

# Vera Katz

SR 9044, Oral History, by Linda S. Brody

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KATZ: Vera Katz

LB: Linda S. Brody (now Linda S. Dodds)

Transcribed by: Phyllis Soderlund; Lillian Strong; Linda Brody, ca. 1985

Audit/edit by: Sarah Stroman, 2018

## Tape 1, Side 1

1982 April 28

LB: The following is an oral history interview with Vera Katz. The interview is being conducted at Mrs. Katz's home at 2068 Northwest Johnson, in Portland. The date is April 28th, 1982. The interviewer is Linda Brody for the Oregon Historical Society.

[Tape stops]

Vera, can you tell me why your family wanted to come to the United States from Germany?

KATZ: Hitler, World War II were the major reasons. My mother and father fled from Russia during the Russian Revolution and were immigrants to Germany. Then I was born in 1933. At that time Hitler was rising to power and we had to flee Dusseldorf into France. The Vichy government took over between 1933 and 1940. I can't quite give you the date on that. There was a declaration on one day in 1940 where every family with children, and every Jewish family with children, could leave Paris and make exit to the United States or anywhere they wanted to go. And that's when we left France.

LB: I see. Did you come here directly, then, from France?

KATZ: No. We crossed the Pyrenees Mountains by foot to Spain, and then into Portugal, and from Portugal took a Greek ship that did not come back. It was sunk on the way back to port. To New York.

LB: Sunk by the Germans?

KATZ: By the Germans. So that was the long trip.

LB: Was your family practicing Judaism at that time?

KATZ: No, no. We were not a religious family. There were some customs and candles were lit on some holidays but it wasn't anything very formal. We never had a Christmas tree and I don't recall anytime going with my parents to a synagogue.

LB: Where did you enter the United States, then?

KATZ: We entered in New York. We were sponsored by an American family with a Russian background that met us at the port with a turkey, a set of dishes, silverware, and had an apartment for us. We lived on the Eastside, East 10th Street in Manhattan at which point, I think, at that time both mother and father had to go to work; mother working in a sweat shop, father was a machinist. My sister and I entered school.

LB: Had your father been a machinist in Germany?

KATZ: No. He was going — I must admit, I don't quite know exactly what he was doing in Germany. He was a student, he would do writing, he would do some translating, and [his] parents were divorced very early on and my father's background was somewhat of a mystery, and still is somewhat of a mystery to me.

LB: Did your mother continue to work, as you say, in the sweat shop?

KATZ: She brought the sweat work home at some point and did needlework on little evening bags and then knitted sweaters for the soldiers during World War II. I think it was a sweater a week. One of these heavy wool sweaters.

LB: Now, you have a sister?

KATZ: I have a sister.

LB: What were you and your sister doing while your mother was working?

KATZ: We went to school, we came home, and we pretty much took care of ourselves. At the point where my mother had taken the work home, she was home when we arrived but we became pretty much independent. Later on, I remember that I wore a key around my neck on a string. [Both laugh] I think that's where the word "latch-key" comes from. I would come home and do my homework and start preparing dinner. That was basically my way of handling that situation.

LB: What kind of recreation did you have?

KATZ: In New York we played potsy on the street.

LB: Potsy?

KATZ: Potsy, hopscotch. Kick-the-can, stickball. Anybody who says that you can't have fun on the streets of New York growing up, doesn't know what they're talking about. Hide-and-seek.

LB: Did you go anywhere together as a family, or were you able to do anything like that?

KATZ: No, no, no. The family really did not operate as a family unit very much. My father left. I was eight years old when I came to the United States and I think he left when I was about 11. Things were very difficult. We weren't in on public assistance. We decided, you know, that we were going to survive ourselves, which meant that everybody had work, and we had the responsibility of learning a language. And we had no money, so there really wasn't an opportunity to do a lot of family activities.

LB: I hadn't thought about the language problem. How did you handle that?

KATZ: I had — the thing that intrigues me is, during my legislative career, some of these issues come back to haunt you, like [Laughs] English as a second language for foreign students, or landlord-tenant legislation, well you need to have playgrounds for children if you're going to allow children to rent, to be allowed into a building under a rental agreement. I would say, "Well, I guess I must have missed a lot in my life somewhere." I don't quite understand, but children in New York did live in apartments and they did play outside and they didn't get molested, and they didn't get run over, and they survived.

As far as English as a second language, I remember walking in the classroom and the teacher pulled me over to the back and started to show me articles such as pen, pencil, and through a repetitive process I learned very quickly. There was no English as a second language, it was just a matter of if you're going to be here then you're going to have to follow the class and you're going to have to learn the language. And I did.

LB: What kind of a neighborhood was it that you lived in? Was it various different ethnic groups or?

KATZ: We moved. We were very transient. East 10th Street, which was primarily low-income, usually the first stopping place for refugees or emigrants, very ethnic; Italians, Irish, Jews, Catholics.

Then we moved uptown, West 136th, very close to Harlem but it's still uptown. [Laughs] That was a much classier neighborhood, and the apartment was bigger, and it was on Broadway, between Broadway and the Hudson, riverside.

Then we moved to West 110th Street, which was again on the borderline of Spanish Harlem, but still in the white neighborhood. [Laughs] So we've kind of always been very close to crossing the magic borderline in New York. Near Columbia University.

Then I got married and we moved into a middle-class, suburban-urban environment near Brooklyn College in Brooklyn.

LB: I forgot to ask you, but during your immigration did you have any impressions of the United States when you first came? Anything that...

KATZ: The only thing that I remember is, I guess there must be mica that's mixed with the cement in the streets that are paved with...

LB: Shiny?

KATZ: Yes, it was shiny. I thought the streets are paved with diamonds [Laughs] in New York. Every once in a while I'll find a stretch with it. I think it's mica, but it may not be, and I chuckle to myself. Some diamonds!

LB: I don't know where that myth began. [Laughs] The streets paved with diamonds. And gold.

KATZ: And gold.

LB: Did your mother then, as your major influence, I suppose, when you were a child, did she kind of promote education? You mentioned that you did go on to college. Did she encourage you to stick with your studies?

KATZ: These are traditions in Jewish families. Education is very important and the only way you're going to advance, and it's your responsibility to be an educated individual in our society, whether you go on and practice it in a profession or your profession is being a homemaker. My mother, though she wanted me, I'm sure, to get married and start a family, also wanted me to be educated. So there was a real strong effort on her part to influence me to do very well in school. [She] pushed me very hard to work hard during grade school and to go ahead on to college, and she did the same with my sister.

My sister's educational history was a little rockier than mine, but she ended up as a psychiatrist and finished medical school in three years after dropping out and being forced to drop out of several city colleges [Laughs] because of her behavior and lack of work ethic. I led a much quieter life and went on to Brooklyn College where I received my Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a Psychology Minor, went on to take 30 credits for my Master's, passed my comprehensive exam, and did not complete my Master's study because I thought I was going to go on for my Ph.D. I did not do that yet, but there's still a few years left.

LB: Oh, sure. Had your mother had a formal education?

KATZ: In Russia it's called a gymnasium. I don't recall how far she went, but she had attended school. My father also went to medical school. So it was apparent that both of them had received a fairly sound educational base. I cannot speak to any other members of my family. I've never even met them.

LB: Did you have any financial resources available to you? Did you have to work your way through college, or how did you handle that?

KATZ: Brooklyn College was a city school. Tuitions were very low at that time. I did work. I worked about 15 hours a week at odd jobs trying to fit it into the schedule. But the commitment that my mother made was to keep me at home and to provide those necessary resources so that I could continue. Though I did make some attempt, I did not put in 30 hours of work a week. But there was, certainly in my junior and senior year, work experience connected with my educational studies.

LB: Well, now, you mentioned working for your master's, or acquiring hours toward your master's. Did you know what you wanted to do? At all?

KATZ: No, no. Now that I think back on it, the college was really remiss in trying to provide a little bit more direction to those of us who took the humanities courses and the humanities track. I had thought that with a Master's in Sociology, and related courses in psychology, and several courses in history that I'd go to work for the United Nations [U.N.]. It was a rather rude awakening when I left Brooklyn College to find out that all I was able really to do is get a job for \$70 a week to either be a statistician or a market research analyst. A market research analyst was a glorified title for somebody who would type budgets and do percentages on a calculator.

There was really no employment available at that time. One, for women, though I wasn't aware of that yet. But, two, for somebody coming out of a higher educational institution with a liberal arts track. Now, that would be fine. I mean that, because I firmly believe that the first four years of somebody's educational experience ought to be a liberal arts education. But the next two years, you ought to be focusing in on some kind of a tie-in between the work experience and your educational courses. There was no such direction and I was just too ignorant, not very well informed, to make that tie myself.

LB: You mentioned thinking of working for the U.N. Were you still bilingual? At that time did you still speak German or?

KATZ: Russian. See, I never spoke German, because I left Dusseldorf when I was two, three months old. My sister spoke German. I spoke French and I spoke Russian.

When I came to the United States, I made a pronouncement that I was going to speak English only, and that I was no longer going to speak a foreign language. Consequently I stopped speaking French, and I was fluent in French because I had gone to school in France from pre-school all the way on 'til I was eight years of age. I was forced to speak Russian because that was the tongue that was spoken at home. So I still maintained the ties to the Russian language, but I had not spoken a word of French since we stepped foot on Ellis Island or wherever we landed. I was going to be an American!  
[Both laugh]

LB: Well, I read somewhere that you were interested in the dance. Can you tell me about that?

