

Micky Loveman Transcript

ELAINE EFF: This is the Jewish Women's Archive Weaving Women's Words interview with Micky Loveman of 4000 North Charles Street in Baltimore, Maryland. And this is Elaine Eff interviewing Mrs. Loveman on August 14, 2001 in her lovely condominium at the Highfield House. Okay, Micky, why don't we start by your telling me your full name and your beginning.

MIRIAM LOVEMAN: My full name is Miriam Loveman. My nickname is Micky. My maiden name is Berenson, B-E-R-E-N-S-O-N. I was born in Chelsea, Mass (achusetts), April 12, 1918. And I lived in Massachusetts 'til I was seventeen when my mother was run over and killed by an auto. And then I moved to Baltimore to live with my mother's brother and his wife. My father and my brother remained in Massachusetts.

EE: Tell me about the ones you left behind? Tell what you remember about growing up in Chelsea. What was Chelsea like at that time? And what is Chelsea and what kind of community is it?

ML: Chelsea is a partly Jewish community. It's a small suburb of Boston of which there's many. And I didn't live there too long. When I was six years old my father and mother and brother moved to Springfield, Mass where I attended junior high and high school. I lived there until my mother was killed in Springfield. She had gone to the A & P to get some bread and as she crossed the street a car pinned her to a tree and she died instantly. I was seventeen. That was in 1935. After that I came to Baltimore.

EE: Why don't you tell me what kind of, I mean, what were you doing at age seventeen?

ML: I was a senior in high school. My mother died six months before my graduation.

EE: So that had a pretty devastating effect on your family I take it?

ML: After I graduated I came to live with my mother's brother and his wife. My uncle was head of sales at Cat's Paw Rubber Company. And I lived with them a few years. Then they moved to Florida. I didn't want to leave Baltimore 'cause I had made friends and I had a job. So I remained here and I boarded with people. I was a boarder until I got married at age twenty-three. I married Frank Loveman who had a shoe store on Pennsylvania Avenue. That's where I learned how to sell shoes. We sold the store a year later and my husband later retired. He was legally blind. I then went to work at Hess Shoes on Howard Street.

EE: Can I just slow us down for one minute?

ML: Yeah.

EE: What was your uncle's name?

ML: Sam Klein.

EE: And what kind of fellow was Sam Klein and who was his wife?

ML: His wife was Pearl Klein who was a "Sandy." Do you know the family? Did you ever hear of the Sandy Lodge? Oh, my aunt was a Sandy. Maiden name was Sandy. She married my mother's brother.

EE: And where did you live?

ML: We lived at 2427 Eutaw Place in one of those big houses. That's where I lived. But when they moved to Florida I moved around the corner to Brookfield Avenue [phone rings]. I lived at Brookfield Avenue and I worked at the Cat's Paw Rubber Company. And I left them and I worked at Schenuit Tire Company.

EE: What happened to your education?

ML: I only went through high school.

EE: Did you finish it in...?

ML: Oh yeah, Springfield. I graduated in Springfield, yeah. I was Treasurer of my class. Yup. And I had many different jobs. I kept trying to better myself. I was bookkeeper. I worked for Goldenberg Department Stores. I worked for Schenit Tire Company. And let me see, who else did I work for? Monumental Paper Company was my last job when I got married. Then when I married my husband, of course, I learned the shoe business. And after we were married a year, we went to Florida to try and establish residence there and we both worked there for six months. We didn't like it, so we came back. That's when I joined Hess Shoes.

EE: And what meaning does that have in your life?

ML: What meaning? That I wouldn't care to live in Florida again. [laughter] My husband loved it, but I didn't like it.

EE: You said that your husband went blind after—

ML: Legally blind since he was twelve years old. He was hit by an auto when he was young. He could see a little. But it was blurry. He couldn't drive. He couldn't read the paper. He couldn't see color television. So that's why I always had a black and white TV for him. But I did the driving.

EE: Tell me how you met him.

ML: I met him. My husband was a blind date. Someone gave him my number. In fact, it was a lawyer, I'm trying to think of his name. He died. He gave my husband my number and he took me out New Year's Eve. I went with him six months. And we got married. It

was his second marriage. He was married when he was twenty-five for one year. And then he stayed single. And never wanted to get married again. He married me when he was thirty-five and I was twenty-three. My first marriage. My only marriage.

EE: Was that considered unusual to marry someone twelve years older?

ML: No. No. I was very poor. I worked for twelve dollars a week. I was glad to marry someone who was nice to me and had a business. He was an only child. He had wonderful parents. And I lived with my in-laws until both of them were dead. This is the first place I've ever had of my own in thirty-nine years of marriage. That's a long time to live with in-laws. You have to know how to get along with people. You know what I'm saying. So we moved here.

EE: Tell me where you lived when you got married? Where did you live?

ML: We lived at the Temple Gardens, Madison Avenue and Druid Hill Park.

EE: What was that, tell me about that?

ML: That was a nice place. There were many Jewish people lived in there and it was considered a nice place near Druid Hill Park. I lived there many, many years. Apartment 202. [laughter] I remember it. And uhm...

EE Why don't you describe Temple Gardens; give us a visual.

ML: It was a colorful building. It was nice. There was a lot of nice people there. There were a lot of Jewish people there. People, Harold Newman lived there from S & N Katz. And there was doctors and lawyers there. I have been away from there now since...1980. I moved in here in January. That's after my mother-in-law died. She died in 1979 at ninety-four. She had cancer. I took care of her at home for a whole year. That was some job.

EE: Well, you stayed in Temple Garden; you really lived there through many different eras for Temple Gardens.

ML: Yes. Yes.

EE: Tell me what it was like when you moved in there? What was the environment? What was the community like?

ML: Well, it was a very elegant apartment building. And there were a lot of nice tenants there. A lot of Jewish people. And I liked it there. I got my first automobile when I lived there. I learned to drive. But I used to go down to Hess' on the bus to Howard and Saratoga Street. I used to work six days and two nights. Long hours. And now, at the present time, I'm working twenty-four hours a week. And I sold more [shoes] last year than anyone in the department who works double my hours and then some. So you know I know what I'm doing.

EE: All right. Let's...I want to talk about the shoe business. I think we'll spend quite a bit of time on the shoe business, but what I'd really like to talk about is coming to Baltimore. What it was like, what you thought of Baltimore as a New Englander coming here? And what you thought of the whole, you know, Eutaw place area. That neighborhood.

ML: Well, when I came to Baltimore, of course, I was unhappy. My mother had been killed. And I never liked Baltimore. To this day, I do not like Baltimore. I'm a New Englander at heart. I like Massachusetts. It's a slower life and when I lived there the crime was very small and here you got to be afraid to go out alone at night. Which I don't do any more since my husband died. I'm very happy in this building. It's very secure. You have to get a key to get use elevator. You have to have a key to go in the laundry room. And I have valet parking. I never get my car or put it away. I pull to the door and they do everything for me. So I'm satisfied. I just would like a little more room. I never had any children. And my husband never wanted children because of his eyes. He

thought he couldn't make a living. That's the reason I never had them. My in-laws were very, very nice to me. I enjoyed knowing and being with them. My father-in-law was an angel. He was very good to me.

EE: What was his name and what did he do for a living?

