me to teach in Greenville, South Carolina.

Andrews: What did you do?

Hollingsworth: I taught third grade. And then I had a friend who was from my hometown, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, also. So she said, "You know, I just got a letter wanting me to come to South Carolina to teach. But there's another position that's open. So I'm going to tell them to ask you to come." So she did, and I was hired.

Andrews: Okay. So you finished the year in South Carolina.

Hollingsworth: Yeah. And then I spent three years there. Three years. But I didn't make any more problems for them. Some of the older teachers were upset with me, because they thought I was a young upstart, and making problems for them. They just weren't used to black people speaking out. So anyway, it was quite interesting.

So after that year, or during that time, they had a -- it was a green bill. Well, it was for the army camp there. Oh, I enjoyed going, having a good time with the soldiers. [laughs] They'd come in town. I was just kind of young, you know. Then, of course, I met this young man who later became my husband. So after three years there, he was from Seattle, and his family, his mother lived here. So I was married. That's how I got to Seattle.

Andrews: And what year did you come here?

Hollingsworth: In 1946.

Andrews: Just after the war.

Hollingsworth: Mm hmm. Right after the war. He was getting out of service. He had gone to Boston. And when he got out, then we got married. He came home, we got married, and moved here. And his mother lived here. My parents were concerned that I was moving so far away from home [North Carolina]. Well, anyway, I came here, and then, there wasn't much to do because the society, black society, in Seattle was kind of clannish, I thought. You know, who you are, and what are you doing, you know. Well, I really didn't like that, because they were probing, in the first place. But they had a hierarchy. And really, they weren't that professional, to tell you the truth. And later on,

those who came worked at Boeing. That was the height of their ambition, you know. And it really wasn't open very much.

Andrews: Was the hierarchy the old black society that was here before the war?

Hollingsworth: Yeah. You know, so I stayed at home, in '47 started raising a family. Then about '49, '48 or so, I thought my mother spent too much money to invest in me for me to be staying at home. I ought to be trying to do something. So I talked it over with my husband and all, and he agreed, that if I found something and had someone to take care of the children— I had one child at this time — well, of course, it was okay if I found a job.

So I went to the school district, because that was my background, teaching. I'd had five years of teaching experience. So I went down to the school district and I applied. And the personnel director told me Seattle had hired its first Negro teacher, but was not overwhelmingly ready to hire Negroes.

Andrews: Thelma DeWitty. [Hired in 1947 to teach second grade.]

Hollingsworth: Mm hmm. So, but I didn't let that stop me. I went down, because somebody told me, "They're hiring at the telephone company."

I went to the telephone company. "Oh, let's see now. But you are a college graduate."

I said, "Don't tell me I'm too educated." [laughs] Because so often they tell you you don't have enough.

So, anyway, after, "Well, you'll hear from us."

Well, of course, I didn't. It was no great disappointment, because at this time, it wasn't expected. I could see the lay of the land by this time. So wouldn't you know, I found that I was pregnant. So I said to the person— oh, let me back up for a minute.

In the paper, there was an ad for workers for the welfare department. It was a state department. So I said, "Well, I'll apply there." Well, of course I applied, and then I found out I was pregnant. So I went to the personnel office and I said, "Well, I found that I'm pregnant."

And she said, "Well, you're not going to stay pregnant." She was so understanding. So after the baby came, then I went back there, and was hired. But let me show you how clannish the—

Andrews: What was your job?

Hollingsworth: I was what they call, I was a social worker for the families. Now there were people in the community, black people, who, "Oh, you're not going to get hired." Just downing you. "You're not going to get hired." But as God would have it, this woman was so helpful. So I went back to the personnel office and was hired, and worked with families for about four years. And apparently I demonstrated well, because in 1950, I think it was, the legislature decided they had too many cheats on the roll. So they gave additional funds to expand the program. And people who had demonstrated well on the job and was interested in pursuing education in their field, they would be given one year

stipend, with tuition being paid by the state. Books being paid for, and a half year's salary, half their salary for a year. But you had to give the state a year. So I did that.

But now after the first year, I'm wondering, how am I going to make that second year? Because it was a two year requirement for a master's. I'm still thinking, Lord, I don't know how I'm going to make this. But by this time, my mother-in-law was sick. And I had two kids, and a husband who was not really supportive of your working, a woman working. But anyway, he told me as long as I had the kids taken care of. So I went the second year, and graduated, with a master's degree in 1959.