KATZ: One of the things my mother also wanted me to do, was she wanted me to get away for the summer. The summers in New York were unbearable. I had a very good and kind mother and she protected me. Probably protected me much too much. In the summer she'd send me to camp. I think I must have gone on scholarship at that time. When I was about 15, just to be able to maintain myself, I decided that I was going to apply to be a junior counselor so that at least my tuition would be taken care of. Then, of course, later on I got paid, so I made some money during the summers.

I was introduced, when I was about 15 years old, to Mary Wigman's Modern Dance Concepts. Mary Wigman was a leading modern dancer in Germany, I think. [Laughs] I don't really – it's been a long time. She had what they called then the machine dance movements, resembling a machine. I guess there's a long history to it, but I don't recall it. But Martha Graham was influenced by Mary Wigman, and it was really very early. She was an innovator in modern dance.



One of her students happened to have been at camp teaching modern dance and, though I was working at camp, one evening a group of us decided that wouldn't it be fun to take a class with the instructor who was willing to give her free time in the evening? Lo and behold, this whole new world opened up to me. It was my first introduction to it and I just got so terribly involved in it.

Unfortunately, I didn't know that there were courses or classes in the city that I could take. My mother had no idea what I was doing and she wouldn't even have been able to give me any direction on it. This was in the early 1940s. Even Martha Graham, in the early 1940s, was just making some kind of inroad. Modern dance was still rather strange. So, the only experience I had with it was in the summer. I would come back to this camp every summer and work as a counselor and would take some classes and, eventually, helped teach some classes, so I learned how to teach.

Finally, in college somebody mentioned the fact that Martha Graham, in fact, had a studio in New York. I went and got heavily involved in studying the Martha Graham technique, primarily for teaching purposes because I enjoyed teaching. But, also, I think that I envisioned myself becoming a dancer. I didn't know until later that my legs were too short and I was too hippy [Laughs] and I didn't quite have the body. Certainly the body Martha Graham was looking for, which was the long slim, long legged, long torso body, tall women. It's changed since then but at that time, that was the body.

Nevertheless, I would take three classes a week and in the summer would take five classes a week. That was work, and spent a lot of my funds taking classes and enjoying every minute of it and missing it terribly here.

LB: Did you work with Martha Graham herself?

KATZ: She taught, yes. She's not one of my favorite folks. She and I had a slight run-in.  
[Laughs]

LB: Did you?

KATZ: Yes, but I have the highest regard and respect for her. She is, as far as I'm concerned, the founder of the modern dance movement and the educator for all those who have followed, and brilliant; just absolutely brilliant. I was fortunate enough, that when I advanced into the intermediate classes, which took several years to do — where you really fit into the intermediate class. People go into the intermediate class but never really were there. I was fortunate enough to have Martha as a teacher on a regular basis.

LB: Can you tell me about your run-in with her? [Laughs]

KATZ: Just physical contact. She didn't always quite believe in using words to express or explain how one would feel the muscles working in the back. Martha concentrated a lot on the back, which was very important, because most dancers have terribly weak backs and they don't know how to work their backs.

Well, I didn't quite know how to work my back either and follow it through my head. Martha came over to me and physically handled my body. At one point I told her to please take her hands off, that I think I understood and it wasn't necessary to be so brutal, at which point she — I was wearing a ponytail and she had taken the ponytail and just yanked it all the way up to force me to sit up and begin using the bottom of my back, which was very weak and still is today. She made her point, but from that day on she and I just did not get along, because I took her hand and I removed it from my body. [Both laugh] Nobody did that with Martha.

LB: Amazing. What were the other students like there? Were they serious dance students, or were they doing it just as a recreational kind of thing?

KATZ: No, serious. People came in — first of all, the instructors demanded serious work from you, and it wasn't cheap. Most of the students were either going to continue on, hoping to be in her company, dreaming of being in her chorus and working up to be a

soloist, or were there to teach during summers or during the school year as dance instructors, or at that time physical education instructors in high schools or colleges. Very, very serious. There was no joking around at the Martha Graham Studio.

LB: Did you see that as a kind of pursuit that would carry you through life, or were you just doing it mainly for exercise and as a recreational outlet?

KATZ: It was an emotional and physical outlet. I didn't see it as exercise and I didn't see it as recreation. It was work. Hard, hard work, but the end result was good. It was the first time in my life –.

I've got to back up. Before I found Martha Graham I had taken courses from Anna Sokalow, from Donald McKay, both of them disciples of Martha, and courses at the Y [Young Men's Christian Association], and floundering, because nobody made any sense. It was the first time that somebody explained how the body works and how the center of the body works and grows out of your limbs, and your back, and your head. It became so sensible to me that I was so intrigued by that and wanted to just continue working at it.

Also, the music was exciting, the fact that it wasn't just one exercise following another exercise. There was a flow and a pattern to it; though there was a series of movements in exercise, they all grew out of one another. If you did them one after the other, as she did in the movie, it became a dance because they all made sense. There was order and I liked that [Laughs] and found that in her studio.

Besides, at the end of five, six, seven years, you were able to do things that you probably never thought that you could manage. Acquiring the skills and trying to get the leg higher and higher, you know, every year a quarter of an inch or a half an inch, was a challenge. I realized early on that I wasn't going to be a dancer, but I didn't care. I was taking this very seriously. To some extent, it is the way I do my work now. I'm not going to be governor of the State of Oregon, but I take my work very seriously as to what I'm doing right now.

LB: What kind of cultural stimulations did you have in New York City that you might have taken advantage of? I know one woman that I interviewed mentioned that she went often to the Metropolitan Museum and they went to libraries on Saturdays and Sundays, things like that. Was there anything like that that you did?

KATZ: Not as a family. I did that by myself and then I did that with Mel. I met Mel when I was 16 years old and he was an artist, or was going to become an artist, and was going to Cooper Union Art School. So we had an opportunity to go to the art museums. We went to concerts, jazz concerts, symphony concerts, not too many because we couldn't afford it. A frustrating part of New York is that it's all there but there aren't very many people who really can afford it unless, of course, you walk in after the intermission. [Laughs]

We did go to the theatre. We attended the theatre and we probably attended more dance concerts than, I think, even Mel thought he would ever see. I guess, my focus was really on the dance and Martha Graham would do a concert tour and start in New York for two weeks. Two weeks; I was there every single night for two weeks.

LB: How did you meet Mel?

KATZ: Camp.

LB: At the summer camp?

KATZ: At the summer camp. There were several summer camps, but I met him at one of them. Then, we went together, summer after summer. I finally taught dance when I was about 18 years of age. I taught dance at the camp and he taught arts and crafts and that's how we made some money during the summer months, which was a nice way...

LB: Had you been campers or counselors together?

KATZ: He was a waiter, busboy waiter. I was a junior counselor. And we dated – God, I must've been 15. Got married when I was 21, so we had dated all those years and had gone away together for the summer all those years.

LB: Amazing.

**[End of Tape 1, Side 1]**

**Tape 1, Side 2**  
**1982 April 28**

LB: You said you were 21 when you married. When did you realize that you were getting serious about Mel? Did you see other people? Or just...

KATZ: Very infrequently. We were what you would call childhood sweethearts. We spent most of the weekends together, summers together, and very close. I knew probably when I was about 19 that this was going to be the individual that I was going to marry, and it was just a matter of when.

My mother had to leave for Washington, D.C., [District of Columbia] to work. Her office had moved from New York to Washington, D.C. She worked for the federal government. It became the appropriate time to get married.

LB: Now, when we spoke of your mother last, you said that she was working in a sweatshop. I assume she changed positions in the meantime.

KATZ: [Laughs] Oh, yes. Okay. Through the years she realized that she had another language that she was very good in and fluent, and she had done some translation work. One thing led to another, and she found herself working for the Voice of America in the Russian Department, which was a federal government agency. The office moved from New York to Washington. I was still going to Brooklyn College at that time. Mel and I decided that this would be a good time to get married. It was convenient. [LB laughs] And we did.

We had a very quiet ceremony. We got married and moved down to Brooklyn — I did. Continued my education, went to work, supported him while he was working on his art. He was working part-time, I was working fulltime. He had his studio in our apartment, our small little apartment. I worked for eight years as a market research analyst, motivational market research. Eight years later we decided to have our first child, first and only child.

LB: This is your son you're speaking of?

KATZ: Son, right. Mel, by then, had rented a studio. He was still working at the Y. I can't recall if it was a — it wasn't fulltime; it was part-time. Jesse was born in 1962 and, I think, a year later Mel decided that he wanted to look for other employment opportunities.

We took a map of the United States that was very small, put it on the floor, and the question we asked ourselves was, "Where would we like to live if we didn't live in New York?" We identified places like Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco. There weren't too many places in the Midwest. Then we said, "What's this Portland? It looks pretty close to San Francisco." It looked big on the map, so we figured it was a metropolitan area. [Laughs] So he sent out about 350 applications for employment opportunities and got a response from the Portland Art Museum saying, "We'd love to have you for a year."

Well, between the time he applied and the time that he heard, he had been asked to exhibit his work and it was to be his first one-person show in New York. Well, you don't turn that down because you're going to Portland, Oregon. So we had to turn Portland, Oregon, down. We sent out our friend, Hal Jacobs, who stayed at the museum a couple of years. But he came out to Portland. The next year Mel applied again and the art museum still wanted him, so we had subletted our apartment figuring this was only going to be year's stay, took the family, Jesse, and came out here.

LB: So he would have been about two at that time.

KATZ: Two and a half.

LB: Going back to the time when you were in New York and you were, I suppose, newlyweds, one would say. That would have been what? Early 1950s? Middle 1950s. Somewhere in there?

KATZ: Middle 1950s.

LB: There was that Bohemian movement in New York at that time with Greenwich Village and all of that. Were you a part of that at all?