ML: He was Isaac Ernest Loveman. He had the shoe store that he gave to his son. So my husband grew up in the shoe business. When my husband was twenty-one years old his father turned over the key, the store, and gave him a big diamond ring which I now have. That was the end of them [in the shoe business]. But his mother helped us in the store in the evenings selling. So it was a family thing. You know, a close-knit family. Very close. He was mama's boy. Her only child. Which was good.

EE: So what did you father-in-law do after?

ML: He just retired and he dabbled in the stock market and ground rents.

EE: Tell me about ground rents.

ML: Ground rents. They were left to me.

EE: What are ground rents for people who don't know?

ML: People who own houses pay rent to other people who may own the ground the homes are built on. And they pay you twice a year. You get a check twice a year, if you're lucky. A lot of them don't pay. [laughter] I've got a lot of delinquents. And when Frank's father died he left everything to his wife. When his, when Frank's mother died, she left everything to her son, my husband. When my husband died I got the mother's, father's and the son's. So my husband had said, "You'll never have to worry when I'm gone." And he said, he made a joke, "If you can't find another man, I'm leaving you enough money to buy one." He used to kid me about that all the time.

EE: Did he know how beautiful you were? When you said he was blind probably from the time—

ML: He could see me. I'm not beautiful. God, I used to be pretty, I'm old now.

EE: What did he say? You're very young looking.

ML: Nobody thinks I'm eighty-three.

EE: You're the youngest eighty-three year old—

ML: My gentleman friend is twelve years younger than I am. My husband was twelve years older than I am. And he is wonderful to me. We'll never marry. But he's a wonderful companion. Because I'm alone. I have no children. My brother lives up in New Jersey. My father remarried. And they had a son, so I have a stepbrother.

EE: Tell me what happened back in Springfield after your mother died and you were sent...?

ML: After my mother died, my father and my brother went to live back in Boston, in Chelsea where we were born. And my father met a woman about five years after my mother died. And he married her. She was never married. Lovely lady. But, they had a nice child. A son, who is my stepbrother, who lives in Malden, now. And after many years she died of leukemia. My stepmother, I rarely saw, because I lived here. And then my father's son was with Eastern Airlines, my stepbrother. So my father went and lived in Miami Beach where he met a woman from New York who was high up in the Hadassah. I don't know what she was. He married her. She made his life miserable. On Thanksgiving Eve, while she was in the shower before getting dressed, my father walked out of the house. Took a plane, went back to Boston. She never knew where he went. He just left her. She called me up. And she said, "Do you know where your father is?" [laughter] I said, "No, I don't know." But he went back to Boston and he had a little

apartment there. And the house where he lived caught on fire and he was burnt to death [sobs].

EE: Oh my Lord. Say that again. What you just said.

ML: So that was my father and my mother. Both died accidentally. They were healthy. My mother was run over and my father was burned.

EE: Where did you get your personality? Where does that come from?

ML: Do you think I have personality?

EE: Well, I guess, I would say you do have quite—

ML: You have to have personality to be a top sales person.

EE: But do you get it from your parents?

ML: I would say so. Yeah. They were both happy go lucky. Very happy people, in love. Yeah.

EE: Why did your dad move you up, your family, move up to Springfield?

ML: Why did they move to Springfield? Because my father got a better job in Springfield. My uncle owned a furniture factory and my father worked there. My father was a top upholsterer. The kind that are out of existence. And my brother worked as a cutter. He cut the fabrics for the sofas. So they worked together. Yeah.

EE: Now, where is your brother now?

ML: My brother is in Rossmoor, New Jersey. He just moved there in a senior citizen establishment. He's two and one half years older than I am. And he's been married a long time. He's got wonderful children. In fact, my nephew-- my brother's daughter, is

married to a guy who was in Admissions at Harvard and now they live near Princeton. So my brother moved so they could be closer. They're up in years. And my niece and nephew have taught all over the world. Now they are going to Lebanon after their daughter's wedding in Colorado up in the mountains where I'm not going. My grandniece is getting married. So they are going to the American University of Beirut Lebanon for three months. They go all over the world. China, Japan, they're brilliant. That's my niece and her husband. My brother's daughter.

EE: Oh. They're the ones who are teachers. Not your brother.

ML: No, my brother's daughter. She's in her fifties.

EE: So do you have a good relationship with your brother?

ML: Oh yeah. I was there last weekend. We drove up to New Jersey to my brother's. Yeah. I'm very close. I call him every Sunday at 8:30 a.m.

EE: So what did he do for a living after...later?

ML: He retired.

EE: Did he stay in the upholstery business?

ML: After my father died? Yeah. He stayed in it for a couple of years. And then he retired.

EE: Do you remember what your Jewish, either religious life was like or your Jewish education when you lived in Massachusetts?

ML: My father wasn't religious. My mother and I, we used to go to shul. It was Orthodox where the men sat on one floor and the women sat on another floor. And I used to go with her every year, on the High Holidays. And then when I married my husband, we

were members of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. In fact, my mother-in-law was bas mitzvah there. They were long-time members on Madison Avenue. And I went there every holiday until my husband died. Then I dropped out because I didn't want to go alone at night.

EE: That means you made the switch up to Park Heights Avenue as well?

ML: Oh yeah. It's up Park Heights Avenue. Way up.

EE: What was your...?

ML: I got married at my Rabbi's home. Morris Lazeron. He was the Rabbi there. I got married in the garden of his home in 1941. July 24th. I got married on my husband's thirty-fifth birthday. So his birthday and my anniversary are the same day.

EE: That means he could never forget, I guess.

ML: He was a wonderful man.

EE: Now tell me about your husband.

ML: My husband was very refined. He was a perfect gentleman. His father was from Alabama. His mother was from Baltimore. And my husband was an only child. A little bit spoiled, you know. I was happy with him. We had no problems. I had a nice marriage for fifty-five years. He died of emphysema.

EE: You said you lived in Temple Gardens when you were married with your in-laws.

ML: And my husband.

EE: What kind of apartment did you have? It must have been quite large?

ML: It was a two bedroom. It was a nice apartment. It faced Madison Avenue. I remember the buses going by. And when I drove I always parked right at the door there at Madison Avenue. And it was okay. I mean, it was a lot better than I ever had. I bettered myself. I mean, of course when I was a teenager with my mother and father, we lived in Springfield we had a nice cottage, a brick cottage. I liked Springfield. I lived right across the street from the Shriner's Hospital for crippled children. It was a nice area up a hill. And I graduated from Commerce High School there. And you know I was a bookkeeper, shorthand and all that. I never went to college. My husband didn't graduate because of his eyes. He just went through junior high. He couldn't see good enough to go to college. And I wouldn't say I've had a sad life. I think I've had a nice life. I have been very successful in my field. Very. Anything I want to do. If I can't do it better than anyone, I don't want to do it. That's the kind of person I am. And when I went to Nordstrom's-- I left Hess' because after forty-eight years they wouldn't give me a transfer to the Towson store. I had to go down to the Harbor using three buses each way. And I got sick of it. So when Nordstrom's opened up I applied and they didn't take me right away because of my bad leg. I can't do steps good. So I told them, if they would get me an assistant, a runner, I would take the job. They called me back a week later and they said, we want you on board. We will get you an assistant. She runs for me. She gets the merchandise. She puts it away. All I do is fit the shoes.

EE: So where are there steps?