Andrews: Was that from the University of Washington?

Hollingsworth: Mm hmm. At the school of social work. And so, following that, well, as I said, I think I did pretty well. And the personnel director from Olympia, state office, came and said, "Dorothy, what are your plans?"

And I said, "Well, I'd like to go ahead and get my degree. But I have a sick mother-in-law, two children, and a husband that I have to deal with."

He says, "Well, I'll tell you what you can do. You know you have a job with us as long as you want. And you can withdraw your retirement and use that for your second year. And then you can pay that back, because you'll always have a job with us."

So that was a blessing. So that's what I did. In the meantime, my husband had started, got employed with the school district. So this kind of helped out. So I, in, oh, I had to give a year back. So the director at the welfare department said, "Oh, I wish I could pull the rug out from under you."

I said, "Well, I really have to look at my family situation. Because the children are growing up, and they're in school. And my husband is teaching. So that means we would have the summer off, and we'd have some time with the kids."

So he says, "Well, I can understand. But I sure hate to lose you." And that was certainly complimentary.

So I worked there. But my second year in graduate school, you could ask for your own placement. And the first year that I was in graduate school, they placed me with the veterans' administration. The second year, you could ask for your own. So I asked for the schools, because that was my background education. So I was placed with schools. I think I had four schools that I was the social worker for.

So my supervisor said, "Dorothy, I've talked to the principals, and I told them to ask for you. Because first place, you're mature enough to understand the responsibilities in family. And secondly, you have children. That's a plus. And you understand the education setting. So they'd love to have you. So I told them to ask for you." So they did ask personnel. So I was hired with the school district.

So I worked with the school district and paid the state year back. And then I was hired as a social worker with the school district and actually did pretty well. When they started Head Start, well, I had indicated with the school district that I would be interested in that-- they had just created what they called the community relations person. That I would be willing, I'd like that job. Because I'm looking to move ahead, you know. In fact, I'm like, going on up. And so I'm looking at moving ahead.

So anyway, the personnel director said, "Well, these jobs--" Now I think it's the public relations coordinator, I think it was. "These jobs, the principals want." So I was so

disgusted and discouraged with that setting. So when the Head Start director came, now I'm working with families and children, I didn't apply. So it was the community, because it was a community program. Head Start was community-based.

So the community advisory group, one of the women called me one day. It was a Saturday morning. And she said, "Dorothy, do you have a coffee pot?" And I said yes. She said, "Put it on, because I'm coming up there." So she came to my home. And she said, "Well, we're in the process of selecting a Head Start director. And everybody, we all wondered why your application wasn't there."

I said, "Well, I had two problems with the school district. First, when they said they weren't going to hire, Seattle had had its first Negro, and was not overwhelmingly ready." And I said, "The next time I applied for the community relations coordinator they told me that principals wanted those jobs." I said, "And I thought, I'm not going to be turned down again."

So this person says, and we're drinking coffee, says, "Well, you're going to get a call. And don't be no fool."

So I did get the call from personnel. "Well, everybody was wondering why you didn't apply. And I told you we didn't keep you from applying. Now you can apply, but that doesn't mean you're going to get the job."

And I said, "Well, that's okay."

So they called me to come down for an interview. The day I went down, I knew I was looking good. I had gone to the beauty shop, and had bought a suit that I couldn't afford. [laughs] But it was beautiful. And I went down for the interview. Well, of course, I got the job.

Andrews: Yay!

Hollingsworth: Things just opened up for me. So then I became director of Head Start, Seattle Public Schools. Then they told me that by June, mid-June, I had to have nine stations opened. Well, people just got in there. They cooperated and supported me so, I had those. I had staff. And I employed staff, many of them, who had been in the school district, but were on temporary leave for the summer. But there were those who had come up, and they had been blocked with discrimination. There were many black teachers who from the South had come, and didn't find employment.

So I went to the University YWCA, and "How can we help?"

I said, "I want you to go down to the school district and look at the classes that are there, and ask them do they have staff representing the students." Well, of course, they didn't. So they brought that back to the attention of the personnel director.

So he called me in and said, "Well, I told them that we had, the principals really had a choice of selecting their teachers."

