Narrator: Susan Roylance  
Interviewer: Mildred Andrews  
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Transcriber: Teresa Bergen  

[BEGIN INTERVIEW]

Andrews: The following interview is being conducted with Susan Roylance 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 Thursday, May third. Susan Roylance is at her home in South Jordan, Utah. Mildred Andrews is at her home in Seattle. The interview is being conducted via telephone.

Susan, as a beginning, would you tell me briefly about your growing up years? Your family, community, school? Something about how you developed your ideas about your role as a woman at home and in society?

Roylance: Okay. The first ten years of my life were spent on a farm in Idaho, near a little town called Darlington. I was the oldest of six children. I lived across the street from my cousins, and it was a great way of life in the country. I loved school, and I was always one of the top students in my class. During the summer, I worked on the farm for my father. He paid me well, and I liked earning the money, so I didn’t mind the physical labor part.

In 1952, we moved to Othello, Washington, on the eastern side of the state. Irrigation water was just coming onto the land in that area. That was the Columbia Basin Project. And my father had some of the first land under water. We worked hard, but most of the time I enjoyed it. I enjoyed working with my family. My father built a very nice home in Othello, and later, another nice home on the farm. I should add that my father worked hard, but in the process he provided every opportunity that I could have wanted, that I did want.

At the time we moved to Othello, the school was very crowded, so we went to a half-day school. And I used that time to study ahead. I advanced two years in math and history and in English. It was an opportunity for me to increase my educational capability and understanding, so it was good. I had every opportunity a girl could wish for in my growing up years. I took piano lessons, and played for the high school choir. I played in the school band, first on the clarinet and later, the trombone. I organized and directed the school drill team. I was often elected to student office, and was the junior class president. I won a speaking contest about the role of the United Nations, and went on to the regional finals. It was interesting, as I looked back on that, how I later became so involved with the United Nations. That was my beginning understanding of the U.N.. I graduated as the valedictorian of my class with a 4.0 grade average. As far as I know, that was the first 4.0 at Othello High School. I was awarded a four-year scholarship to Brigham Young University. And I began that process, but, I don’t know how much more you want me to say.
Andrews: Did you go on to Brigham Young immediately after high school?

Roylance: I did. However, I did not graduate. I later got married. Because I had earned the four-year scholarship, I didn’t have to take a full course in order to maintain it. But I had a child, and I decided that was my priority. We did continue to go to the university. My husband graduated from BYU. We lived on the farm that my husband had homesteaded a few years previously. He was four years older than I. He had already finished two years of college before we spent the next two years at BYU, Finishing his bachelor’s degree. I attended some classes, but I did not graduate.

I just might say at this point, looking back on it, I’m sure that I would have enjoyed and appreciated having graduated from college. There are a lot of things that I have done that it would have been helpful, if I’d had a degree. But I can’t say that it ever slowed me down in anything. I can’t imagine that I could have done much more with my life.

Andrews: No, it doesn’t sound like it.

Roylance: So I’m not sad in that respect. But I would have liked to have had that education. However, later in life, I found out that I had endometriosis quite bad. Had I not married early, and started my family early, I probably wouldn’t have had any children.

Andrews: Oh, my.

Roylance: I don’t know how much you know about that, but endometriosis continues to grow, but while you’re pregnant, it stops. So I had, oh, about two years in between my kids, maybe a little bit more, some of them – I didn’t wait a long period in between. After I had all my children, I had to have some fairly serious surgery to remove the growths inside of me. As I look back on it, and I’m so very grateful for my children so very much that I’m glad that I did get married early.

Andrews: Well, it worked out well.

Roylance: It worked out well for me, yes.

Andrews: What was it like to be a woman when you were growing up in eastern Washington and in Utah? Can you describe some of the struggles and achievements prior to the IWY convention in 1977?

Roylance: I thought it was great. And I never did feel, as a woman, that I was discriminated against, or that I didn’t have every opportunity. I never felt it was a deficient thing to be a girl. I can’t remember anything that I felt needed to be campaigned for – until the IWY came along – and I saw a great threat to the family structure and those things which I felt were important and good for families. I saw the IWY as more of a threat to a way of life that I thought was good, than I did see it as a need to go after things that were needed.
Andrews: What were your major affiliations and networks in the ‘60s and ‘70s? And what roles did you play?

Roylance: I was very involved politically from the very beginning. In fact, even in high school, I became very interested in political issues. I had a teacher in American history that really motivated me. Interestingly, I intended to maybe say this later, but somewhere along the way, the whole Hitler experience in Germany really impacted me. The fact that the people accepted him, and accepted what he did in the beginning, and were very empathetic towards it – somewhere along the line it had a real impact on me. And I felt that I saw some of this same acceptance – particularly in Houston with the IWY and the way it was organized, and the way things things were handled. I saw this as a great danger to our society, and I didn’t want to be an apathetic person who just accepted it and didn’t do anything about it.

So I was very involved politically. I started out as the precinct committeeman right after I was married. As I became more involved and I became the secretary of the Central Committee.

Andrews: And this was in Washington State, right?

Roylance: Yes, in Washington State. I was the Secretary of the Central Committee in Franklin County, then we moved to Walla Walla County, and I helped organized the precinct committeemen. I helped locate those who would serve in that position, and then I helped organize them prior to elections – determining where to have precinct causes, etc. Then when we moved to Kennewick, I was the Vice Chairman of the Central Committee for Benton County. So I gained a lot of experience, particularly when I was Secretary and taking minutes of the Franklin County Republican Conventions. I was also elected as a state delegate. I had a lot of experience with parliamentary procedure, and knew how it worked. And this had a lot to do with why I eventually became a floor leader at IWY – because I understood parliamentary procedure very well.

And then I was very active in my church. I always have been, since the time I was small.

Andrews: Can you elaborate on that just a little bit? What you did in your church?

Roylance: Yes, my membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints is very important to me, because it’s a way of life. It’s good. It’s a way of life that I believe produces happiness. And it did in my life, and in those that I knew that were active in the church. And certainly, I never felt within the church that a woman had any less capability. There are many things that the women do in the church. They’re the head of the women’s organizations. They’re the head of the primary organizations, and the young women organizations. And it’s a very active, cooperative thing. So I never saw it as any kind of discrimination. I never felt at any time that I was discriminated within the church. The church structure allows everyone to be very active. I don’t know how much you know about the LDS church, but it’s a lay church. The people are the ones who run the church. We don’t pay any ministry at all. And I was very involved from a young age, particularly in the beginning, when we moved to Othello. We had a small group in the
beginning – we call them wards – and I was the only one that could play the piano at that time, so I played for church. Later, when the Church purchased an organ, I played the organ for church. I was very involved in my church, and found it to be a great sense of joy to me.

Andrews: That’s great. Were there specific events that spurred your thinking about changing roles of women in the home and society around the time of the conference?

Roylance: Well, the changing roles that I saw being promoted among the women of IWY – yes, that was an event! [laughs] However, I guess there is one other thing. As the Vice Chairman of the Benton County Central Committee, the issues of ERA, abortion and gay rights were pretty much debated across the spectrum in both parties. They really were not the big issues they became after IWY. IWY was a great catalyst to polarize people on those issues.

