

Molly Graham: This begins an oral history interview with Ann Terbush Schaefer for the NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] 50th Oral History Project. This is our second session. The date is Tuesday, January 18, 2022. The interviewer is Molly Graham. It's a remote interview with Ann in Salisbury, Maryland today. I'll pull up my notes. We talked a lot about the late 1960s, the Vietnam era, and the social and political movements of the time. Just one question for clarification I had was, your first husband Terry, was he able to receive an educational deferment?

ATS: He did for a while. Well, I mentioned it in the early part of the interview that one of my childhood friends and I went to Europe and traveled around, and I sent postcards to Terry every day. He got lured to come and meet us in Nice, France. He did not tell his draft board. He had a student deferment, but part of the requirement was to tell the draft board, so his father went through extraordinary efforts to get in touch with Terry and tell him to come home and report to his draft board. But he did end up with 4-F, so he was not drafted. He had other health problems that kept him from serving in Vietnam. But it certainly was one of those things that has stayed, I think, with mostly every man who lived through that period. All of my contemporaries have had experiences either with trying to stay out of Vietnam, or they seem to finally be ready to tell a little bit more about what they experienced there.

MG: The other thing you talked about was forming informal and formal women's groups at work, and so I was curious if you could talk a little bit more about that. You mentioned the girls would get together and say, "Okay, tomorrow we're going to wear pantsuits." I didn't know if that was while you were at NOAA or in a different position.

ATS: That was while I was at EDA, the Economic Development Administration, which was the agency that hired me initially into the Commerce Department. I was working there from '69 to '75. That was when I went from a grade 5 to a grade 12. Yes, that was at EDA. The women's movement there was just – it really hadn't permeated at least into that part of – other than wanting to wear the pantsuits and my joining NOW [National Organization for Women] on the outside. One of the things that I worked on with NOW was employment discrimination. Equal pay was a big issue. The federal system, with the grades and all of that, was a little bit less clear where the equal pay problems were. But it did become obvious to me that I would need to make some changes to go any further than a grade 12 at that time.

MG: How were these groups formed? How would you communicate with one another?

ATS: Well, there were EEO [Equal Employment Opportunity] committees. And I'm not sure exactly when the EEO committees started. That would be something I could look back into my records and get a little bit more. But I know, by the time I got to NOAA, there was an active EEO committee, and I served on it intermittently throughout my career. There was also a group called the NOAA Committee for Women, which was active when I came in, in '76. I did a little booklet for them that was about women who made a mark in history. I illustrated it with pen drawings of each one. I think I still have a copy of that somewhere. But the NOAA Committee for Women was active for quite a number of years.

MG: This is the era before email, so I'm just curious how communications took place. Was it all in person? How was it set up?

ATS: Yes. Telephone, memos. We had inboxes. There were ways to get a message to each employee, if that was our intention. And there were posters. Posters in the ladies' room, actually, was something that we used back in those days, but mostly, the NOAA Committee for Women was supported by the administration. We had our meetings in conference rooms and used – usually it was lunchtime, but we could get a little bit of time away from our desk to participate and things like that. Of course, later on, getting up into the '90s, when there were a lot more women in scientific roles and other positions in the agencies, the Women's Aquatic Network was started, which is still active and may show up in some of your interviews.

MG: Did you receive any pushback, or were there some women that weren't maybe as progressive as you guys and weren't interested in joining these groups?

ATS: Well, there were certainly people that weren't interested in joining. But I think they tended to be pretty quiet about it. I can't remember any instances where women – any women, really – resisted this push because I think every – just as we're caring an awful lot more now about the way individual Black people have dealt with going into a white situation, they were quiet about it. They assimilated, got to know people, but there always was a little bit of pushback they felt from the white people that were there first. There were so few women in any positions of power in any agency, really, at that time, in the '70s.

MG: And what kinds of things were discussed? What was on the agenda of these meetings?

ATS: Well, we had women who were progressing, speaking, [and] giving ideas. There was some training involved, opportunities to learn about different management skills. Daycare was certainly an issue that came up and that I worked on, especially later in the '70s when I became a mother and – but even before that, daycare was certainly an issue. In the government, there was some progress, although it's kind of shocking to think, here, forty years later, we still don't really have daycare solved.

MG: Yeah. Especially in the COVID era. I think my daughter's been in school one or two days in the last thirty.

ATS: Yes. It's a huge challenge for you young mothers now, absolutely, because of COVID. But the daycare options are lessened because it just never has been handled by our system, by our government, by our society the way it needs to be in order to really provide everything that young women need to pursue their careers and their family at the same time.

MG: Well, talk a little bit about when you started your family and what that was like for you?

ATS: Yes. It was challenging and, I think, probably more so challenging because I didn't have a great marriage at that point. I was pretty much on my own. But I did get a fair amount of support at work. People understood if I had to be late because I was taking my son to my mother's. I had a mother, which was actually a mother who lived close by. I don't think I could

have progressed in my career the way I did if it hadn't been for her because I did have to travel a fair amount at that point, when I was doing grants management, for meetings throughout the country and as far as Alaska, even. My son and my mother ended up really building a very strong bond, and he didn't mind going to stay with her while I was gone. I remember him saying, "Mommy, don't go to Eeyaska [Alaska] anymore," because that seemed like an especially long one for him. I don't think I could have done it without my mother.

MG: Just looking back at your career, did you see changes in attitudes and treatment towards women take place?

ATS: Oh, definitely. Yes. Definitely. I do think that probably most managers, men and women, realized that, to not recruit in less traditional ways – certainly, getting to know my husband's colleagues that he gained over the years and what a close network there was among biologists who were into marine science and also spent most of their free time fishing, which most of them did, it just – it was a very tight network and a difficult one to – it was much more logical to hear about a young person who had some talent who was a boy, a man, than it was to hear about a young woman, so I think they did have to reach a little bit, look a little bit further beyond. But it all ended up benefiting an agency so much, it was kind of inevitable that it would happen. There's still a glass ceiling, of course, but it's dramatically different than it was back in 1970.

MG: You described hitting your ceiling as a reason why you changed positions in the first place.

ATS: Yes. Yeah. The reason I actually resigned and traveled and did some art classes and things and – yeah, it just became pretty clear to me that there wasn't any room for me to move up. They liked the job I was doing, keeping track of the grant funds and doing the budgets. I wasn't finding those things terribly interesting.

MG: I was also curious about the era in which you took the federal service entrance exam and what your motivation was. I know you mentioned possibly getting a job at the National Gallery. But this was a real low point in terms of trust in the government. You had the Vietnam War, the My Lai massacre, the shootings on campus. I'm also thinking about the Watergate scandal.