KATZ: No. Remember, we lived in Brooklyn.

LB: Oh, I see.

KATZ: Mel knew it and was very comfortable and familiar with it. I think he knows, probably, as well now and is even more comfortable with it now. But we physically removed ourselves from it. I guess we had a choice when we got married where we were going to live. There was still some element of the middle income class values from both Mel's family and my family that continued to permeate through our relationship. We made the decision, no, that's not where we're going to live. We're going to live in a very nice, safe, comfortable neighborhood similar to where Mel's parents lived and much better than where I lived.

LB: Now, you said before you had Jesse, you were doing motivational research. That was your work at that time. That sounds like a euphemism for something else. Can you tell me what...

KATZ: Trying to fool the public into buying a product. [Laughs]

I had started as a budget analyst really. It was just technical work. Moved into new products development. I remember my first new product was a bidet, the little vaginal feminine toilette. [Laughs] I had no idea that we were going to get involved in a product like that. It was so foreign. I mean, it's not foreign now. It's all over on the markets. I had to deal with the size, the packaging, the scent, the package design, and the copy or the



rhetoric about why it was so important for women to use this particular product. I did some formal research on it and then, just for my own benefits, some inner-office research on scent. Did a lot of work on scent. [Laughs]

Charles Antell hair products, that was another line. You don't see Charles Antell out here, but Charles Antell, I think, is still big on the East Coast whether it was cream-rinse shampoo or regular shampoo, or conditioner, whatever. And the color, big thing, color and scent. Had some contact with some real motivational research experts at that time because the company also had — that was something different. Prior to that I was working for Timex. Just before I left Timex they were beginning to get involved with the possibility of some motivational research analysis.

That was very early on, even in that field. So I was fortunate to sit in at some meetings and listen to experts on that. But really, basically, you're right. It was a euphemism of how can we get the public to buy a product without them knowing that they've been influenced by the advertising. That was fun. [Laughs] I'm not sure if it's quite ethical, but it sure was — I learned a lot.

LB: Did you use your background in sociology and psychology at all? Or did that help you in your job at all? Or help you get the job, perhaps?

KATZ: No. I guess one would say that only in a sense that I was probably well-rounded in terms of my educational experience and sensitive to the use of the word, or to images, or trying to influence people, that was helpful. But they could have hired, probably, a history major, a political science major too.

That field was probably the only field open in New York. Remember, all the advertising firms are in New York and all the research that's done pushing one product over the other. That's probably the only field, at least, at that time, that was willing to hire people like us, who were on the humanities track, because we had a well-rounded education.

LB: After you worked for eight years and then suddenly had a child, did that effect you in any way?

KATZ: It was so nice. I looked forward to it. I enjoyed being a parent. I enjoyed staying home. I enjoyed cleaning; I enjoyed cooking. I enjoyed taking care of Jesse, and I enjoyed that more than anything else. It was a nice change because from the time I entered college to that time, I had not taken any break. It was school, work eight years, and this was really the first break.

I did not want to come out here. I wanted to stay in New York. I had envisioned myself probably going back to work when Jesse would enter school. I think I saw myself going back to study dance again and maybe make a professional decision as to what other kind of work I would want to do. I don't think I wanted to stay in marketing any more than I did, and was not prepared to leave. But that was what Mel wanted to do and I had really no choice.

Now, I thought we'd come back and we left all our possessions in New York. After about the third year, we placed a phone call to Mel's sister and said, "I think you better put our possessions in storage and give up the apartment. We think we're going to be here for a while." Because then Mel went over to Portland State [University]. I think that it was just about three or four years ago we finally got some of our possessions back here.

LB: Amazing. So you arrived in Portland, then, in the early 1960s.

KATZ: 1964.

LB: What were your impressions of Portland when you got here? What stands out in your memory?

KATZ: Oh, I loved it. Well, first they said, "Hal Jacobs said you've got to live in Northwest Portland. It's the closest thing to New York." When we first got here we were on

Jefferson and 10th near the Safeway. There was a motel. That wasn't quite what I had envisioned [Laughs] living in Portland would be like. But we were told that that's just temporary, that these are the neighborhoods you ought to be looking at. We finally settled in on Overton between 24th and 25th. Joe Erceg and Elsa Erceg own the house now. It's a lovely two family house. It's now been restored and it's a one family house. We rented; that was the time when you could rent homes.

We found the city terribly friendly, clean, safe. I think the thing I remember is that people talk to you on the streets. They said hello. People talked to you in the stores when you were waiting. There wasn't any paper on the sidewalks. People had pride in their neighborhoods. I enjoyed those few years at home, living in the Northwest and in the city and then all of a sudden, and I can't tell you when it actually happened — things kind of changed. People weren't quite as friendly, and the city wasn't quite as clean, and the city wasn't quite as safe. But my first impressions was very, very positive.

Though I did miss some of the cultural activities of New York City, and that no matter how Portland tried, it just couldn't come close to the quality of the dance, the theatre, the music, and the art. To this day, I miss that terribly and I rarely participate in anything.

Oh, I shouldn't say that. [Laughs] But I'm very selective in what I go see or what I go hear, because when you've heard the best, it's very hard to be patient with the second best.

LB: Since Mel was working, did you have a circle of friends?

KATZ: Yes. We had basically a lot of Hal's friends. Hal made friends here, we did a lot of entertaining. It was probably the first time in our married life that we had done that, because our lives were always very full. When we were at home alone, we wanted to be home together. But we did a lot of entertaining here; people from the museum, people that Hal had known. And for the first time, you know, made family trips to the mountains, to the beach, around the city. That was very pleasant and very nice.

LB: If you didn't have your possessions, you had to set up housekeeping all over again. That must have been very difficult.

KATZ: We did, though the house was somewhat furnished. But we started to pick up odds and ends. We spent a lot of Saturdays at Goodwill. [Laughs] We learned where to go in the city to pick up some old furniture. The chairs you're sitting on is one of the things that we picked up. That was 1964. Four years later, I was beginning to get a little restless, 1968. That began the beginnings of my political adventure.

LB: Let's see. Jesse was preschool then. Were you active in any kind of preschool activities?

KATZ: Oh, yes. Oh, you bet. Cooperative daycare; Jesse was there for three years, because he was ready when he was still in diapers and wanted so badly to go and have some contact with other children. There weren't very many children living in Northwest Portland at that time. In fact, I recall the park was absolutely empty. I couldn't believe Wallace Park — Jesse may have been the only child in there. It is not that way today. Amazed, just amazed, that in a city the size of Portland that Jesse Katz had that park almost entirely to himself during the school hours. Participated in the cooperative day program as an active mother for three years in a row. I belonged to a cooperative daycare association. Most of my energies and efforts focused in on the family; Mel, family, entertaining, Jesse. But in 1968 things began to change.

LB: Why did they change in 1968?

KATZ: You've got remember that when I was in college, it was in the 1950s and that was the sleeping generation. I remember going into a bookstore and just looking around and being busy about my own work and the radio blasting the McCarthy hearings and

completely ignoring it. I was not involved. it didn't affect my life. I had my work to do. We were really the Sleeping Generation. And I guess, that's a part of my life that, probably now in hindsight, there was a real void.

My parents came from a political background. My father, when he was in Russia, was a Social Democrat, Menshevik. Both my father and mother were. In fact, I think my father even sat in jail during the Revolution because he was a Menshevik. They were involved in the Underground in Germany.

LB: Really? What kind of activities in the Underground?

KATZ: Nothing. Nothing mysterious about it, but just discussion groups. I'm not sure they were even smuggling people. I don't think that it went to that extreme. So there was a political awareness and that was missing in my life.

In 1968 if you recall, there was the Sleeping Generation, or the Next Generation finally woke up, and we had Vietnam War. We had the election where you found two individuals who began to arouse guilt feelings on the part of those that haven't done anything over the years and excite those that were willing to participate either, whether you supported Eugene McCarthy or Robert Kennedy. I went over to Robert Kennedy and decided to offer my services to answer the phone and lick the envelopes, just a couple of hours a week. Well, the next thing I know, that was almost fulltime.

LB: This is for the 1968 election?

KATZ: Yes, the 1968 election.

LB: And he came to Portland, too. I got to see him when he was here.

KATZ: He came to Portland and I was involved in scheduling a lot of celebrities that came to town. We could have done without a lot of those celebrities; they were more work than

help. But they, nevertheless, wanted to give of their time and energy to the senator. That was part of my job was to schedule people like Warren Beatty, and Patty Duke, and [Jim] Whittaker the mountain climber, and, oh, there were some educators and theologians who had come in, and some artists who had come in. We scheduled their day and made contacts all over the city to make sure that they were involved in worthwhile activity.

[I] had the pleasure of meeting Senator Kennedy and recall walking through the back room of one of the hotels, I think it was the Sheraton. Again, now after the tragic events, you think back on it and he didn't know — he was leading the way and people said it was very much parallel to what happened in California, Los Angeles. He never knew where he was going. I had the pleasure of explaining to him where he was going, who he was going to meet, how many people were going to be there, what the mood was. I guess that's where my psychology background came in handy. [Laughs] We kind of chatted about that and chuckled about it for a while, as we walked through the corridors of the hotel.

When he was assassinated and we were packing up the office, it became apparent that we just couldn't pack the boxes and close the door and walk away. That the campaign, the issues, and the man, but really the issues had to be continually raised and discussed. The issues ranged from aid to migrant workers — in Oregon, at that time had a large population of migrant workers and very little laws to protect them, if any. And the gun control issue.

We expanded our issue base to include decriminalization of alcohol — well, actually yes, decriminalization of public intoxication laws and the establishment of the detox center in downtown Portland, which was my charge. People like Gretchen Kafourey, Margot Perry, and some other folks worked on gun control legislation. Don Clark, at that time too, was involved in that.