At that time, as the Central Committee Vice Chairman, I was very careful not to be involved in those controversial issues – to not say anything that might be considered controversial, because I wanted to elect Republicans. I was a Republican, and I wanted to elect good Republicans that represented the basic Republican issues.

At that time, more of the differences were based on a belief that government should protect people and allow them to function on their own – to care for themselves, rather than have a government-controlled socialist society. At that time, the Democratic Party was more socialist in their belief of how government should help people, and the Republican Party was more for independence – a “give us the opportunity” type attitude.

Well, when I was asked to become involved in the IWY Conference by Dolores Gilmore–she asked me to be the floor leader because she was a precinct committeeman and she knew my understanding of parliamentary procedure, and that I would know how to help the women to participate. (Dolores Gilmore is not a member of the Mormon Church – I think it’s important to point out. Most of the women who were involved in organizing that effort were not Mormons.)

And when she first asked me, I said “No.” I did not want to become involved, because I didn’t want to become involved in those controversial issues, since I was the Vice Chairman of the Central Committee. And she said, “Well, please pray about it.” I finally told her I would pray about it, and then she gave me the tape of a woman from Oklahoma – telling what had happened at the Oklahoma IWY conference. As I became more and more aware of what was going on in many of the IWY conferences around the country, I did decide to become involved. And that was, as you know, that was kind of a major change in my life.

Andrews: Kind of. You mention that Dolores Gilmore was not a Mormon. Was there a religious affiliation for the other women?

Roylance: Well, she was Catholic.

Andrews: She was, I know.
Roylance: I know that we had people that were Baptists. I know that, but it wasn’t like we asked people: “What’s your religious affiliation?” We knew each other through political affiliations, rather than we did religious. Well, absolutely, we did not know each other religiously. As I was re-reading some of the newspaper articles, I noticed that Dolores said that out of the twelve women who met at her home in the initial meeting, that only two of us were Mormons. I don’t even remember who the other Mormon was, because that was not something that we were even considering at that time – what religious affiliation we were. They were women who were experts in their fields and could provide good background information for us.

Andrews: Was that meeting where the Blue and White Coalition was born?

Roylance: Yes, and that’s really interesting, because I don’t even remember that they were called “Blue and Whites,” but in the newspaper articles, that’s what it calls us, so I guess we did. [laughs] I noticed in the newspaper that Dolores said that she chose those colors because they represented Mary, to her – the mother of Jesus. But I don’t remember. I’m sure we must have had some ribbons that were blue and white, or something, to help designate who we were. But yes, that’s where it was born.

Andrews: That’s really interesting about, we’ve heard so much about, keep hearing so much about the Mormon women being leaders of this.

Roylance: Yes, I mean really, the leaders were Dolores Gilmore and Dolores Glesener. They were the real leaders. I was just asked to be the floor leader. And when I agreed to do that, there were two things that I said: (1) I’m not going to go over there with just a few women – If I’m going to go, let’s go with enough women to do something meaningful, and (2) I was not going to go over there and be negative. I was going to go and be positive. If we were going to go and participate we needed to help fulfill the purpose of the conferences. (As I remember, the purpose was to gather women together and decide what things they thought government should do.) Well, I didn’t want to go and just be opposed to what other people thought. I wanted to be “for” something.

And that’s why we organized the twelve committees, and why we pulled together women who were experts in those areas – and prepared the background information. And each one of those individual committees prepared their proposals. It was my job to help coordinate that – so we could be successful in the plenary, because I understood plenaries very well. I’d been involved in a lot of plenaries in my life up to that point, so I understood how they normally worked. However, in this case, it was very, oh, my goodness, the person who was the chairman was very unfair. She didn’t want us to participate at any point.

I don’t know if this is a time to bring this up, but as I read this, there are all kinds of versions of what happened in that plenary.

Andrews: Are you talking about *The Story of Ellensburg*?

Roylance: Yes. Do you want me to tell you now? Or should we talk about it–
Andrews: Sure, go ahead.

Roylance: What happened is – the woman who was the chairman was determined that we were not going to participate. So she wouldn’t call on us, she wouldn’t recognize anyone who was from our group that, you know, just to offer an amendment. I know one article in the paper, they said, “Well, why didn’t they offer an amendment?” Well, the reason we didn’t is because she wouldn’t let us.

And so about, I don’t know how far into it – we obviously had the numbers that we could have passed those resolutions which we came prepared to pass, the ones that had passed the workshops – we were not trying to promote anything that didn’t pass in the workshops. However, we had had a lot of women in the workshops, so we did get a lot of things passed. But, there were some workshops that never passed anything, because there was not willingness on the part of the chairman to allow a resolution to be passed.

But anyway, those that we had passed – that were appropriate to bring before the plenary – we planned to do that. But the Chairman wouldn’t allow us to participate. So I passed around to everybody, and asked them to pass on to vote “No” on everything. And that was a tactic to try and get them to let us participate. Because, if we voted “No” on everything, there isn’t anything they could pass – because we had the numbers to stop them from passing anything – if they wouldn’t allow us to participate. And then they did, loosen up and let us participate – which was very helpful.

Some people remember that tactic as being very controlling and a very bad thing to have done. But it was an effort on our part to try to gain an opportunity to participate. And it worked. That’s the important thing – that it worked. And we were then able to participate to some extent. But even then, you know, in offering amendments or things like that, she was still a very controlling chairman. And she had already decided what the conference was supposed to produce. She wasn’t about to let us have any effect on that.

And that’s what I saw in Houston, also, which was so extremely disturbing to me. The Houston conference was not even run by normal parliamentary procedure – by Robert’s Rules of Order. They used a whole new system – that they had created – that, of course, nobody knew anything about. I mean, they created a whole new system for participating – you had to hold up certain colors of cards for certain types of participation – and we didn’t know; we hadn’t come to the conference knowing whether to hold up a yellow or a blue or a red. It didn’t even allow you could call for a personal privilege or anything. You couldn’t do anything! Even the ability to vote on anything was different. So it was a very controlled environment with the intent to produce a certain outcome. It was not an effort to bring women together across the country to decide what women wanted. It was a controlled effort to produce a specific outcome.

And that’s what scared me. That really did scare me. I saw the same kinds of things that I had heard of happening with Hitler in Germany. And, quite honestly, Bella Abzug was just that kind of a person. She was a very controlling, domineering woman. She was even determined to eliminate the male Congress and have just a female Congress. That was one of their big pushes. There were a lot of things they wanted that were totally against what I thought was appropriate in a democratic society.

So, I came home from that conference determined to do everything I could to replace my own Congressman from Washington State – because he had supported all this. We had tried to contact him, and tell him what was happening, and he wasn’t
interested -- it was just a “bunch of women.” Now there’s a discriminatory attitude, for sure, it was just a bunch of women -- let them do what they wanted to do. But the way they were organized, and going forward, it wasn’t just a silly little thing. [laughs] It was something very serious that was happening, in my mind.

