NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
VOICES ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NOAA HERITAGE AND THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVEN WILSON
FOR THE
NOAA 50TH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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SCARBOROUGH, MAINE
DECEMBER 7, 2019

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Molly Graham: This begins an oral history interview with Steven Wilson for the NOAA 50th Oral History Project. The interview is taking place on December 7, 2019, in Silver Spring, Maryland, and the interviewer is Molly Graham. We'll start at the beginning. Could you tell me where and when you were born?

Steven Wilson: Okay. I was born in 1959 in Clark Air Force Base, Philippine Islands. My father was in the Air Force, played tuba in the Air Force band for twenty-eight years. He had just gotten married to my mother, and she completely complains about this on a routine basis, where she had to fly over to the Philippines pregnant, and then fly back pregnant with my sister. Back then, it wasn't a jet; it was a prop plane. So thirty-six hours of flying – she was not happy. [laughter] So, yes, born there, and lived there for about eighteen months.

MG: What else do you know about your father's service?

SW: He had always wanted to be in the Air Force. He kept talking about that in his yearbooks and things. Why he chose the band, I'm not exactly sure. He came from Kentucky, a town outside of Louisville, Kentucky. He enjoyed his life, but basically, he wanted to see the world. I guess the Air Force got him that opportunity, especially in the band. We traveled a few places, and then we actually went back to the Philippines when I was thirteen years old for another two years. He didn't want to go back. He didn't like the Philippines the first time. He told me a few years later, "Yeah, I tried to get out of that assignment, but my general said, 'There's no way you're going.' And I said, 'okay.'" We were all excited. It was a very enjoyable time. But, he did end up getting up to First Sergeant of the band. The only reason he didn't stay full thirty years and get his last stripe was he couldn't be in the band as the First Sergeant anymore if he got promoted. He'd have to go to a larger unit. My dad is not good at change in any way. [laughter] So he got away from that. One of the things that was very impressive is that he also learned to play the string bass, upright bass, and had the opportunity to play with the St. Louis Symphony when we lived in that area, and he also played with the Manila Symphony when we lived in that area. So he tried to expand. He also tried to get a few more dollars into the coffers by playing in a dance band – electric bass – at night. Now he's back into it. He just wrote me back. He's eighty years old, and he's picked up a new bass, and he's found a bunch of people – he's the youngest man in the band. [laughter] So they're playing and enjoying themselves. I'm glad to see he got back into it.

MG: Where is he getting gigs?

SW: In Peoria. He lives in Peoria, Illinois. What the gigs are, I don't know, but it doesn't matter. It doesn't even matter if he gets paid; he's just happy playing.

MG: Are you musical at all?

SW: I tried. I played the trumpet when I was in fourth, fifth, sixth grade, that sort of thing. I did okay, but I was very mechanical. I would hit the notes and do them exactly the way the band teacher said. Then I got braces, and the trumpet was painful, so I went on to other things.

MG: Can you trace your family history for me? How did your father's family come to settle in Kentucky?

SW: It's interesting you ask that. I got onto Ancestry.com a few years ago, and I've been in and out of it. It's wild how this all occurred. Apparently, on my mother's side, we all came over here in South Carolina in the late 1600s with the Huguenots, part of that religious freedom. There's an ancestor that we do know of that was in the Revolutionary War. He married an Indian young lady, who died in 1840. We have the headstone and everything else. She's in the books. Why we don't know. It's just the name. On his side especially, it seems to be farmer after farmer after farmer. They all came in again from the East Coast but settled in places like Kentucky and in and around Kentucky. There's one Wilson, Josiah Wilson, who I think had fifteen children – scary all by itself. There's even a photograph with him and all his children, some in a goat cart. That seems to be the big branch that came off. My grandfather on his side, he worked at Fort Knox as a mechanic. That was very quiet. He was just a tinkerer. He's the kind of guy who'd just play in the garage all the time. They never really left Kentucky. They were there the whole time. It's interesting that on one side, my mother's side, moved all around, and finally settled in Texas and other places like that. My father's side came in, stopped, and just didn't leave until my dad decided to get out. [laughter]

MG: Do you know how your parents met?

SW: Yes. My dad was stationed in Albuquerque briefly and somehow met my mother, who was seventeen at the time. Apparently, hit it off rather quickly, and within a year they were married and off to the Philippines.

MG: Wow.

SW: Yes, very fast.

MG: How did she feel about that?

SW: About the Philippines or about marriage?

MG: Both.

SW: Well, she seemed to have been extremely excited about marriage. That changed twenty years later. They did get divorced. The Philippines, I think, was a little exciting, but back then, even the military base was very, very rustic. The good news was, at eighteen, she had the chance to have what they call a house girl, a maid who would come in and help out with babies and everything else. She didn't have it that bad. But there were a lot of problems. There were problems when we went back. The food you're used to doesn't get shipped over but once every three to four months. So your potato chips are in cans. Your milk is not fresh. You tend to get used to a few things, but it was really bad back then. It was even worse for the military. The military didn't get paid very well. Over years, it's much different. My father was in during that Vietnam War era as well, and they weren't treated very well. He recounts a story when they were in the Philippines that – and back then, they got paid once a month. He recounts a story

about how poor they really were. He said, "We'd thought we'd outsmart everything. At the beginning of the month, we got our pay. So we bought a chicken. We were going to hold that chicken until the end of the month because everybody else is usually starving at the end of the month. And at the end of this month, we'll be having chicken." Well, by the time they looked at the chicken, it had rotted. [laughter] So they basically lost it all. He keeps recounting the story about just how bad things were. Of course, I didn't notice it; I was a kid.

MG: Can you trace your moves for me? After the Philippines –

SW: I was born in the Philippines. Then we moved to Biloxi, Mississippi. My dad was at Keesler Air Force Base. That's where my sister was born. From Biloxi, we went to Colorado Springs or the Academy. He played there for a while. From the Academy, we went to Illinois, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, near St. Louis. That's the MAC [Military Airlift Command] base. Then we went back to the Philippines for a few years. That was a good time for me, thirteen to fifteen years old – real good time to be there. From the Philippines, we moved to Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. That's when my parents eventually got divorced. At that point, I graduated from Tabb High School, went on to Virginia Tech, and the rest of the career at that point.

MG: Tell me why being in the Philippines as a teenager was so great.

SW: Well, I had been involved in the Boy Scouts before that, very much involved. In the Philippines and in the military bases overseas, the Boy Scouts were king. The military wanted to do everything they could for the dependents. So Major General (Manor?) – I'll never forget his name – he was the commander of all of the 13th Air Force for the whole Pacific region. He was extreme in his support for the Boy Scouts. Our unit was sponsored not by a church like many other units, but by the jungle survival school, the people who taught the pilots what to do when they crash. So they would take us out. We had all sorts of equipment. We had buildings. Everything was set for us. Our troop grew to about a hundred and twenty boys – very large. On a monthly basis, we went somewhere – everywhere around the Philippines. Weekly, there was always something going on on the base. Once you hit Eagle Scout over there, at the time, if you wore your uniform, you were allowed to fly what the military calls "space available" without your sponsor, without my dad. So if we got our uniforms on, we could actually fly to Japan and spend a couple of days in Japan and then come back. We would do things like that. It was all the support of the Boy Scouts and everything else, and it was extreme, truly extreme.

MG: Were there a lot of other American families there?

SW: Yes. At the time, it was the largest military installation in the world. Sixty-six thousand people lived there – very big.

MG: That's like a city.

SW: Big city. Then, a few years later, after I left, in 1981, Mount Pinatubo erupted, basically had to evacuate. We were trying to get out of that base anyway as the U.S, and it's still there. I went back to visit about fifteen years ago, and a lot of the buildings that I remember were still

there, some were gutted. They turned the high school into the University of the Philippines, and things like this, but essentially, it is not the same base it ever was. It started diminishing about two years after I got there.

MG: Because of the volcano?

SW: No, it was more along the lines that we didn't necessarily need to be placed in different areas. The planes could fly longer faster. That was the staging area. When I was there the second time, that was the staging area for Vietnam. In fact, I was there in Vietnam – if you remember the headlines – you're too young to remember. If you remember the headlines, when the POWs [prisoners of war] came back, one of the POWs came off the plane, said, "God bless America." I was fifty feet away from him. We saw the first POWs coming back. They came in and talked to our school as part of their therapy. It was a very interesting time along those lines.

MG: Were you following along with the events of the war?

SW: No. Thirteen, fifteen, we didn't care that much about it. But there was a paper called the *Stars and Stripes* that the military uses – very good paper then, lots of little things. I do remember near the end of the time period; the first was the first B-52 bomber shot down. They fly so high that people were saying, "How did that happen?" Then soon after that, "Seventeenth B-52 shot down." I remember seeing those headlines. I kept asking, "What's going on?" My dad, being in the band – "I don't know. I don't know what's happening." But I found out later, according to some, we were winning the war. The way we were doing it was those B-52 were flying much lower to be very much in their precision bombing. That's how they were able to be shot down. From that aspect, it really hit home. It was about fifteen at that point. From that aspect, we started paying attention in school.

MG: When was it that you encountered these POWs?

SW: Late 1974.

MG: Was the attitude towards returning soldiers different in the Philippines than it was the United States at that time?

SW: Oh, yes. They still had their problems coming back – people spitting on uniforms and everything else. A lot of people don't remember that and how bad it really was. When they came home, they had been indoctrinated that they were forgotten and no one cared about them. They showed them some of the videos of what was happening in the U.S. But when they came off the plane, they were overwhelmed. Everybody in the school skipped school that day. Everybody there, cheering them on, "Thank god you're back," that sort of thing. It took them a while to absorb all that. They had been basically thought they were dead to the world. You come back to a military base under those situations, and it's a far different aspect, completely different.