ATS: Yeah. I was already in the government during Watergate. But I think I was still kind of on the – at the time when there was a [John F.] Kennedy bounce. Think not what your government could do for you but what you can do for your government. It was much better. That isn't a very direct quote. But there was definitely, I think, a feeling that a government job was a good thing. I guess, going to high school, finishing high school, as I did, in DC, a lot of my friends' parents worked for the government or worked with the government, as my dad did. So, I had been thinking about – and I also think I was perceptive enough to know about how the government may be more open to bringing women in and paying better than private businesses were. So, certainly, working for the government was something that I sort of jumped at. I think I mentioned my younger sister ending up working for the government because she needed health care, and that was certainly a motivation too, that it was something we could count on for the benefits that you'd get in the government. It definitely was something I was thinking about. It was originally the National Gallery application that I was making and needed to take it for that.

But then there were ways that, when you had a high score, it was provided to other agencies, and I got some invitations to apply to places. I'd been thinking a little bit about the Foreign Service too, and I did go through the interview process for that and didn't get anywhere with that. But you needed to take the same federal service entrance exam for all those things.

MG: Was it a placement exam or a qualifying exam?

ATS: It was a qualifying exam. It was really kind of like an SAT. It was that kind of questions. I don't remember too much about how it got eliminated. I think some of that might have been because there was a push to hire veterans. With more and more people going through the Vietnam system, a lot of the young people that came into the government were veterans and had come in that way. I think there's just been a general recognition that tests aren't always the best way to get the best people. Some people are good test-takers, and other people are very talented and don't do well with the tests. I'm not sure when it was eliminated, but it certainly helped me because I was a good test taker.

MG: Remind me what years you were at the EDA.

ATS: I started in 1969. I left in 1975.

MG: Can you say just a little bit more about those years, the purview of the EDA, the priorities at the time in terms of grant funding, and how it all worked?

ATS: Yes. Well, EDA was a Johnson administration program. It was declining a bit at the time that I was working there, although it had an important mission to develop rural areas and growth centers in rural areas. There was fairly steady funding for it. However, there were a couple of reductions in force that went on during that period too. I think that those were budgetary. There was certainly some shrinking of EDA during the [Ronald] Reagan years. I think those reductions in force were soon after Reagan came in. But I wasn't involved in any reductions in force once we got to NOAA.

MG: You were gone by then?

ATS: Yes, I was gone. I was really out of EDA. We did have some other really tight budgetary things in NOAA, but NOAA's mission was quite different, and the EDA funding really did bounce up and down even more after I left than it did while I was there.

MG: Can you give me an example? What kinds of things would get funded?

ATS: Yes. Well, actually, I remember one program that was an interesting one. It sticks in my mind because we named it unofficially Jobs for Junkies. It was sort of getting people out of rehab from the drug abuse that was going on at that time in these rural areas into jobs. So, we would fund grants to cities. There were even some to companies to recruit people that were coming out of a rehab program. But I think the bulk of the projects that I was involved in making the grants for in the beginning was the planning grants for counties and multi-county districts, and so I think I mentioned the little maps that we had, mylar maps, and I would cut out

the districts to paste on the map, and multi-counties and growth centers were designated, cities that had some potential for developing and being commercial centers. The one I remember – well, right where I'm sitting today, Salisbury, Maryland was one of those. It has grown and should, for many reasons besides EDA funding. But there were a lot of planners that we funded in different areas, looking ahead, developing plans for what industries to recruit, what needs did they have for jobs, and working with the community colleges too.

MG: Was EDA evaluating these programs and measuring their success?

ATS: Yes, to some extent, yes. And these were the jobs I didn't get promoted into. Of course, I didn't have the city planning background. That's partly why there really wasn't any further opportunity for me there. But there were program officers assigned to each state. There would be meetings periodically of those program officers and the heads of the development districts to share ideas about how to do their jobs better [and] what things had worked in one county that ought to be applied to another.

MG: Were there any changes in the EDA or in your position when Nixon resigned and [Gerald] Ford took over?

ATS: I don't remember anything. I do remember how we were all kind of glued to the TV set. And there weren't very many TVs around in those days. But I think there was one in our conference room. And when there was some key thing in the Watergate hearings, we would tune in. I guess one thing that's just an interesting little story was that the – I had mentioned there was one woman among these program officers who was a friend of mine at EDA. She had gone on; I think made a lateral move, to the Agriculture Department, working in a similar kind of rural development program. She really had her heart set on being on the Watergate jury. In talking with her – we knew that she was working toward this. She made it. Her name was Ruth Gould. She ended up being the forewoman of that jury. It really was a highlight of her life to do that because she had democratic leanings, and was outraged by Watergate. Certainly, things weren't polarized the way they are now in terms of Democrats and Republicans. As a career federal employee, you're always told how nonpolitical you need to be. There's a Hatch Act. You don't wear your politics on your sleeve, but it was very clear that Watergate was a very demoralizing thing to happen in the government, so it was something that we followed closely, as closely as we could while doing our jobs. I don't think the Watergate experience really did make anybody decide they would leave the government. But it definitely was something that had our attention.

MG: What made your friends-want to be on the jury? Did she have strong feelings about this case?

ATS: Well, yes, she did. Privately, she would share her feelings that [she] really did not like anything that Nixon had done. She felt this was such an egregious abuse of his office that she wanted to participate, and she wanted to know more about it. She wanted to listen in on all those hearings – she was on the jury, so it wasn't the hearings that were held in Congress. It was the court hearings. She really enjoyed being part of it and felt it was really important that everything be revealed about the situation and that people who did illegal things would pay for it.

MG: It definitely was a part of history.

ATS: It was. It was. Yes. I think that was part of her feeling too. She was, I'd say – I'm trying to think of how she – she was probably in her fifties at that point. It was an intellectual challenge for her to take on beyond running development programs. She had leave from work to be on the jury. It really was a highlight of her life, I think, to work on that.

MG: Remind me again how you spent this period between EDA and then joining NOAA and how the position at NOAA came up for you.