And it has proven to be serious. I believe the country has been damaged by it. Only I wasn’t successful in stopping it.

Andrews: I think everybody would agree that it was very serious. And you’re articulating your point of view extremely well.

Roylance: Well, thank you. I did feel very strongly about it, and still do, obviously. I’ve spent an awful lot of time in my life to try and help prevent what I saw as a very devastating thing to our country.

Andrews: Could we back up just a little bit and go back to Ellensburg? In The Story of Ellensburg, there was something about the minority caucus, and how pro-ERA and anti-ERA coalitions seemingly came together in support of the minority women. I know it wasn’t in support of the ERA. Could you comment on that?

Roylance: I don’t know of a minority caucus. I mean, there may have been some people who decided to put together some minority positions. It was never our intent to be in a minority. We intended to participate fully within the conference. We felt like we had enough people to do that. We organized well prior to the conference so that we had–

Andrews: What I was talking, sorry, I didn’t mean to interrupt you, but I was talking about the African American women, and–

Roylance: Oh, the minority women.

Andrews: Yes.

Roylance: Okay. Now ask your question one more time.

Andrews: There was something in The Story of Ellensburg about efforts by the conservatives and the minority women to come together so that the minority women’s resolution could be voted on before the time expired?

Roylance: I’ve read more about that in the paper than I remember about it. Interestingly, there’s an article that was in the newspaper by my own mother.

Andrews: What’s her name, for the record?

Roylance: My mother is Cora Gene Anderson. And she said – I’ll read you what she said, because I think it’s very appropriate. “Our last procedure of the day on Sunday was regarding women of color. I was among those who voted against their proposal, as it was broad and encompassing things we were opposing. I love the sisters of color.
grandparents worked together with a black family. There was mutual respect and love for each other in this association, and my mother instilled in me love for the black people.” This is my mother saying this. “We have two living sons. When these sons were in high school, they had best friends who were Mexican Americans. Both of these boys came from families who were farm workers, whose source of income came from working hard in the fields, weeding, thinning and harvesting farm crops. My boys did the same identical hard work, as did all of my family, and my husband’s family, when we were young. One of these Mexican American young men graduated from Harvard with a master’s degree. We had two foster Indians. They were treated as our own family, and we received no funds from any source. Then it was our privilege to have a Nepalese young woman. I belong to a minority group, per se, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have withstood much persecution from the beginning, but through these things, great depth of character is formed. My husband’s great-grandfather pushed a handcart across the plains of America for the purpose of religious freedom. I maintain this is the greatest country on the face of the earth. We do not need more giveaway programs. It’s my belief that it is still the land of opportunity for all who will pay the price of hard work and live good, moral lives.”

Now there are other articles, also, by other people regarding that particular proposal. And in fact, one of these news articles gives the full wording of the proposal. And the point is that there was an effort (this is a very common tactic among people who are trying to get things through legislatively – this was like a legislative experience – they will attach wording that they want to get through on something that might be 99 percent acceptable by those that they’re trying to get to support it, and they’ll attach something else) – and at the end, it had the wording about the ERA.

Now we were opposed, as a group, to the ERA. There are a whole long series of reasons why we were – but that is why it was opposed. It had nothing to do with women of color. And those women who maybe joined them because they wanted to see that go forward, they did that in spite of the fact that it included that wording. But you see, we couldn’t offer amendments. If we’d been able to offer an amendment, we could have accepted the rest of the proposal. Most of what that said was very, very good. But you can’t throw things in that aren’t a part of what we’re trying to promote at that conference and expect that we were going to vote for it.

Here it is, right here. This is, this was at the last – in the closing hour of the plenary session – the policy statement of the ethnic women of color. This article is written by Sue Miller in Othello. I don’t know who she is. She said:

“But last Sunday in the closing hour of the plenary session, the policy statement of the ethnic women of color was voted down, and shouts of ‘racist’ to the Christian women. To us, we were called racist. I would like to say that all women, regardless of race, color or creed, should have equal rights. I would have liked to have been able to have voted for a reasonable resolution. However, since Christian women were prevented from proposing an amendment to the policy statement that we could have accepted, I could not vote for it.”

And then she goes on and she has the actual wording of it, which is quite a bit. And then she said, “the last thing it says is, ‘Lastly, we reaffirm our support for the Equal Rights Amendment and urge ratification at the state and national levels.’ We feel that if
these resolutions had been passed, indeed our democratic way of life would have been threatened. I urge all women to become informed and involved in all future women’s conferences.”

So it’s not, we weren’t against women of color. There were some specific things we went to work for. We went to work for equality for women, but not the Equal Rights Amendment, because it had the potential of creating a lot of problems. [laughs] That’s a whole other subject.

Andrews: I’ve heard other people confirm exactly what you said, in fact – women of color, conservatives, liberals, have said the same, and you’ve articulated it. I think there’s quite a bit of agreement on that.

Roylance: Oh, yes. There’s 99 percent agreement. It’s that 1 percent – that adding of the last paragraph, and the fact that we could not amend it, – that’s why we opposed it.

Andrews: Sure.

Roylance: And it was something that was needed. I’m sure we had a resolution that would have fit into that situation. But anyway, I don’t, one thing I don’t have that I wish I had, and I hope you can get from somebody, is the list of our resolutions. I can’t seem to find it.

Andrews: I think I have that somewhere.

Roylance: Okay. I would like that.

Andrews: I’ll make a note. If I find it, I’ll send you a copy.

Roylance: Okay. It’s twelve separate pieces of paper, and each paper has a separate has a resolution on it, with appropriate background information.

Andrews: I. Okay. Let’s back up again to, I’d like to have you tell me about how you got to Ellensburg. The logistics of getting there, and how you informed the planning committee about all of the unregistered women that were planning to come.

Roylance: Okay. I have record in, actually, a newspaper report, that I began contacting the committee as early as the second of July. And that’s the first record I have. I actually don’t remember everything, except that I remember from the very beginning I tried to work within the process that had been outlined for our state conference. There was never any attempt to have any surprise invasion. [laughter] There was never any intent of that, as is stated in some of the reports. It was always billed as a conference for the women of the state to come together to determine those things that they would like to see the government do, and that’s exactly what we were trying to do.

And why should anyone should be concerned about more women attending -- rather than less? Prior to our getting involved, it was a very organized effort for a certain group of people to participate. And we tried to contact everybody we could. There was
no intent to say, “You can’t come, or shouldn’t come.” But anyway, I also tried to get the official rules – to find out how we could best participate, and I was in contact with the committee people. And that’s why I was invited to come to the committee meetings, in final preparation for the conference, two days prior to the conference, which I did attend.

And at that point, I didn’t know exactly how many women were coming. There certainly hadn’t been any effort on our part to gather names and know how many were coming. I just knew that there were more than they were planning on, because I knew people that, I knew none of us had preregistered. I think we were past the preregistration date. But it didn’t say we couldn’t participate, it just cost more money. And so, we paid, as I remember, it was fifteen dollars. I noticed in one of these articles, it said ten dollars. But I can’t remember –

Andrews: I’ve heard fifteen.