MG: I worked for a long time as a military oral historian and have heard a lot of stories from Vietnam veterans returning home and not getting a positive reception. That must have been meaningful to have such a supportive welcome home.

SW: Well, they were crying. Almost all of them were crying. Some were in – you could see a state of shock in their face. It was incredible. The one or two that came to talk to my school – I was in my freshman year, I think. When they came through the school, they would talk with this glaze in their eyes. They really didn't know what to say or how to say it. They were overwhelmed with that. For them to get indoctrinated – I don't even know if I have it anymore, but there was a pamphlet about fifty, a hundred pages, they put together of all the news events that happened in the last ten years, little things, including minimum wages. All this stuff so they could get caught up. When we were reading this – "Wow." It's amazing the things that have happened that we just take for granted. And they have to figure it out. They were going to the base exchange. They would open it up at night to get them to go shopping and get clothes and things like this. Little things, like their privacy, had always been gone. So they were walking around naked, didn't think much about it, and the lady's like, "Okay, you can go to the room here." Getting them back into society took a little time.

MG: You don't think about those things.

SW: No. There were constant stories at the base. It made us worry about them even more.

MG: Would your father, as part of his work, interact with returning soldiers?

SW: Yes. Part of the band's job is to promote the military. So they would go to towns in the area, and do a lot of playing, etc. In the Philippines at that time, there was a little bit of sentiment about get the Americans out of base from when they were very young. But the other generations were like, "No, no. They saved us in World War II. You've got to stay here." They were very impressed with any POW because they remember the POWs during World War II. It was a much different aspect. He got that kind of aspect, trying to build them up.

MG: Was your mother able to find work throughout these years?

SW: She didn't really try – different time. Moms didn't work necessarily. She did get a job later. She worked for JC Penney for a long time and was pretty well-respected in her location. That was because they were divorced, and it was time to get a job, get out there. She prefers to stay at home. She was raised in that generation. I find it interesting because I was just talking to a friend of mine. His daughters are stay-at-home moms now. I said, "It's just such a weird swing." In my lifetime, it was that's what it was. Then for the longest time, [women said], "No, I've got to have a job. I have to have my own career." All fine. Now they're going back to, "No, I'm staying here. I'm staying home with the kids." Okay. [laughter] I don't know. Everything I've done in my whole life has been unconventional. So I don't even try to stay with the curve.

MG: I wonder if it's moms who were raised by working moms.

SW: It's possible. I don't know. It always seemed to me the big trend was dual-income families. I can't imagine some families that don't have a dual-income and how they make ends meet, to be honest, especially in this area. It's rough.

MG: Well, tell me about the schools you attended along the way.

SW: Sure. I remember the schools vividly. When we were in Mississippi, they put me into a kindergarten that was run by the Baptist Church. I remember we were in a basement or something. It wasn't very great. It was dank. But it was fun, and we enjoyed it. There's an old joke from Bill Cosby on his albums where he talked about how the kids – let's lay everybody's head down for a nap, and we did all that. We would lay our head down for a nap. He said there was nothing more wide awake than twenty five-year-olds at naptime. The only one sleeping was the teacher, and that's exactly what was going on in my school. The teacher would just lay there – "Oh my god, I need this nap." [laughter] I felt so bad for her. I don't know. I remember that very clearly. They even had a graduation, where we had caps and gowns and everything else. It was very impressive. From there, we went to a school nearby. I didn't last there very long because we moved again, about six months into my first grade. That's when we to Colorado Springs. That was a school on the base. The schools that are operated by DOD [Department of Defense] dependent school system – much different operation. It was good. I didn't know this until we went to Clark Air Base in the Philippines, but your father's or your spouse's commander got your grades. So imagine your boss getting your kids' grades, good or bad. They would write letters if you were on the honor roll – "Congratulations to your son," very nice things. But if you weren't on the honor roll, he brought you in to talk to him. There was a lot of pressure. I can't imagine my dad even listening to this. My father was one of the most non-military military there were. He never told me. I found these letters – my mother handed me all my grades and everything. I found these letters. I was like, "Why didn't you tell me this?" "Well, we didn't want to put that kind of pressure on you, son." [laughter] I'm glad because I would have been really stressed at that point.

MG: What was the reason for that?

SW: The military is very concerned about its dependents because it has an effect on the military staff, and whether or not they're functional. Military spouses and others, when they, in fact, get moved around – at least they used to – you get a stipend as well. Every mouth gets a stipend. I think officers now get a housing allowance if you live off base. If you have extra kids, same thing. So they take care of the whole family because you are married into the military. A lot of spouses don't like this. It's one of the reasons for divorce. They take care of everything, and they want to make sure that that kind of pressure is not entering into your job.

MG: Were there repercussions for students who weren't doing so well?

SW: I don't know. I don't know. It didn't seem like it. It was like any other high school in Clark Air Base. Any other high school, you had the cool kids, the bullies – you had all that. In the Philippines, it was a little rougher because the kids didn't really have a lot to do. You had to search for your thing to do. So the bullies actually carried weapons. It was like an inner-city

high school. One of the things that was interesting in the Philippines was you could have jackets and clothes made. So you would have these jackets made, f you were part of a group; it would have on the back where you're from, your last name, and whatever you were doing. It was either sports of what-have-you. Well, the Boy Scouts were big. Our troop had a hundred and fifty of these jackets made with this giant fleur de lis in the back in big red. You would think it would be a big target – "Let's go beat up the Boy Scout." In fact, once you messed with one, all these red jackets would come running. It was amazing to watch. Once we started wearing those jackets, people left you alone. You were part of a gang, whether you liked it or not.

MG: You had a big gang.

SW: Exactly. It was a big gang. The dynamics were quite interesting at that point. First, you had the stress of getting into puberty, trying to find girls, and all the other things. At the same time, your dad is getting your grades – your dad and your commanders are getting the grades. You're trying to figure all this out, and it's like, "Uhh…" I'm glad they didn't tell me. I would have freaked, honestly.

MG: Adolescence is hard enough.

SW: Yes, it is. [laughter]

MG: You also lived in Illinois for a bit.

SW: We were in Scott Air Force Base during the time – I'll never forget this piece. I was in seventh, eighth grade, and every ten years, when the census comes out, they figure out where the population center is. Well, it was right there in my school. It was Mascoutah Junior High School. Mascoutah was the population center of the United States, and we were talking about it. Like, "Hey, we're right in the middle of everything." It's funny what you remember through various points in your life. That's when I really got into the band, and we did pretty well. I was enjoying it quite a bit. Then [we] moved. The band that we went to in the Philippines was not nearly as good.

MG: Where and when did you graduate from high school?

SW: I was in Tabb, Virginia, which is near Yorktown. It's near where Langley Air Force Base houses its families, Bethel Manor. I graduated in 1977.

MG: Is your sister your only other sibling?

SW: Yes.

MG: How did you get along growing up?

SW: Depends on the day. My mom would write in our baby books that we were best friends. Well, that's because we were the only ones around. As we got older, snarkiness came in, and

the same typical stuff. When my dad left, my sister tried to start growing up in cooking more and everything else because my mother was working. Well, she wasn't that good at first. She was pretty bad. Her favorite thing to make was frosting. I said, "Well, you got to put it on something, please. Even a cookie, for crying out loud." Then she would try other things, which was nice. She was really trying hard. There was one night she made – I'm a very simple guy, so meatloaf, potatoes, gravy – I really like that sort of thing. So she made that. Well, she put gravy over everything, which is what I like, except the gravy was awful. It was like a lump. You just plopped it on like a scoop of ice cream. When you took a bite of it, it actually dried out your mouth. I said, "What did you do to the gravy? It's gravy. What did you do?" "I don't know." [laughter] I was scraping off the gravy and eating what I could. Then one night, my mother comes home. My sister used to wear this one-piece with a foot thing for bed. She'd walk around in it at night, and she was annoying me. I was watching TV or something, and she was annoying me to no end. My mother came home and saw that my sister was sitting on the floor next to the end table because I had pulled the bottom of that onesie and tied it into a knot around the end table. She couldn't move, and she couldn't undo the knot. I just sat there and said, "Leave me alone." So she's sitting here with her arms crossed, and I'm sitting with my arms crossed. My mother's like, "I'm not going to get involved. I have no idea what happened, but you guys are on your own." It was that kind of thing. It's better now. She lives down in Stafford, Virginia. Her husband is in the Air Force, or was – he just retired. She did pretty well. She did pretty well. She's a good kid with two really great kids. They've both graduated college now.

MG: You went to an interesting high school. Tabb High School had just opened up a few years before you attended. It was one of those open-learning schools without walls.

SW: Well, they called it that. I saw walls, but yes, you could move these walls around. I haven't been back in a long time. It was the second high school that was built in the area. There's now four or five. That's how big the area's grown up. I remember when we graduated. They called us "first and century three," which was the third century of the country type of thing, and – you're right – it's only been open maybe two years before I got there. It was very new, very nice. But it did feel fabricated. It didn't feel like a walled high school.

MG: This was popular with public schools in the '70s. Were they trying to foster an environment of open learning?

SW: Well, they didn't move the walls one day that I was there. I was there for two years, and not once did that happen. But I think it was just about growth. If they can move things around and have a little bit more growth, but I think that was about it.