I said, "Well, I'll make a deal with you." I said, "I have six that are ready to move now. And if you will hire those, then after three months, if you think they're not performing, I'll take them back." Well, I can tell you, at least four of them retired from the school district.

So I could see, and then they had a local group here. And I guess I was moving too fast for them. And I had learned, you don't have to put this in. I've learned how to work the system. [Motions Andrews to put recorder on pause.] You can put that back on.

Andrews: Okay. [laughs]

Hollingsworth: I had worked with families. And I was a parent, and had worked with children. So I had a vision of where we could go. So I did, we all did, a lot of creative things. So I figured now I've got to do something to make it obvious that we are succeeding in the community. Well, I decided, we're going to have a big dinner. Well, the regional office says, "Well, you can't pay for it. You can pay for the children, but you can't pay for the adults."

Well, I called Washington, DC, at their office, and said, "How can I teach families when I can't have the parents eating with the children?"

"Well, that's not in our regulations."

Then I told my leadership, the advisory group, and I had parents and community people as part of the advisory group. And they didn't mind challenging things. So they said, "Of course you can."

And I said, "Okay, we're going to have a family night. And it's going to be parent evaluation night. We're working with the parents. They can evaluate the program."

Then, I did send letters out to different people in the community to ask for responses. And the money just came. So we had a successful time, and I enjoyed every bit of it. So I worked with Head Start. In 1966, I was appointed by the National Director of Head Start to the advisory committee of "Sesame Street."

Andrews: Now, when was this?

Hollingsworth: This was in 1965. 1965. So anyway, by this time, I think I had demonstrated my leadership within the community, and the community was very supportive. And I was on the YWCA national board. You start making your dent in the community. In 1970, that was 1965, 1970, then the, that was the Seattle Model Cities Program, I think. And the director called and said, "Dorothy, now I've asked you three times. This is the third time I'm asking you to come work with me. I want you deputy director for planning on the Seattle Model Cities Program."

So I said, "Well, how much is it paying?" So it was three thousand dollars more than I was getting. I said, "Well, okay." So I left Head Start and went to work for the city of Seattle in the Seattle Model Cities Program.

So I think they must have felt that I was moving ahead nationally. So I got this invitation to work on the Ellensburg conference. But then, we went to the meeting, I guess, I don't know who was in charge.

Andrews: Judith Lonnquist, Elaine LaTourelle, Jill Ruckelshaus—

Hollingsworth: Oh, yeah, Jill. I'm going to talk about her, cause she was on the national— but I can't think of the woman whose name was local, I mean, was—

Andrews: Gisela Taber was the regional coordinator.

Hollingsworth: Gisela. Yeah, she was here. So anyway, I guess my name had been given as the community person. So we had the meeting and so we sat around—

Andrews: So you were on the coordinating committee.

Hollingsworth: But now we have to have a chairman. “Not I, not I, not I!” Well, I have never removed myself from participating when I feel there’s something to be done. “Well, I’d ask Dorothy, but I know she’s busy.” Well, I just was not going to allow them to decide what role I was going to have. “Well, let’s ask Dorothy. Will you be chair of the committee?”

I said, “Yes. I’ll need help.” So I became chair of the coordinating committee. But I said, “We are going to be inclusive. Now we have to find people to help us be inclusive.” So I went down to Grays Harbor to the Indian Reservation. I called a meeting of the black women. Thelma [Jackson] was a member of the coordinating committee. I talked to Thelma and I said, “Well, we’re going to have a breakfast meeting in Seattle, and I’m going to invite the black women.” Because I frankly felt unless some extended activity was there, the blacks were not going to participate.

Andrews: Was this the Black Women’s Caucus?

Hollingsworth: The Black Women’s Caucus was a group of Black women who participated in the conference. This was before. That’s how it got started. Yeah, that’s how it got started. So I said, “I’m just going to invite the black women.”

So Thelma said, “Yeah.” So we met. And that’s when the Black Women’s Caucus was born. And Thelma took the leadership to that.

Now I talked to [Roberto] Maestas, because I wanted the Latino women. So he said, “Oh, yeah, we can help you.” You know, from El Centro [de la Raza]— And so then I think I talked with the Indian group. But I went to the different groups. I went down to Lake Quinalt to get the women down there. And you know, I talked with many of the men. But the men decided, “Yeah, we can get them there.” And so we just had a very, very selective group. But well represented in ethnicity.