ML: In the stockroom. If you buy shoes that are not black, all the black are on the first floor, thirty steps up. Brown, beige, red, navy, white, bone, up the steps. You think I can come down the steps with six boxes? I would kill myself. So I have a runner. I always have a runner. When I don't have a runner, I don't work. Now my good runner is going back to college so I'm going to lose her. So I got to get another one. And uh....

EE: Who does the hiring?

ML: I've got letters from Mr. Nordstrom and everything.

EE: Who does the hiring of your runners?

ML: The department where they employ people. Human Resources.

EE: All right, let's, we need to go from the forward back or from the back forward. Shall we start with your life in shoes?

ML: My life in shoes...has been like a dream. I've been selling so long, sixty straight years I'm selling shoes. It's a wonder I look like I do. It's a wonder I can walk. It's a lot of walking. And I used to do it all myself until I went to Nordstrom's. And I'd still be doing it if they didn't have those steps. If it was all on one floor I wouldn't need a helper. But I do good. I've had days where I've sold nine thousand in one day.

EE: Not nine thousand pairs of shoes.

ML: Nine thousand dollars. No, you can't sell nine thousand pairs of shoes.

EE: You could if Imelda Marcos was your client.

ML: Yeah. [laughter] Now what else would you like to know?

EE: What don't you tell me how you got started at Hess'. You went from Loveman's to where?

ML: To Florida for the short while. I worked at Baker's shoe store in Florida. That's where I picked up my speed. I had forty seats to wait on all at once. Baker's in Miami City, not the Beach. In the City of Miami, when it was nice. Now it's terrible. That's where I worked.

EE: What was Baker's like then?

ML: It was nice. Shoes were \$3.98, \$4.98. Do you remember that? Oh, you're too young.

EE: I remember Baker's.

ML: Do you remember the John Irving shoes? Oh, wait a minute. Something else, too. When I was single before I married my husband, I worked on Lexington Street at Forsythe's selling pocketbooks on Saturdays to make extra money. That was another job I had. I didn't sell shoes, just pocketbooks. And when I went to Hess' I built up a large following. I still have some of the customers. I have some customers four generations. That's a lot of customers. I have books and books of names. And a lot of them, of course, have died. But I mean, I could go a whole day without waiting on anyone. Just calling people and sending merchandise. I used to do a lot of that. But I don't do it any more because I only work six hours, ten to four, four days a week. That's my latest for the last two years. Before that I was working three days and then they asked me to help them out and work an extra day. I only took the job for three days a week. But now I work four days. Pretty soon I won't be working. I'm going to hang it up. Hang up the shoehorn. But I think I'd miss it. And they'd miss me, believe me. I've got customers who won't come in unless I'm there. I know how to fit. I don't give them the wrong size. I've saved many people from foot surgery by fitting them correctly. I've had letters about that somewhere in one of my books. Yeah. So, do you think my life has been colorful?

EE: I think there is still more to hear.

ML: [laughter]

EE: Okay, so you came back to Baltimore. You went to Florida and you worked at Baker's.

ML: I came back to Baltimore and there was an ad in the paper for a sales lady for childrens' clothing at Hess Shoes on Howard Street. I answered the ad and when they heard that I had a shoe store they didn't put me in the clothing, they put me in shoes. And I worked in shoes. It was called 'The Thrifty Department,' the cheaper shoes. After I was there a while they put me in regular shoes. And I stayed there many, many, many years. And business was good on Howard Street. I was next door to Schleissner's. The Oriole Cafeteria was next door. I used to eat there, lunch. Do you remember all that? And I stayed there until--can you lift that, sweetheart?

EE: Sure. Tell me what this is.

ML: I want to show you.

EE: What is this book? What are we looking at?

ML: I'm going to show you when I left Hess'—there. That's when I left Howard Street, see it? And I went to the Harbor Place, Hess Shoes. Look at that write-up in the paper about me. See it? "Hess Sails In With Micky Loveman." That was their opening ad for the Harbor store.

EE: Why don't you read that. That's great. Read that paragraph.

ML: "July 1, 1980. Hess make more waves with our new Selby Department and our very special first mate, Micky Loveman. She's been sailing with Hess for over thirty-five years and is anxious to serve you at our new Harbor Place location. Ms. Loveman will be returning from vacation July 14th." Wasn't that nice?

EE: So, what was it like moving from...Why don't you tell me a little bit about Howard Street when you started working there. What year was that when you started?

ML: I think I started there in '43. March of '43. I'm not exactly sure. It was good. I loved it.

EE: What was Howard Street like as a place to shop and a place to go?

ML: It was wonderful.

EE: Why don't you describe it?

ML: Howard Street had all four department stores on one corner. Hochschild's, Hecht's, Stewart's and Hutzler's. It was a busy area. And one block up was Hess.

EE: Why don't you describe what a Saturday was like downtown? What were the busy days?

ML: The busy day was Saturday. But, it seemed that we had customers all the time. Where else could they buy shoes? The main shoe was the Selby shoes. The designer shoes were the Pandoras and the Herbert Levines. They were the costly shoes. They are both out of business. In 1978 I won the National Shoe Retailer's Award, top sales lady in the United States. There it is. A man flew down. The plaque is on the wall that he gave me. Bronze. And here it is. "Top Sales Lady in the United States on Footwear, 1978."

EE: Did that take you by surprise?

ML: I think I put that on the front page [of my book] because that was a great award. See, there are a lot of write-ups about me. See, different ones. "Salesperson of the Year." This was written up by Selby Shoe Company. "She is better known to her customers as Ms. Love," that was my name. Not Micky. "Ms. Love for the past thirty years has written the highest 'book' throughout the entire chain of Hess Stores... Personal following of more than one thousand customers." Well, you can read it, it's all

there.

EE: What do you attribute that to? Your success?

ML: Well, I would say I'm a good sales lady.

EE: Were you born to sell?

ML: Yes. Because my mother's three brothers were top salesmen for the Cat's Paw Rubber Company. All three. I inherited my selling career from them.

EE: So what are the secrets of a good sales person?

ML: I'll tell you in three words. This is very important. Service. Smile. And Sincerity. That's what made me successful. Service first. Sincerity is good, if you don't lie and tell them the shoe fits when it doesn't. And people love "Smile" sales people, not grouchy sales people. And I live by that rule. The three "S's". I've been written up on that subject.

EE: Did you have any competition?

ML: In my field? Yeah. A lot of people were very jealous of me. Yeah. Because they couldn't do as well as I did. And a lot of people learned how to be professional salespeople by watching and following me. Several people turned out to be good.

EE: Who were some of your protégés that you remember?

ML: Well, they became managers and all. I can't exactly tell you who. One of them works with me now. She was the manager of Hess at Owings Mills. She worked with me on Howard Street; her name is Eleanore Bunting. Do you know her? She works at Nordstrom's. After Hess closed, she came. I trained her thirty years ago. She is one of them. All right.

EE: So how does she compare to you?

ML: Well, she is good. She is very thorough. You have to be born with selling in your blood. You can't take someone and just say, "I will train you." It has to come from within. You have to, I talk to my customers like they're sitting here and I'm cutting up. I make my customers feel like they're in my living room. Not in a chair, fitting shoes. And I've become friendly with a lot of them.

EE: Tell me about some of your customers. The more memorable ones. Or some of the more memorable moments you had at the shoe store.