MG: I read there were two kivas on campus.

SW: Yes.

MG: What were they used for?

SW: The kivas were for large meetings or large classes if they ever had it. They usually called it two separate auditoriums. Every once in awhile, we would have a school thing. We could go to the gym if it was available, or we went to do two different kivas.

MG: And the gym was unusual. I read that it had a strange floor.

SW: Yes, it did. I don't know. Everything was all new and modular. Even the gym bleachers folded back into the wall. You pulled the bleachers out for everything else, and then you closed them up and had this nice open gym to do things, a class I hated anyway, so I didn't go in there very often.

MG: What were the kinds of classes that you liked in high school?

SW: I was in calculus in high school, back when calculus wasn't taught in high school. So there were only five of us in the class. I enjoyed that. I enjoyed the chemistry, all this. I wish my teachers had taught me more about not just relying on my brain but my wits because I really did well in high school, but I didn't have to study. I would do my papers in the morning, and all this. I did everything first thing in the morning and turned it in, and still did well. When it came time to choose a college, my teachers would say, "Well, what do you want to do?" I said, "I have no clue." "Well, you like math?" "Yes." "Do you like science?" "Yeah." "Be an engineer." "Okay." So I put down "engineer" everywhere. I did not do well in engineering. [laughter] It's mostly because I just said, "Well, if I'm going to be an engineer, I'll be a chemical engineer." Well, let me tell you, you better really be dedicated to something like that. I enjoyed college life more than I enjoyed the college classes. They were harder. They were a lot harder. I was a stupid kid at eighteen. I did all sorts of stupid things. I finally found my way.

MG: I don't know any eighteen-year-olds who aren't a little bit stupid.

SW: Well, we all think we're great, don't we? I have a son now who's doing the same thing – "I got it. I got it covered, Dad." "I'm sure you do. All right. Fine. But you're on your own." [laughter]

MG: How did you find Virginia Tech?

SW: That was another interesting thing. I basically only applied to Virginia Tech. Nowadays, I hear they apply to five, ten schools, and you have your backups and everything else. I didn't think about that. I just applied to Virginia Tech. I did look at Virginia Military Institute and things like this. I only looked at Virginia Schools. But mostly Virginia Tech because other friends were talking about Virginia Tech. I didn't think much more than that. A couple of my buddies were going there as well. So I said, "Okay, I'll know some people." That was the only reason I went there. I enjoyed it. It was a very good experience. Too good. Too much fun. But I don't think my thinking process had anything to do with the education and the activities there. But I still recommend it for anybody. Back then, very cheap. In-state tuition and room and board only cost three thousand a year, the whole thing. It's much, much different now. It's

less subsidized by the state. We were only a AA school, so we were playing small football games. It has grown tremendously since then. It's not the same Virginia Tech.

MG: How did you find the food science program?

SW: That was found because I was failing miserably. [laughter] Again, stupid decisions. I did the chemical engineering. Word of advice for anybody: you do have to go to class in order to get [good] grades. Even if you think you know calculus, you can't just show up for the test and take it. I can attest to that. So my grades had started plummeting to the point where, in my sophomore year – we had three trimesters at the time. One trimester, I got a .5 grade average. I said, "Okay, I've got to rethink this business." I went to my advisor. My advisor says, "Oh, Steve, you're on the dean's list." I said, "No, I think you got the wrong Steve." "Oh, no. You're on the dean's list, just not the one we publish." I said, "Great, this meeting is not going to go well." But we talked about it. I did enjoy chemistry, but I had trouble with P-chem, physical chemistry. So we agreed I would get a BA [Bachelor of Arts] in chemistry. [laughter] All my friends were like, "What are you going to do with a BA in chemistry?" "I'll teach chemistry in high school." That lasted one quarter. While I was working – I had to work to get some money in. But while I was working, a friend of mine says, "Well, what is it that you plan on doing with the degree." So we started talking, and he says, "Why don't you think about food science?" I said, "What is food science?" I had no idea. He was in the curriculum. Once I found it, it was like the skies opening up and sun rays coming down because it was applied. You would take courses – a milk products course – make cheese, make ice cream. How do you do this? All this stuff was going on. There was a meats course. The lab was literally going in at night and slaughtering a cow, slaughtering one sheep, slaughtering a pig, bringing it down to pieces, just like you would anywhere else. So you knew all about it because you had to do it. I really enjoyed all those courses. I was getting straight A's at that point. It didn't help that I had a lot of baggage to bring up. I had to take some time off and then go back to school, and then take time off again. I never really graduated from Virginia, but that was the best foundation. I went back twenty years later – Kansas State University had a food science degree that they're offering online. All I had to do was finish my last year. So that's what I ended up doing was going back and finishing it that way.

MG: Can you say what the baggage was and why you left school?

SW: The baggage was my grades had been so bad for so long that you have to keep getting higher grades. The averages just go up a little bit. [laughter] That was it. At certain times of the year – I think it was junior year, I hadn't reached the overall average needed. I reached the average for the year that I needed to have easily, but not the overall average. So I went to summer school, got it back up again. Then the next year, they basically tell you, "Well, you got to take a year off." Okay, so I come back a year later. It was essentially just not hitting the overall average. But the last time I left Virginia Tech, they needed you to have a 2.5 average, and I had a 2.495. It was the same year – I'm still burned about this – that was the same year that they actually started added pluses and minuses, and that had a dramatic effect on my grade point average. Had it not been there, I would have graduated from Virginia Tech. But, the way I look at all that is had that did that go that way, any differently, I probably wouldn't be here either. It's the path of life. You move on and figure out what you're going to do.

MG: When you took that first year off, how did you spend it?

SW: I stayed up there. I had a lease on an apartment. I stayed up there, I got a job, and I worked. Again, dumb decisions – I stayed with my fraternity and played around with the fraternity for the year with no obligations other than work. That was great, right? No, don't do that. [laughter] So I never really learned the lesson that I needed to learn to get back. It took almost twenty years for me to say, "You know, knuckle down and finish this thing. This is ridiculous." And I did well. Once I had a mission, I did well. I just didn't have the mission when I was eighteen.

MG: Where were you working during that year?

SW: It was just like a 7/11. It's called a Hop-In, that sort of thing, forty hours a week.

MG: When you left again before finishing the degree, where did you go?

SW: I had a conversation with my mother – "Can I stay here until I find a job?" Then nearby was a – I started with a group called Management Recruiters. They're headhunters. I didn't know it. They said, "Yeah, you can do great." So I started there. I lasted three days. I couldn't stand it because it was cold calls. You would call and demand to get put through to the CEO and everything else. There are secretaries whose job it is to stop you from doing that, rightly so. Here I am, twenty-two years old, trying to beat a door down, and you only got paid if you got a sale. I said, "No, I'm not doing this." They had a business-to-business yellow pages back then. I took that. Anything that was food-related, I sent my resume around the area. Within two days – there was a seafood plant nearby that was looking for somebody – hired me. That was the start for me to get into the seafood industry. That was in Hampton. He was very good about teaching me everything about seafood fraud, which is what I'm dealing with now because he did it. He was big on finding ways to skim those pennies on each pound. I only lasted there a year, and then I got a job with the USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] as a food inspector and then moved up the ranks from there. But that put me on the food path at that point.

MG: Didn't you also have a position with a salad company?

SW: Yes. That was a summer job while I was looking for something. That was interesting. Simply taking samples and doing microanalysis in a kitchen. But that helped out a lot, too.

MG: What were you doing for the seafood company?

SW: I was the receiving director, so as the fish came in, he would take bulk fish, put them into trays like you see in the grocery store, and then chill it down using CO2, and then send that out to various groceries stores for "fresh" delivery, so to speak. So I was receiving, making sure everything got taken care of, that we got the orders that the – and that the quality was there. If the quality of fish wasn't there, then we would send it back or get a price reduction. That was

my main job. Then it got expanded to, "Okay, now make sure the truck orders are set. Get them loaded and get them out."

MG: You mentioned your boss was committing various seafood fraud at the time in various ways.

SW: Yes. He used to give out speeches. Virginia Tech and others even had him speak. He would start out with, "I'm a thief. I'm going to steal your money, and you're going to be proud of it." I'm like, "What is going on?" He taught me all sorts of things. We had mussels that had – he bought too many mussels, and he couldn't sell them fast enough. So he had me freeze them, and then a year later, bring them out. Then we shucked them and sold them again. I said, "Now, how did you sell these?" "As fresh (SeaPak?)." "Fresh what?" Because they're not fresh; they're dead. But he sold them. He was one that would bank it on the return. "Just how much do you think I could afford on a return before it doesn't cost anything?" Most people, they don't return their seafood. They just throw it away. He was banking on that. We would order thousands and thousands of pounds of flounder, yellowtail flounder. His boxes only had these little white stickers on the bottom of what it was on those ten-pound boxes. So we would put up all this flounder, put it into the cooler. Then if he needed to sell grey sole, which was a higher price, he would just take the sticker off and put a grey sole sticker on there and sell it for a higher price. Then if someone complains, "Oh, no, I thought it was sole. Sorry about that." He did a lot of that sort of thing. He found ways to add water. He found ways to do all sorts of things. He did it with a passion because he said that's what we have to do to make it in this business. There's a lot of seafood people who still think that way, but gladly, most of the industry is trying very hard to be fair. But he was good at it.

MG: Would he be someone you target today?