Roylance: Yes, I thought it was fifteen, too. We all paid fifteen dollars. We got nothing for it, other than the fact we participated in the buildings that had been rented to do that, because we provided our own meals and our own lodging. We made that very clear to the committee that we would do that – right from the very beginning. I read somewhere that we offered to do printing, if necessary, so that we would not cause any problem for them – but they didn’t think that was appropriate, so they didn’t allow us to do that. But anyway, we offered to do everything we could. If we were going to participate, it’s kind of back to my original statement, if I were going to be a floor leader, I intended to be successful at it. I didn’t intend to go be a floor leader and vote against things, and just make a little statement, you know. Statements for this kind of thing are irrelevant, in my point of view. You either do it or you don’t.

And that’s my political background. I wasn’t a Vice Chairman of the Central Committee in name only – I worked hard to get Republican candidates elected. This was a political thing (the IWY conferences), in my mind. So we worked to be successful at it. But we worked to do it within the system that had been created – with every intent to be supportive and helpful. And I think we were. I think we were.

Andrews: There’s been quite a bit of comment, I think in the report, and also from other people, about Mormon men attending the conference. Can you comment on that at all?

Roylance: [laughs] Yes. The only Mormon men that were there, that I know of, I mean, I know some of the ones that were there, but they just drove the cars, you know, and brought the women there. In fact, during the plenary session, I was hearing this thing about how some of the conference organizers thought that the “Mormon men” were telling us what to do. Then I told the men, and asked them to pass this on – “If there’s a man in this room, get clear up in the top of the bleachers – you’re just here as an observer – you’re not to talk to any women.” And they sat clear up on the top of the bleachers, so that they were not anywhere near any of the women.

And to me, that was such a, to even hear that, it was so crazy to think that these people that are saying that didn’t think that we, as women, had any mind of our own – that we couldn’t talk on our own? [laughs] I mean, I was the floor leader. I never talked to a single man about anything. The only thing I ever did is – I told the others to tell them
to not be around where we were. This was not a men’s conference. It was a women’s conference. And men should not be involved in any way whatsoever. And they were just there to support, to help transport people and things like that. That’s all I knew of. And, as a floor leader, I never at any time spoke to any man about anything that had anything to do with what we were there to do.

Now afterwards, I did use some of the legal help, some of the lawyers, to help us in filing a lawsuit against the way the voting was handled. But I didn’t use them as part of the conference.

Andrews: Can you say a little bit more about the lawsuit?

Roylance: Yes. I guess, to start with, it was a shock to everybody that we didn’t get any of our delegates elected. Everybody said, “Well, man, how could that have happened?” We did have a woman who had been very active in her political party – as a poll watcher. And we were organized to have people both where they were counting, and where the ballots were being collected, to record any inconsistencies that they saw. And we gathered notarized statements from women who saw them collecting ballots in cardboard boxes instead of in the official metal containers – that were supposed to be used. We just saw, we know, we knew of people who voted twice. Those were also notarized. We had notarized statements. It wasn’t just something that came off of the top of their heads.

And so, when we didn’t get the votes that we expected, we challenged it. And they were supposed to recount. It was a very small difference, and they were supposed to recount, but then they decided not to. And I saw one news article that says that if they didn’t recount, we would sue. Well, we did sue. But it didn’t make any difference. They put us on the court docket with a court date that was after the Houston conference was over – and it was irrelevant after the Houston conference was over. And there wasn’t anything we could do about it. However, it’s not like you could say that because we weren’t adequately represented it changed the conference. It didn’t. It wouldn’t have – because even if we had all been there, the numbers were still so heavily in favor of Bella Abzug’s group – she had 75 percent of the people.

Andrews: Bella Abzug’s group is the pro-ERA faction?

Roylance: Bella Abzug was the chairman of the whole event.

Andrews: I know.

Roylance: Yes, yes. Those who had the agenda that had been pre-decided before the conferences ever begin. That were pre-decided and written in the book To Form A More Perfect Union – and the intent was to bring the people together, to get them to vote for those proposals at the state level, then go to Houston, vote for them on the national level, and turn them in to Congress. And it was pre-decided what they should be. There was no intent to gather proposals from women in the country. It was predetermined what they wanted the outcome to be. And they were organized to get the numbers to vote for them – that would accomplish their purpose. It was very well organized. From a political perspective, it was brilliant. It was just wrong!
Andrews: Now I know you’ve written a book, *Defending Marriage and Family in the Halls of the UN for the Future of the Children*. And that was published in 2004 by Roylance Publishing. And in that, you said something about your own meeting with Bella Abzug. Could you tell me about that?

Roylance: Abzug. Yes, I certainly can. I was not a delegate. I was an alternate to the conference, with no funds, whatsoever, appropriated to help those who were alternates. They sent a special singing group that they paid for out of the extra money that we had provided through all of our participation – but they didn’t provide any help at all for the alternates. But I was there.

I wasn’t going to go to Houston, because I didn’t see any real purpose in it. But then there were people that encouraged me to go, and they raised some money so that I would be able to go. And after I got there, that’s when, as I was telling you, the whole parliamentary procedure was not used. And they had all of this new process. And they had the microphones arranged so that anyone who would be considered pro-family, any State delegations that would be considered pro-family, were seated very far away from the microphone. If anybody would get up from any of those delegations to go to a mic, the groups that were closer would immediately get up in front of them – so they couldn’t get to a microphone. And then, of course, they used the colored cards for participating.

So the person who was the chairman (it wasn’t always Bella that was the chairman, but she was in charge, and she was up there) – it was a very controlled situation. It was not set up to allow a democratic process to even proceed. And there were runners who would take notes to different people – whenever there was a need to communicate with someone – that was set up, which was good.

And so I sent a note to Bella Abzug and asked to meet with her. She met with me, privately. And I said, “Bella, I don’t understand why you can’t let the pro-family people even participate in this conference. I mean, you have 75 percent of the delegates. There’s no way we could pass anything. What does it hurt to even allow us to say what our views are?”

And she said, “Well, you can participate.”

And I said, “Bella, you know that we can’t.”

And she kind of hemmed and hawed around, and she went back and she changed the process. I can’t remember what she changed, but I do know that they then started allowing us to participate, and I felt like that was some sort of a victory – that at least we were able to say what we believed, even though we couldn’t participate enough to affect any of the votes.

But the interesting thing about all of that was, I believe it was Sadat, was in the country from Egypt. And all of the news media was going towards his visit and everything was all about him – in the early days of the conference. Although there were lots of media people in Houston, it was being overshadowed by his visit. About the time he went home was when Bella Abzug opened it up and allowed us to participate. And the first issue that came up after that was the abortion issue. And on the national airways, we were given equal time. They had people from us, as well as from them. So what is a victory, really – being able to at least give those points of view and have the American
people hear it. It was worth something – because the outcome didn’t really change anything, as far as the Congress or anything like that.