ML: Well, I used to wait on Mrs. Sheppard. Now, Mrs. Sheppard owned the Hanover Shoe Company. She was a multi-millionaire. I've been to her house for lunch. She owned the Hanover Shoe Farms with all the trotting horses. I still wait on her daughter, Mrs. DeVan, whose husband is a doctor in Hanover [PA]. I have a lot of customers that I've waited on for many years. I mean, just to mention a few. I don't want to put their names all in it.

EE: You don't have to use names, but can you tell me about any of the experiences you had that are more memorable?

ML: I waited on a very charming woman for many years. She was in charge of the Red Cross. And she had bad feet. She was about to have surgery when I gave her a corrected fit. She wrote Mr. Hess a letter that I saved her from surgery. The letter might be in here. She was a very charming woman. And I waited on her for years. These are pictures of all the people. All my awards. I mean, no big deal, you know.

EE: How many generations of Hess' did you work with?

ML: I worked with Ned Hess, his son, Tommy Hess who is still living. His nephew, George Hess, Jr. and his father, George Hess. And I knew their sons. Now they're out

of the business completely. They sold out to Mr. Gertz. Hess sold out to Hamburg, Germany, Ludwig Goertz of Germany and that was many years ago. So I worked for the Goertz family

EE: How did that affect you?

ML: Same thing. Same thing. Look, I wrote poems and everything [for the annual banquet].

EE: Tell me about Hess' as a family. Hess' as a company you used to work with.

ML: Very good. Nice people. Yeah, they were okay. Listen, when you work hard and you do good-- see, now look, this is from Germany, from Mr. Goertz, the owner. He sent me a postcard. There he is. And with his wife at Howard Street, at the store. He bought the company.

EE: That was quite a while ago.

ML: Yeah, many years ago.

EE: This is Eleanore, the one I said I trained, with me. This is the Harbor store; as it looked when I opened it. Were you ever down there?

ML: How did you feel about going down there?

EE: I liked it. A lot of very wealthy people used to come in their yachts! And they were good customers, but it changed. It really changed. Now it's terrible. Selby Shoe Company, they were a big company. U.S. Shoes. They gave me big write-ups. See. "Hess Store In Experienced Hands of Mickey [sic] Loveman."

EE: They spelled your name wrong.

ML: I know it. I'm not going to worry about that.

EE: What do you think of as the great moments in shoe history? In your shoe history?

ML: Well, shoes change. Now the shoes that I sold years ago with the big fat heels and the platforms, they're back in style. I still have a couple pair. How do you like that? I'll tell you something. I wouldn't want to go through those years again. I've worked very hard. I've accumulated a nice amount of money. I made good money. I saved my money. And then I became interested in stocks. So now, I have a nice portfolio.
[laughter] Heavy book.

EE: How do you get paid for selling shoes?

ML: I work on ten percent. If I sell \$100, I make \$10. If I sell \$1000, I make \$100.

EE: So you know that's the better way to go.

ML: But, there are a lot of returns in the shoe business. They buy them today and return them tomorrow. Are you like that?

EE: I do it.

ML: There are a lot of returns. Still, I am now for five years a Pacesetter in Nordstrom's. By being a Pacesetter you have to sell like 375,000 [dollars] a year in shoes. And also by being a Pacesetter, you get a thirty-three percent discount on what you purchase. Just an employee, you get twenty percent. But a Pacesetter is as high as you can go. And last year I was the only pacesetter in my department, working half their hours. So you know I worked hard to do it. By being a Pacesetter, they give you a nice book for your customer's names and you get your cards and you get your "thank you" notes. You have to write "thank you" notes. And I'll give you one of my cards. And it's an honor to be a Pacesetter. There were only twenty-three in the whole store [last year]. But I was the only one in Ladies Shoes.

EE: Are there any tricks of the trade?

ML: Tricks? Well, they're not what I call tricks but there's ways of making a shoe fit if it doesn't. By inserting tongue and heel pads, foam cushions, arch pads, heel slips. If a person has a bunion, we have a ball and ring to ease the bunion. It's an iron circle with a ball in the middle. You push this thing inside the shoe and the ball pushes out the shoe in one spot. Like you, you would need that. Have you had it done?

EE: No, not that I know of.

ML: I've got a ball and ring here. I can push your bunion out. [laughter] I know how to alter a shoe. I mean, sometimes you do it and people say, oh, it fits, what did you do? And I tell them, it's my secret. [laughter] I don't tell them everything. Have to have some secrets.

EE: Are there any, like initiation rites when a new shoe salesman comes into a store that the older—

ML: Well, when I worked at Hess, whenever anyone new came in they'd say, "Follow Micky and you'll learn." So in one week they learned. And now when we get new people at Nordstrom's they always say, "Why are you doing this, why are you doing that?" And I kind of like to teach them. And I've had some of my people who were my runners, assistants became sales people. They learned so much watching me that they thought they would rather sell than just be a runner. Make more money.

EE: What did your husband think of your career?

ML: He was very proud of me. He thought I was good. Every day when I would come home, the first thing he would say to me, "How much did you do today?" It was a joke between us. I'd say, "Guess." And we had a little thing going about that. But, he's gone. He was cremated. That's what he wanted. And we sat shiva one night here and

you should see what Nordstrom's sent. So many platters I couldn't get them on the table. They are wonderful to me.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

ML: They were wonderful to me. All the bosses came.

EE: It's interesting. How would you compare working for Hess' with working for Nordstrom's?

ML: Oh, Nordstrom's is much better. Did you see the plaque on the wall that they gave me? They had it enlarged and framed for my eighty-third birthday. They had it done in Florida. Isn't that beautiful!

EE: Why don't you describe what it is. I can see what that is but tell me what it is that you are talking about.

ML: They took my write-up in the April [issue of] Baltimore Magazine with my picture. They had it enlarged and framed in mahogany with the gold around it.

EE: Hold on.

ML: And that's a keepsake for life. I was very touched when they gave me that. It's beautiful. That's something I will always keep and—

EE: Hold on.

ML: This award is in 1978 when a man flew down from New York to give me this and a bond when I won the National Shoe Retailer's Award of America.

EE: Would you say that was the pinnacle of your career?

ML: At Hess, yes. But this [newer plaque] was the pinnacle at Nordstrom's.

EE: Now tell me when and under what circumstances you left Hess' and what year that was, do you remember?

ML: I left Hess' in September 19... I left in August 1991 when they refused to transfer me to another location. After I left they called me up and they said, "We decided to give you anything you want." I said, "It's too late. I've got a job now at Nordstrom's," and that was the end of Hess'. After Mr. Hess retired and it was in different hands, the managers, it was not a nice place to work. They didn't treat me right for all the business I did for them. So I didn't need the job, so my husband said, "Quit the damn job." So I did.

EE: Did you not work for any period of time?

ML: I was out of work only three weeks. From August to September. I went to Nordstrom's when it opened. And when Nordstrom's opened, now hear me, I was the only salesperson on their opening television show. I've got tape, out of several hundred employees. Beautiful. It shows me talking to one of my customers who was a model in Baltimore. It's beautiful. I've got three tapes. Yeah. I'm the oldest one there now.

EE: I'm sure. What do you like about shoes? About selling shoes?