SW: Oh, yes. We would keep a file on him now. But he was open about it. He was very open about it. He started in the crabmeat industry and taught me everything about what to look for in good and bad crabmeat, and how crab processors or packers sometimes put cheaper crab in the bottom of the tub and put the really good stuff in the top. You open it up – "Oh, it looks good." Well, you have to learn to turn the crab upside down, then open it up, and see what you're seeing. You can actually see the lines of how things are packed. I was telling this story to our Office of Law Enforcement, and he said, "You ought to work for us. We ought to have you training our people on what to look for." There's a lot that you can look for.

MG: You were young and new on the job, so did you think this was how things were done, or did you know this was wrong?

SW: We all knew that this was pushing the edge, but it was a job. Just get it out and get it going. I was only making two hundred dollars a week. It wasn't worth the fight. But that probably pushed me more into the going into the regulatory side. Let me do this a little bit. I was only taking jobs just so I could get enough money to go back and finish my degree. It really wasn't a career. It was just money coming in to let me move forward. Later on, it became a career.

MG: It sounds like a good introduction to various versions of seafood fraud.

SW: It was very helpful. I didn't think I'd stay in the seafood industry. I thought I was going to be in meat and poultry with the USDA. I met him after I was gone for about a year or so. I met him at a wedding. He said, "You ought to go work for the U.S. Department of Commerce." I said, "What is that?" The reason I did it was in the USDA's poultry inspection, you stood in one spot, and the birds – forty-thousand a night – would come by and you're just looking at this, and just trying to stand up straight, have your breaks, and that's all you cared about. I wanted to get moving. So the USDC [U.S. Department of Commerce] inspectors actually was only one per shift. You would walk around. You'd do a little bit of everything. That was interesting. That was, again, just long enough until I got back to school. He actually helped me think about going somewhere else.

MG: Your boss?

SW: Yes. My old boss, yes. It was weird.

MG: How did you find and get the USDA job?

SW: You take a test. There's always an application. There's a test you have to take. I don't know what it's like now, or even if there's a test now, but it wasn't hard. They're just looking for a certain level of cognitive ability. So I took the test, did well, and then I got shipped to Shenandoah Valley, Rockingham County, for the poultry. I quickly knew that I couldn't stay in a job like that because most of the people were upset that I got a 99.5 on the test. To this day, I still want to know what I did wrong to get that .5 because it was a very simple test. People are like, "Well, I barely got an eighty." I'm like, "Oh, god. Who am I working with here?" But they were good people. They were very good people. And the test was good to make sure you had a certain ability to do certain things. These guys were great inspectors; they really were. But it wasn't me. I needed to think more, move on. So the USDA was an open call. They did that on a frequent basis, but it was this other gentleman who alerted me to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

MG: So the poultry inspector job, were you going into multiple plants, or did you have one plant that you were in charge of?

SW: One plant. I wasn't even in charge. There were ten of us – ten people on a line. I was on the second shift, so it was even more boring than the first shift. Once in a while, if we were shut down for the day, they would send us to another plant, but that was very rare. Again, I was only there for a little bit over a year.

MG: Was it a commercial plant, like a Perdue?

SW: I can't remember the name of the company, but yes, it was definitely commercial plants – slaughter and processing. Lots of birds going through. Everywhere you went in that county, there were feathers alongside the road.

MG: Maybe I've seen too many documentaries, but was this work gruesome, or did it make you squeamish?

SW: No. I'm sure it was gruesome. I didn't have a lot of money when I first started, and so I lived in my car until I got my first paycheck. This was a turkey plant. So for the gentlemen who put the turkeys on the line to be slaughtered, they have showers for them because the turkeys defecate all over you. So they come out green and get washed down. I would actually take a shower there until I got an apartment. Gruesome? You didn't think much about it after the first day or so. You just didn't. Because by the time the birds came to you, they weren't birds; they were carcasses. That's how you talked to them. You had a function. You were going to look at one part of it and move on. You got past that because what you were really worried about was not passing out because the birds would go in one direction. The water that was taking all the gurry away was going the opposite direction, and you were doing this, just weaving back and forth. You were doing everything you could not to pass out. They teach you this over the first two weeks, slowly get you involved, so you get used to the fact – you don't look down at the water, ever. You're just constantly looking at the birds. They had to teach you how to do this, so you don't fall like a rock. [laughter]

MG: How were the workers treated?

SW: It was a very good location. This was the business of the county. I was near JMU [James Madison University], and there were a lot of people who were going to college, but there were a lot of people who were working at these plants. There were a number of these plants in the area.

MG: Has any of this work ever changed your eating habits?

SW: No. It might change my family's. My mother hates it when I come to dinner now because I say, "Do you know what's in that hot dog? Do you know what you're eating right now? Let me tell you how they produce that particular loaf." She's like, "Stop. Just stop." I've stopped doing that. To me, it's interesting to know what I'm going to eat. Now, my wife, she'll put something in front of me. I'll say, "What is this?" "Just eat it." "No, I want to know what I'm eating." "You'll like it. Trust me." "I do trust you. What is it? Please tell me." [laughter] She's really big on, "You should try sweetbread. You should try pig brains." I said, "I don't want to." "Well, it's good for you." "I don't care. I don't want to eat it. I want to know if you're going to put that into me." We have that discussion often because she's very big on trying all sorts of things. I am not. I am a very simple person.

MG: But do you eat hot dogs?

SW: Oh, yes. Those are great. [laughter]

MG: That's comforting to me. If you say it's okay.

SW: It's great. Hot dogs and bologna, those are some of the best things we ever made.

MG: You were only in this position for a year before you came to NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration].

SW: Yes.

MG: How did that position come about?

SW: He said, "Check into it." How I contacted the Northeast, I don't know, but I did contact somebody. They came and met me – I was on Thanksgiving break. They came and met me at home because they were desperate for people. At the time, the seafood inspection program was only hiring temporary employees for years, but I was permanent already. They wanted more permanents. So they took me right away. They said, "We could start you Monday if you want." I said, "Well, I got to move and everything else." They desperately wanted somebody with good training that had understood what was happening because they were going to put me in a remote site in Pennsylvania. So I was surprised how fast this all occurred. The interview took maybe ten minutes. They said, "Well, we're going to off you a job." I wish we could do that now. We're having trouble getting people down, but it was very fast at that point – a little shocking.

MG: It was Camp Hill, where you were going to be based.

SW: Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, near Harrisburg. Yes.

MG: What was that position?

SW: I was the plant inspector for the second shift again. There were two shifts. It was a plant that produced fish sticks and fish portions, the breaded [inaudible]. They did Burger King and McDonalds's, and a lot of that sort of thing. My job was, again, to inspect the product that was coming out and make sure it met the criteria, met the grading aspects. Then we went into a system about two years later, turned it into what's called integrated quality assurance [IQA], and then I was the only inspector. The plant did more of the work, and I would verify it throughout the two shifts. Very nice because it gave you a lot of flexibility. You looked at labels. You looked at all sorts of things. Whereas, the slaughter inspectors in USDA just looked at that one aspect of the bird; they didn't look at the whole thing. So you really got a chance to see the whole picture at the plant.

MG: Why is it NOAA's job to inspect a commercial facility?

SW: It's not. This is a voluntary service. So if you want grade A on that – you don't have to have grade A on that. You don't have to grade A to sell it, but if you want grade A, that's what we do. We're under the Agricultural Marketing Act. It's similar to grade A poultry and everything else. That's separate from the food safety inspection. But we moved over thirty years earlier. As a result, we had more food safety activities than quality. So we do both at this point. Now it's evolved where we actually have an agreement with the FDA [Food and Drug Administration] because there's things we can do that they can't, and vice versa.

MG: Just for seafood?

SW: Yes, just for seafood. Fish and fishery products, let's put it that way, because we do fish meal, we do fish oil, that sort of thing.

MG: What were those four years on that job like for you?

SW: It was nice. It was a good job, nice location. The plant was very clean. They were very cooperative. Nothing worse than an uncooperative operation. But you're alone. Yes, there's a whole bunch of people there working there, but you are the only government inspector. So you don't have the camaraderie, etcetera. After four years, I was bored. I had put in to go back to college – very interesting. I was a GS-7. I put in to go back to college after about three years of being off and was accepted to go back. I said, "Great." So I put in for student loans, and they didn't come back to me very quickly. In fact, it was about a week before I was supposed to go to leave – I'd already given my notice – and I still hadn't heard from the student loans. I'm like, "Well, I can't pay for this myself." What I ended up doing was calling – making the decision that I'll let this wait. I called the office, and I said, "Listen, I've decided I want to stay, but if I'm going to stay" – I was being very cocky – "if I'm going to stay, you're going to be giving me a promotion to GS-9. I've been a seven for two years now." They said, "Okay. Wait a few minutes. Let me call you back." I didn't know what was going on. It turns out, when he calls me back, "No problem on the GS-9. We'll get that taken care of. You were going to be slated for that anyway." It turned out, they had already hired my replacement and were swearing him in when I called. That's when they said, "You got the job, but you're going to be on the second shift," because I was the experienced one. He was very upset about that. He only lasted about a year. He did not like the fact that he was on second shift. To each his own. I've got to stay. When he left, that's when we went to the IQA process I talked about. But it was odd. Then, two years later, it was, "Okay, I've done this enough. I'm tired of this. I'm going to put in for the next promotion, whatever it is. If I don't get it, I'll look somewhere else." Well, the next promotion was the deputy chief of the region. So then I got moved up to Gloucester, and then things started escalating quickly from there.

MG: What was the position in Gloucester?