There were things that were talked about at the conferences, that were passed, that women have worked very hard to make happen. Like, for example, the “sex stereotyping” of women – they believed that even presenting a woman as a mother is a “sex stereotype” and should not be done. They had resolutions that included getting women into positions of authority in television stations, creating of television programs, and determining what television programs will be shown, and in creating schoolbooks, and all of that – that would remove any representation of a woman as a mother. I mean, she might be a mother, but she’s presented as a mother who’s a lawyer, or a mother who’s a doctor – presenting women in a professional mode rather than as a loving, nurturing mother mode. And, they’ve been successful. If you look at the movies of today, and the schoolbooks of today, and even the children’s books of today, it’s pretty much true that the role of a mother as a nurturing, loving mother, has been removed.

So there are things that they’ve worked for, they wanted to work for, that didn’t happen legislatively, but they happened because of an organized effort to make them happen. And they were mostly women who didn’t intend to have families. So they went about doing it, while we went about having families [laughs] – raising and loving our families. And it’s had a very damaging effect, I think, on the country.

Andrews:   I think you just answered this question, but just in case you have anything more to say about it, how did the conference influence your perceptions of women’s role in home and in society?

Roylance:   Well, it didn’t influence my perception. My perception didn’t change of what it should or could be. It changed my, I mean, there were things that they were working for that I was surprised at and concerned about, so it influenced that perception, of a direction that they wanted to go that I didn’t think was good for the country or for the children of the future. I think it solidified my feelings that I already had, realizing that there were a huge number of women who were working toward those things. In fact, as I’m sitting here, I’m looking at one of the news stories, and the headline is: “Threatened Our Way of Life.”

That was the story I read to you by Sue Miller, or the letter to the editor. They have a big headline there that says, “Threatened Our Way of Life.” And I do believe it did. It did then, and it has. It has impacted our way of life. Now we have a lot less people living in families, a lot less people that are married, a lot of children that are being born out of wedlock. What is the number? I think it’s quadrupled. And children are suffering the consequences. We’ve got more gangs. America’s in trouble from a family perspective of raising children. Children are not being raised by their mothers. They’re being raised by daycare centers who don’t love and nurture them in those critical stages of life like mothers do – or mothers used to, anyway.

Andrews:   So what would you say was the significance of Ellensburg and Houston?
Roylance: Before I answer that, let me say one thing that I think, which relates to significance. When I went to Houston, I really did feel that our Washington state conference, those things that were passed, were good. Those things we did pass were good. And I felt like we were successful in doing those things which I felt represented women that were good for America.

Andrews: And what were some of those?

Roylance: That’s what I don’t have. I know we passed some of our resolutions, but I don’t remember which ones. I don’t have that file report.

Andrews: I was just wondering if there was anything that stood out.

Roylance: No, there really isn’t. I’m sorry about that. I wish–

Andrews: Oh, that’s okay.

Roylance: I think that’s an important part of what we did. But from a personal level, I felt that we were successful. And when I went to Houston, I actually wore my IWY button. I was wearing it as I went into Phyllis Schlafly’s Stop ERA newsroom. I went in to help in the media room and she saw my IWY button – and it was just, I mean, a feeling of hate was in her eyes. I just could not, she thought I was, you know, she didn’t realize that I was with her [laughs] – she thought because I had an IWY button on that I was supporting the IWY, which I did, because in Washington State I felt like we had done good things.

But so that’s, I guess, saying that, I felt like we were successful in a good way. We didn’t elect the delegates for the Houston conference, but I felt that in our Washington State IWY Conference, the things that we passed were good. And that was the part that upset me – when the Women’s Council of Washington State said that we just represented a minority of women – that what we passed was of no value. And that’s why we had Referendum 40 put on the ballot.

Because, if that’s the way the Women’s Council was going to look at it, and it had just been passed by the Washington Legislature to become a State Women’s Commission – if that’s the way they looked at everything we did, then they ought not to become a State agency in my mind. I mean, I felt like we had done something that was meaningful and represented women of the state. And they just threw the whole thing out.

Andrews: So, just for listeners, I’m just going to say that Referendum 40 was an effort to stop the state women’s commission from being a state-funded entity.

Roylance: Right. Right. And they were the ones who were the organizing committee for the IWY conference in Ellensburg. They were the ones that organized everything, too.

Andrews: The state women’s commission did?
Roylance: They were a council then. They weren’t a commission yet.

Andrews: And can you tell me a little bit about Referendum 40, and that campaign?

Roylance: Well, that’s what lit the fire that started it – their comments to the media that what we had done was of “no consequence – that it just represented a minority of the women of the state.” And the interesting thing that helped make Referendum 40 successful is there was a woman, a doctor, and I can’t remember her–

Andrews: Kathleen Skrinar?

Roylance: Yes – she had been attending the Women’s Council meetings for four years, and she had been keeping a record of the things that they passed. And it was true that they had been passing those kinds of things that were, well, for example, this is a minor example, but they had spent Washington state money to send people over to organize Idaho women to pass their Idaho ERA. We thought it was inappropriate that our Washington State money should be used for that purpose.

And there were other things, things that the Council had proposed and supported in the Washington State Legislature that we felt well, they were not the things that we would have wanted to be passed. They were in opposition to the resolutions we had passed at the IWY Conference (our resolutions). So we felt it was inappropriate for State money to be used for an organization to lobby our legislators, which is what they did. Dr. Kathleen Skrinar had all of the documented evidence of that. And so we, actually, we used that information, once we got the signatures. And quite frankly, we would never have been able to get the signatures if it hadn’t been for the IWY Conference, because it was the IWY that opened a lot of women’s eyes as to what was happening. And they became very concerned!

And so they became very energized and got out there and gathered the signatures. And after we got enough signatures to put it on the ballot we only produced one handout. It was just a regular 8 ½ x 11 page, folded in half. I don’t know if you’ve seen it, but it just had excerpts from the minutes of what the Council actually had passed – direct quotes from the minutes of the women’s council. The brochure said, “Do you want this council to become a State Women’s Commission?” – then it had two pages showing what they were working for. And every organization of major importance in the whole state, and every newspaper, came out against it. But we won by 72 percent. And that’s what did it – the distribution of those pamphlets – door to door throughout the state.

Andrews: I understand there was also some interaction with Governor Dixy Lee Ray.

Roylance: Yes. Before the election she said, “I don’t care what the result is. I intend to have a Women’s Commission, even if it’s funded out of the governor’s office.” Well, after we got 72 percent, she could see the handwriting on the political wall. [laughter] And she did, eventually, disband it. Yes. We had a meeting with Governor Ray and those who worked on Referendum 40. I don’t know what they’re doing today. They probably have a women’s council, and it’s probably state funded. And they probably do–
Andrews: No, there isn’t one.

Roylance: There isn’t?

Andrews: No.

Roylance: Well, it was our intent to not have a Council with that kind of an agenda. It’s the agenda that was the problem, not a Women’s Council. It was the fact that they had their own agenda, and it didn’t matter what the women of the State wanted. They were going to go forward and do it, with or without our approval. And that’s not a democratic system.