We went down to the Legislature and lobbied unsuccessfully in 1969. During the period between 1969 and 1971, I collaborated with two others and was involved in writing a report called *The Green Ghetto*, which was a history of the laws on migrant workers and changes we would recommend in the statutes. It's in the library and I am so pleased

that some of our work – the legacy of the – and we called ourselves the Oregon Kennedy Action Corps. To this day, there's a copy of that in the files in the library. It was the first report ever done that was really an advocacy report on behalf of the migrant workers. It was well done, well documented, and made some recommendations on statutory changes from unemployment insurance to clean water and toilet paper in the fields. We went down with that report and legislation in 1971.

Now, during that time, we met Neil Goldschmidt, who was a bright-eyed and bushy-tailed energetic legal-aid attorney. When some of us decided that we wanted to look at migrant issues, we didn't even know what an O.R.S. was, which is the Oregon Revised Statue, or how to even look at it, how to read it, what it all meant. One evening we had a board meeting and we invited Neil Goldschmidt, who started to talk and didn't stop for about an hour and a half. Of course [he] absolutely impressed everyone that was in this room. Who was this young man, who, of course, explained everything to us and told us what he thought we ought to do and what he thought we ought not to do? I said we ought to involve this young man in some of our activities and keep him in mind, because he was a breath of fresh air.

Also at that meeting, Don Clark had suggested that we get involved in setting up the detox center. I chaired that task force and that task got accomplished during the year that Neil Goldschmidt became a city council member. Okay, so...

LB: But did he support it as a city council member?

KATZ: Yes, he supported it as a city council member. The chronology may be wrong, but I think it was the following year, or somewhere around there, Neil ran, 1970, 1971. We met him in 1968. He ran for city council and, of course, we all supported him and worked almost fulltime knocking on doors, the lawn signs, the phone calls, and learned almost everything there was to know about campaigning, and won the election.

Then it became, well, if we could do this, and we had a terrible time with the Legislature, why can't we run ourselves?

LB: Who was we?

KATZ: There was a cadre of folks. Steve Kafoury. Though I'm not sure — I think Stephen supported McCarthy. There was a bind that was there anyway. People like Gretchen [Kafoury]. She came on later on the scene. Earl Blumenauer. Who was the freshman class? Hardy Myers came later on, though Hardy, I think, was somewhat involved in some of our issues. We decided that —

Oh, 1970, we had reapportionment occurred, in 1970. And so the district was no longer a multiple district. It was a one person, one vote district.

**[End of Tape 1, Side 2]**



**Tape 2, Side 1**  
**1982 April 28**

LB: You had reapportionment in 1970.

KATZ: Reapportionment in 1970 was accomplished. The districts were no longer multi-districts. They were smaller now, so that people could run for the Legislature and maintain contact with the voters and campaign on a very personalized basis.

I decided that I was going to run, and succeeded. The Democrats took over in 1973, or the Legislature switched hands. At least the house switched hands. A flood of legislation was presented to us from all sources dealing with consumer protection, environmental protection, civil rights protection. It probably was the session where very important legislation either got introduced and passed, or got introduced and had preliminary work done on it and passed the following session. A lot of women's issues, the E.R.A. [Equal Rights Amendment] — Betty Roberts, by the way, was part of the early group, but she was already in the Legislature.

What I really ought to do, and I didn't do it, is pull out the letterhead of the Oregon Kennedy Action Corps, and try to go back and see who the people are.

LB: That would be interesting. I wanted to ask you, when you were running in 1972 you challenged Fritzi Chuinard. It's interesting to see a woman defeat a woman. I don't think that probably happens too often in our state legislative elections. Is there any comment you might want to make about that? Did you feel that you might easily overtake her in the election?

KATZ: Yes. After reapportionment we had done a thorough analysis of the remaining district and it became obvious that Fritzi — we had analyzed Fritzi's voting record and Fritzi's activities, and it became very obvious that, though this district was probably the most difficult district to represent, (you cannot please everybody here, and it's gotten even more difficult since the district now meanders over to the Southeast) that, Fritzi

Chuinard did, one, did not represent the district, did not make any attempt to keep in touch with the district and wasn't really responding to the needs of the district.

The district was as diverse as a precinct in the city of New York. From the rural Sauvie Island, to the rural north part of the county, to the very wealthy, the middle income up in the hills to the poor, elderly, single, widowed, divorced, gay, transient. We're in a population down here to Burnside to the retired, elderly living in the hotels in the downtown area to Goose Hollow. I mean, it was a fascinating district.

It became very obvious through census tract analysis and through just being involved in the neighborhood and going door to door and meeting people for the first time, they had never seen anyone campaigning on the doorstep before. I had no qualms about running against her, or the fact that she was a female, and did very well against her.

LB: What kind of an election was it? I mean, grassroots I imagine?

KATZ: Grassroots. It was basically — a couple of standards that we have held very high: one, it's going to be a grassroots election from the fundraising to the activity. We had a very detailed campaign plan and we followed it and we tried to reach every voter, on way or the other. I've not been able to do that quite as successfully ever since, but it was a huge task. And if you couldn't do it on the doorstep, you did it by phone, and by mail. We do reach everybody by mail now. The money was grassroots, the campaign was grassroots, and I insisted that I was going to talk on the issues.

I got involved with a candidate that had a personality, Robert Kennedy, my roots, or Neil. But they talked issues. It wasn't the personality rhetoric, or the political rhetoric, and the one thing that's followed me throughout my political career is that I'm only there for one term, so that I have to deal with the issues of the day. If the voters reject me because they don't accept my position, that's fine. But I will not hide behind my beliefs just so I can get reelected. I'm there to serve that term and no other. I insisted that that

be the standards for the campaign and, in fact, we've tried to make those standards throughout.

The money, now. Certainly, later on, you get money from special interest groups. There were no special interest groups terribly excited in our case the first time. They were a little more excited about it now. But the other standards are maintained.

LB: I'm interested. I'm thinking of the way you might conduct a campaign in an area as diverse as this. How would one present oneself as a candidate, say, to the Burnside District?

KATZ: Well, you see, at that time I had established a detox center. So the whole issue of dealing with the alcoholism, not as a crime. See, it was a crime on the statutes. We also had gone down to the Legislature and had the Legislature change the statute. Now it's defined as a disease. So to a large element in the downtown area, that made a lot of sense. I was also very concerned about the housing, single-room occupancy housing, and was later on involved in the city to try to deal with the whole issue of housing.

Neil appointed me to chair Chapter 13 Committee that tried to mitigate with the owners of these buildings some of those fire code violations and building code violations so we could protect the housing. So that was an interest that I think they could relate to.

I guess the other issues that I talked about were health care, landlord, tenants. There was nothing on the books to protect the tenants. Mel and I were renting and we had run into some very interesting problems [Laughs] and we were good tenants. My whole background from New York came into play. Tenants were second class citizens in Oregon at that time and that was, hopefully, going to change.

I did some research and found that there was really very little protection for consumers. Generic drug legislation was nonexistent. That was about the time, also, that the unit pricing issue in grocery stores came into play. So I found some issues that I thought were very important and would save people money and they were solid consumer issues.

Of course, the civil rights issues, the gay rights issues, the women's issues. There was a whole litany of those. There was also the one percent for art. There were other issues eventually that I got attracted to. I mean, I was spread thin in terms of my focus. I'm fully aware of it and though I was able to accomplish some of it, I was not able to accomplish it all. Obviously, I couldn't. But later on in the years, most everything I wanted to do got done.

One thing that I failed miserably in was kiddie discrimination. Oregon allows landlords to discriminate against children in rentals. I found that out and I was absolutely horrified at it. Of course, that was a terrible loss, but since then that issue has been resolved by city councils, it's been resolved in courts. I'm usually in the forefront of some of these issues. I'm usually five or 10 years ahead of my time on most of them. [Laughs] So some of them had passed immediately, others we had to go through the educational process.

Later on, because of my service on Ways and Means — go ahead. Maybe I'm...

LB: No, no. That's alright.

KATZ: The second session, I was asked to serve on the Ways and Means Committee and to serve on two committees of substance, and those were the two committees that I served on during my entire Ways and Means career, was Human Resources and Education. It's comprised of over 65% of the general fund. Not only was I asked to serve on the Ways and Means Committee and the Emergency Board, I was asked to chair the Education Subcommittee. I knew nothing about the financing of education in the State of Oregon.

LB: Let's go back. You said that you were asked to serve on the Ways and Means Committee. Do those plums just come along because someone asks you?

KATZ: Oh, okay. That was the Phil Lang Administration. Let's backtrack. Richard Eymann was the speaker in 1973. I don't recall Dick Eymann ever asking me to support him or promising me anything. As a freshman, I just kind of listened and did what I thought was right and everybody kind of did what they thought was right and, luckily, we all did it together at the same time and it became right.

1975 was a little different situation. Eymann was defeated and the speakership was up for grabs and some of us supported Phil Lang. There was not unanimity oh Phil Lang as speaker. I worked with Phil Lang but I had never asked him for anything and he had never offered. When Phil Lang became speaker, he said, "You're going down on Ways and Means." I wasn't even aware I wanted to go down to Ways and Means. "And you're going to chair Education."

I remember that I was shocked. I said, "But, Phil, I know nothing about education — at least, the financing of education. I have no idea what the policy issues are that we ought to be addressing for the next five years."

He said, "That's exactly why I want you down there, because you're coming in with a fresh approach on it." That was very important because most of the folks that were sitting and making those decisions became so intertwined in the educational system that they couldn't tell what was right and what had to be done. They were just kind of following the same old patterns that were established and Phil knew that some major changes had to occur. I came on the scene.