ATS: Well, I knew just about everybody at EDA because of my job. They knew that I was moving on to try a career change, experiment, travel. A couple of my friends in the agency would send me notes when I was on this little trip in Europe. It was less of a trip than the one I did before when I was still in college. It was probably six weeks, maybe. I would occasionally meet people for lunch. I wasn't really actively looking for another job yet. But NOAA was just – well, the Magnuson Act had just been passed, and NOAA was building up its grant programs. One of the division chiefs from the office I'd worked in at EDA moved on to a job at Coastal Zone Management. There was a lot of – actually, a lot of overlap between Coastal Zone Management and the kind of work that we did with these development districts in my office at EDA. So, he was a very, very logical one to move into that office. He was, I think, a deputy director there. He knew what they were trying to recruit for grants management people. He knew that I was a trained grants person, and I was available. So, he called and asked if I would be interested in interviewing. At that point, I really was needing to get back to work, and so I went for an interview with Barbara – her name was then Barbara McLaughlin, now Webster, and she is still a good friend. She lives in Virginia Beach. I see her about once a month now. Anyway, we talked about the work that I had done and the work she needed her grants people to do. It was very similar in many ways, although it had more to do with the review of the grants than with the accounting for the grants, and that was the primary thing I did at EDA, but I know all the OMB [Office of Management and Budget] circulars and things that applied to grants. She hired me, initially at a 12, and then promoted me very quickly to a 13. Eventually, I became the head of the office. It was, I guess, a section chief. That's the job that I – and I would act as – in her job, she was procurement and grants. When she was gone, I would back her up. I had more visibility in NOAA in that job. That's how people like Bill Gordon found me and suggested that I come into a grants job that was opening at NMFS [National Marine Fisheries Service]. It was getting into more detail in how the grants were run and what the results were of each grant.

MG: Your initial position was with NOAA headquarters?

ATS: Yes. Yes, it was in the Office of Administration.

MG: Even though it was in response to the Magnuson Act?

ATS: No. After EDA, I moved to the NOAA Office of Administration, and then to NMFS. Jack White was the EDA guy who went to Coastal Zone Management. I think there was just a general growth that was happening in NOAA. The Magnuson Act was a big part of that. So, there were people probably moving from jobs that didn't have to do with the Magnuson Act to a

Magnuson Act job and leaving a spot that needed to be filled. Jack's job wasn't directly a Magnuson Act job; he was Coastal Zone Management. But I think part of the reason why he was hired was because of this mobility that was caused by growth in NOAA, followed by the general expansion of the Magnuson Act.

MG: So, your first role there did not relate directly to Magnuson?

ATS: No. My first job in NMFS was not directed directly to Magnuson, although it was in the Office of Fisheries Management. That office name had changed, I think, almost every year through the time I was there, but basically, it was the office that dealt with fisheries management. My particular functions were related to the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act and the grants to states for scientific research (PL88-309). So, I was doing work that pre-existed the Magnuson Act but expanded as a result of it in the way states managed it. I think the other main difference or the other main change in my day-to-day life was working on an interagency basis more. There'd been some interagency work through OMB and grants management across the Commerce Department that had started while I was the NOAA grants officer. But I was still working mostly within the Commerce Department. In my job, my grants job at NMFS, it was much more working with the Fish and Wildlife Service periodically because they had responsibilities under the Anadromous Fish Act, and we did too, so they issued some grants, we issued some grants, depending on the species that was being researched. I got used to interacting a lot with Fish and Wildlife people. That continued certainly into my marine mammal job as well, because there were similar Marine Mammal Protection Act [MMPA] responsibilities that crossed those two agencies, so I probably worked as closely with some Fish and Wildlife people as I did with people within my own agency.

MG: Was it sometimes hard to figure out what belonged to Fish and Wildlife and what belonged to NMFS?

ATS: Not too much, no. I think it was pretty clear because it was basically species-dependent. I think we knew that, although some species, like striped bass – the anadromous fish cross both agencies, but if the work was within state waters, within the rivers and lakes of a state, it would clearly be Fish and Wildlife Service. If it was in the saltwater area, it would be funding from us.

MG: Just so I'm clear, and so we have it on the record, can you remind me, what was the year you came to NOAA, and then what was the year you changed positions?

ATS: The year I came to NOAA was '76. Yeah, it was the bicentennial year, and that was pretty clear to me. I'd been doing – well, anyway, there were bicentennial things I was doing with my Washington-area feminist theater group, things like that. I shifted from the grants office to NMFS in early 1980. I had been in the grants office, I guess, about three and a half years.

MG: In between there and 1978, that's when your son Alan was born?

ATS: Yes. Yeah, I was in the grants office when he was born, in the NOAA grants office.

MG: And you came to Fisheries in 1982 or '83?

ATS: No, no, I think it was a little earlier than that.

MG: '80.

ATS: Yes, around February 1980. But then again, my sense of time gets fuzzier, the older I get, and the more COVID goes on, it gets confusing too.

MG: I just wanted to ask a little bit more about Magnuson. It seemed to usher in this new era of doing fisheries management, so I'm wondering if you can speak a little bit about that. I was reading something I think Bill Gordon wrote or said something about how it changed things to be more conservation-focused.

ATS: Yes. Yes, there definitely was that kind of a focus. The agency that preceded NMFS at the Fish and Wildlife Service was the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries [BCF]. It was pretty clear then that what you were doing was making it easier for fishermen to fish. I think, when the Magnuson Act was formed, the most immediate need was to control the foreign fishing in the two-hundred-mile limit, so there was a lot more connection with the State Department and with dealing with international fisheries. It was a total refocus. The conservation aspect, I think, is one that grew, that kept growing, kept increasing. It was certainly there from the beginning in terms of the kind of grants that we did. Most of them had to do with life cycles of fish, and the Anadromous Fish Act and the state-federal programs were more focused on enhancing the fish stocks, which has a beneficial effect for the fishermen as well, often, but that became a greater and greater need.

MG: Did you work with anyone who had been with the Bureau of Fisheries?

ATS: Oh, yes. Yes. Actually, a lot of them just came right over from there transferred. They were already there by the time I got there, by the 1980s. By 1980, all of the basic regulations had been written. And these were things that – I think a lot of the people from the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries [BCF] ended up being in a different office that had to do with industry services in NMFS. Tom Billy was the director of that office. I think he came over from BCF. But there were many others. So, I think the culture – there was a culture change, but when your policy changes and the laws that you're working under change, you change. But I think a lot of the contacts that you have as a bureaucrat with the public continue even though you may not be as directly involved in what they do.

MG: Tell me a little bit about Bill Gordon. What was his role? Did he hire you for the grants and program work?