Andrews: So you’ve already talked about Referendum 40, and about the lawsuit. Were there other follow-up activities that you participated in?

Roylance: Yes. That I participated in would be more accurate than to say everyone participated. I became quite involved in defeating the ERA. We organized Women for Integrity in the Nation (WIN) during a gathering for everyone during the IWY conference, and that continued afterwards. But then we later organized United Families. (It was called Families United, to start with.) We actually raised money in Washington State to pay for the buses that took women to the South Carolina legislature to lobby their legislators. And, on that day that we had raised the money for women to travel to the legislature, it was defeated. That was the day it was defeated.

Then I became involved with an organization called Pro-Family Unity. That organization was started in South Carolina. We then organized a national organization of Pro-Family Unity, and I was the national vice president. That organization eventually became the United Families Foundation, which I was the president of, and that organization eventually became United Families International (UFI), which I was the president of for a while. UFI has had a great impact on international public policy – as it relates to family issues. So I think that IWY awakened a sleeping giant.

Andrews: [laughs] Sounds like it.

Roylance: Yes, I think that it helped people realize that there was a need to become involved, and we did.

Andrews: You ran for office, too, didn’t you?

Roylance: I did. I did. That was part of my vow to replace our congressman. It ended up, because I was the Vice Chairman of the Benton County Central Committee, I was the one that went to the Fourth Congressional District meetings to try to determine who the Republican Party would run for the office. And, in one of those meetings, they said, “Well, the only person who has the name recognition that might be able to do something is Susan Roylance” – because we’d been successful with Referendum 40, and had people all over the state that were interested in what we were doing.
And I will say that that probably is the one thing that I really do wish that I had not done. I think it was hard on my family. Looking back on it, I got right into their (the feminists) territory, I guess. I felt like it was important to have someone in Congress that represented the women who believed in the family issues. Part of what inspired me to run for Congress was the situation when the ERA went through Congress the second time. I think there were about five women in Congress at the time – I can’t remember exactly, but they all stood in a line as everybody came in for the vote. And the women all asked the men to “please support us.” When I heard of that I thought, “there needs to be a Congresswoman who can represent the family point of view.” So I felt strongly about that.

And I felt strongly about the future of my children. I really did feel like there was a threat that I needed to do something about. However, it was hard on my children when I was running for Congress. I mean, I had a little family.

Andrews: Oh, I can imagine.

Roylance: I mean – it’s not what I stood for. However, the reason it worked as well as it did is that I had a sister. She had two children the same ages as my two youngest children. And she’s a wonderful, really a wonderful mother! She really helped me. But, what would I have done if I’d won? I did know women in Washington, DC, that said, “Oh, if you can get elected, we’ll help you with your children.” But that’s a totally unrealistic statement.

When they asked my husband, “Well, what would you do?” he said, “Well, it would be a miracle if she gets elected. So I’m sure if she does, we’ll figure out something. And I just about did get elected. But I didn’t. My opponent poured a whole lot of money into the television spots the last couple of weeks, and we just didn’t have the money to do that. We had five major television centers. They were coming out of Portland for that side of the state. They were coming out of Spokane, they were coming out of Seattle, they were coming out of Yakima, they were coming out of the Tri-Cities. We had all of those areas, and there wasn’t an overlap, at that time. You had to put spots in all of those areas in order to reach all the people. It was an impossible feat. It was the largest Congressional District in the country at the time. It isn’t, I don’t know if it is now, because it’s been divided. But at that time it was the largest. I had to travel four hours in every direction from my home to get to all the areas of the District.

Andrews: Oh, my.

Roylance: And there were also many newspapers – people received their newspapers from all of those different centers. So, just to remain alive as a candidate was horrendous. [laughter] Anyway, I didn’t make it. I thought I was going to win, at one point. But I didn’t. And I can look back on it now and I’m grateful. I certainly learned a tremendous amount in that process. But I’m grateful I didn’t win – that I could come home and be a mother.

Andrews: Yes. Well, you certainly made headlines, and received a lot of press coverage.
Roylance: I did. I did. Some of it was rather negative. But anyway, that was interesting. It was a great experience. I learned a lot. It was a great educational experience. And it had a lot to do with everything I did after that. Because the things I did with United Families nationally and internationally–

Andrews: That’s what I was just going to ask you about now. I know you’ve written a couple of books, and been very active internationally.

Roylance: In fact, I suppose you’ve probably read the article in my book about when I met Bella Abzug at the UN?

Andrews: Yes, I did.

Roylance: I started to introduce myself from United Families of America, and they all laughed and hooted at me. That was a real – that was a very life changing experience for me. It was hard to believe that women could be so anti-family. So “anti” those things that are really good for America, and for the future of the country. So that’s what really – I wasn’t planning to become involved in the UN.

Anyway, it was a real shock to me because I knew that Bella had helped to create the National Women’s Office under Jimmy Carter, President Carter. And that lasted for about a year, and then it was disbanded. So I thought her whole push had died. Of course, she had been pushing for a women’s congress. There were a lot of things that were really quite radical that she was pushing for, that probably, as others in Congress found out about it, they quit funding that office. So I thought she’d kind of faded into the woodwork. So when I showed up twenty years later at the UN, and there she was –

Andrews: Where was this? At the UN.

Roylance: At the UN. This was in New York, at the UN. It was a Preparatory Meeting for the international, or for the Fourth World Conference on Women that was held in Beijing. And I had been asked to come and be part of a delegation that met with the United States Delegation – to represent Western women, and Mormon women, although I didn’t officially represent them, because I didn’t have any authority to do that. It just happened that I was a Mormon woman from the West. [laughs] They brought together women from a lot of different organizations, and different parts of the country, to meet with them – to talk to them about requesting their involvement in some of the issues that related to the family.

I just happened to go into a caucus meeting that Bella was in charge of – where she had leaders of many national and international organizations. And she was very much in charge. She made the comment, not in that particular meeting, but in another one, that “We don’t run the UN yet, but they can’t run it without us.” And it was true. When she had not been able to achieve her objectives through the US Congress, she had gone to the UN. And she was amazing. There is no question about it. She was a totally amazing woman in her ability to make things happen, because she had women in very key positions in key organizations, within the UN, that worked hard to achieve their goals. I
mean, she was a tireless worker. In the later years of her life, she had elephantitis and her legs were so big that she had to be in a wheelchair. And yet, she was the first one there in the morning, and the last one to leave at night – and she was always there during all-night policy debates. I don’t agree with what she did, but she was totally amazing in her zeal to accomplish her goals.

Andrews: Did you have any direct contact with her at that time?

Roylance: Yes, I did. Yes, we knew each other well. We didn’t talk too much about issues, because we both knew where the other one was coming from, but we were very cordial to each other. [laughs] I respected her right to be there as well as I had a right to be there. It was really all, well, I don’t know if you want this on the tape, but–

Andrews: Do you want me to put it on pause?