LB: Let's go back to one other...

KATZ: So, the answer to your question, in this particular case: no. Now there were other leadership battles but in this one, no.

LB: Okay, I see. I did forget to ask you, though, when you got to the Legislature, what was your impressions of what was going on, this legislative process? Now you mentioned before the interview that you had been a lobbyist, so you obviously were familiar with

some of the workings of the Legislature. What did you think when you were suddenly thrown into the real...

KATZ: Not very impressed with my colleagues, with the majority of them. I got the sense, and I think accurately, that the Legislature's resistant change. It does not want to change.

LB: Why is that, do you think?

KATZ: All institutions are resistant to change, because they assume what they've decided to do is working and there are enough vested interests in place because of the fact that it's working and it's too much of a hassle. It'll change when a crisis occurs and even then, it's doubtful. I mean, there's a lot of tension.

I knew that the process was going to be slow, that the process was going to be tedious, and probably, more important than even enacting some of the legislation that I had introduced, like the whole concept of the cost of growth in Oregon (we were growing very quickly as a state) the whole concept of the growth, was for educational purposes. That there had to be different approaches presented and the issues had to be discussed. A lot of the legislation I had introduced was really for that purpose, and it did raise a lot of questions. People were realizing that those are problems. Those issues weren't seriously raised in the past.

So that's what I learned: very slow, very tedious, very time consuming. You were dealing with people who were about average in everything they attempted and you had to work to accommodate their needs and desires without violating your ethics and your values; very difficult but possible.

LB: What was it like to be a woman in the Legislature?

KATZ: We had, if I recall, about seven. It was the largest class of women. We had people like Norma Paulus and Betty Roberts, oh, and Mary Rieke, leading us and providing us

direction. I loved our House Delegation, even some of the women that didn't quite agree with us on all the issues. We did battle with Gracie Peck on the obvious issues. But it was nice for the first time to have a women's caucus to talk about how we women reacted to all these power plays and the boys' network and the fact that many times we were just overlooked; not because people wanted to overlook us, but because it was the normal thing to do. They never had to deal with the fact that there was a mass of women in the House.

Then the E.R.A., the ratification of the E.R.A. on the state level here, amending the constitution on the state level here, and then all the bills that followed. The piece of legislation that I worked the hardest on and probably am the proudest of, is the one that prohibits discrimination in housing, in credit, and in public accommodations. Because in the city of Portland at that time, you couldn't eat in a restaurant in two major department stores, one, unless you were accompanied by a male and, one, you just couldn't walk in there — and this was public places. That's where we were in 1973, so that was one of the issues that I said, "That is going to be done this legislative session."

LB: Did you seven women then work together on that? Were you united?

KATZ: We worked together but we all gave — we were united on that one, but everybody had assignments and that was the one I was the chief sponsor, and that was the one that I had to follow. That was probably the most important piece of legislation, substantive importance, other than the ratification of the constitutional amendment.

LB: Was that called the Women's Caucus?

KATZ: We had a Women's Caucus. We have had it ever since but it was never quite the same because it was the largest freshman class, and the seniors, the Pauluses and the Riekes, at least in the House, were so happy to see some fresh young blood come in, that we became very close. To this day, there's really, on the floor of the house there's

only Mary Burrows and I, who were the two freshman legislators who came in at that time.

We lost Mary. We saw Norma advance to Secretary of State. Betty went to the Senate and then to judge, worked for her for governor. Fadeley lost. Gracie died. Peg Derelli lost. Pat Whiting lost. I can't remember who some of the others were. But Mary Burrows and I are the last two remaining. We have a very, very dear, close relationship between her, me, and Norma. I think to a large extent, many of my democratic colleagues don't quite understand how I could be close to some Republicans. [Laughs] That's really caused a tremendous problem for some of us.

LB: What about, as a legislator, being female and dealing with other legislators or lobbyists? Were you taken seriously?

KATZ: They didn't know how to even talk to us. They didn't know what to do with us. They didn't know, do you invite them alone? Do you invite them with their spouses? Do you invite them to a poker game? Do you invite them for drinks? Do you invite them to dinner or do you invite them at all?

You also need to understand that I had a reputation when I entered. *The Oregonian* said in their endorsement of me, and I underline endorsement, "Vera Katz is ready for the Oregon Legislature. The question is, is the Legislature ready for her?" So I had come with a reputation. Fast mouth. Maybe some slightly abrasive. Slightly pushy, aggressive. Some of them were really frightened of me. And I am really a pussycat. My feeling about this is: my office is open to anybody. I don't care if you supported my opponent and if you did everything you could to defeat me, which is your right, my office is open and you don't have to give me a penny to come and talk to me. Most of the lobbyists say that the reason they support candidates is for access. They didn't understand that. Consequently, a lot of them left me alone.

I had all the citizen's lobby groups parked in my office the first legislative session. I mean, almost all of them. Thank God when Gretchen came in, she took that load off my



shoulders. So I didn't really have much dealings with them, but some of them who were smart enough figured out that these women are going to be around for a while and they're going to be a force to reckon with, as we were because we were not a dumb class. We were sitting in some prominent positions. Environment and energy, or environment and land-use, there were five women on that committee. Almost any legislation you could have gotten through [passed through there]. Some of the smart lobbyists realized that they could, in fact, sit and talk to us and that they could take us out to dinner, and they could take us out to dinner without our spouses and it would be okay, and that we do understand the issues and they could share with us their feelings about legislation without having to feel uncomfortable about it. Some others, to this day, have not learned how to do it.

LB: I have heard from other legislators that there's a lot of homework involved in being in the Legislature, and there's also commuting sometimes and kind of an upheaval at home. It's a tremendous effort that one has to expend to get it all together. How did you handle that when you were...

KATZ: It wasn't easy. I made a decision. There are other women, by the way, who have made different decisions than I did. But I made the decision that my first responsibility is at home. I've taken on that job and I've been fortunate enough to have been elected but I will be coming home every night, unless, of course, I had to stay down for a meeting for my legislative duties, and I knew that was going to be a problem. We managed so that we shared some of the responsibilities. Jesse was a little older and it worked out.

It was a long day. I took a bus, our commuter bus, which is an hour and a half, and tried to get out of Salem at five o'clock to catch the bus back home, which forced me to leave as opposed to go out and socialize during the evening hours. So I probably was much more alert the next morning than most of my colleagues who had stayed down there. And [I] did not do much eating, or drinking, or smoking, or carousing.

The homework would come home at night, and after dinner I would put in about two hours of work because I always felt that I had to do my homework. I always felt that I had to make the extra effort. That took a lot out of me, but I had the energy to do it. When I went down to Ways and Means that became even more of a burden on the family. But they understood.

Mel and I talked about it and he said, "Look, if our marriage breaks up, it isn't going to be because you're down in Salem. It's going to be because there is other factors." That was an accurate assessment of the fact. And I think the family is very proud of it.

I think Jesse was very proud of it and, in some respects, he sort of followed in my footsteps on his own level and when he was ready to do it and learned a lot from that experience. From Mel, he's learned about the artistic life, art, jazz, new experiences in that area. From me, he's really learned about the political world and the process.

**[End of Tape 2, Side 1]**

**Tape 2, Side 2****1982 May 19**

LB: [This is an interview with] Vera Katz. The interview is being conducted at Mrs. Katz's home at 2068 Northwest Johnson in Portland. The date is May 19th, 1982. The interviewer is Linda Brody for the Oregon Historical Society.

[Tape stops]

Mrs. Katz, the last time that we spoke, after our interview you were telling me about some of the kind of political games that your colleagues play. Could you tell me something about that? We spoke of vote changing and promising votes and loyalties and that kind of thing. Could you tell me a little bit about that for this permanent record?

KATZ: Well, during the political process, there are attempts to sway other colleagues in one way or the other. Now, I've got to clarify that not all of my colleagues are involved in the political gamesmanship, but I think it would be unfair to say that that doesn't happen in the State of Oregon. As clean and as virgin pure as our politics are, compared to other Legislatures, those internal games do occur. There's certainly pork barreling, quid pro quos, trading of votes in other more subtle ways of getting the piece of legislation that you are interested in either having passed or defeated among some colleagues.

The interesting thing is that there are certain colleagues you always approach and others that are never approached. In my entire political career, I was never approached. There are other colleagues of mine who can claim that nobody has ever come to them to ask them for any of the favors that might smack of gamesmanship. I'm flattered by that.

For those of us who don't play those kinds of games, it takes a little longer to get our legislation through. But when it does pass, we feel good about it, unless, of course, the legislation has a tremendous amount of merit and it's the time for it to be enacted.

LB: I think I read and I think you also said in our first interview, that during your first session you had a number of issues that you were interested in. I think you sort of hinted at the fact that you narrowed your scope down a bit in following sessions.

KATZ: Oh, when we all came in in 1973 we were going to change the world. It was a brand new, spanking new freshman class with big ideas coming off the 1968 presidential election, the 1970 city council race, and we were going to make major changes. One of the major changes that occurred is that the Democrats finally took control of the Oregon Legislature. Our speaker was Dick Eymann, who was a very progressive and liberal Speaker of the House and we were able to enact some very important pieces of legislation, [Laughs] some of which escape me right now. But for us personally, we came in and we had to have our name on every piece of legislation that we thought was critical to the State of Oregon — not to our reelection but to the State of Oregon. Thank goodness not all of them passed. [Laughs]

LB: This is the Women's Caucus?