SW: That's where the region office is, and we managed all the inspectors in the Northeast quadrant of the United States. My job was basically to be, what they call now the chief operating officer, just to manage the activities. The region chief was the vision person. That position no longer exists. As we started leaving those deputy positions, they realized they didn't need a deputy branch chief. But I was only in that for about – well, on paper, it's about two, three years. But, within a year, I was assigned a temporary detail here in Silver Spring. That was because this new system they called HACCP came in, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point. I was tasked to be the leader to develop it with FDA. This temporary detail lasted two years here in Silver Spring. That entire two years, I was still officially the deputy of the Northeast, and they just didn't have anybody. So they finally moved me here permanently as basically deputy director of field operations and filled in a new deputy. He was actually the last deputy up there after that. It was very strange. I didn't have more than a year as the deputy branch chief in actual funding. Then I was down here doing headquarters-style activities.

MG: Can you say a little bit more about the HACCP principles that you just mentioned?

SW: That was built in the 1970s for the space program. They couldn't have astronauts getting foodborne illness in space. Throwing up in your suit is not a good thing. So they developed a system for microbiological control. If they had used a normal system, you would have destroyed ninety-five percent of the product inspecting it, and then you still couldn't be sure of the five percent. This system is more about controlling things along the way, controlling particular hazards and steps, and making sure there's heat treatments and everything in place. Then you document this control. Then you do some verification later on. That was developed in '72. It was picked up later as the means to do all food inspection, and eventually, the USDA and the FDA went down this path. But we were working on a joint project with the FDA. This was a voluntary activity in 1993. Then, by '95, FDA put out regulations. We had our system in place to help the industry and move it forward. It does a lot of things. Not only does it have the industry taking more ownership of the problem, but it also maximizes the use of the inspector. So you're not looking at everything at the end product; you're looking at it throughout the process. Because of that, you don't need as many inspectors. So it really helps stabilize the inspection force.

MG: You also contributed to a book that talks about the HACCP principles.

SW: Are you talking about *The Certified HACCP Auditor Handbook*?

MG: No. *Fish Inspection, Quality Control, and HACCP*.

SW: Oh, that one? A lot of people did that one. I did a chapter on this, but that was a symposium. NFI [National Fisheries Institute] put that together, all the papers together into a book. There was a lot going on. There was a lot of movement in the seafood industry. The seafood industry was being used as the vanguard for updating food inspection. For many years, it was the dairy/milk industry, because, if you think about it, if you have a tanker of milk, you only need to take a small vial and do your testing, and you can say something about the entire tanker because it's fluid, it's homogenous. But all other food practices, you could only infer the safety by taking samples. Seafood was generally safe to eat. It actually smells bad in most terms before it's unsafe. Beef and poultry don't necessarily follow that same path. So a lot of the regulations that are in place now for HACCP came in for seafood because it was easier to do. Now, there will be people who disagree with that, but it was much easier to put in place, it was easier to deal with, and the risk was a little lower along those lines. But we also needed to improve the sanitation aspects of the seafood industry, so that was a help as well. That whole process actually did make a lot of changes to food inspection in general. Now HACCP is the common activity worldwide.

MG: How are those changes translated down the supply chain?

SW: Well, what happens now is the buyer/supplier relationship is strengthened because the buyer now knows that the product was under HACCP, there were controls in place, and so they only have to worry about what's happening once they receive it. It strengthens that chain of

control. Now you have other standards in place for ISO-9001 and some other standards, where they actually mandate through third parties communication between these buyers/suppliers. "I had a problem with some defects in your product." They report it back. That gets reported all the way back. So the chain is strengthened for a variety of reasons. But this is the whole point. It's basically not relying only on the inspector, which was the common practice. You instead rely on the firms doing their due diligence.

MG: Something you said earlier was it's much easier to deal with a cooperative plant.

SW: Oh, yes.

MG: What would uncooperative mean?

SW: Uncooperative. Going into facilities, it's mostly a sanitation issue; you can see this. Imagine my old boss who was trying to do some fraud, and he would escort you all around the plant. So while he's with you, things are being done over here that you didn't know about. So yet another reason I'm a big fan of auditing a plant instead of inspecting a plant because auditing means you keep records. If you falsify the records, we can see that. If you are inspecting, they know where you are. If someone is uncooperative, it could be a problem. Usually, it's about cleaning up, following corrective action. We've had plant leadership actually shout at our people and say, "You can't come into this plant." But they still want that grade A mark. They don't realize that's our mark, not theirs. We've had some battles – very rare – but some battles to the point where the government says, "We're going to cancel this relationship because it's not in the best interest of the government. We're just not going to do it." We've had inspectors who were threatened because anything they were trying to change and improve the process, some of the workers actually thought it was going to hurt their job. So they said, "We're going to take care of you if you continue to do this." All right. We leave. That's when the plant says, "Well, wait. You can't do this." "Well, of course we can. My inspector's health and safety is more important than your grade A." So we've had those kinds of issues before.

MG: What happened to the plant after the relationship dissolved? They just don't have the grade A certification?

SW: Yes. There were some that – "You're out. That's it. You're done." Their buyers say, "Well, we're not buying your products under these conditions." We've had that. But mostly what you have is: "Okay. Wait a minute. We probably were hasty." The big common thing is: "Well, we fired that plant manager." "Well, come on. It's not just one. But okay, you did this." We have to see a management change before we come back in. It's a little easier for the Food Safety and Inspection Service [FSIS] in USDA and some others because the plant can't operate without them there. So you would think, "Well, it's so much easier. Then we'll just walk out." No. Regulations basically make it clear that you will be there. There was a time when I was an FSIS inspector, the poultry inspector, where there was a – there was a labor dispute. During the labor dispute, there was a picket line, and the plant was still operating, but the union said, "No." Well, one way to stop the plant from operating is make sure that the USDA inspectors are not there because they have to be present in order to work this out. So we

actually met – the inspectors met at a McDonald's down the street. They brought in federal marshals to escort us into the plant. All these people that we worked with every day were like, "You can't come in," until they saw these giant pillars of men walking around with weapons. They parted like the Red Sea, and we walked in. There weren't any plant workers to work, so the plant didn't operate, but it wasn't because USDA wasn't there. It's similar to us. The difference is we can say, "No, we're not going to do it." It's a voluntary program. It's under contract. I feel more compassion towards the FSIS inspectors because you can't be the reason the plant can't operate. You might reduce. You might do something else. We, however, have the flexibility of saying, "I'm not going to let you treat our inspector that way. We're pulling them."

MG: Can you remind me what FSIS is?

SW: I'm sorry. That's the Food Safety and Inspection Service. That's the food safety side of USDA.

MG: What year did you move to Silver Spring?

SW: For the detail, I moved in August of 1990, and then I stayed throughout that time.

MG: In 1994, you became deputy director.

SW: Yes.

MG: Tell me a little more about how your position changed.

SW: It didn't. I did basically all the same things, only this time, I was also managing aspects of the field, personnel aspects, that sort of thing. But all the technical aspects that I was dealing with, I continued on all that work.

MG: Where was your office?

SW: It was here in Silver Spring. It was in the first building, Building 1. We moved twice.

MG: Your position changed again in 1996.

SW: Yes. My boss, at the time, wanted to have an internal affairs division. I said, "Well, can we call it quality assurance instead?" More improvement versus going after people. He said, "Sure." So I became the chief quality officer at that point. That's a misnomer that implies staff. I didn't have anybody. It was just me. I worked hard for almost twenty years, trying to make sure that we had good procedures in place, that we did science-based information that the inspectors were using critical thinking, moving up. So a lot of was trying to improve the service. So that's why I'm trying to say quality assurance versus: "You're not doing your job. We're going to fire you." Some of that did happen, but it was a very rewarding time for anybody with a technical background.

MG: What do you mean?

SW: I had the opportunity to use not only the food science I learned and be able to talk to the scientists, but I also had the opportunity, through my association with the American Society for Quality and some of these other certifications to utilize good, quality management thinking towards how do we address human behavior. We're still doing this, but human behavior being: how do I make sure inspectors assess the same plant consistently? How do I make sure that I can review a report and know they did or didn't do their job, things like that to make it easier for everybody concerned to do a good, sound level of performance. Some of it's easy – let's get a checklist so that we know they're at least covering these. Some of it's not so easy. When you're reading a report – did they spit back the same information they've always spit back? How do I know they actually did it? There's different ways of doing that. So we instituted internal audits, and I became basically the manager of what goes into the inspection manual and how it's written, including what do we actually put in there. You can overdo that. You can write down everything to the point where people don't think. It was a very good time, and I would get an opportunity to see the operations of the field and get out there and really enjoy it.

MG: It's interesting that you were doing such advanced and technical work without having finished your college degree yet.

SW: Yes. They would tell me that quite often – "Well, Steve doesn't have a degree. He's doing good." "Thanks." Yes, I didn't have to finish the degree. I just said, "I'm going back. I want to finish this. I really do. Then, I got the bug. So I finished that, and then went and got my master's right away. A master's in business administration. The reason I did that is because this unit operates like a business. We set a fee. We're trying to figure out the budgets. Did we cover our costs, etcetera? So I really wanted to understand business operations better. That was actually a very smart decision. I've even recommended when I leave – "You find businesspeople who help manage this." The technical side of food inspection is actually easier to find than anything else. It's managing this from a government agency's perspective, but like a business that makes all the difference in the world. So I think we've been very successful because of that. I actually tried to get a PhD, worked on it for ten years, but family, working full-time, everything else – I just couldn't get it done. At the time, I hadn't been into this leadership position. I was still the chief quality officer. Then I became what they called the assistant for quality and technology. I was the science-based side. I said, "Well, a PhD could help." Well, PhDs honestly, are for research, and I'm not in research anymore. I said, "Okay, moving on." I might get more master's or master certificates, but the PhD was a desire, not a requirement.