ATS: Yes. He and Dick Schaefer, who I had known just casually through various meetings on grants because his office was the one that had the – actually, then it was the State-Federal Division, I think, in the Office of Fisheries Management, so it involved anything that involved states and the federal government working together. Dick had come up through the State of New Jersey and the State of New York and had been basically a state worker when he was recruited into NOAA. He had been there for several years. I guess he came in probably in '72, and I came

in in '76 to the grants office, and so I knew him very casually. He and I continued to be colleagues. He was my boss for a while. He had teenagers, and his focus was on his family and his work, and I think there's a – when you're thirty, somebody who's in their forties can seem really old and a different generation almost, and then once I got to be forty, I developed a friendship with him, but until then, I figured he was just a different generation. My marriage was still going. So, it was kind of a slow transition to go from admiring him as a colleague and having a personal relationship, which happened much later. But Dick was my original first boss, although Bill Gordon was the agency director who suggested to Dick that he recruit me.

MG: Can you say a little bit more about Bill Gordon? I read that he was very outspoken. He had lots of nicknames, like the Marco Polo of NMFS, Mr. Fish, Cod Tzar.

ATS: He's a real personality. He's still living. He has some real health problems, but he's living in Pennsylvania. He was one of those good-old-boy fishermen, and he and Dick Schaefer fished really all over the world together in many ways. They enjoyed each other's company. They were good friends. I think one of the other parallels between Dick Schaefer and Bill Gordon was they both moved back and forth from the regions, being regional – they were very conscious of what the regional directors needed to do and the contacts they needed to have, and the role that the central office people played. So, I think Bill always had a good rapport with most of the states and definitely was a strong personality in the way he carried out his duties as director. I didn't really work that much with him as director because I was a couple of levels lower, so I don't remember meeting with him that much one on one. But I know that he was very good at telling us, as the whole agency, how things ought to go.

MG: Yes. I read that, but I also read that he was encouraging of differing opinions. Was that your take, as well?

ATS: Yes. Yes, I'm sure he was. And I think he listened. He was a good manager. I think he was a very good manager, and he did listen to people. He was knowledgeable, but he was open to hearing from other people. Yes, definitely. He worked all the time, it seemed like. He almost was working twenty-four hours a day. His family was up in New England, I think. But he would go out and drink beers with everybody, and even me every now and then in a group. So, he was a good, I guess, morale builder. He wasn't the kind of guy who would have vendettas against someone or write them off, so he was a good manager. I think, certainly in my little part of the world, I think it was very clear – he did understand about how it was important to bring women into the agency. There were others that he brought in too and encouraged a little more diversity, even though he was definitely a good old boy himself. But he took for granted the people he would know from other agencies. I guess Dick Schaefer and Bill Gordon were both very supportive of the American Fisheries Society [AFS] as an organization that employees should join. That became a reality as more and more women came into various positions there, being local chapter leaders and things like that, that became a place that was a recruitment tool and probably always had been, but earlier it was mostly just the young men that were fisheries biologists that were part of it, and it became a much more diverse organization too.

MG: In which role was it that you started to get opportunities to interact with the scientists? Was that when you were doing the grant work or when you were with the Office of Fisheries Management?

ATS: A little bit when I was doing the grant work but much more when I moved upstairs to the Office of Fisheries Management. Should we talk about it a little bit more or – okay, Roland Finch was the director of that office. He was just a character, too, a different kind of character. He was one who'd come from the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, now that I think about it. He was English and a naturalized citizen. He had a real British look and demeanor – he had that British accent, he had a little British mustache, and he was just really a delightful person. He was an artist of sorts, too. I still have cartoons he doodled during meetings, and some that he framed for Dick. I'm not sure exactly how he and I got to know each other, but I think – I guess, actually, the offices moved around. We were moving. We were in the Page Building then, north of Georgetown. I guess I was still doing grants and was very close to that central office. He was the one who was getting me more involved in more general management tasks and making phone calls for him, setting up meetings and things. He was the one who eventually decided that, rather than having a deputy, because I didn't have the fisheries credentials, he would change that position into being an operations manager, and I acted in that role for a while. I and other people applied for it, and then I was eventually selected for that, so that was my promotion to Operations Manager grade 15. I really enjoyed that. I was doing, I'd say, mostly personnel management and budgeting, and so I was certainly working with the scientists in terms of their own personnel issues and travel issues and things like that. I edited a lot of papers. I worked with the division chiefs who were handling certain program areas under that office. But I don't think I ever was deeply involved in making fisheries management decisions. I would more likely be having a meeting with outsiders – if Roland wasn't available or was out of town, I would be explaining the agency. That was much more my role. I wasn't a policy developer; I was a policy interpreter. I think it really wasn't until I made the lateral move into the marine mammal area in 1989, I guess – '88, '89 – it wasn't really until then that I was much more involved in policies, developing the policy.

MG: I'm curious about your management style. This has been such an enjoyable interview because it's been so interesting, but also because you have such a soothing way of talking. Can you talk about your approach towards the people who worked for you?

ATS: Now, I think that's always been my style. I've always much preferred a one-on-one situation than speaking to a group. I never became a good public speaker. I always hated it whenever I had to do anything like that. I could lead meetings with people. Taking the Myers-Briggs test that we took over the years, I moved from being a strong introvert to being an "X" in the introvert/extrovert area. But I think that I always was someone that people could confide in if they had a particular concern – if they had an illness, if they had a family situation that required some accommodations, I could help with that. There were a number of personnel situations that – and I guess one that sticks out in my mind was a very bright young Black woman who was the secretary for the office director. I think she started – this was during the time that Dick Roe had that job because I was the operations manager under Roland Finch. Then Roland retired, and Dick Roe moved into that job. Dick Roe was – I had wonderful people that I worked with at every level, and I've really been able to stay friends with all of them. Dick Roe

