

Call number: 01-80-03

Name and place: Dorothy Jane Wood interviewed by Paul McCarthy

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Notes: Original on 7-inch reel. Master copy on CD.

Recording starts with a woman's voice [Dorothy Jane Wood] talking about running and how it took her 3 years to finish the Equinox Marathon. Paul tells that he participated with another person.

Paul asks Mrs. Wood to talk about some of the many things that she was involved with during their time at the University of Alaska. Paul tells that William Wood said that the presidency is really a two-person assignment and that one person isn't enough to fill it and asks what she did in support of president's role.

Dorothy Jane tells that she has had many dinners "here," and in earlier years they had more dinners since the facilities weren't suitable for serving people. Recently they have been able to place people in the Commons, the Hess Center and the Wood Center, and it has become easier than years before. Perhaps 3 or 4 years ago, Dorothy Jane was still having 3-4,000 people yearly at their house.

2:26 Dorothy Jane tells that they get outstanding visitors from all over the world and some of their visitors have included Monsieur Pompidou who was the president of French Republic, and many ambassadors [lists a few]. Then they have had semi-formal dinners for the board of regents, and for dignitaries from out of state.

Paul asks if Dorothy Jane found the university to be more cosmopolitan than she initially thought, and she says that she did. That's particularly true in thinking about their faculty that has 25 different nationalities represented. She used to have a reception for the foreign women of the university and she tried to complement them by finding foreign women in town.

4:13 Paul says that the university is quite a large one on budget and payroll, but small in terms of student body as compared to other large state universities. He continues that Dr. Wood told some stories in which Woods were involved with students and he wonders if there were any humorous moments that Dorothy Jane recalls. Dorothy Jane remembers one time when 25-30 students from Moore Hall, whose water went off around midnight, came knocking on her door. They had decided to come to the president's house to brush their teeth and go to bathroom. Dorothy Jane wondered if she should let them in or not, and since Mr. Wood wasn't there, Dorothy Jane decided to just send the students to bed without having brushed their teeth.

In earlier days, they used to have students visit them quite often, but in past 3 years not so much. They also had ASUA officers over many times.

6:03 Dorothy Jane recalls that she had in early years a Nigerian boy, Joe Codero [sp?], who worked around the house and at the yard. The Baptist mission sent for his girlfriend to come to Alaska too, and they eventually married. Dorothy Jane hosted the wedding reception in 1962 or 1963, and she had

people coming in from all different directions of campus. That was the most unusual function that they had.

7:02 Paul asks if Dorothy Jane finds that faculty brought their personal tragedies to her. Dorothy Jane says that she had that quite often, but now that they have adequate counseling on campus, she doesn't get that as often as she used to. She has had a few cases in recent years but she doesn't want to talk about them.

They have also raised a few teenagers and they have had youth from town come and go. The house was almost free for them and it was quite an active and exciting place to be.

Paul mentions Mark and his friends who couldn't say a word when Mssr. Pompidou visited. Dorothy Jane says he was just frozen.

Then Paul asks how long Dorothy Jane was involved with nursing. She says that she was in the Navy in WW-2 for about 3 years. She took her training in [unclear] and she wasn't in the 5-year program but later, just before she got to Alaska, she got her master's degree. She hasn't really used her degree and says that she feels sometimes that she would have needed a degree in hotel management and home economics management.

9:10 Dorothy Jane tells that she worked closely with Mrs. Walsh and whoever was the head of the home economics department. The department head would find out which girls were available for helping with large functions. That's how Dorothy Jane knows lots of students from throughout the years.

She also used to have the Spurs [?] come and offer their services for large gatherings.

Paul asks if Dorothy Jane has taken interest with nursing in Alaska. Dorothy Jane says that she has, but that it has been quite limited because of her duties "here." She is in touch with the Nurses' Association in Fairbanks, but they happen to meet on a symphony night and Dorothy Jane plays in the symphony and she played when they lived in Nevada too. She started when she was quite young and in past years has studied under Paul Rosenthal. After 30 years of not really practicing, that has been quite difficult.

11:18 Paul asks if Dorothy Jane feels that the president's spouse gets involved with the public relations aspect of the university. Dorothy Jane says that she has been there for a long time and seen changes in public relations. She has tried to see what the needs have been and helped "them" with guest lists. She has also tried to broaden the scope as much as possible.

Paul asks if Dorothy Jane was involved in Mr. Wood's efforts in getting a new hospital to Fairbanks. She tells that she has stood by on that effort. They have hosted many early breakfasts for people who were going to be the directors. Then they have had groups on board in different times. William Wood is the builder.

Paul mentions that William said that Dorothy Jane was as much part of the effort as he was. She tells that she enjoyed the experience and that her part in life was to help William in his efforts. She wishes that more women could feel like they were very helpful for their husbands.