ML: Well, selling shoes to me is as simple as drinking a cup of coffee. I know my work inside out and backwards. It's very easy. And when I get through waiting on people, they say, "Gee, give me your card, I'd like to come back to you." I say, "Sure." And I've built up a big following by treating people nice. And if I don't have their size I call other stores and I get their size. I don't leave them hanging in the air. That's very important in the shoe business. Because you get some that are, they're pretty tough. They want service when they come to Nordstrom's. You've got to give them service. And the manager of the store is very fond of me. I've gone through about four managers already. See this? This was the Vice President of the entire Nordstrom Company. She just last year left Nordstrom's; she is now CEO of Harrod's in England. See? She sent

me this Christmas card. She's a big shot. Marty Wickstrom. That's her son on the cover. So, I've got many write ups in another book from Nordstrom's. Letters from customers, a whole pile of them that I didn't pull out to show you. You don't need to see all that.

EE: Are you always surprised when you get a letter? Or do you expect to?

ML: Well, I get, they write letters to the firm telling about me: Micky is delightful, Micky is great, Micky is this, Micky is that. I get a lot of letters. Now what else would you like to hear about?

EE: I want to know what it is about, like I bet people say, "Oh man, I can't imagine working with people's feet, looking at people's feet all day." How do you counter that argument?

ML: Honey, I'm so used to looking at feet, I can look at a foot and tell you your size. I don't even have to measure you. A lot of people like to be fitted short. Now, if they say they wear a seven, and you give them a seven and it's too tight, you bring out the next size. A lot of people won't buy anything but what's in their mind. In other words, [phone rings] they want fit. And that's, tell me when. All right. A lot of people have bunions because when they were younger they were fitted too short. And a lot of people have bunion operations that aren't successful and I've seen quite a few that are not successful. The bunion grows back. I waited on one lady, a principal of a school--she had it done and for four years she couldn't get shoes on her feet. They changed her feet. They changed the size and she's miserable. All she can wear now are flats, no heels. Her husband is a dentist; they live in Linthicum. I've seen some good operations, too. But, you know, there is an old saying, "If it don't hurt, don't fix it." [laughter] It's true.

EE: Don't they always say, "If the shoe fits, wear it?"

ML: Right. That's right. You got it. I can make a sales lady out of you in one week. If you want to learn how to sell shoes, come on in. We're hiring. [laughter]

EE: So why don't you tell me what your life has been like since your husband died?

ML: Well, my husband died five years ago. And four years ago I met a very nice gentleman at a Christmas dinner. My Irish girlfriend who got married and lived in the next apartment moved to Sparks and she worked for the State. And she had this gentleman there who worked with her for the State who had lost his wife. So she thought she would get us together for Christmas dinner, which she did. So I met this man, Saul Goldberg, and I've been seeing him ever since. He's a very nice gentleman. Very kind to me. Helps me with everything. Takes me to dinner three times a week. Helps me with my chores. He's a very—I'm very lucky. He's a wonderful man. We'll never marry because we decided that at the beginning. He's got grown children, grandchildren and his mother is still living at North Oaks. She is ninety-five and we go to see her once in a while. He goes to Shul every Saturday. He is very, very deep in buying books. When Bibelot's went out of business he went there every weekend and bought books.

EE: What kind of books does he read?

ML: All kinds. He likes maps, too. He buys a lot of maps. He likes to drive. He works now for the Federal government in the Medicaid Department. Not Medicare, Medicaid. And the lady that introduced us also went from the State to the Federal. She works in a different area. She's got a very good job.

EE: Sounds to me like you like people who are very industrious?

ML: Yeah, I don't like lazy people. My husband said, "I don't have a lazy bone in my body" My mother was like that. She used to get up 5:00 o'clock in the morning and clean the house. By 8:00 o'clock she was ready to go downtown. No, my place is a little wrecked right now because I've been buying things for my brother and my sister-in-law.

Clothes, they're all over the floor there.

EE: What do you do to relax?

ML: I watch television. I'm very big on fashion magazines. Do you read them? I get a lot of them. Elle, Harper's, Vogue. When I was younger I played the piano. But after my mother died I sold the piano and I stopped playing the piano. What else do I do? I sew. I made this skirt. I do a lot of sewing. I like to sew.

EE: Do you think that's something that you must have picked up from your father or brother?

ML: I took sewing in school. No. I like to sew. My machine is open. See it there?

EE: Yeah.

ML: And what else do I like to do? Oh, I like to take pictures when I go out, of my friends. I like to go to Joey Chiu's with my girlfriend on Friday nights. It's a Chinese restaurant. I've been going there for years. My boyfriend and I, we go to Linwood's every other Saturday for dinner. I've been there. I like it. And on birthdays and New Year's we go to The Prime Rib. And during the week we like McCabe's. We like McCafferty's. That's all our hangouts.

EE: Tell me about your relationships with girlfriends? Do you have any girlfriends that go way back? Or where do you go?

ML: I have one girl friend that goes way back. We worked together at Cat's Paw Rubber Company, before I got married, for Esterson and Eisen. Her name is Sylvia Kleiman. She is my only Jewish girlfriend. She is religious. She keeps kosher. All my other friends are gentile.

EE: Now, why do you think that is?

ML: Well, it's--I think it's kind of the area where I live and the business that I'm in. And I have good girlfriends. Now my girlfriend that's down at the Ritz Carlton, who was at Harbor Court, she lived upstairs and we became friendly and every Friday we go to dinner. And, uhm, I have another girlfriend, she is also Irish. But we go way back. When I worked at Hess' she used to be a wrapper. She wrapped the shoes. And then she became the dye-girl. She dyed the shoes. She lives in Arbutus. And her name is Grace Miller. And I've known her since 1943. That's another old friend. Now I have five girlfriends in my will.

EE: What are the ages of your girlfriends? Are they mostly younger?

ML: Every one of them. I would say in their sixties. I have one girlfriend seventy, the rest are under. Yeah, none of them are my age. No.

EE: Were you ever friendly with women your age?

ML: The only one my age is my Jewish girlfriend, yeah, Sylvia. I never see her though. Once a year maybe. I talk to her. I have one cousin here. Her name is Millie Paul; she lives on Smith Avenue. She is my age. She's divorced. She was married to my first cousin. Do you know her? She married Parsons? You don't know her. She's been married twice. She used to look like Elizabeth Taylor. She was gorgeous.

EE: Did you always think of yourself as a working woman?

ML: Yes. Yes. I still think of myself as a working woman. Because if I stop working, I'm going to have a problem. I'll have to look for new hobbies. But another thing: All my friends work so who am I going to be with during the day? They all work. They're younger. So that's another reason I keep working. If I had a close girlfriend who was idle, like I would be, I guess I would stop. But they all work. And the one that I'm going out with tonight, she works for the Community College. I think she is a fundraiser. I don't know. This is Judy Martinak. She used to be my broker. And Dorothy Moran works for

the Ritz-Carlton. And let's see who else? Gracie Miller, she lives in Arbutus. I get to see her once a year at Christmas. Sylvia, my Jewish girlfriend, once a year. Eleanore works with me. I see her every day at work. She is another close friend. And I have another friend but she's a long distance friend now. She used to work at Schleisner's. And she lives way out on Frederick Road. And my friend that I used to go on the cruises with, Mary, she died last year. She was older than I am. I've taken many cruises with her. Just the two of us. She worked with me at Hess. Mary Hanner, she was in her eighties.