was the office director at the time. The head secretary of the office was Margaret-Hurst, who – I’m sure she must have come from the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, I think. But she was just one of these characters – a tiny little person, maybe a hundred pounds, and she was like the English teacher that you might remember from when you were a little kid. She was just very her-way-or-the-highway kind of a person. She could type perfectly. I think she did finally, just before she retired, had a computer on her desk, but she wasn’t happy about it at all. She would still be doing carbon papers, perfectly the first time with carbon papers. It was kind of like, “Well, I worked my way up to this job this way,” and she expected every young woman that would come in as a secretary to be just like she was. This young Black woman was very bright. You could just tell how much she had going for her, but she had a really tough life. She had a son, who was, I guess, about the age of my son. She had just a lot of complications. She would disappear sometimes at lunch and not come back, and so we had to take some personnel actions to straighten her out or get her out of the job. It took several weeks, actually a couple of months, to do this. Part of it was to go to Margaret and say I’m going to have to be keeping time on Jawana. I’m going to have to make sure that she is at the office no later than nine. We had flexible hours, but I think everybody had to be there by nine. And that means that all of us will have to be here by nine. And Margaret would sometimes come in a little bit slower. She knew she would work later in the day. She just arched her eyebrows, and she was not happy about my telling her that she needed to be there by nine in the morning. But she grudgingly agreed. She understood that it was necessary in order to take the actions necessary to straighten out this young woman. I referred Jawana to the employee assistance program. She had interviews with them. Anyway, it turned out she had a problem that was just too difficult for the government to work with within the government. We had to go ahead and terminate her, which I did. That doesn’t happen very often in government because it does take keeping such a close eye – oftentimes, supervisors will just sort of set someone aside and not count on them, and they just sit there. That’s really not fair to anybody when that happens, so I did terminate Jawana. It was really heartening. A few years later, when I got a call from her, she thanked me for doing that because the fact that she lost her job because of what was an addiction really, a chemical addiction, she was eligible for some social programs in DC. She got her son into a special program, into a private school with a scholarship. She ended up coming back and working for the government, and she did well. But I did have to deal with all the personnel issues that came up. I enjoyed that because a lot of it had to do with really making people's work-life work for them and for the agency.

MG: What other issues did the Office of Conservation and Management tackle during this era, or what do you remember coming across your plate?

ATS: Well, a lot of it was the international fisheries – well, working with the international fishing people, people that wanted joint ventures. That wasn’t directly something that my office managed but was mostly worked out with recommendations from my office. And so we would be working with, talking with the fishermen, explaining to them why they could not fish in a certain area. And they would go ahead and try to work out joint ventures, one way or another – the striped bass, the conservation programs – [telephone rings]

MG: Do you want to pause?

ATS: Yes. [Recording paused.]

MG: Go ahead.

ATS: Yes. So you were asking about what issues I remember from those days. I remember that one of the important ones in terms of state-federal operations was the conservation of striped bass. That required a lot of tough decisions, stopping the fishing for a period of time. It involved working closely with the Fish and Wildlife Service over these anadromous fish. But it was a real success that both agencies celebrated. There are interstate commissions across the country, and the East Coast commissions, the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic and the New England all had a role in that project. Reauthorizing the Fisheries Conservation Management Act and the tightening up of regulations, how regulations process was done was important during my tenure there. In the headquarters office, I think, at least from my perspective, we had a lot to do with how to manage things that affected all of the regions. A lot of the fisheries work really is done at the regional level. At headquarters, it was issues like reauthorization, interagency cooperation, and setting policies to be consistent across the regions in terms of administrative policies, which may have been part of why I ended up in that role, although, when I eventually left that office to go to the permits division, that was when Dick Schaefer came in as the office director, and he brought Dave Crestin down from the region to be the deputy there and succeeded me. I think that the issues that I was working mostly on were things like consistency across the regions, budgeting, and just having a consistent regulations policy, getting regulations through the system for each fishery. That became an even bigger job once automation developed, or once the electronic systems really kicked in, in the '90s. By then, I was already in the marine mammal area.

MG: Had you met Nancy Foster before you moved to marine mammals?

ATS: Yes. I think that this NOAA Committee for Women was still operating on some level. I can't remember exactly where I first met Nancy, but I did know her. I think I mentioned the other day she did a jazzercise exercise class in the boys' club next door, and I participated in that. She was a real star for women, especially in our agency and the Fish and Wildlife Service too. Bill Fox was the director of the agency when I came in to work with Nancy. I do think that she and Bill Fox pushed an even further conservation agenda that got beyond the impact on fisheries, per se, but dealing with the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act in a more active way for conservation.

MG: I want to ask you now about the transition to the permitting office, but is there anything I'm missing up to this point?

ATS: Not that I can think of. Well, no, not that I can think of.

MG: I just wanted to understand better how this happened. When Dick came back from New England, what role was he stepping into? And was it because you had a personal relationship that you stepped out?

ATS: Yes, it really was. And Dick Roe had been my boss at the time. And Dick Roe and Dick Schaefer had been good friends going all the way back to Rutgers University. Dick Roe knew that I had started dating Dick when he was shifted to this job in the region because that's when the Schaefer marriage kind of fell apart. His wife wanted to stay here, and she wanted to move on to work. Their kids were grown up, it was empty nest time, and it was just a time for them to separate, and so I started dating him at that time. I would go up to New England and spend a weekend and also got to rekindle some personal relationships I had with art friends, too, while I was up there. Dick Roe knew that Dick Schaefer and I were dating, but nobody else really did. I don't think any – there may have been a little gossip but not very much, as far as I can tell. Actually, I guess one little anecdote about that was there was a woman who – she had been a Navy biologist, Libby Haynes, and she was one of our best central office regulations people. I worked with her really closely. I guess it was after I had gone to Nancy's office, Dick and I went to an AFS crab feast, and Libby was sitting across from us. Dick and I had just gotten engaged. So, Dick turned to Libby and pointed to me, and he said, "She said yes." Libby said, "Who's the lucky guy?" She had no idea that it was Dick himself. Anyway, we didn't want to make our relationship public until I was able to get out of that operations coordinator deputy job and move over to the permits division. The reason Dick had to come back was, as an acting director, in the regional offices, you're much more treading the difficult line between balancing things between what fishermen want and need to make their business work well and the conservation needs. Dick Schaefer was always one of these people ~~that~~ who felt that the conservation should lead – that you can't increase a business if you're not managing the fish properly so that you conserve them, and so he had made too many enemies who were calling [Dr.] [Anthony] Calio, who was the NOAA director at the time, and saying, "Get rid of this guy. He's been acting for three years. Get him out of here." So, Calio called Dick Schaefer and he called Dick Roe, and he said, "Dick Roe, pack your bags. You're going to New England and, Dick Schaefer, you're coming back to head up the fisheries management office." And they both called me; both Dick Roe and Dick Schaefer called me, to say, "Dr. Calio doesn't know that he put you in an awkward position, but this is an awkward time." They both said that they would help me find a place to go. I think one of them – I can't remember exactly who – talked to Nancy first. I wasn't too aware of what changes were going on in her office. As it turned out, Bob Brumsted, who had been the director of the permits division, had just retired. He was a Navy captain, and he was a really, really, really nice guy, but he had really tight industry ties through the Navy and the aquarium industry, and the Navy was very tight with the aquarium industry because they traded animals back and forth. So, Nancy was looking for someone that didn't have that kind of connection and thought that I could carry out the policies that she and Bill Fox had in mind to try to tighten up conservation of marine mammals, not issue permits for captures in the wild for public-display purposes. So, there were a number of policies that they needed somebody from outside to come in and help create, help enforce. It did all work out well. It turned out, I was very happy to make that move because it did give me a chance to get much more deeply into the issues that I was working on. I guess one thing I should mention, to just back up. I forgot to mention this. While I was in the – I think it was before – I know it was before I got the operations manager position. The agency helped me to get a master's in public administration, and that was an important credential for any other job I would move to. I think the agency had increased my visibility as a recruit through that effort, and I was very happy to spend – this was the Key Executive Program at American University [AU], and a couple of other Fisheries people were in my class, Joe Clem, who was one of the division chiefs I worked really closely with in