KATZ: Oh, this is the women, and this is also individual legislators. Later on, as you mature through the process and as you learn the process, you realize that you cannot physically be at every public hearing or do the kind of research that you have to do on the legislation you're introducing. It's totally irresponsible to introduce a bill and never pursue it any further in terms of trying to enact it into law. Unless, of course, you're introducing a bill just as a personal favor to somebody and telling them "We'll put it in, but we won't do anything about it."

So many of us, including myself started to narrow our field. I did a lot of work in the women's legislation until about 1975, 1977, when other women came into the Oregon Legislature and we said, "Okay, it's your turn now to follow these issues. I'll keep one or two that I feel very closely about, that I've done a lot of work. I'm moving on to do something else." For me personally, I moved from consumer protection, women's issues,

housing, landlord/tenant, to issues of the budget process, economic development, and some bonding issues.

Now that doesn't mean that I still don't have any interest — I have two housing bills I passed during the last legislative session; residues of issues that never got enacted in my early years. But, started to move in other directions only because those were the committees that I sit on, and because those are really the issues that there is a lot of focus on and you want to provide that kind of direction and innovation that you think you've provided for the issues of the past.

LB: I see. In your experience, what kind of lobbies would you consider to be powerful or impressive? I mean, which kinds of lobbies in the State of Oregon go out of their way to impress legislators? Are there any particularly assertive lobbies?

KATZ: Yeah. I think there is a clear tie with the lobbies with the amount of money that they spend. One, on legislative races and, two, on lobbying. They are representative of the special interest groups that have a large contingency at the Oregon Legislature advocating their cause. Example: counties have a tremendous lobby cadre at the Oregon Legislature. They don't spend money as a lobby group for candidates, but they're there en masse, and that has a tremendous amount of impact only because they are there watching the legislation, educating legislators, and influencing legislators.

When you take a look at the lobby groups that spend some funds, it's probably fair to say that the Oregon Education Association, and they, in coalitions, sometimes with the Oregon School Board Association, coalitions with the state employees, with different coalitions, depending on the issues, built an impenetrable wall and it's very hard to break through, as evidenced during this last special session on the whole issue of reducing the property — 30% property tax relief program. They saw that as detrimental to the school budgets and built those necessary coalitions, and we just were stymied.

In the past the insurance and medical lobbies exhibited a tremendous amount of clout. That is slowly diminishing and, I think, it's diminishing because of the high cost of

health care. Those pressures are mitigated by the fact that the Legislature now is looking for other ways to finance health care, even though it might go against the philosophical grain of professional organized medicine, or the insurance who support organized medicine, but paying the freight.

The banks and the S.&L.s [Savings and Loan], the financial institutions, not so much because of the money that they provide for candidates, but more because the two lobbyists, or the several lobbies are very personable, are experts at what they do, know how to do it, do it without antagonizing people, and are probably the best lobbyists in the business at this time.

I don't think that it would be fair to classify any other lobby group with those that I mentioned, because though they are good, they're certainly not in a class of the Oregon Education Association.

The A.F.L.-C.I.O. [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations], which probably has the largest contingency in the state, doesn't have the funds and has a lot of internal bickering on the issues, so that it appears that their power is diminishing. Though, there are a lot of legislators who are committed to the issues of organized labor and would support those issues whether they receive one cent for their campaigns or not. On a lot of other issues, they turn a deaf ear, such as the original plant closure bill. The original, I underline, not the one we voted on. The original plant closure bill, which the strongest labor supporters said, "This is unconscionable. We just cannot support." That was the A.F.L.-C.I.O. top priority.

LB: We talked about, during the last interview, the special concerns of your constituency and you were saying that you had all kinds of interests here in this district, here. How have those interests changed over the years? I imagine in the time that you've been in the Legislature — I mean, I'm just supposing that certain needs have been fulfilled and on to new ones, or certain needs have disappeared and new problems have arisen. Are there any?

KATZ: In terms of how I've changed those with relation to the district?

LB: Yes.

KATZ: Not too much. The basic needs of the district still remain. The problems of survival for the elderly and the poor, the need for housing, and during good times, the need for some controls and regulations over the abandonment of housing or the conversion of housing to condominiums so that you have real changes in the neighborhood that reflect in higher rents or reflect in closures of buildings. Concern about, specifically, urban issues, historical preservation issues, community preservation issues since the Northwest District Association and Goose Hollow, and now my new district, Ladd's Addition, and Buckman, the community is very focused into preserving the community, rehabbing existing facilities and preserving housing. So that still continues to be reflected in my activity at the Legislature. Other than that –.

Oh, one other thing, the Tri-Met. Many of my constituents are transient dependent. They had some concerns, especially this legislative session, about the raising of rates. Unfortunately, that's a legislative issue. That was something that we followed with my colleagues in the Portland area for several sessions. We lost that battle this time, but that was another issue that those needs were reflected at the Legislature.

In the Northern part of the district, they had some real concern about M.S.D., Metropolitan Service District, and the potential landfill site at Wildwood. Whether I support the Wildwood site or not is not the issue. There were some legitimate problems that constituency had with regard to representation and with regard to the ability to negotiate with an agency like M.S.D. for some better financial benefits for that community as a trade-off for the establishment of a dump. Legislation was introduced on their behalf for that issue, didn't get anywhere but that was a legitimate concern from that part of the district.

Basically that's it. They leave me to do what they think I do best and with just those few exceptions, I feel that not only do I represent the district, but my role in Ways and Means is really representing the State of Oregon

LB: Yes, I was going to say that. But back to your constituents, how do they contact you? How do you listen to them?

KATZ: I try to come back to the district and meet with them. That isn't always very successful. I have meetings, nobody shows up. There is an attempt. I don't do weekly Saturday breakfast meetings and maybe I should. The weekends are very precious to me. My phone is listed in the phone book. They call me all hours of the day and night and on weekends, which is fine. They can reach me at home, they can write to me, and they will get a response.

LB: Everyone, I think, these days is as concerned about accessibility of their lawmakers, so that's why I asked that question.

KATZ: If they have a dog, [Laughs] they can accompany me walking my dog or jogging with me in the mornings.

LB: Now, I know that you're speaker pro tem this last session. How else are you involved in the Democratic leadership? You explained the various layers of leadership to me before, although I'm not sure that that was on tape when you explained it.

KATZ: Let's start from the top and let's just look at the House, though there are leadership organizations crossing both chambers. There's the speaker, the majority leader, the speaker pro tem, and the two whips or assistant majority leaders, and a representative from, I think, the freshman class, and from the Conservative Caucus.



That's kind of one little central group. Then a few other people are added to that and they make up the Democratic Policy Group.

The policy group meets with the speaker on a pretty regular basis trying to define some of the policy issues and making some policy decisions that they then go back and share with the caucus. That's the structure.

In reality, the decisions are probably made by two or three people, whether it's the speaker and the majority leader, the speaker majority leader, the speaker pro tem and the Ways and Means Chairperson. That has played a tremendous role – used to play a major role in the Way and Means Committee. Then you cross over and look at the Senate Chamber and there's another layer. There's a Senate President; there's a Speaker of the House; there's a Senate Majority Leader; House Majority Leader; House Minority Leader, Senate Minority Leader, Co-chairs of the Ways and Means. They create a policy group for both of the chambers, specifically, on the budget issues. Again, that's the structured leadership probably, the unstructured would be the co-chairs of the Ways and Means Committee, and the House Speaker, and the president, and maybe the two majority leaders.

There is always a smaller group that makes those key decisions and then it trickles all the way down until it reaches the caucus. Sometimes the governor's involved so that you're really coming from the top all the way down. My involvement has been primarily as somebody that knows the budget, concerned about the budget and, also, on the policy committee as speaker pro tem. Though I don't always agree with my leadership on a lot of the issues I am in that small early core group, except for the special session when I refused to participate, later on.

LB: Oh, I didn't know that. Why did you refuse?

KATZ: I felt that I really wasn't welcome, because I did not agree with the direction that, in this particular case, the speaker, majority leader, the whips, and, I think, some of the

Senate leaders took. I think that's one of the reasons we were there for such a long period of time.

LB: I think the taxpayers resented that quite a bit.

KATZ: Yes.

LB: You explained, I think, the way you acquired your position on the Ways and Means. I think you explained that you were a member of the Ways and Means. You were appointed by Phil Lang, I believe. How have you progressed on that committee over the sessions?

KATZ: I've been fortunate that I've had the opportunity to serve as a member of a committee, chair the two major subcommittees, Education and Human Resources — and act as co-chair of the Ways and Means Committee with my Senate counterpart and then for two sessions as vice-chair, though the vice-chair really isn't significant in terms of the title. I've grown in the sense that I know, I've had the experience of doing both. There are not very many people on the Ways and Means Committee that have had the opportunity to be both co-chair and members of the committee. I've grown in the sense that I've sat on the two committees that handles most of the money, so those are the areas that I have some familiarity with.

I think it would be fair to say that I feel very strongly that you have more clout and more power as a member of two major subcommittees, and as a chair of one of those two, than you would as a co-chair. Especially during the time when you have to cut budgets, because those decisions are primarily made by the members of the committee that deals with the details of the budget. When you have funds and you've got to make a decision how you distribute the meager surpluses that you might have, then you've got a lot of leeway and the co-chairs play a little bit more of a role. But when there's a deficit situation and you're trimming budgets, then those who know the issues and know the

budgets make the decisions. Being on all both sides, I think I've grown a lot in terms of understanding the process and I've also grown a lot to admit that the co-chairs, though it's very impressive to be a co-chair of the most powerful committee in the Legislature, the work is really done in the back of the Senate.

LB: The subcommittee positions, are those appointments or are those made on the basis of seniority or...