EE: What do you attribute your good health to?

ML: Who said I'm healthy? I never go to the doctor. My doctor retired. And I never go to any doctor now. And I should. Because there are a few things I should look into. But, I guess for my age I'm pretty good. I can tell you something else, too. I have two drinks every night of my life. VO on the rocks every day when I come home. While I'm fixing dinner. I don't smoke. And when I go out to dinner I have a drink or two. And it doesn't hurt you. Do you drink?

EE: In your case, I would certainly say it certainly doesn't hurt you.

ML: No. I don't get drunk. But I relax that way. When you serve the public all day and I come home, I open my mail, fix a drink while I'm fixing dinner. I relax that way. It just, it's a habit. Even when my husband was living. He used to drink wine. And I used to drink VO. We always had a drink.

EE: I get too relaxed.

ML: You don't drink.

EE: Oh, I do but, I mean, I drink wine.

ML: What do you drink?

EE: What do I drink? I drink like red wines or white wines. Or—

ML: Zinfandel?

EE: No. I don't like pink wines.

ML: Well, let me tell you something. This man I'm going with, Saul. Never was in a Chinese restaurant until he met me. Never had a drink. Never sat at a bar. I'm ruining him.

EE: What does his ninety-five year-old mother think of that?

ML: [laughter] She doesn't know he goes to bars. But, he said I've made his life different, too. He has a nice condo in Owings Mills. New Town. He lives alone. He's got a nice condo.

EE: You said you didn't like Baltimore. Have you ever figured out why that is?

ML: Well, the first reason, and this is going to be surprising to you, when my mother was killed I was in Baltimore visiting my aunt and uncle. And I'll never forget that train ride for eight hours to the funeral. They didn't tell me my mother was dead. They just said she had an accident. And that made me think, "Oh, I hate Baltimore, it's a bad luck city." And that's the first reason I've never liked Baltimore. And I still don't like it.

EE: So, what don't you like? How would you articulate it?

ML: It's such a fast moving place. When I lived in Springfield it was relaxed, quiet streets. You know, it's different living. I grew up in Springfield. When I left Springfield I came here to Baltimore. Are you a Baltimorean?

EE: I'm a New Englander too.

ML: You like Baltimore?

EE: I would say, that I wouldn't, I wouldn't blame the pace of things, because I think the pace has speeded up everywhere.

ML: Yeah, and the crime is everywhere now.

EE: What do you think about the technology? How do you adapt the new technology to your work. When you probably used to—

ML: I have a computer [at home]. A little 'I-Opener.' Did you ever hear of it? I get the news, I get the sports, I get e-mails and I do 'em. And I just use it once a night for about ten minutes. I like it. It's okay. I can do with it or without it.

EE: Have you ever been involved in women's organizations? Or any Jewish organizations?

ML: When I was real young, I think I was in the B'nai B'rith, real young, I think. But it dates way back. No. I'm not an organization person. And I'm not strictly a person that favors Jewish people because some of 'em are difficult to deal with. I've learned through my work that they're tough babies. So, I don't,--my boyfriend bawls me out-- he thinks I should be more Jewish than I am. [laughter] But I'll never change.

EE: How could you become more Jewish?

ML: Oh, I could be more interested in Jewish organizations. In fact, when I have time, when I retire, I am going to put a plaque in Baltimore Hebrew in my husband's name. I haven't done it yet. I just don't have time for everything. I'm busy. You don't know how many books I keep. The ground rents, three stock brokers, four stock books. Every day when I come home I have book work. I've got a lot to do besides my job there. Calling customers, trying to find shoes for them at night. Look, this is all work here.

EE: Where do you do your work?

ML: In the bedroom sitting near my bed. I should use my desk but I don't. I just ordered this for myself. Pink suede flat. I can only wear flats. It's on sale, look, \$50.00 for \$14.00. I like that so I'll see what happens. Do you do any mail order? Do you order through the mail ever?

EE: I do order through the mail, ever. But I'm more of a person-to-person kind of gal.

ML: Do you look for sales?

EE: I do look for sales. But I'll buy when I need something.

ML: Do you go to yard sales? That's my Sunday hobby.

EE: Ah.

ML: I have fun. I bought this little thing there.

EE: What is that?

ML: It's a swan. A glass swan. \$2.00. And I put my napkins in it. I thought it was pretty.

EE: It's great.

ML: I bought that at a yard sale. Look at the work on this thing. Fifty cents.

EE: Tell me what it is. Describe it.

ML: It's a doll. Just a doll. But look at that! Look at the work. That's all handmade. I thought it was adorable.

EE: Describe what she is wearing. Your doll.

ML: Well, she's wearing a double twirly skirt, that's suppose to be grapes I think, I don't know.

EE: How is it made?

ML: All hand crocheted. It's that adorable. I bought that and I bought one more. I've got to show it to you. It's crazy. It's cute as can be. Look at this crazy one I bought.

EE: What is that?

ML: That's a little animal with the curls.

EE: That is very cute.

ML: It's that darling. Suspenders.

EE: It's almost like a-- do you think that's a pig?

ML: I think it's a pig. Hold on, I want to show you this.

EE: A pink crocheted pig with long blonde curly locks.

ML: [Song is playing] It's more of an old-time..."L' is for the way you look at me. 'O' is for the only one I see. 'V' is very, very extraordinary. 'E' is even more than anyone that you adore. And LOVE is all that I can give..."

EE: Tell me about this.

ML: That's my valentine from Saul. [laughter] I think it's adorable.

EE: I think you have an awful good time.

ML: I do. I have fun. I have a lot of fun.

EE: Have you ever gone to Israel?

ML: That's my wolf. [howling]

EE: We're getting a little tour of Ms. Love's—

ML: I've never been to Israel. I've been on seventeen cruises, all in the Caribbean. I love Italian ships only. I like the bars. I like the food. I like the crew. What else do you want to know?

EE: When is your next cruise planned?

ML: Well, I'll tell you. I always used to go with my girlfriends. My husband went on one, he didn't like it. Too confining. My next cruise will probably be— I don't know if my friend will go or not. I'll either go with Dorothy or Saul. I don't know. I'd like to be going on one tomorrow. Love them. When I was on the Michaelangelo which is an Italian ship, when I got off I made so many friends they changed the name to the "Mickyangelo". Oh, I could tell you a lot of things. I'm not one of these conservative women. I'm very outgoing. I love jazzy clothes. I never wear tailored clothes. I like beads and jazz and ruffles. I could show you all my stuff. I love clothes. I've got three hundred blouses.

EE: Where do you shop?

ML: What size shoe do you wear?

EE: 8 ½.

ML: Where do I shop?

EE: You should tell me what size shoe I wear.

ML: I told you before 8 ½ or 9, didn't I? But you wear all these wide toes with that bunion? Or you wear dress shoes?

EE: No dress shoes.

ML: No dress shoes? Never?

EE: So tell about where you shop?

ML: Oh honey, I shop anywhere. Hecht Company, boutiques, anywhere.

EE: Do you like to shop when you're away?

ML: When I'm away in a foreign place I like to buy. But when I go to the islands I buy whiskey, naturally. And perfume. I love costume jewelry. I love rings. I've got drawers full. Plus I have nine big diamond rings. Big ones. My aunt, my mother-in-law's sister, was an opera singer. She left me all her diamonds. My mother-in-law left me her diamonds plus I have my own diamonds. I don't need any diamonds, believe me.