13:43 Paul mentions some things Dorothy Jane was involved with. She tells that she hasn't been too active with AAUW [American Association of University Women?] in last years, but that previously she was, and she hopes to get back to it. Dorothy Jane has had their fall [unclear]. Now some of the women

have built houses that are almost as large as the president's residence and they meet at the hospitality house now.

One year Dorothy Jane was going to take an office as a program chairman, but she decided that she had enough to do. She's involved with PEO that meets from February to December and Dorothy Jane can't always make the meetings.

15:01 Paul asks what Dorothy Jane feels that the main problems are that are facing the spouse of the president. She tells that probably one thing is that getting acquainted with people will take a little bit of time, and getting an idea of all the areas with community colleges like Nome, Kotzebue and Shishmaref. Then there are all the men who are leading various cities, towns, and villages. Dorothy Jane thinks that the next president's wife will have quite an experience ahead of her.

Paul asks if Dorothy Jane was involved with people from legislature and she tells that they came by quite often for meetings and occasionally Woods had them over for dinner or lunch. She has also traveled with William Wood after 1966, when her children went to school. She has gone to 7 European countries in 1964. In 1968, she went on a trip to Asia and they visited 7 Asian countries with Dr. Wood who was on a panel that discussed problems in financing higher education in various countries.

They visited 2-3 universities in each city and Dorothy Jane went along as a note taker. She was also taking pictures and got good results even though she's "quite an amateur."

18:49 Then Woods went to Vietnam more recently. Dorothy Jane has been to Vietnam twice. The first time was in 1968, which was right after the Tet Offensive and their mobility there was limited. The second time she went back was in last August and September and they had more freedom to go to different areas. She has also been to Liberia where her husband was with a group of educators from American Association of University Presidents who met there for a week.

Dorothy Jane tells that she really wanted to go to South and East Africa, but they had to go to another meeting in Oulu, Finland, and had to travel cross continent. From Oulu they went to Helsinki, and took a bus to Leningrad [St. Petersburg] and that was quite an experience. They were greeted with more difficulty than they were in many other places that they visited. Everything they had was examined before they left the bus and when they got back on, but they enjoyed their trip. They came back through Helsinki and continued on to Copenhagen and then to Reykjavik, Iceland.

21:12 They travel over a short period of time which is exhausting, and they had to take notes to remember what they had seen.

21:35 Paul asks what Dorothy Jane will do in the future and if she has plans. She tells that she wants to get settled first. Her husband will do consulting and she may go with him. Dorothy Jane was also asked to get back into nursing again but she thinks she might do that very gradually. She's tempted to take some of the nursing classes to learn newer techniques.

22:42 A woman's voice asks how Dorothy Jane would advise a person who was going to be in a similar situation that she has been in. Dorothy Jane says that that's a loaded question and that she's not accustomed to giving good advice. She says that she thinks that liking people and understanding them is important. She has played most of her interactions by ear and has found out that there's not much difference between people. She advises to act naturally toward people regardless of their income levels.

The same woman asks what kinds of things Dorothy Jane is most proud of Dr. Wood having done. She says that he has done great things in building program but that all programs have been developed and improved over the years although there are still things that are undone. Dorothy Jane says that Dr. Wood has been particularly interested in improving the quality of teaching.

24:38 The woman asks if Dorothy Jane thinks that the job would have been easier if it had been somewhere else than Alaska. She says that the weather was a challenge and many of the women were dissatisfied, and when they were dissatisfied, so were the men. Now they have started giving the women some opportunities at the University and that has helped the situation.

Dorothy Jane was involved with the University Women's Club that has broadened their scope and they try to touch all areas of the University rather than just having an exclusive faculty club. They wanted to help women – not just faculty women – get acquainted with each other.

27:34 Paul says that Dorothy Jane's particular interest was the holiday ball. She tells that they gave that ball for 9 years. That was given to show appreciation for the community of Fairbanks for their support. They also invited people from Anchorage and all of the regents. It was difficult for the Anchorage people to attend at that time of the year, but they were invited nevertheless.

The ball was right after Christmas and people from all over the community attended. Faculty members were also free to invite their guests.

A woman's voice asks if there are projects that were left undone. Dorothy Jane says there are always projects, but she would get involved with the new law school if that was established. She tells that the only way she kept up with her nursing skills was to use them whenever somebody at the house became ill. Through Wamic [?] program, that they had at the house on several occasion, they had opportunities to work with the local doctors and the staff that came from University of Washington.

30:13 Dorothy Jane says that it has been fun to get to know some of the students and find out later how they enjoyed Alaska. Many of them have found the area very stimulating. She has talked to several of them on different occasions and they seem to have enjoyed it.

[End of the recording.]