So now we’re getting ready for the— oh, then I needed somebody to help. And I went to Washington state employment. Norwood Brooks was the director. And I asked for help. So he assigned Cora Spencer, a staff person to help us.

Hollingsworth: She became, she was the kind of person who felt that, I asked her to be the office staff to help us in organization. But then I think there was something, she was competing with me. You know. So now we’re getting ready to go. But I had a good staff. I had a good cross section—oh, she’s in the legislature now. Roberts.

Andrews: Mary Helen Roberts.

Hollingsworth: Mm hmm. Then there was, oh, these people came forward to help me. they were on the committee, the coordinating committee. They really helped. And now we’re getting ready to have the annual meeting. I mean, the meeting in Ellensburg. And people were very helpful. And I guess Jill Ruckelshaus must have contacted her husband

[Bill Ruckelshaus], because he called me to ask what way could he help. And I went down and had a meeting with him. And he agreed that they would do the programs for us. Weyerhaeuser would do that, so they did that. In the meantime, I think it was a Catholic group that did something. But the community just came forth. And I think it was surprising that we had such a diverse group. But now the time comes with the Mormon group. Were they the Mormons? Yeah, from down—

Andrews: Mormon and Catholic, primarily.

Hollingsworth: Yeah. But we didn't have much problem with the Catholics. But the Mormon group decided that they weren't going to have this, and so I get this, you know, you get information from the other regional meetings, that the Mormons would be here. So then we had to figure out how we're going to deal with those. And it was in Ellensburg, which was a small community. But it ain't the most diverse community, I think. But we had, what's her name? She was on the coordinating committee.

Andrews: From Ellensburg?.

Hollingsworth: Mm hmm.

Andrews: Alice Yee.

Hollingsworth: Yes. Alice provided leadership there. And what we needed on the campus and all. So we're getting ready to go to this Ellensburg conference. And then at the last minute, we hear about all the Mormons that are going to be there, and we had to accommodate them. So we had a meeting, and decided that, okay, Gisela came down, and I rode down with her. And that day, when we got on the campus, there were women, and the sun was hot, and they had handkerchiefs over their heads. Really, I must tell you, coming from the South, I didn't know if it was the Ku Klux Klan or what it was. [laughs] I was leery, but I wasn't going to let it stop me.

So we went in, and we decided we had to kind of organize to accommodate everybody. Well, Alice had gotten the dormitories, you know, place for the committee. And then we decided that what we needed was security. Well now, coming from the South, and I told you when I looked at those white bandanas on their heads, all I could think about was the Ku Klux Klan [laughs] So I said, "Well, okay, we're going to meet with the others, the committee. And we'll ask for police protection." Oh, the committee, oh, they couldn't understand why we needed that. My thinking was this: We may not have needed them for our protection, but we needed to have police in order to keep any interveners from coming in, making problems for us. So I said, "Oh, no, we're going to get the police."

"Well, ask them to give us women on the committee."

I said, "We can do that." You know, women police, or whatever. So we did. And they were most accommodating. I said, "Because, you see, unless you have them supporting you, they can make trouble for you." And I think that was one of the best decisions I ever made, because everything went well. And we had the conference. But it was something else. It was very stressful with the participants there, because emotions

were quite high. And then of course, Mary Helen Roberts was on the budget committee. And we had to square up with the money, you know. And I think she did a good job. I'm sure she did, because I wasn't called to court. [laughs]

So that's about as much, and I think that's in the write up that you sent me.

Andrews: Yes.

Hollingsworth: So it was well done. The conference report that you sent, I read. And it was well covered.

Andrews: Oh. Good to hear. Well, of course, you were chair of the committee, but at the conference itself, what stands out?

Hollingsworth: Well, I think they were protecting me. Cause I was absolutely exhausted. So I remember it was, what was the woman's name? She was a nurse. And she had been on the school board. She came up to the room, and said, "Dorothy, you need to relax." And she and, I can't think of her name now. She's an attorney. You know who I'm talking about? [Dorothy Smith.]

Andrews: Let's see. Judith Lonquist?