EE: You have an opera singer in your past?

ML: My mother-in-law's sister was an opera singer. She sang on the boats going to Europe. Her name was Frances Morrow. She died at ninety-two. My mother-in-law died at ninety-four. My mother-in-law was from a big family. She had six sisters and six brothers. My father was from a big family. He had, I think, five brothers and five sisters. My mother was from a smaller family. Three boys and three girls, in my mother's family.

EE: Do you know where they came from?

ML: Well, most of them were in Massachusetts.

EE: But where did they come to?

ML: I don't know. I think my mother came here when she was three weeks old from Russia. I'm not sure. I don't want to say because I'm not sure. My father was born in Portland, Maine. New Englander, yeah.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2]

ML: I say it's very odd that my friend, Saul likes to do so many things that I enjoy doing that we have a lot in common. Things that my husband would never do. He goes shopping with me. He'll go to yard sales. My husband would never do that. He likes to drive and take rides. My husband didn't like the car. And we just have a wonderful friendship and I'm very fortunate that I met him because at my age, who wants a woman eighty-three. But my husband said, "Don't worry about it. You'll find someone."

EE: What was your biggest adventure? Probably one of your trips?

ML: Biggest adventure? Well, I was on a ship once that was going after an Italian ship that was sinking. And we went after them in the middle of the night. And the ocean was so rough. I had on a red lace gown and when I got done I upchucked all over my gown. I was a mess. Only four people were left standing. I was one of them. That's how rough the sea was. But we saved the freighter. And we were late getting back to New York. We had to stay on the ship a whole night because that year there was a very big snowstorm in New York, and we couldn't get off the ship. I remember that. That was many years ago. I have books on my cruises that I didn't show you. I have books on cruises. I have books from Nordstrom's.

EE: Where is your book of your husband? Do you have a book of your husband, of your life with your husband?

ML: No.

EE: Why not?

ML: I have pictures of my husband. No. I don't have a book on my husband. I don't have a book on any man. I'll show you my husband.

EE: Let me just say that this is Tape 2 or Disc number 2 of interview for the Jewish Women's Archive with Micky Loveman by Elaine Eff on August 14, 2001.

ML: That's me and my husband. That's one of the last pictures we took together.

EE: That's great.

ML: He shaved his head like Yul Brynner. He was adorable. He loved clothes. He was a clotheshorse.

EE: Did you dress him?

ML: No, he dressed himself. [laughter] He wasn't that blind. He could go from one room to the other but he went to the Downtown Athletic Club for twenty years to exercise everyday, on the bus. But towards the end he couldn't do it.

EE: Now, where is this picture taken?

ML: This picture? It looks like it's taken in one of the shoe stores. It looks like shoes. Doesn't it?

EE: Yeah.

ML: Or is that a curtain?

EE: Well, it was probably a Christmas party.

ML: That's me. How I used to look. I was pretty.

EE: You were a looker.

ML: I was a looker but I wasn't a hooker. Yup.

EE: Well, let's think. Is there anything that we didn't talk about that we should talk about?

ML: Yeah.

EE: What's that.

ML: Right here. [mechanical laughter] How is that? [laughter]

EE: What is that? Tell me what that was?

ML: Too sexy. Just a little doll I picked up. I thought it was so cute.

EE: Did you get that at a yard sale?

ML: Uh huh. \$2.50.

EE: Oh, you paid a lot for that.

ML: Why?

EE: That's a lot if you paid \$2.00 for your swan.

ML: Oh well, they were different sales. Do you ever go? You do?

EE: Love them. Sure.

ML: Do you pick up any good stuff? Do you like estate sales?

EE: Sure. So where do you go? How do you pick them?

ML: I look in the paper. He picks them. Haven't found any good ones this year.

EE: I can tell you about one on Sunday.

ML: Where? This Sunday?

EE: Uh huh. In Catonsville. When we finish, make a note, and when we finish up we'll, I'll—

ML: What is it, a yard sale?

EE: No, it's an estate auction.

ML: What kind of stuff? I only buy certain stuff. He likes books. If there are books we'll go. He buys books. I buy costume jewelry or tschotschkies.

EE: What are tschotschkies?

ML: Oh like a little thing, like these little things that I buy. I don't know. Little crazy things. I don't know. I've got a lot of crap here.

EE: What is your favorite collection that you have here in the house?

ML: My favorite collection? I guess my costume jewelry.

EE: Did you—

ML: I got two whole chests full. I got a lot of stuff. Did you ever hear of Roz Kaplan, jewelry designer? Well, she died. I've got a lot of her stuff. She was a wonderful costume jewelry designer. In business for years. She was a friend of mine. She died last year. Her son is Dr. [Harold] Kaplan. He's now a hospice doctor.

EE: Do you have anything from your parents, from growing up? Anything that belonged to your mother or your father?

ML: I have some of my father's things, yeah. Not my mother's. There are things that my father, my father collected. He like pottery. If you walk over I can show you after. It's in

my—

EE: Tell me what it is.

ML: Dishes from Italy. Bookends, he saved Italian pottery. He liked different stuff like that. Yeah, my father liked that.

EE: How about your mother? Do you have anything from her?

ML: My mother? No, really I don't. I had her diamond ring but I got rid of it because when my mother died my father had it and gave it to his second wife and I didn't want to wear it [after that]. I sold it to a jeweler.

EE: Are there any ceremonial objects that you kept? Anything that had any value like Sabbath candle holders?

ML: I have my mother's candlesticks, yeah. That's my mother's. The brass.

EE: Do you ever use them?

ML: My boyfriend's mother does the bench light every...he eats with his mother every Friday night and they do the candles. But I don't do it. I'm not a good Jew.

EE: Do you do anything any more? I mean, do you go to any services?

ML: I haven't been to services since my husband died, truthfully. I dropped out of the Temple. We were members for years at third row center. Beautiful seats. I just didn't want to drive out there alone. I don't like to drive alone at night out that way. It's a long drive from here to Baltimore Hebrew. So I dropped out. So I don't go to any services. I don't miss it. I used to hate to go when I had to take him. And on the Sunday between High Holiday services we had to go to the cemetery on Belair Road and we put flowers on his mother's, father's, his uncle's, his aunt's, his grandparents'-- we put flowers on all

the graves. My husband wasn't religious either.

EE: That was very unusual. You said that he was cremated.

ML: Uh huh.

EE: I think that's—

ML: He wanted to be. He told me that. He said, "I know how you hate to go to the cemetery on the high holidays so when I die just cremate me." And I said, "I will." And I did.

EE: Who did that for you? I was under the impression that that wasn't done in the Jewish religion?

ML: Oh sure it is. A lot of Jewish people do it. Truthfully, you know how I did it? By myself. I looked in the phonebook and picked out a name. And the man came over here. He was very nice. He went to the hospital, picked up the body, cremated my husband, came here, helped me write the words for the newspaper. He was wonderful. And that was the end. And I never took the ashes. I couldn't. I couldn't. I wanted to send the ashes to Florida because my husband loved Florida but his friend always said he'd take him, he'd take him, and he never took him, so after one year they disposed of him.

EE: So did you say that you would be cremated?