Roylance: No, it’s okay. One of the more interesting things that happened is after the IWY, or after the Fourth World Conference on Women in China, which I was very involved with, and I watched her. I watched how she did things. She knew how to make things happen. And she had prepared a proposal of possible amendments for each of the different paragraphs where they were trying to insert language that would accomplish her purposes. It was a very good publication – to help people in the process. She well prepared information, and she had people in the right places to help make things happen.

So as the next UN conference (the Habitat II conference) was coming up – this was the last of seven UN conferences that were supposed to define, put things into their international public policy documents that would have an impact on the world. And so as the Habitat conference was coming up, the Internet was fairly new at that point, but they had everything on the Internet about this conference. So I was able to go in and gather the information about how to best participate. And, one of the best ways to participate was to represent a city, because it was supposedly a conference on cities, only it was much more than that. So I went to my city and asked if I could be a representative of the city of South Jordan. They they had a special meeting of the City Council, read the things that we’d been doing, and voted to have me represent them.

So when I signed up, I signed up as a representative of my city.

Andrews: This is South Jordan, Utah.

Roylance: Yes, South Jordan, Utah, just a small city. And so when I went – it was really interesting because I was the only one who had done that. They had this special place for people to sit that were representatives of cities, but nobody else came. [laughter] So then I was seated on the UN floor, just the same as the United States government was.

Before the Conference began I had sent a copy of a book I had written, The Traditional Family in Peril, to every Country Delegate to the conference (that was listed on the internet). And the person who was the Chairman of the main Plenary Session, where everybody was, had read my book. And so, when he found out that I was there, he gave me every opportunity to say something. Bella just about had a cow. I shouldn’t say that – Bella was very upset. Every day Bella would go to the committee that was
controlling (running) the conference – to try to get me off the floor. But I had participated within the rules of the conference, so they couldn’t get me off the floor.

But they finally the Chairman said, “You can only represent your city. You can’t represent any other cities.” Well, I had never tried to represent more than my city anyway, so that was OK with me. [laughs] And so it was really interesting, because then Bella organized a Special Session for the actual conference, which was held in Istanbul,. This special session was to allow people to have input. It would be people like us, you know, organizations like ours, to speak for the delegates. And it was an effort to try and undo what I had been doing on the floor at the UN – in the Preparatory Meetings. So that’s an example of how Bella and I knew each other. We both knew each other well. Bella had women in high places, but we did our best to participate within the rules of whatever Conference was being held, and we were quite successful. We got good family-friendly language in Habitat, and we were able to keep the bad policy language out.

She (Bella) was upset. She didn’t even want that document to be accepted by the conference at the end. She tried to stop it. But it was accepted. So, yes, it was an ongoing thing.

And now, you know that Families International is very strong. And there are a lot of other organizations [focusing on family issues]. And the book that I’ve written, that is the most impactful, is the Pro-Family Negotiating Guide. It includes twenty-one of the main treaties and documents that have been created internationally – that drive international public policy. It has an index that helps delegates find the language that is good – that is family supportive, that is family friendly.

Andrews: When did you write that?

Roylance: I did that in . . . just a minute, I’ll look at the book. Oh, I thought I had it here, but I don’t see it now. Well, let’s see. Oh, here it is. I think about 2000. When I wrote it, I wrote it with the idea that maybe I wouldn’t have to keep going to UN Conferences. Other people could use this, and it could be a . . . – 2002.

Andrews: 2002?

Roylance: Mm hmm. I prepared preliminary versions of it before I actually did the big book. But I know many Ambassadors of countries that kept this with them at all times, because it has the treaties in it. But then it has highlighted those words that are good. And then we have a section where we included sentences from all the documents supporting the Five Respects: respect for the family; respect for human life; respect for parents; respect for religious values; and respect for national sovereignty.

I pulled out language from these documents that were good. Because, when they’re negotiating, if somebody comes up with some new language, in fact, this happened quite a bit after Bush was elected. They’d come in and they’d have this great language they had developed – but it was new language. It’s very difficult to pass something that’s new without it going back to the national capitals – of all the various countries – to get it approved. But, if we could find language that already exists in a treaty or document – that has already been approved by these countries – it is not so difficult to insert language. (This is what Bella did. Bella was the expert at this.) So, if
we could find language that was good, that we could recommend, it could be inserted or it could be used in place of something else that was there, because it had already been approved.

So this was the purpose of this book, to point out all the good language that is throughout these international documents – that could be used as they were creating new documents. It’s been very successful!

Andrews: Sounds like it.

Roylance: Yes, it’s good.

Andrews: Well, congratulations.

Roylance: Thank you very much. But I don’t go anymore. I pretty much don’t do it anymore.

Andrews: Oh, you don’t?

Roylance: I don’t.

Andrews: You did until quite recently. That was 2002, so.

Roylance: Yes, yes. But we spent a lot of time in Africa. In fact, what actually happened to me as we started going to these international conferences, and meeting with a lot of women, and – I will say this, that as I met with women of other countries who really do have discrimination problems, serious discrimination problems, as I went to various countries for various reasons, and became acquainted with some of their problems, then I had a different perspective.

And one of the things that I really learned more about are “single mother families.” Internationally, it’s a huge problem. And the women’s movement has created some of this. Well, not some of it. They’ve created a lot of it – because they have sold women the lie that they don’t need to be married, that they don’t need a man, that there’s no reason why it’s helpful, if you’re going to have children, to have a man help you raise those children, or to help provide for those children. So, you have millions and millions of women throughout the world who are trying to raise children on their own. And it’s such a serious problem.

Then you have the whole AIDS thing. There’s a lot of things that have entered in that have created huge problems. And, quite frankly, I couldn’t continue to go to those international UN conferences and just deal with words. It was really bothering me, and so I ended up getting involved in issues related to orphans, and the HIV/AIDS issues. The HIV/AIDS issue, when I first started going to UN conferences, was a small issue, but it has grown and grown to become such a huge problem! And it’s part of this whole sexual revolution. This idea that all you have to use is – well, I don’t want to get into that on here, but it’s part of the sexual revolution that’s created the huge problem with HIV/AIDS.
So I was involved in helping to create an HIV/AIDS prevention education program for children, where we taught children between the ages of nine and fourteen how to make choices – how to think consequentially about their choices and what causes AIDS and what doesn’t cause AIDS. We taught them to plan for their future – to plan for their education. We are trying to help prepare the next generation to avoid this terrible scourge.

Andrews: And this was through the UN?

Roylance: No. No. It’s through United Families International. But it’s the awareness I gained through attending UN conferences that was the impetus for developing this program. And then my husband became very involved in helping the farmers in Africa to increase their income – so they would take AIDS orphans into their homes and raise them in their families – which was a very successful effort. Anyway, for four years, that’s what we did, back and forth. And that’s why I was no longer involved in going to the conferences. I let other people take the book I prepared and go to the conferences. And I went out to try to make a difference.

Andrews: It sounds like you have.

Roylance: I think “we” did. We are. We still are. That program is in nine African countries now. It’s called the Stay Alive program. [The lessons were written by Wendy Sheffield.]

Andrews: In what part of the world?