fisheries management and Don Wickham, who was in the management and budget office. The three of us were in the same class, and it gave us a chance to do papers that focused on some of the things that we were dealing with as managers, mid-level managers. The program was aimed at mid-level managers, so we could, instead of doing a thesis on an abstract thing that you study in the library, we were able to apply our personal experiences too. The topic of my thesis had to do with grants and changes that were going on in federal grants programs, from individual grants to block grants and that kind of thing. So, I think that credential was helpful in my moving to Nancy's permit job as well. I do really appreciate that. Classes were on Fridays and Saturdays, so we would need to take every other alternate Friday off from our regular job to go to the classes at AU, and then we'd continue with classes on Saturdays. I remember this was right about the time I was going through my divorce, and my little boy was just about to start kindergarten, and so I was going back to school, and he was going back to school. And I could go to bed when he went to bed and wake up at 4:00 in the morning and do my studying between 4:00 and 8:00 and then go to work. But that is an important part of my career and of my appreciation for NOAA for funding that effort.

MG: Yeah. I thought that must have been such a busy time in your life. Were you working full-time?

ATS: Yes, I was working full-time and living in an apartment with my son. My ex-husband was in his own apartment, but he helped me on the weekends. So, certainly, on the weekends when I had classes, he could take care of Alan. My mother, of course, was helping all along too. But that was in, I guess, '82 to '83 – in that time slot.

MG: Can you talk now a little bit about the marine mammal work that NOAA's done over the years and maybe what that work looked like before you came into the office and before Nancy Foster and Bill Fox were there?

ATS: Well, actually, Dick Roe had been the director of the Protected Resources office before he came into the Fisheries Management Office, which fit him better. I think he was much more interested in the fisheries than he was in marine mammals. Nancy, on the other hand, was a broad conservationist/ecologist in general and had an equal interest in the range of species that we were dealing with and ecology in general. And I think she and Bill Fox worked out a basic, simple policy that, if we're dealing with a controversy, we are in favor of what's best for the animal, for the individual animal or for the species. I think thinking about individual animals is something that someone like Dick Schaefer or Dick Roe or Bill Gordon – none of those people would have been thinking about individual animals. But the way society was changing over those years – in the late '80s and '90s, animal protection became a much bigger deal. Knowledge of animals that live in places [where] we don't see them all the time was increasing. So, things became much more of a human controversy. It wasn't just now business versus conservation. It was more how do we value animals in society? How do people in general deal with animals? I found that really interesting and something that the way my mind works, which is not always from a black and white, point A to point B, having a more – I guess thinking as an artist or creative person, it's a lot more natural, I think, to think about controversies as having multiple layers and not being black and white. So, I think we, in the Office of Protected Resources, began to think of the conservation groups as being constituents – and this was

happening to some extent in fisheries and Magnuson Act issues as well, but I think it was especially intense when it came to the animals that people identify with more, the warm-blooded, furry animals and beautiful air-breathing whales and dolphins. A lot of people get very excited about marine mammals and endangered species. So, I think Nancy and Bill Fox really were part of making a big policy change in the way we approached those laws and how we implemented them.

MG: Had it always been under NOAA's purview to be dealing with captive captured animals?

ATS: Not always, but I think ever since the Marine Mammal Protection Act, so that was '72. I don't think there was any responsibility before '72, but that's an interesting question because I really hadn't – the brain cell that had that information, if it was there, hasn't emerged. But I think I was dealing with a fairly new office is my impression. Again, we were dealing with interagency responsibilities. For captive marine mammals, the Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has a major responsibility for monitoring the health of captive animals in general. We worked, and my division worked, very closely with the veterinarians at the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service when there was a concern about a captive marine mammal, and so their responsibility existed before, but I don't know – we had an inventory of captive marine mammals, and I think that that did not exist before it was established by NMFS.

MG: What was the Marine Mammal Act born out of? Was there an incident, or was public awareness increasing around this issue?

ATS: Well, public awareness was certainly increasing. I think what really made it happen was the concerns about the tuna fishery and the Pacific tunas and that the fishery was developing around basically following the dolphins who were preying on the tuna and capturing lots of dolphins. I think that was the main impetus. But there were lots of other issues, such as captive marine mammals in zoos and aquariums. The impacts that increased fishing or the more the fishing technology and the boats and the ability to capture animals that you're aiming to catch, which would be the tuna, and the animals that you're not, which would be the incidental take of the dolphins. All the technology was increasing so fast, and so the MMPA became a way to curtail that. The Environmental Defense Fund – there was a lot of litigation around that. I guess it was developing before the MMPA.

MG: Did you work with turtle excluder devices and their implementation?

ATS: Yes, just very peripherally, though. The office did. And we had a separate division in Nancy's office that dealt with the turtles, although we issued the permits, the research permits.

MG: To study the effectiveness of TEDs?

ATS: No. The effectiveness of TEDs wasn't really something that my division did. I think the take, though, was. I think that was managed so much by the other division that I don't remember. It may have been – I think that was something that was under control quite a bit by the time I came in, so I don't remember being too much involved in that controversy.

MG: Something I think you might have said in our last conversation was that there was a bit of an adversarial relationship with the Marine Mammal Commission before Nancy's tenure.

ATS: Yeah.

MG: So, I was curious how they addressed that.