ML: I'm not sure. Why do you ask?

EE: I just wonder if you did, what you would do with your ashes?

ML: I haven't made up my mind yet what I'm going to do. When I die, they can throw me anywhere, I don't care. I wouldn't have missed too much in life. I've had a good time.

Yeah, I just, I'm looking forward now, truthfully, to retirement and doing a lot of the things I've never had time to do. There are things I would like to do. I would like to travel. But alone I can't do it any more. Because I just need someone with me.

EE: What else do you want to do?

ML: What do I want to do? Well, what else can you do? Go to nice restaurants, buy nice clothes, travel? I have my friends over to dinner on Sundays. I had them this Sunday. I like to cook. I'm a good cook. I even make matzoh ball soup. [laughter] What do you like to do?

EE: I like to talk to people like you.

ML: Oh you do?

EE: You bet. It's great to—

ML: Did you have many boy friends when you were single?

EE: Oh, we'll talk about that when we go off. When we turn off the microphone. [laughter]

ML: Okay.

EE: I have one question, one thing I'm curious about. What do you think of Northwest Baltimore Jews?

ML: Should I tell you?

EE: I'd love to know.

ML: Half of them are phonies. Their accounts are frozen.

EE: What does that mean?

ML: They can't charge because they don't pay their bills. I won't mention names but there are some very wealthy people that overbuy. Then they want to know why their charge doesn't go through. They don't pay their bills. Northwest Baltimore. I wouldn't even name them. But there are some.

EE: When you travel around the community, my guess is you have a sort of a Pikesville axis as well as a downtown access—

ML: No, my access is all this way now. A Towson area. I never go to Pikesville, never. Don't even go there to shop.

EE: Did you ever?

ML: Yeah, I used to go to those little shops out Reisterstown Road where the pink buildings are. I don't know the name of them. I used to go out that way and shop. I used to shop at Cross Keys. She moved, what the hell is her name? Not Ruth Shaw, the other one?

EE: Octavia?

ML: Yeah. I waited on her when she was young. She wore 10AA narrow feet. I remember her. Yeah. I've waited on a lot of people.

EE: So what made you sort of move your direction from Pikesville to Towson?

ML: Well, because living here, I'm so used to shopping now out York Road area. My food shopping, I go out York Road. My clothes, I go out to Towson. There's enough stores there. And when I need something I'll go to the Hecht Company or I'll buy at Nordstrom's, I get my discount. I don't need anything, really. I've got more than I'll ever wear. I'm loaded with clothes.

EE: I heard a story about you. About when you worked at Hess'.

ML: Yes.

EE: You were able to get people credit.

ML: Get them credit? No.

EE: Teenagers. You would help to get teenagers credit.

ML: Never.

EE: Get them to charge on their parents' accounts.

ML: Never.

EE: Does that ring a bell?

ML: No, never.

EE: Somebody told me that they remembered that was something you were good at.

ML: I couldn't do that. Unless I knew the parents real well and I'd call the mother up and get the okay. Then you give them, then you let them charge. But you couldn't do that. They wouldn't pass it.

EE: I remember when I was a kid and I was shopping downtown at Hutzler's or even at Hess' and I wouldn't have the shopping plate, they would call.

ML: You call the parents, sure. Your daughter is here. She's buying something for \$30.00. Is it okay to give it to her? You'd get the charge plate number and that was it. But I could never give credit without an okay. They wouldn't pass it. Same way at Nordstrom's. They won't pass it. You have to have I.D. and everything else.

EE: Are things different now than they used to be?

ML: Yeah, now they have something, just started a couple weeks ago at Nordstrom's where they have Junior Charge Accounts, Brass Plum. But they've got to take it home and get the okay from the parents and all that. Yeah.

EE: That sounds dangerous.

ML: I think it is dangerous. Because you know these college kids, they buy like crazy.

EE: What would you say in seeing shoes over the last sixty—

ML: I would say the shoes at present, the fashions, are horrible. Horrible. They make them look like big, clunky club feet. And when an elegant customer comes in and wants a thin heel, you don't have many. There are all those big thick shoes. Thick heels, high wedgies, rubber bottoms. There are very few shoes that are graceful. Very few.

EE: Where do you think that comes from?

ML: Every year they try to make business so they change the styles so your last year's shoes look dated. But there are some people that will wear their dated shoes because that's what they like. The shoes these days, everything looks alike. Stuff like this. Stuff like that. Stuff like that. Stretch shoes are very big now. Nylon stretch. They come up the front. Good thing I've got this book here. [catalog] The biggest thing now in the shoe business is slides. They'll ruin your feet, no support. You can fall and break a leg or a hip. See? It's a good thing I've got the book here to explain. The graceful look is out. The clothes. No style. A plain little dress like that, \$98.00. You can make it for \$4.00. I've got material sitting there.

EE: So we're not in good shape, design-wise.

ML: No, I don't like the clothes.

EE: I'm going to ask you one more question and then I'm going to let you ask me one. What is your favorite thing to make when you are cooking? Do you have a favorite meal or favorite dish that you make?

ML: Well, I like to make Spanish meatballs.

EE: What are Spanish meatballs?

ML: Well, I call them Spanish meatballs. I make the little balls, put a little baking powder in them so they are light; I have another recipe that's good too. Then I cut up green peppers, celery, onions, tomatoes, and I cook them all together. It's delicious. Make mashed potatoes. Throw the gravy over the potatoes and you've got a meal. A quick one hour. Finish. Another thing that I make very good all my friends adore is my tuna salad. Make regular tuna salad, but did you ever add horseradish to tuna salad? If you had the red it makes pink and nobody knows what it is. You can add the red or the white horseradish. One-half teaspoon to a can. It's fabulous. Takes away that mayonnaise taste.

EE: Do you use mayonnaise, too?

ML: Yeah, oh yeah.

EE: And celery and what else?

ML: Chopped eggs. Red onion. My tuna salad is good. I just had some for lunch. I don't have any left.

EE: Sounds great. Wish I were invited.

ML: Now, what am I going to ask you? What is your favorite dish?

EE: I think you're my favorite dish.

ML: I think you're adorable.

EE: This was fun. I enjoyed this. Is there anything else I should ask you though before we hang it up for the evening?

ML: You might ask me if I'm a happy person. I would say, I'm happy-go-lucky. I like to have fun. I'm very out-going. I'll talk to everybody at the bar. I have a lot of friends. And a lot of people like me. I'm good company.

EE: I'll say.

ML: That's why I have so many younger girlfriends.

EE: I'll say.

ML: I don't act like a stick-in-the-mud sitting in a rocking chair. I'm not that kind of woman. And wherever I go, I make friends. My customers are my friends. I've got customers who send me flowers; that basket there came from a customer with all kinds of good food in it. She is ninety-four. She was a friend of the Lindberghs. She lives at Edenwald. I've got all kinds of customers.

EE: So what's the secret?

ML: The secret is you treat people nice; you don't become their sales lady, you become their friend. That's the secret. I like people.

EE: Thank you.

ML: I like women and I like men.

EE: This has been a treat for me. Thank you.

ML: Really?

EE: Thank you so much for letting me into your life for a few hours. I really enjoyed it. I hope you did, too.

ML: I did. You're a very charming lady.

EE: You're sweet. Thank you.

ML: Did you enjoy...?

[END OF INTERVIEW]