MG: Can you walk me through these years in a little more detail? There are a lot of things I want to make sure we cover – the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2001 [*sic*], and in 2002, you went back to school.

SW: Deepwater Horizon was 2010.

MG: Right, sorry.

SW: I went back to school in 2002. There were a couple of reasons why I did this. First, there was a little bit of fear because, at the time, [Bill] Clinton was President. I finished in 2002. Clinton was President, and they were doing what was called the A-76 process. That process was about essentially eliminating government personnel that we don't need, which makes sense, but at this time, it was determined that if the seafood inspection program was taken out of the agency and become a performance-based organization, a private corporation, that would meet the qualifications of all the people, not just for NMFS [National Marine Fisheries Service] that had to be cut, but for NOAA. With one slice, they could meet their quotas. It didn't help them on the budget because our budget was not appropriated. We were a target, and we'd been that way for a long time. We're not as mission-critical to fisheries management as a lot of other people. So I understand that; a lot of our friends don't, but it doesn't matter. Agencies have to make decisions. There's only so much money. So at that point, I said, "If I do leave the government, I may have to have a degree." So I started looking around and decided to go back and get the degree just to be sure I had that checked, but also I felt like I wanted to finish this. There was an impetus to do it right then and there. Throughout this time, though, there was a lot of increase in foreign plants wanting to come into our program because they were shipping to the United States. The buyers here wanted them inspected. So I was also doing a lot of foreign travel to go over there and help do these audits and design the audit systems, everything else, to the point where I was traveling a hundred thousand miles a year. There was one year where I was gone for six months over time. So a lot of this was going on. ISO-2200, which is the food safety management standard, became big. So I had to go over and work on that. There were a number of changes that the industry was going through, and there was a big push, not just for governments, but in general, to let third party people do this kind of work. I don't have an opinion one way or the other on that, but the opinion I did have was that the third parties should be very qualified. If you're going to do food safety, you should know what you're doing. It was too easy at the time to just say, "Well, we'll do it for you. I know how to audit." "Well, yeah, you do. But do you know about this or that? So all these ISO standards were going down that path. So I felt it was important we get there and make sure that the qualifications are in play and all that. That was happening at the same time. I finished the master's degree; I think it was 2005, something like that. I started the PhD, and then, of course, as you already mentioned, Deepwater Horizon hit. This is one of those things where I just happened to be here. That was during the same time as the Brussels seafood show. My boss was in Brussels with a couple of other people at the seafood show. Then the Deepwater Horizon hit. I didn't even see the news that day. Someone called me – "Okay, we need to go talk about the oil spill." I said, "What oil spill?" Well, that is how I caught the football. I just happened to be there to pick up the line. There was nobody else in the office at the time. We were told within twenty-four hours to figure out how we would determine to close or open these waters. Never been done before. We were all looking around at each other like, "What are we going to do?" Deer caught in the headlights. I can see their faces now. My counterpart at FDA in the Office of Food Safety, he had only been there for maybe three weeks on the detail. They said, as people are leaving, "You're going to be working with NOAA on this." Both of us were being thrown into this hot tub. It got bad. There were two calls a day, seven days a week, with management and everything else. "Where are we with this? How many samples have we done?" We were trying to figure out how we would use the best science we could do – closing an area is easy; it's reopening it. When do we reopen it? How do we do this? We finally came down to what I thought was a very good concept, but it was thrown

together in that we had to go running with it, and then test it. We finally came to a good point. All this was going on before the cap was even on. We were still trying to determine, "Can we test this? Can we do this?" The oil is flowing the whole time. We came up with some simple criteria that did work, thank god, by the time this all happened, and it was defensible. But what many people don't realize – and this is where our sensory people got involved. Most people don't realize that scientifically, you could eat that fish – even if it swam through the oil, you could eat it, and probably for a number of years, eat that before you might have a problem because of the contamination. But the market was very fragile. If anybody tasted or smelled or even thought they tasted or smelled oil contamination, they would not buy seafood, not just seafood from the Gulf. They would slow back and just not buy seafood. That's part of our job, is confidence in the seafood market. So it was sensory that was driving the bus. We don't smell or taste anything. Now we can send it to chemistry. The chemistry always passed. It always would because the PAHs [polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons] were always going to below toxic levels. But people said, "Well, we got to test it." "Well, we are testing it, but this is what's going to drive it." We had questions from countries – "We want to make sure that the lobsters from the Northeast are not contaminated with the oil from the Gulf." Well, that's how bad this was. People were worried about all seafood from the U.S. We had to deal with the media and everything else. This was a dividing point for our program. It's one of those milestones we remember. It also was a big point in getting the relationship between us and FDA to a good place. Before that, it was always adversarial. You have people in different agencies who think you're stepping on their turf. It didn't help that our inspectors thought we were there for food safety. That's not why we were there. We also had leadership at the time, who wanted to be better than the FDA, and they loved to poke the bear sometimes. This is normal between organizations. But at this point, nobody had all the balls in play. When Peter and I sat down, we didn't have that baggage. It was: we have to get this done well. So we used each other's authorities to make it happen. FDA couldn't open and close the waters, but FDA would decide if the fish was acceptable once it landed. So we used both of those activities to make sure that we could have the seafood working well. That showed a cooperative relationship. That showed what FDA and NMFS could do together, and it's been that way ever since.

MG: Can you talk about how the sensory tests were being done? How much time did you have to spend in the Gulf region?

SW: Well, we sent, in the first days, a team of about ten people to do the sensory, but the things were trickling in. Once it really started, we were thinking about having three shifts of doing this. We ended up sending twenty-five people down there. That was a chunk. Things weren't necessarily getting done, but it was all hands on deck. FDA helped send a couple of people, but I had staff down there doing different aspects of that work. Finally, it was getting – there was so much information going so fast, and NOAA wanted information so fast that we needed to get a better handle as to how to get that information flow. So they sent me down. I was down there for four weeks at a time. They gave me an office, and I was running back and forth. Some of the people that I had there – one of them was there for nine months. He was there almost the entire time. Thank god he was single at the time. It was an issue where we didn't ask people, "Can you go?" We'd say, "Okay, you're going down for three weeks. We got to get you down there. We got to get you moving." Everybody couldn't do sensory this

way. We had to train them. We had to retrain them. There was a lot going on. But to a person, no one complained. They were always big on: "Let's make this work. Let's do this. We're worried about this." But, at the same time, we always thought it wouldn't last a year, but it did. It lasted a long time.

MG: The training was done at GARFO [Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office]?

SW: Yes. That's where we have our sensory lab. It's the best one. We train people there, but we also trained some people in some of the states to help screen things down in Louisiana. So we did some training down there, but the people we trained we trained up at GARFO.

MG: What's the training like?

SW: You essentially go through the samples of areas of what you know is concentrated. You've contaminated samples of a certain level, and you know what that is. The training is about then detecting it. It's also about to what level can we detect? So we were pretty good at getting down to detection levels of one part per million. Some people could do .5 parts per million. That's the equivalent of a ping pong ball in an Olympic-sized pool. So that level of contamination we could test. There are more sensitive people in the world, but in general terms, that would be a good way to deal with the market. We got all sorts of suggestions. "Why can't we use the perfume industry people?" You could, but the perfume people don't taste the food. Sensory just isn't about smelling. It's about: do you have a taste. "Why can't we use dogs?" You could use dogs, but dogs have almost a hundred thousand to a million times more sensitivity, and they can't tell you what they're smelling. They can tell you there's something in this, and there probably would be, because there's oil in the Gulf already. So we don't want people worrying about anything more than what's baseline, what we're used to seeing. It was a media circus at times because they wanted information. I understand that. They truly wanted that. There were times when there was information we weren't going to give them. There was a big push to get the names of the sensory analysts. We said, "No," because you want to eliminate bias. You didn't want anybody thinking, "I got to find something." We didn't even let people look in the window, because if they thought they were being watched, there was a worry that they would find something and we wouldn't know if it was a false positive or not. So we actually had people go through a FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] request to get these names. "No, you're not getting them." We fought it all the way. There were times where some of the people felt threatened by some of the locals. "You got to open up this stuff because if you can't, I can't work." That had to be eliminated as well from this issue. It was a day to day discussion on all this. We had a great team working. The comms [communications] people upstairs were excellent. They helped us through all this. Leadership gave us what we needed. There were, of course, tussles. "How many samples did we do? You can't count." That sort of thing. There was so much information happening so fast in so many different ways; we just had to manage this almost on a twice a day basis. "What do we say? How are we going to say it?" It got rough for a while. Once we got good at it, that was good. It was great. Of course, the states, especially Louisiana, wanted us to open quickly. Well, I appreciate that, but if you can't follow protocol – we had problems with that. And it was a heatwave. So all these samples are coming in decomposed because it was like extreme

temperatures. Simple ice wasn't keeping these things cold enough to move us forward. If it could go wrong, it did; it definitely did.

MG: Did you ever feel targeted? There are so many pictures of you sniffing seafood online.

SW: [laughter] That was so they wouldn't get the others sniffing seafood. I didn't feel targeted, but some of the things I had to do was go down and help the communications people manage the media, give them something. I remember some of those pictures; there must have been twenty cameras in the room, and it wasn't a room big enough for that. As soon as I started showing them how we sniff some of this stuff – *flash, flash, flash*. It was like, "Oh my god, I'm just sniffing the seafood." There was a lot of media interviews and that sort of thing. It was good for them to have somebody to talk to, and I could keep that information away from the inspector so they could get their job done.