KATZ: A little bit of both. More on appointments and knowledge of the budgets. There are preferences given to senior members as members of the subcommittee and where people have some expertise or a real desire to serve. But I think it's fair to say that as far as the chairs of the two major committees, I think, it's primarily given to folks who understand the issues and who can handle the responsibility.

LB: It must generate a lot of homework looking at the details.

KATZ: Yes, a tremendous amount.

LB: Over the sessions, were there other appointments or committees that you were on that you contributed to, that were important to you?

KATZ: Ways and Means members don't serve on any other legislative committees. During the interim I was appointed by the governor to serve on the Bond and Debt Panel. That was the interim before the 1981 session. That was very important to me because that's where the whole issue of industrial revenue development bonds and economic development was introduced. It was also important because that's where the focus is on the whole bonding issue and the bond ratings, Oregon's bond ratings, and the role that the number of bonds issued have on the interest rates. Nobody understood that before, nobody wanted to understand it, it's very technical, it isn't very exciting, but it's very

important in terms of financing a local and state government. Those issues were clarified; I think I played a role in that.

The 1981 Legislature had a special committee on bonding. Bonding became a key element in the legislative deliberations. I found that to be very valuable for the state and for me personally.

LB: That sort of dovetails with your interest, though, in the financial aspects of the Legislature.

KATZ: Exactly. And the beginnings of my interest on economic development through the use, or abuse of industrial revenue development bonds. Since then, the other group that I'm involved with, again, during the interim, is the consortium between higher education and industry on the funding of high technology and the 50-50 match that both Governor Atiyeh and I collaborated on. That's important to me, because it's an innovation approach to a very small funding issue and higher education, and it's important to me because it's the first time that we've had a collaboration between industry, public and private education.

I'm also honored and flattered that the Governor has appointed a Democrat on the Governor's Economic Recovery Council.

LB: Do you see that as a solution to some of the financial problems that do exist, though: a cooperation between public and private enterprise?

KATZ: Absolutely. But then they make some demands from us as they have in higher education and the demands are absolutely legitimate. I think deep down the concept that I developed at the Higher Education Consortium was that for the industry to continue making that financial commitment, they would be making demands on the government to make some structural changes in higher education and raise the standards, and I wholeheartedly support that.

I think you're going to see those kinds of cooperative agreements because even the private institutions of higher education can't do it alone now. The funds just aren't even there from the private sources. I think there has to be some distance, certainly, and will always be, because private resources can't match state governmental resources. But if you have a specific program that you want to focus in on and it just doesn't fit in the priorities of the state or the money just isn't there, it is very appropriate, I think, to have some cooperative arrangements with the private sector.

LB: I agree with you. In our other interview you mentioned the good ol' boy system when you arrived in the Legislature. I'm not sure if I asked you if you had ever experienced any discrimination when you arrived or since, I guess, in your whole experience in the Legislature.

KATZ: I think the first time that I really sensed it was during this special session, where there was difficulty on both parts, my colleagues in a leadership position, to accept me dissenting from their policy decisions. It's hard for me to separate whether they rejected me because of my dissent on the policy issues or just that I was in a role a woman would play, because not only did I dissent, I had the votes. I didn't throw that up at them, it was just obvious they didn't have the votes. That a woman was able to cross the party lines and work with some Republicans, big question mark. I had a sense, though, when I would walk in to the speaker's office and there was, really, the ol' boys network was sitting there, that I was just not too welcome. I hope that changes. Temporary fleeting moments in history.

The other is just a kind of a sense, an undercurrent, that women legislators, even though some of them like myself hold fairly important legislative positions, never quite are able to break the barriers of private industry in terms of developing strong rapport with industry leaders or community leaders, and always looked with suspicion as to what we're doing and what our political philosophies are leanings are. Again, can't quite

distinguish whether it's because I'm a Democrat and my position on some issues differ from theirs, or whether I'm a woman. But the combination of both is a killer.

I sensed that at a press conference that the governor had for the appointment of the Economic Recovery Council. There were not too many women. I think there were two of us plus the Governor's staff person.

**[End of Tape 2, Side 2]**

**Tape 3, Side 1****1982 May 19**

KATZ: But were not accurately recorded. It may have been a bad morning for me, but as I entered the room I just sensed that I didn't quite belong. Again, whether it was the fact that I was a woman or the fact that I was a Democrat, and most of the people there were Republicans. But that makes very little difference to me because I work with Republicans. Some of my best friends in the Legislature are Republicans, some of the most respected colleagues in the House. So I had a very difficult time, but I just sensed that the fact that I was a woman in a circle of the ol' boys network was there. I can't do anything about it, just try to deal with it the best you can and insist that you play that role, certainly, and you're there and you're visible when you're invited to be there.

LB: It's interesting that it would crop up, though, in a special session where it's an emergency kind of situation. They were going to be forced to make some kind of a decision.

KATZ: See, I didn't even realize it. It was one of my women colleagues who said, "I want you there; it's the ol' boys network making the decision and you ought to be there. You're part of the leadership." Many times I wasn't even aware of the fact that the leadership was meeting on some of these issues. I mean, that message never quite got to me through the formal channel.

LB: You mean that you weren't invited to these?

KATZ: The message didn't get to me formally and, of course, that will all be denied. Maybe it was in the heat of the emotional trauma of the special session. Perceptions maybe have gone awry. I don't know. But it was pointed out.

LB: How did you manage to be voted as speaker pro tem? How did that come your way?

KATZ: I was just trying to think about it the other day. I didn't campaign for it. I guess the roots of that was that in 1979, I was one of the sacrificial lambs to get Hardy Myers elected speaker. He would not have been elected speaker had I not given up, or was asked to give up, or forced to give up my seat as Co-chair of the Ways and Means Committee since that was one of the plums the conservatives wanted and weren't willing to support Hardy Myers until they got it, and since that was my seat, I gave that up or was forced to give it up.

In 1981, the whole issue was, well, we aren't going to rock the boat and everybody's going to stay where they are. I said that's fine, but I decided that I wanted to make a statement, and it was time that a woman made that statement within the ol' boys network of the leadership in the House and decided to run.

I didn't win by much. It was by one vote because I ran against Ed Lindquist who had played a major role in unseating me as the co-chair in 1979. I did not campaign for it and, consequently, was somewhat surprised [Laughs] to see how close — I was surprised. I didn't think it would be that close. But it split down among the conservatives versus the progressives and a group of folks that were not involved in the history and, I guess, will lobby one way or the other and cast their vote for Ed Lindquist. But you win by one vote, you've won.

LB: You said conservatives and progressives. How would you label yourself?

KATZ: Progressive moderate. [Laughs] I never thought I'd qualify that. Mine really, as I said before, on the fiscal issues. Moderate may be the wrong term; more of a realist and a pragmatist. It's fine to talk about adding more money to the budgets and not starving higher education. We were accused of starving higher education in the paper today. And it's another thing to realize that the votes just aren't there and nobody's going to tolerate



massive increase in taxes when the unemployment rate in Oregon is hovering around 13, 14%.

On social issues and on other economic issues, political issues, I would classify myself as a progressive, looking at the roots of the problems and trying to get to solutions that address the roots of the problems, as opposed to fiddling around with the peripheral issues. You find out what is the real cause of the problem and you try to attack that, if it's at all possible. Certainly, this fiscal situation that we're in, it's probably not possible. Even when it's probably imperative that you do it, you can't because the funds just aren't there. You can reallocate some, but you've got immediate problems that you have to deal with and you don't have the luxury to go back and attack "the roots." I find myself siding on those issues with the progressive elements of both the Republican and Democratic Caucus.

But, as I said, I am a pragmatist, I am a realist, and I think the economic problems that the State of Oregon has been facing over the last couple of years and my role down at the Ways and Means, forces me to look at some of the issues in light of that. Are we doing, or would we be doing damage to what we're trying to preserve, which are the industries that have chosen to come to the state for one reason or another, or expand in the state for one reason or another. Not at the expense of the consumer, but there are some issues where I now think I can stand back and say, "I'm not sure now is the time that we ought to be dealing with some of these issues."

Example: the first plant closure bill which would've put a lot of burden on the industries and would've probably discouraged a lot of new industries from coming in. Now, I must qualify that. The final plant closure bill had nothing to do with that, but the original one that never got out of committee. I was criticized by my progressive colleagues and by progressive advocate groups that I took that position, but I was close enough to some of the problems in the economic development field, that that was an issue that I thought would be very harmful.

However, tightening up the regulations of industrial revenue development bonds, for example, which is used by industry to expand their facilities, probably would not have

done that kind of damage and I supported tightening. I even supported the abolishment of those issues. So I'm really unpredictable. It's a matter of looking at it and saying, "Who's paying, and who benefits, and who does it hurt?" and making those decisions based on those facts.

LB: Is it ever frustrating? Obviously it must be, the lack of money to be able to reorganize and allocate funds to where the Legislature feels they should go. It seems to me it would be intensely frustrating because of the economy of the state being so comparatively undeveloped and leaning so much on several major industries.

KATZ: Terribly frustrating. I'll just give you an example in higher education now. The higher education budget has been severely curtailed. It hasn't increased like it had in the past. I'm aware of it. I'm a terrible critic – not a terrible critic. I am a critic of the present system of higher education, for obvious reasons. But I support it and want it to be strong and healthy; it isn't.

On the other hand, you have to look at the needs that we are not providing for a high technology industry, which is one of the industries that is growing. It's a clean industry that wants and advocates land use planning, that has increased in terms of their job opportunities more than anything else, and it's a fine way for us to diversify. We've not provided them with a qualified engineering manpower, person power, that they need; graduates, undergraduates. Our system is not a quality system.