ATS: Right. Yes. That was an important part of the initial talk Nancy had with me was that she wanted that relationship to improve. John Twiss was the director of the Marine Mammal Commission throughout the time that I worked in that area, or at least up until – he developed Parkinson's disease and had to retire, I guess a little bit – it was about the same time, around 2000, when [he] retired. Anyway, he and I were – we got to the point where he would call me at home on a Sunday and say that he had heard something terrible that was happening to either a captive dolphin or a stranded animal or something, and then I would find how to get enforcement involved in it. So I just – I did focus on getting to know the people there. Mike Gosliner, who had been one of our NOAA attorneys, ended up being the Marine Mammal Commission's attorney. There was a lot more back and forth that happened, both in the personnel for the Marine Mammal Commission as well as integration of the policies, so the Marine Mammal Commission had really had the role of trying to tamp down the permits, and the Marine Mammal Commission has a review function in every Marine Mammal Protection Act permit. We don't go ahead with the permit until we get a recommendation from them. But I think once Bob left, and I came in, I think their concerns were addressed more in the permits than they had been before. I think the balance of the opinions of the commission and the animal advocates and the public display industry and the Navy, all those things were considered equally under Bill Fox, Nancy Foster, and my role as the director of the permits function.

MG: It sounds like, when you came on, there was maybe a backlog of permitting issues.

ATS: Yeah, there was. A lot of permits were issued, I think, probably before Nancy came in. I didn't look up exactly when she came into that office director job because I think – I don't think it was – I don't think she came in right when Dick Roe came into Fisheries Management, which I was involved in. But there were a lot of permits that were issued for collecting animals for public display purposes by SeaWorld, and there was, I guess, a real growth of aquariums, which can be a really good thing and is usually a really good thing, in the '90s, the new Baltimore aquarium was a big one, the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago and a number of others that maybe weren't quite as big as those. But even as the aquariums were building their hardware structure, the permits to capture animals for those new aquariums were underway. So, when I came in, there were a number of capture permits that were already operating. There were others that were – where extensions were being requested. So, we struck a balance with those. There was quite a bit of capture activity, which really served to intensify the controversies, because anytime – one of the big controversies was marine mammals captured in Japanese waters because Japan has had – and I must say, over the past twenty years that I've been out of it; I haven't tried to follow that, and I'm not sure exactly where it stands right now. But there was an island, what the aquariums described as an artisanal island fishery, where dolphins would be rounded up and brought into coves and slaughtered. I think it was about the time that I came in that some animal protection

spies who watched what was happening there, instead of just reading the way it was described in the permits – and described in the permits as an artisanal collection, dolphins rounded up and selected carefully for the aquariums. It didn't mention what happened to the ones who were not selected. So, that became much more publicly known. That became just more information in general about how these captures happened and how they might have affected the local populations and the cruelty that would happen to the animals that were just incidentally rounded up or caught in a net and would die in the nets, like the tuna fishery. The controversies were definitely building at that time, and they have mostly been resolved now. We don't hear about them anymore, and so I think that there was success on the part of the agency in trying to manage better, to shine a brighter light on some of the darker things that were happening, and the conservation groups and animal protection groups certainly played a big role.

MG: A couple of questions are popping up in my head. I guess just how does the permitting process work? If I work for SeaWorld and I want another killer whale, do I apply for a permit?

ATS: Yes. You would apply for – if you wanted to capture one from the wild. There were a number of legislative changes that took the agency out of some of these decisions. At the time, that was upsetting to see that our role was diminished. But knowing that the most important thing was to stop the captures from the wild, there's a lot more freedom now for aquariums to transfer animals from one aquarium to another or from the Navy to an aquarium that the agency doesn't weigh in on that. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service still has a role in making sure that there is enough room for the animals that move from one aquarium to another. But I think the good news, the way I look back at it from twenty years ago, is that the aquariums are much more aware of what animals can be kept in a healthy way in captivity, what animals really can't, like killer whales, for example. There is no effort to increase the number of killer whales in captivity right now, although there are still controversies when, like a few years ago, the *Blackfish* movie – that was after my time – thankfully, didn't have to deal with that one – but we certainly, in my day, heard about injuries and deaths that happened to trainers of killer whales. We were involved in moving – I was involved in issuing the permit that allowed the importation of that particular killer whale, actually, because SeaWorld made the case that they could isolate him better, they could take better care of him, they could calm the tendencies that he that [led] to his playing with this trainer and killing her up in Canada. So, several whales were moved from a facility up there under a permit we issued. The other thing that has continued well, developed during the '90s and has continued, is some captive propagation of dolphins, so dolphins are born in captivity, and once they're born in captivity, they stay in captivity. There were several release controversies that kept me busy during my time that I think we mentioned the other day, after the *Free Willy* movie, Keiko, the killer whale who was imported from Mexico under a permit that my office issued and then went to Iceland and then eventually died in Norwegian waters, and the dolphins in the Keys that ended up being recaptured and nursed back to health by Navy trainers and one of my staffers. So, the releases are something that I don't think we're still hearing very much about in the agency. But the next time I talk to one of my former staffers who's still there, I'll ask that question. I think that the conclusion is that those trials were enough proof that, once an animal – which we know with pets, except for maybe cats, but most pets cannot be released to the wild and survive.

MG: Was that something that NMFS researchers were looking at, at the time?

ATS: No. NMFS researchers really had no interest in that, except to – well, I wouldn't say that. No, there were NMFS researchers who were on the Marine Mammal Commission, people like Mike Tillman. There certainly was some interest on the part of researchers. But it really wasn't part of NMFS' mission to determine that. But when an agency like Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures would take it on, our researchers could comment on it and could review what was done there. But releasing to the wild was never something that our agency has taken on. The Stranding Network is a different question. And the Stranding Network, we have – again, the agency's role in the Stranding Network is much more of an advisory one rather than being a hands-on function that the agency does.

MG: In the instance of Keiko, what specifically was NMFS's role in all this? Were you coordinating with the Free Willy Foundation and the amusement park in Mexico where he was coming from?

ATS: Yes. Our role was to issue the import permits and to work with Iceland on the permit to bring him into Iceland, so we didn't have a direct role in an export permit for Keiko – well, there was a permit to do the research on the release, and we did have a role in reviewing that and getting reports on that. But I wouldn't say that any NOAA research people were given any task about actually participating in any kind of release study. It was more reviewing it, setting certain requirements. The Marine Mammal Commission had, I think, a much more active role in placing those conditions on permits. They would recommend what the permits should include, and for the most part, we followed the recommendations they made. There were certainly Fisheries research people that were involved in the Marine Mammal Commission's recommendations.

MG: How would this have gone differently if it happened today?