MG: You mentioned the level of contamination that could be detected. What level were you detecting from your samples?

SW: When it got to us, it was pass/fail. So we didn't do levels at that point. It was just pass/fail. It wasn't until the oil basically stopped flowing that we started seeing positives. It was a good test that we started doing some of these things before the oil stopped because people thought maybe it was still good to go. No, we could detect it. It was pretty easy. The problem came in with dispersants were being used, the Corexit and everything else. We had to recalibrate to make sure we could actually detect that, and we could. It was possible. Sometimes you're detecting it, not knowing what you're detecting. You're just able to repeat that test. So the whole concept of sensory is to train your brain – "Something's not right. This is not normal. I'm going to call it." We knew behind the wall that there was Corexit in it, there was oil contamination. That's what the calibrations were all about. If we couldn't calibrate somebody or couldn't get somebody to a sensitivity that we trusted, they weren't used. Some people can do better than others. We only used the ones that were able to do a very consistent job.

MG: What are the impacts of ingesting contaminated seafood?

SW: Well, it's not good. But at most, you might get ill that day just from the flavor and odor and everything else. There are long-term carcinogenic issues. That was part of the discussion. Nobody wants to think that you could eat this, and it would be okay. It's not great, but it's not acute. So you won't get sick and die that day, or anything like that. It would be something that would handle over many exposures, many exposures. That's still not good, but you had – as I said, the sensory was dealing with the more immediate problem – can you still seafood versus how much you could and whether or not it would be contaminated. We didn't want any of that. We wanted to make sure you could sell it, and it wasn't contaminated. The driver had to be scientifically-based. Even that, there were a lot of scientists who thought that the sensory was more witchcraft than anything else, and it's not. We would love to have a more analytical basis for this, but it's the best way at this point. Again, it's not wholesome. That word "wholesome" is very important because it's not something you should eat, but if you did eat it, you're not going to get sick necessarily or die. Is that a glowing recommendation? No. But you also want

to make sure that you're being careful about any background levels that are already there. There were people who were saying we should close the Gulf anyway because there's oil it until all the oil is gone. It will never be gone. There's shipwrecks. There's natural seepage. It will never be gone. Are you saying just close the Gulf? That was the kind of discussion that was going on at times. So there was not only an education process for the industry; there was an education process for consumers about what you're consuming, and educating government leaders all about all of this. Once a decision's made, we can go forward, but realize all this data before you make a decision.

MG: When and how was it deemed safe to open up the Gulf?

SW: The protocol was there was no oil sheen on the waters. Then you could start testing. If the sheen is gone for a certain period – I think it's just a few days. Then we started testing the sensory. If the sensory passed, we would send the sample to chemistry. We did it by grids. We did a certain number of grids on the outskirts of the spill and then moved forward into it once the oil was capped and everything else. It took a while. The center took a lot longer.

MG: Maybe this is a hard question to answer, but are you able to talk about the scope of the impact that the oil spill had on the seafood industry?

SW: Well, it didn't have the big effect you thought once we started opening it. Prices were down, of course. There will be people down South that would say, "Wait a minute. I couldn't sell my seafood." Yes, that's true. But I'm looking at the entire seafood industry. There's a much bigger industry than just the Gulf. The Gulf was impacted for some time. You still had tarballs coming up onto the beach, and people were worried about that. But people forget there's always tarballs coming up on the beach. So tarballs in your shrimp catch don't necessarily mean the shrimp is contaminated. Lots of little decisions going on. But it did subside soon thereafter. There are parts of Louisiana that are still having trouble. The oil just devastated certain areas. The swimming fish probably recovered very quickly. It's the crab and oysters in these tiny areas that were the worst hit. But even then, most of that is moving forward. I think there's only one area that might still be closed in Louisiana, and they may actually have just opened. It's visual contamination and then moving on. Industries are very resilient at this. There was a worry for a while that the red snapper industry was a problem. They said, "The oil is causing these lesions on the fish." Well, in fact, what was happening was there were so many fish because we hadn't fished it that they were nipping at each other. Those wounds were getting infected. So the natural problem was we had too many red snappers at the time. It's things like that that the long term effects were very important. Now there were a lot of NGOs [non-governmental organizations] that were talking about all the oil in the bottom of the ocean. That's not my area, but those are concerns as well. We're just not seeing the impact on the seafood sales.

MG: Were there other things like the oil spill that happened? Maybe on a smaller scale?

SW: We do have spills from time to time. It's on the smaller scale. But it's also a spill versus a pouring. This one was a constant flow. Nothing's come up like this, but we do have some spills that are contained and dealt with and often don't even need our services because it's

already taken care of, and we know it's going to be clean. So this does happen from time to time. We have staff who can jump in when we have to.

MG: Is there anything else you want to say about the oil spill and the work you were doing in the Gulf?

SW: No, I'm glad it's over. It was rewarding. Again, it was all the side benefits, especially the benefit of working with the FDA better that has really made a difference.

MG: Can you clarify for me – when you went back to school, it was at Kansas State.

SW: Kansas State University. They had an online program. I haven't visited the campus ever. I just finished it through distance learning.

MG: Same for Regis University?

SW: Yes, Regis was a distance learning program from the very beginning.

MG: I was curious about how you negotiated all of that.

SW: On planes a lot. Lots of planes at the time. [laughter]

MG: Were your children young at that time?

SW: Let's see. Yes. My son was born in 2001. My daughter was a little – yes, they were young. It was easier to deal with then. Plus, again, I was traveling a lot. That was the sort of thing I could do while on the road as best I could. They were a couple of instances where I had to do a test during Christmas or something like that, but nothing really that earth-shattering.

MG: What was your ultimate degree from Kansas State University?

SW: Bachelor of Science, Food Science and Industry.

MG: What was the master's degree?

SW: Master's in business administration.

MG: Can you say a little more about seafood fraud and the work you've done around that?

SW: Sure. I've always been a proponent that our agency NOAA especially can help with seafood fraud, but the longest-standing concern has been low net weights or added water. A lot of that is going on. Even product that's presented to us, they know it's going to be inspected, about forty to sixty percent of that sometimes has a labeling problem or an issue of low net weights. It gets corrected before it gets sold, but that's a vast amount of seafood when it gets down to it. Recently, there's been work because the Obama Administration put forward these concerns on species substitution for seafood fraud and IUU, the illegal underreported

unregulated fish. So there's a big concern in fraud. Now my people are doing the Seafood Import Monitoring Program for a certain number of species. That's mostly about making sure it's a legal catch. That's working as best as it can. We're still trying to define areas on this. I'm pretty impressed with the work that's been done so far. But it isn't getting specifically to the day to day fraud of – I'm selling you twelve ounces of shrimp and making you pay for sixteen or I'm going to inject these scallops with a great deal of water and sell them for a higher price, and you're going to buy water. More common than it should be. We are working as best we can to make sure that goes forward. Again, I learned a lot of the kind of things that can be done from my days in the seafood industry. There are a lot of good players in the seafood industry who are trying to do the right thing, and often will do these things only because they have to compete with the guy across the street. So we have to find a way to make this work for those guys who are trying to make it work. Once we can get that going, the rest of them will be pushed out of business.

MG: Is an extreme version of seafood fraud what Carlos Rafael was convicted of?

SW: Yes, that's also fisheries fraud. [laughter] That's an extreme example. But I would say the most common thing you would see are those processors who are soaking the scallops for three days to make sure they get as much water in there or something like that. Or, those people who are bringing in tilapia and selling it as grouper for a higher price. Or, trying to get around tariffs at the border. There's various levels of this and various ways that it's being done. You can't necessarily measure incidence because a lot of fraud at the consumer level is at the retail and the foodservice level, but a lot of that is innocent. They think the rockfish is coming from Taiwan, but it's not. Something like that. It's the intentional fraud that we have to deal with. A lot of it – there may be big chunks going on at the border, but overall, it's a very small percentage getting to the consumer. What really happens is all the trading in between, changing hands, mistakes, all sorts of things. So we've got to do something better internally in the United States, but NOAA can only do so much at that point. We need to work with the States. We're going to try to do more of that.

MG: Were you involved at all in the Rafael case?

SW: Not me. No, no. I'm sure there were others. I didn't hear about it until it was already done. But we've had fraud – hell, when I first became the deputy up at the Northeast, we had fraud where we had companies who were working together to fraud the military on military buys. The first two weeks I got up there, there was a case, and it went forward by the U.S. attorney. My boss took vacation. I was there for two weeks. Okay. We helped testify. We helped send some people to jail. They came back out later on, but basically, they were saying, "Okay, you'll bid this time, and you'll bid this price, and you'll bid time," instead of doing the right thing. And they were violating Buy America [Act] by bringing in foreign product and finding ways around this. It was our data that helped that. Those kinds of frauds are bigger often than the species substitutions issues that we're dealing with.

MG: Are there trends in fraud that are responsive to regulatory changes?

SW: I think all the fraud that I've seen is the same I've seen in the last thirty-five years. It just continues on. It's different variations of a theme. I don't see any regulatory changes along those lines, except maybe tariffs.

MG: Can you talk a little more about the work you're doing today?