It was very apparent when industries were looking at relocating in Oregon, that our system of higher education was not going to meet their needs and that was one of the reasons they decided not to come here. I recall receiving a phone call from the then Mayor of the city of Portland, Neil Goldschmidt, saying, "I need \$200,000 to fund an engineering program at Portland State because I've got an electrical engineering group that wants to come to the City of Portland but they aren't satisfied with the educational system." It was just a perfect example. It continues to this day.

So here you're faced with a system of higher education that's being cut and the need to develop new programs in high technology. What do you do? I guess we came up with something: you put some money aside and you ask them to match it and you focus on that. Seed money, symbolic, but at least a step in the right direction. When you can do that under the atmosphere that you've described, it is very rewarding, even though you may fail and that program will never be continued again. For us to deal with misery all the time, you need to have something built into the system that gives you some rewards.

We did that also with the Dammasch closure of the wards and the deinstitutionalization of patients in the mental institutions. Dammasch in the tri-county area shifted the money from the closure of wards to the county mental health to provide services in the community. In time of a fiscal crisis that was a new program. I think there will be savings in funds, but more important than that, if the counties do their work well, they will have the money, but the services will be better for the client. Exciting, because it's a new perspective, a new plan, more structured than before during economic crisis.

I can only name one or two, maybe another one if you press me. And that's the frustration during these times. I can name you several others that we did when times were good that were very exciting. The challenge is much greater now, but at some point, if you've got nothing, you end up with nothing.

LB: I was wondering, do you think, this is certainly an opinion on your part, but the availability of hydroelectric power has possibly in the past attracted industries which have hampered these other industries who are not so reliant upon natural power. I was thinking of some of the labor intensive industries, like the aluminum plants and things like that.

KATZ: The aluminum plants. I guess those are the ones that would come to my mind first. On the other hand, one of the things that industries look at in the State of Oregon is the cost and the availability of energy. So we are in a positive situation if we can keep those

costs down. We're not going to be able to do that with the WPPSS<sup>1</sup> [Washington Public Power Supply System] situation, unfortunately. But I think we've been careful as the State of Oregon even to control the expansion of the aluminum industry for the reason that you stated. I remember Alumex denied, I don't know whether it was a permit or not, on the coast. One of the reasons was the intensive use of energy resources.

LB: What do you think about the expansion of nuclear power in the State of Oregon?

KATZ: I'm not supportive of that kind of a program. It's been absolutely obvious that our energy forecasts have been way off, that we didn't make the commitment when we first talked about it, on the conservation and on changing our lifestyle. We have now, it's paid off and I just feel that there are other ways than continuing the proliferation of nuclear power plants. I'm not advocating closure of what we have online but I think we have to reexamine, and we have reexamined the economics of it; the economics of not only the health aspect of it, but the economics.

LB: We talked earlier about your experiences in the 1973 session, and you briefly mentioned several occurrences in the 1975 session. Were there any other issues or anything that come to mind in the sessions beyond that up 'til now? You spoke of the recent special session, too.

KATZ: No. The only incidents that I had to really deal with — I had to deal with two. One, when I was appointed as co-chairperson of Ways and Means, I had to deal with that awesome responsibility. I was the first woman to have held that position.

[Tape stops]

Let's see, where we were?

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<sup>1</sup> Pronounced as "Whoops"

LB: You were talking about the awesome responsibility of being appointed as co-chair.

KATZ: As co-chair and whether I could do it, whether I could handle the job, whether I could deal with all the personalities that I had to deal with on the Ways and Means Committee, and my colleagues in the Oregon Legislature. That was a test of my abilities. Concerned about it, but willing to tackle that and I think I did a very good job.

The other was how I would handle the change that occurred in 1979, where I no longer had that responsibility and had to play second in command as vice-chair to somebody who never served on the Ways and Means Committee, didn't know the process, didn't know the budgets, and to a large extent really wasn't committed to it. The question that I asked myself, and I think everybody else asked themselves, how would I handle it? I think I handled that very well.

The chair and I became good working colleagues and I was supportive of his effort, since the issue really wasn't my own personal ego but the issue was getting the work done. You've got to give him credit for allowing me to play a behind the scene role in trying to get the budgets pulled together and the issues resolved.

That and the special session were difficult times for me, personally, and surprised that I was able to handle them and, of course, grew during that whole experience.

LB: Under the redistricting program, why did you decide not to run for the Senate this year?

KATZ: Good question. I thought about it, but I also know if I was going to do it, I was going to do it right. I was going to work hard; I was going to win. If you look at the geographic area of that new district — first just look at the geographic area of my House seat, which was expanded to cross the river. Then take a look at the Washington County one. I looked at it and I said, "I can't hold a job, do my work at the Legislature, and run

that kind of a massive campaign, and for what? Not to run every other year and to be a member of the Senate?”

Not running every other year was certainly a plus, but I never cared for the Senate. It has always been a very private little club, an old men’s club, with the addition of one or two women every once in a while, but that’s going to change now. I liked the uncertainty of the House. I like the dynamics of working with a bigger group. There were all the negatives. The only positive one was running every other year and I wasn’t sure how long I was going to want to serve in the Legislature. So that was the decision.

Besides which, Nancy Ryles wanted to do it. I have a very fond affection for Nancy. I love her dearly and she wanted it so badly. I knew she did a good job. I had no problems making that decision after I found out that she wanted to go. She waited for me to make the decision before she decided to run. She would not have run had I decided to go. But I put all that together and made a decision not to do it.

LB: I was interested in the man who resigned, the senator’s from this area. That was Ted Hallock, wasn’t it?

KATZ: Ted Hallock.

LB: Yes, the predecessor in this area and Tom Hartung both retiring. It was rather an interesting kind of situation. [Laughs] It all came together at the end.

KATZ: Really, yes. I guess the bottom line was that I enjoy the House better than I think I would have enjoyed the Senate.

LB: What next?

KATZ: This race, maybe speakership, maybe go back down to Ways and Means, concentrate on a couple of issues that I’ve been working on, and then really sitting back

and wondering if it may be time to leave and proceed on some new ventures, and probably not in the arena of politics. Very uncertain, makes me very uneasy not knowing quite what you're going to do when you grow up when you, in fact, have chronologically have grown up. And, I guess, not to worry about it until I've got to make that decision, which probably would be sometime early next year, would depend on how the session goes.

I enjoy the Oregon Legislature. I could probably serve my entire life, assuming the voters would want me down there. But it does preclude my ability to find employment and it does preclude from my ability to make a living, and it does preclude from my ability to have some time for myself. My family has grown. I'm alone and it's time to start a new life, and give somebody else a chance.

LB: I was going to ask you what kind of skills that you've acquired. I imagine you have acquired skills over the years. What would you apply to some sort of employment?

KATZ: [Laughs] That's a great question. I'm sorry I don't think I can answer it. I think I have acquired some skills. First of all, I've acquired the budgetary skills. I've also acquired process skills. I'm also knowledgeable about the government and how it operates. I also know who's in the government and where to push the buttons.

The process skills I find probably more important than anything else. How do you get down to the real issue? How do you push away all the muck and all the garbage and waste everybody's time dwelling on it when you know, and everybody else sitting around the table knows, what the real issue is? And how to weigh tradeoffs and how to make some very difficult, tough decisions and try to do it in the best interests of people in the State of Oregon. I think that's something that I can offer.

I probably would have to feel compelled to go back to academia to learn some additional skills that might need to complement what I just described. Others have said, "You're crazy. You don't have to go back to school; you can learn it on the job." I'm not as confident about my abilities as, probably, they are. I would like to go back. I've been

contemplating law school, but that might be a little bit too ambitious. Or I'd like to go back, maybe, and take some courses at Harvard, John F. Kennedy Institute, or the School of Management, but I can't. I can't even go on a vacation now, because there's always a threat of a special session coming. So those are some of the plans that I've been mulling over.

LB: Interesting. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this permanent record?

KATZ: Just that I want to thank Oregon and my constituents for giving me the opportunity to do what I've done for the last 10 years. They got a good deal and I got a good deal. I learned, and hope that even when I leave the system or don't return because they don't choose for me to come back, that I can continue providing that knowledge to somebody else in sharing it with other people. But there's no question in my mind that I would have never had the opportunity to do that in New York where I was raised and where I worked. That Oregon has allowed me to spend the last 10 years of my life doing something that is very exciting and very productive for me personally.

LB: I have to ask one more question.

KATZ: I thank them for that.

LB: Why do you say that you wouldn't have been allowed to do that in New York?

KATZ: It's a closed system in New York, a patronage system. Political parties are terribly strong. I'm not crazy about political parties. Probably deep down in my heart I'm more of an Independent than I am a Democrat. The rhetoric of the political parties grates me. I'm uncomfortable with it. It's all black and white, and it isn't all black and white; there are grays. The party system doesn't allow you to see those grays. In New York, boy, you've



got to be down the party line and you've got to be on the right side of the philosophical differences within the party line and I don't think that I could do it.

In Oregon I had to choose a party and I was a Democrat. I will always be a Democrat but had the flexibility, certainly, as I served to work both sides of the aisle on both issue support — both Republican governors, both McCall and Atiyeh, as well as Straub, and did it feeling very comfortable. Maybe at some great concern by my party Democrats, who can't understand why I don't follow in the footsteps of my own caucus. But that's the beauty of Oregon politics. I couldn't have done what I've done because I wasn't disciplined enough, in New York. I'm allowed that freedom here until, of course, my own party says "Out." I don't think that'll happen, but I don't have to be that disciplined. In New York you have to be.

LB: That's great. [Laughs] Well, thank you very much.

KATZ: Thank you.

**[End of Tape 3, Side 1]**

**[End of Interview]**