Hollingsworth: She said, "Well, let Judith know," because I was really unsure of myself when it came to dealing with the big crowd and the, you know, the proper ways to handle. Cause I really didn't know all the legal ramifications of a big meeting. And when you sit down, and how you deal with that. So I talked with her, and they said, "Well, let Judith do that." So we had Judith, and I can't think of who the other person was. You can look through your records. [The other person was Beverly Smith.]

Andrews: I know who it is, and it's not coming to mind.

Hollingsworth: The two of them decide that they will take the meeting that day, and take care of the business part of the meeting. And then we went on down to, we went on down to Texas. But then I was telling you, the woman that came from—

Andrews: The other woman was Beverly Smith. [ed. Judith Lonquist was not a nurse; she was General Counsel for the Washington Education Association. Beverly Smith was Executive Director of the Washington State Nurses Association.]

Hollingsworth: Beverly. That's right. You are absolutely right. Beverly. So Beverly and Judith decide that they would chair the meeting, you know, when they lectured that Sunday morning. And also to be the state people when they went down to Texas. And that was good, because I was unsure of myself as far as the parliamentary procedure and all that stuff. I knew I could get people together, we could direct, as long as they followed directions. [laughs] But then, when it became more of that, I wasn't sure of my legal

grounds. So I needed help there. And they were just wonderful. They were wonderful. But I was going to talk, what was I going to tell you?

Andrews: Well, you were going on to Houston now.

Hollingsworth: Yes, well, to Houston.

Andrews: Before you go there, I understand that the election process was somewhat controversial for delegates.

Hollingsworth: Yeah. Yeah. You mean in Houston?

Andrews: In Ellensburg.

Hollingsworth: In Ellensburg. Oh, yeah. All of them were there. Everyone was going to get their group in. And it was controversial. But I thought it was handled all right. And we all went off to Houston together. And that was good, even though there was controversy, that we were able to get ourselves together to go down to Houston as a state delegation. So that was good.

But I was telling you about the woman coming, Cora Spencer, who was a staff person who came to help out. That gave me some concern. Because when I got back, it was in Ellensburg, and I'm trying to kind of keep things moving. Then they said, "Well, Dorothy, you know—she thinks, she feels that she ought to be a delegate." And they had put my name up as a delegate. And she was competing against me. But anyway, it was decided that I should be the one to go, to be the representative from Washington State.

And we went down, and it was a good conference. I met many people whom, many whom I knew, like Dorothy Height. Dorothy was with the YWCA at that time, and was instrumental in getting all this together. So, anyway, it was a good conference. There was a lot of controversy. But we ended up, the conference was had. Now, any specific part, I could talk to.

Andrews: Well, what issues were of major concern to you, and why?

Hollingsworth: Well, I think the major issue was helping each person to see her benefit as part of the whole. The wholeness of the conference was important to me, because I could see how it was being fragmented. And pulling it together was a real concern to me. But as I said, I had good help. It was Alice Yee. And, oh, I can't think of her name now, and I should. But she was with the Hispanic group, and worked for the city.

Andrews: Was that Lilly Aguilar?

Hollingsworth: Mm hmm, Lilly. And those were women who were supporters, and they respected me. And we were able to work together. I didn't have any in-house fighting. I don't think I did. If they were, I didn't know about it.

Andrews: That's amazing. Could you tell me a little bit about your role in organizing the National Black Women's Hookup, I think it was called?

Hollingsworth: Black Women's Caucus?

Andrews: Nationally. I saw it referred to as the National Black Woman's Hookup.

Hollingsworth: Now, I was not involved in that. Did Thelma [Jackson] tell you about that?

Andrews: A little bit.

Hollingsworth: I was not involved in that.

Andrews: Okay. I saw an article that had you listed as one of the leaders of that. But the reporter might have been mistaken.

Hollingsworth: And I just probably said something, you know, being a black woman. And they might have thought it was a thought point of authority. [laughs]

Andrews: Thelma did talk about it.

Hollingsworth: And a friend used to say, "Dorothy, that's one thing about you." That was my pastor's wife. My pastor said, "Dorothy, one thing about you and my wife. You may be wrong, but you're positively wrong." [both laugh]

Andrews: Love it. And speaking of positive, what were some of the positive and negative outcomes of the conference, in your opinion?