SW: Once seafood inspection moved into the larger Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, a lot of the work and a lot of changes in the industry have to do with market access, trade between countries. There's a great deal that we're doing as well on making sure the certificates that we issue for export, which is now about fifty percent of our work, are something we can live with and can get the product into the country. Seafood is different than a lot of other commodities. Poultry and meats, when it's exported, the FSIS has their one certificate, they issue it, and it tends to work. But they also import a lot less than that. They don't have as much impact that seafood does. The U.S. is one of the largest exporters and importers of seafood, and there's hundreds of species. They all have different aspects that we have to deal with. It's not easy to say it's U.S.-acceptable, and that should be enough. So we have to start issuing certificates that say this meets the requirements of China. This meets the requirements of Guatemala. Then we have to negotiate what we mean by that. It means we have over a hundred certificates now because of that kind of concern. Add to that, that we're also issuing catch documents that it's a legal catch. There's a lot of certification that goes on for an exporting nation. A great deal of that work is going on. If there's a barrier, we work with USTR [United States Trade Representative], but mostly our work is about trying to get it done from a scientific basis. Technically, can we do this? Will that work?

MG: You also mentioned on your survey that you often travel for work and that you've been to some rough areas.

SW: Yes. I remember one story. Going to the Philippines, there was a series of bombings going on. The best place to do some of these bombings is the worst place in the Philippines, where all the tuna is coming from, from Mindanao. Mindanao has always been fighting with – they're Muslim, and they're fighting the Catholic regime. The plants are about fifty kilometers from the Abu Sayyaf training camps for Al-Qaeda. So there's a lot going on down there. One time, a bomb went off at the bus stop near one of the plants we were going [to]. We weren't there. We had already left and gotten to Manila, but they were going crazy trying to find us. We're in the Manila embassy, and they're trying to find us down there. They come running into the office, where we're talking to the economics officer – "Okay, we got two people down in the Philippines. There's been a bomb going off in the same area. Do you guys know anything about it?" "Well, no, We're here." They were very happy. But it's that kind of problem that goes on. We've had earthquakes. Some of our people were down in China a couple of years ago, and a typhoon hit. They were stranded in Hainan island, waiting for the typhoon to go forward. So there are quite a bit of things that go on like that because of the frequency of travel. One gentleman went to Sri Lanka, and as he landed, they had a military coup. So he was stuck in his hotel waiting for all this going on. It was happening in the streets around his hotel. There's been riots. There's all sorts of things. We teach our people to get in, get out, keep the footprint minimum, and do what we can to be a fly on the wall. There's a lot that can go on.

MG: When you look back on your career, is there anything else that stands out to you when you look back on it? Is there anything I forgot to ask you about?

SW: No, you've been extremely thorough. It's amazing how much I enjoyed the career. I enjoyed the fact that we're not the mainstay USDA/FDA because that allows us to be involved in a lot of things, and get involved in different aspects that a lot of people in these other agencies they do one aspect for their whole career, whereas we get a chance to touch everything. It's much more rewarding along those lines. Frustrating because we don't necessarily have control over it, but it doesn't mean that we can't learn more about it. It's been very fascinating.

MG: Well, tell me a little bit about your life outside of work. How did you meet your wife?

SW: My wife – met on the job. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation had put out a request for us to help them with a project to deal with NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] and HACCP. So we were going to do this, and we had set up a training in Seattle. I had Canada involved. I had FDA involved. But I couldn't get anybody from Mexico. I kept writing these people in Mexico, "NAFTA is not NAFTA without Mexico." So I finally got this call from this young lady on the phone. I was told her boss told her to get involved because I was bugging her too much. They sent two people, and she was one of them. It was a ten-day trip. We hit it off. She didn't have a whole lot to do other than changing slides and things like this, but they wanted her there. She did similar work for the fisheries ministry down there. So she and I hit it off, started dating during that time. When she came back, we talked on the phone, did some faxes, sent flowers, that sort of thing. Four months later, we were engaged. It was very quick. I had one date. I went down to Mexico and had one date. So it went pretty well. It was very nice and very different. Truly, getting involved in another culture along these lines – this was very old fashioned. I had to go down and literally wear a coat and tie and ask for her hand in marriage with the whole family around. I'm like, "I don't want to do that. You said 'yes' already. I don't want to do this." But it was very nice. In fact, I still tease her. I say, "I haven't gotten my dowry yet. I had to do all this. I'm supposed to get those sheep and goats, and I want to know what's going on." Different. She's truly Mexican, and it's a constant issue – "Well, we don't do that in Mexico." I said, "Do you see Mexico? We're not in Mexico. What's going on?" Now my kids, once they were born, they've become bilingual. In fact, throughout their school, through grade school and everything, it was nothing but Spanish. So they learned quite well. My wife says, "They're not fluent at all." "All you guys ever do is talk in Spanish. I'm the odd man out. I don't even know what you're talking about." It's been very good along those lines. It was nice having that separate concept going on in life. Different.

MG: Are you able to go back and forth to visit her family?

SW: Able to? No, we have to. About at least once a year, if not twice, we go back and forth. There's something important to me – I travel so much; traveling for vacation bothers me. It's not her or anything like that. I just want to sit and watch John Wayne movies when I'm on vacation because I travel so much. Hotels are all the same. But I understand the desire. So, yes, we do go back and forth quite a bit.

MG: Tell me a little bit about her and her life since marrying you.

SW: I think it's been a dream. I'm certain she is not so pleased about it. She was, as I said, doing well in her Ministry of Fisheries, etcetera. She came here. She had to find work. She's now an interpreter at a hospital, which she seems to enjoy. Her life, in my standpoint, still seems to be about how much she can make this feel like Mexico, or how much she misses Mexico. I say, "Lourdes, honey, it's been twenty-five years. I think you should probably adjust at this point." [laughter] She seems to be – she is missing her home life, and she's very big on family and always being with family, whereas my family is very good at being spread apart – "I saw you a year ago. Isn't it enough?" That's the kind of thing we do. It's just different ways of approaching life is all.

MG: And she moved here later in her life.

SW: She was about thirty years old when we got married and everything else. She had lived at home the entire time until then, which would never happen here in the U.S., right? No. It's those cultural differences – telling my kids, "If it doesn't work out in college, you can come home. You can stay here as long as you want." I'm saying, "Stop. Hold the phone. No, you can't. That is not how we do things. As soon as you walk out, I'm painting your room. I'm moving on." Those discussions happen on a daily basis.

MG: You told me a little bit about your daughter before we started recording, but can you tell me again about your children?

SW: My daughter is doing very well. She's up in Bangor, Maine, studying journalism. Very pleased with where she is going. She was okay in high school, loves the friendship parts, and that's all good. During high school, she got involved in something – she's not a physical person, but she got involved in crew from freshman year and was a coxswain, and did very well. I was very proud of her and very impressed with her. She wanted to do that later on but dropped it. She doesn't have that same outlet up in Bangor. The degree is going well, and she's focused on the degree. She's getting good grades, and she's about to graduate. Thank god, because I don't have to pay for that anymore. She seems to think now that she's going to try to get work back down this way. We'll see how that goes. We'll help her out any way we can. I'm a big fan of: "It's your life now. You really need to make some decisions and tell us what you're going to do. Don't get us to tell you what to do." My wife, however, is very good at saying, "I'll tell you how you do this." I said, "No, we have our own lives. Let's move this on." Yet another discussion point at home. My son, this is his last year in high school. He's getting ready to graduate. He's finally starting to realize as much as he talked about how he had it under control, he doesn't have it quite under control. He's finally applied for colleges, etcetera, isn't as serious about going to classes as other people, but he's doing okay. We'll have to see how that works out. I was absolute – "You graduate. You might have a couple of months, but if you're not going to college, you're going to leave the house and find a job somewhere else. I don't care if it's McDonald's." He's like, "Well, but it might take a while to get on my feet." "No, no. Get on your feet now." He's eighteen. He's been eighteen all throughout his senior year in high school. So I said, "You're being treated as an adult. You

make adult decisions. You have adult mistakes." My wife says, "He's a kid. We have to treat him – he's a kid. We have to help him." "No, we don't have to. The law is very clear. We don't have to." It's that kind of give and take that's going on. We give my son a hard time. He fights us just like any other teenager. But he has the wherewithal if he needs to; he can get his job done.

MG: It sounds like an interesting time in your household.

SW: Yes. Anybody who has older teenage kids, they emphasize with everything I'm saying right now. We'll have to see. Some of us were good kids. I keep saying, "Mom, was I really that bad?" She goes, "Oh, no, honey. You were an angel." I'm like, "Oh, yeah, thanks. Lying to your son." We will have to see. But what's good about all this is my kids are seeing their cousins who are out and trying to get jobs or are getting jobs. One was very good and very successful and got married. The other one is having some issues because it's hard to get jobs. College kids now graduating only about twenty-five percent get a job out of college. They have to do something. That's not a good statistic. That's a scary statistic, but it's not mine. It's their statistic. [laughter] "What are you going to do, son? How are you going to deal with it? Kerrie, what are you going to do?" I don't mind giving safety nets if someone's really tried, but if they're just going to sit there and wring their hands, no.

MG: Well, is there anything else I forgot to ask you about?

SW: No. No, you've done very well. I appreciate it.

MG: Well, this has been so much fun for me.

SW: I enjoyed it, too. I really did.

MG: Good.

SW: I really did.

MG: Well, thank you for all your time.

SW: Anytime.

----------------------------------END OF INTERVIEW----------------------------------
Reviewed by Molly Graham 2/6/2020
Reviewed by Steven Wilson 3/2/2020
Reviewed by Molly Graham 3/3/2020