Roylance: In Africa. Africa is where it’s the biggest problem, and Africa is where it’s a sexual problem. Now, when you get into Europe the HIV virus is passed more through needles, using drugs – that sort of thing – which is not good either. In the United States, a lot of HIV is passed by drug needles, too, but you’ve got both the homosexual and the needles. It’s not growing as much here in the heterosexual community, but if it ever gets into our heterosexual community, like it is in Africa, you know, we’ll have bigger problems. But it isn’t yet. [In the US] it’s more of a homosexual disease than it is in Africa. In Africa, it’s pretty much, it’s across the board. It’s in the heterosexual community as much as the homosexual. And so anyone who’s sexually unfaithful has a good chance of bringing it into their family. In many countries, among prostitutes it’s about an 89 percent infection rate. It’s this whole sexual revolution that we export on our televisions and the internet. We export it to the world. And, in fact, it’s interesting that a lot of the Muslim animosity toward the US is all about the garbage that we’re sending out all over the world – on the Internet and in our movies. So, they’re very angry with us over it. Anyway, it’s quite a problem.

Andrews: My goodness, you’re doing a lot to raise awareness. I have just a couple more questions. From your perspective, how have women’s lives changed since the conferences? And in what ways have they stayed the same?
Roylance: Well, they’ve changed in that most families now, because of the big push for women to break the “glass ceiling” and go to work, most families have both a mother and a father working now, and it’s made it harder for women. It really has. I think there’s less women who are married now, both through the no-fault divorce, and through a lot of things that have occurred. There’s a lot more single women raising families on their own. There’s a greater sense of immorality in the country. We’re raising children without the moral standards that we used to have – they’re flaunted in so many respects, in ways that are not good for them. And some of that is because of this whole movement to move away from a moral foundation, which is part of that radical feminist movement. It’s not what all women want. It isn’t what I’ve wanted, and I’ve certainly been very involved in about everything a woman can do. But I didn’t accept that, that radical agenda that we were presented with in Ellensburg. I think–

Let me tell you another interesting sidelight. My husband and I have been involved as missionaries. And we’ve been involved also in teaching English to immigrants who didn’t know English – and they needed it in order to be able to participate in our society. And a phenomenon that we have seen over and over again is that men in this country, who are fed up with women who want to do it all themselves, are going to other countries to get their wives. It’s just that they don’t like American women. It’s been really interesting to see. There’s a lot of men finding their wives on the Internet. And that’s not easy. It takes them a long time, if they find someone on the Internet, to be able to go to that country and to be able to get approval to bring them in this country. It’s a several-year process. It’s not something that they can just decide to do and do it. It’s not easy to bring women into the United States. But it’s being done a lot. And we’ve seen men who have actually gone to other countries to find a wife, and they’ve been successful, and they’ve come back with great women. [laughs]

American women are kind of creating their own, you know, “digging their own grave,” so to speak – because they’ve been sold that “more money” is where happiness is. And I will tell you this, in all of my international work, and going to all these conferences and dealing with all of the feminists that want all these things – I’ve never seen such a bunch of unhappy women. They’re not happy. And they think that if they can just get more of this, or more of that [material things], that they’re going to be happy. Happiness is in your family. Happiness is in a strong, healthy family. It’s our relationships – that is where we find happiness. Not in making more money, or breaking the “glass ceiling.”

And a lot of these women, as they’ve gotten older, they realize that they’ve missed out, but now it’s too late. And a lot of them, because they promoted all this no-fault divorce, and all this stuff, and they felt like they weren’t having enough authority – they had a divorce, and they don’t have a husband. Then when they get older, they’re lonely. The biggest outcome of it all is that there’s a lot of lonely, unhappy women.

Andrews: It’s sad, isn’t it?

Roylance: Yes. It’s really sad. I don’t know where you’re coming from on all this. [laughs] In my perspective, I see a lot of lonely, unhappy women.

Andrews: And that’s what I’m trying to get, your perspective.
Roylance: Yes, that’s my perspective.

Andrews: I’m glad you brought that up.

Roylance: In fact, I wrote an article that was published in the newspaper in China – Beijing, China – that was titled: “What Good is Empowerment if Women are Miserable?” What do you want to be empowered for, if you’re going to be unhappy? Basically, what good is empowerment if women are unhappy.

Andrews: Mm hmm. And this was published in China.

Roylance: Yes, it was published in the newspaper in China, at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. There’s a copy of it in my first book, *Traditional Family in Peril*, which was written after my return from that conference.

Andrews: So, just one last question. If there were, and there were many specific issues that have concerned you, how have these issues been resolved since the conferences? And are they still being debated?

Roylance: Oh, yes. A lot of them are still debated. The whole childcare issue was of great importance to me – “government sponsored and paid for” childcare. I thought that was a very negative thing. Other countries that have had government daycare centers have had a lot of bad outcomes because of it. And we’re still debating childcare issues. Childcare issues are still something that we need to take a close look at, because there are a lot of problems with childcare. And the reason there are problems is because most women are working now, which is, you know, we’ve almost passed the point of being able to really do what’s best for the children, because of what we have created. That’s an issue that I care a great deal about now, and I did then. Probably one of the issues I cared the most about at IWY. I’m concerned about the children!

Andrews: Sure. In summary, is there anything else you would like to add?

Roylance: I think that one thing I wish I could help other women see is that it’s a glorious thing to be a mother. Men cannot be mothers. I don’t care how many times they would demand it. Whatever they would do, all the marches or whatever they do, they’re never going to be able to be mothers. Women have a corner on that. And the kind of mothers women are is both what’s good for society, and what’s good for themselves. It’s an important part of a woman finding fulfillment and happiness. It’s not a drag, like they try to make it look like in the “feminist lie.” It’s where happiness is! And when you’re sold this “bill of goods” – when you’re young, that it’s not something you should even want, there are a lot of women who have ended up in situations that are very difficult, because they believed the lie.

And there isn’t anything you can do to make things equal to men when it comes to motherhood. Men can’t do it. They can’t have it. They weren’t designed physically to be the great nurturer that women can be. Women need to, we need to speak out to the value of motherhood, so that women don’t feel that it’s a negative to be able to be a mother. It’s
a wonderful thing! And it’s where the future of the country and the world is, to the extent that women fulfill that role of a mother in a positive, good way – to bless the lives of their children – and want to do it. If they don’t want to do it, it’s not going to be a positive thing. As we talk about it, and make it important, I mean – education’s important, and being able to do anything you want to do to develop yourself is important, but not if we lose the most important thing of all, and that’s that wonderful role of motherhood, and a recognition of how that can bring happiness both into the woman’s life, and the lives of others. That’s my parting thought.

Andrews: Thank you so much, Susan. This has been just wonderful. I appreciate so many insights, and all you’re doing. I wish you well in all of your efforts.

Roylance: Thank you so much. And I liked talking to you. I really didn’t want to do this, but I did it, and it wasn’t so bad.

Andrews: Oh, I’m so glad you did. It’s been a tremendous contribution.

Roylance: Well, thank you.

[End Interview]