Hollingsworth: Well, I think the positive part of it was women coming together for women. The negative part of it was, the negative people who were there. Never felt, and I never felt that they thought they were part of the whole, the wholeness of it. And we were trying to get women to come together. But I think there were so many differences and differentiations in issues and people that were coming. They never bought into the whole issue of women being united and moving ahead.

Andrews: And this follows up on that. I don't know if there will be anything to add. But in your opinion, what was the significance of both the Ellensburg and Houston conferences? Is that pretty much what you just covered?

Hollingsworth: Yeah. Here I felt that the community became aware. It was an awareness from the point of the community. And I think the Ellensburg conference brought women of the community together. And I think it added to women's rights. And it gave strength to legislation, which provided for women to be a part of the activities and what's happening. And to provide legislation. I think it was a support of legislation in the interest of women. I see it coming as a result of this election that we're going to have.

You know, Hillary being out there. She's not out there alone. And then during the time, so I think all of this is a result of women finding themselves, and knowing that they can make a difference.

Andrews: What kind of follow-up activities did you participate in? The short term, and also the long term?

Hollingsworth: Well, I think I participated, in fact, I did go to several places to talk about women, women's rights, and that type of thing. I think it was on an individual basis. It was not as a group project. In fact, have you talked with Vivian, Vivian Caver?

Andrews: No, I haven't.

Hollingsworth: Vivian, and I were thinking that as a result, Vivian talked with me the other day, last Saturday, I think, last Friday, at a luncheon. And I told her I was having an interview with you. And she says, "Well, is that part of what I called you about?" She called me about Esther Mumford. Do you know Esther?

Andrews: Very well. Good friend.

Hollingsworth: Okay. And apparently Esther is writing, also, about women. But apparently the two of you are writing about the Ellensburg conference.

Andrews: I'm conducting the oral history projects right now, just to—

Hollingsworth: Well, you might want to just check with Esther, what part is she doing. Because Vivian called and said to me, "I gave Esther the names of the black women who were participating."

Andrews: Esther was, as far as I know, compiling a list of the women that were involved in the Black Women's Caucus. [Following this interview, Andrews checked with Esther Mumford. In addition to compiling the list, Mumford is asking each of the five black women who have served as state legislators to write a brief updated statement regarding her perspectives. Mumford's information will be posted on the Women's History Consortium's website.]

Hollingsworth: Oh, well maybe that's because Vivian asked me about the names of those women. So maybe it's related in some way. But nevertheless. And I think it gave, certainly the black women, an opportunity to see themselves as part of the community, and empower them to really challenge some of the things that were happening in the community. I think it gave them strength to see themselves as participants, and also to see that they could make a difference. I don't know whether that's, but that's my thinking.

Andrews: I think Thelma said pretty much the same thing. And I think this is pretty much the same question, but I'm going to ask it anyway, just to see if anything else

comes to mind. From your perspective, how have women's lives changed since the conferences? And in what ways have they stayed the same?

Hollingsworth: Well, I think it has not addressed all of the needs of women, but I think women have become more involved, and found the strength to be involved, and the power that they have in getting involved. And I think that they had certainly become, society has become, provides more recognition of leadership with women, and women have a lot to offer. It gave women empowerment. I was honored in 1959 as the distinguished alumna from the University of Washington School of Social Work.

Andrews: And on the same track how were some of the issues that were debated at the Ellensburg conference resolved? And are there some of them that are still being debated? Or challenged?

Hollingsworth: Well, I don't specifically know, because I haven't been that involved recently. But I would think there's always going to be some problems in the way that women are treated. And we'll never be the full acceptance of the power of women, and the role of women. I think there will always be accommodations. But the women will have to see to that. Okay?

Andrews: Okay. In closing, I would like to have you say just a little bit more about what you did after the conference, professionally. You moved on to serve on the school board.

Hollingsworth: Yeah. I became a candidate for the school board. And then I was elected president of the Seattle School Board. And I was on that for five, eight, years, whatever the time. And then I went to the state board of education, and I was on there for eight or nine years. Now I am a trustee at the Seattle Community College, and finishing my fifth year there. So I've been involved in education and community activities for a long time.

Andrews: Yes. You certainly have. Is there anything else you'd like to add in summary?

Hollingsworth: Well, I think I've given you enough. You make the summary. [laughs]

Andrews: Well my summary is just to thank you so very much for sharing your story about your impressive life.

[End Interview.]