ATS: I don't know. I don't know. I think a lot of it was the timing of the – at the time that I was doing this, there was much less focus on the role of zoos and aquariums. I think most zoos and aquariums are looking at their own function more differently than they did. There was a time when the function of – and I'm not sure if this would apply to Sea World, and I haven't been to Sea World in a long time, so I can't really say, but I know there was a requirement under the Marine Mammal Protection Act that places that display marine mammals had to have an educational function and had to carry out an educational function, so in all of the killer whale displays at SeaWorld, you'll hear something about how large they in the wild, how long they live in the wild. You'll get some education. But basically, most of the people there are wanting to see the big splash when the whale dives and swims. I think there has been a shift that there wasn't – I can't say that the agency, by putting that regulation in – well, Congress put it in, actually – that probably wasn't the influence; that was more a response. The zoos and aquariums are influenced by people like Jane Goodall and what animal protection people have learned about animals in the wild and want to protect them, thinking that going to a zoo is probably not the best thing. My husband, Dick Schaefer, would never go to the zoo with me. He just hated the idea of zoos. He would occasionally go to an aquarium, but he just – I think a lot of people who have a scientific perspective think, "Why were these animals taken out of the wild to be in this little cage or this little pool? Do they really belong here?" So, I think that's a change that's happened

gradually over the past thirty years. I don't think it would be happening today because it would have already come up when it did twenty years ago. That's a little bit of a ramble, but I think people, when they go to the zoo these days, don't want to see an animal that looks like it's walking back and forth and wanting to get out. The zoos are having – even for primates and elephants and all kinds of animals, they're building more naturalistic display areas. The National Zoo has the cheetah run where you don't see the cheetahs unless you happen to be in the right spot where they're running by. They're going through grasses. I think we were probably responding rather than leading. We were leading the agency, but we were responding to a change in societal norms.

MG: When things like the Keiko story would happen, was this a particularly tense or chaotic time at work? I just was thinking about all the different things that happened around this time, including there was someone, a Norwegian pro-whaling guy, who was encouraging killing the dolphin to feed people in Africa.

ATS: Yes, I don't think that came directly to us. But that would have been the practical – somebody who was trying to do the best thing for the most number of humans possible, but the controversy definitely was a big thing. I don't think that the producers in the movie had any clue that this would become a big thing. They ended up putting a lot of funding into the relocation of that whale because it just – and I don't know why it didn't occur to them at the time that people would be really interested in this particular animal actor and what conditions did he come from, but the press got right on it, and it became very clear that here was an animal in Mexico City, of all places – high altitude, high temperature, tiny pool. So, thanks to the funding by the producers of the movie, the whale was able to move up to Oregon. I guess, if people were to ask my opinion, it's too bad he didn't just stay in that open-water pool in Oregon. But the idealistic hope was that he could be a wild whale again. I just don't think that's the way animals work.

MG: Is the lesson to not capture them in the first place?

ATS: Oh, definitely. I am proud of the role that we played that Bill Fox, Nancy, and I played in not issuing additional capture permits. Yes, that really is the answer, to let wild animals be wild and take the best care you can of the captive animals who really are our pets.

MG: Can you say more about the Navy dolphin program? This isn't something I was aware of before our conversation. What are they using dolphins for?

ATS: Well, I don't know that they're using them for anything right now. It probably is classified, if they are. But at one point – and this was going back to the '70's and '80s – the Navy had a program based in California too – most of the animals – and also Key West. There were animals in Florida at the Navy base and in California at a Navy base. They were trained. There were seals and dolphins and perhaps some other animals. I don't know. I'm mostly aware of the seals and the dolphins. And they were trained to do mine sweeps and that kind of thing underwater. There've been little bits that have been made public, but it was a classified program. Well, I guess, ever since those times, there's been a lot of interaction between the Navy and the captive marine mammal facilities because, if an animal wasn't suitable for whatever the Navy was wanting them to do, they would place them in a zoo or aquarium. The veterinarians that

would develop the specialized skill of taking care of marine mammals would be working for the Navy sometimes and would be working for Sea World sometimes, and so the community of marine mammal veterinarians is very small and very skilled and learns a lot about the animals in captive situations as well as in the wild. Some of them have – I’m trying to remember her name – there was a Navy researcher who did a lot of work on how explosions affected the hearing systems for whales. Dr. Darlene Ketten is her name. Anyway, the Navy used marine mammals for defense purposes, national defense purposes, and that function has been taken over by more artificial intelligence, who knows what other kinds of technology, and keeping marine mammals is an expensive proposition. So, most of the time that I was involved, it was this marine mammal program kind of decommissioning the marine mammals and a lot of interaction with the public-display community and, to some extent, agreeing to do things for the people that were looking at it more from the idealistic way of let’s see if we can release them, which was funded by Ocean Futures and the Humane Society of the US, and some other groups have contributed to those efforts that happened with Keiko and with the Navy dolphins, none of which have worked or showed any promise of working.

MG: Ann, I still have a few more questions, but we've been talking for two hours, so I just want to check-in and see how you're doing for time, if you need a break.

ATS: Do you think we'll cover them in another half hour? How much more time do you think we need?

MG: I think that would do us.

ATS: Okay. Well, why don't we just take a five-minute break and then do another half hour?

MG: Perfect.

ATS: Then my work will be done for a while. [laughter]

MG: Okay. I appreciate all the time you're spending with me, and I'm sorry to take so much of your day.

ATS: Oh, no, no. I'm the one who's doing all the talking. I hope that most of what I'm saying is useful.

MG: It's interesting. It's giving me more things to ask about. We'll take a quick break. I'm going to run to the bathroom. We'll be right back. [Recording paused.] When you mentioned the study of explosions and the impact to whales, it reminded me to ask you about something else I read about in preparation for this interview, which was that there were some whale deaths in 1994 and '95 that were maybe caused by underwater transmissions off the coast of California.

ATS: Yes, that may have had to do – this was one of the other controversies – your question made me think about it – there was an experiment called the Heard Island experiment that grew into the ATOC [Acoustic Tomography of the Ocean Climate] program, which was funded in part by the Navy, but it was in part to use underwater sensing systems that the Navy had put in place

to monitor marine noise and – but the Heard Island experiment, the purpose was to see how sounds traveled through the oceans and use that as a way to measure global warming. There were questions at the time about whether those sound transmissions would affect the migration of whales. And so there was a permit in place and some study about that. But I don't recall the culmination of it. I just remember the controversy surrounding it. And there have been explosions from time to time in military exercises and concerns about how those would affect the hearing of marine mammals. So, those are issues that are probably still being studied by scientists. I just looked up whale ears, and I couldn't do it in our brief break, but I'm sure that there is still a lot of study going on because there are real concerns about how human impacts and, as things get louder and louder as we have bigger and bigger ships, there is concern about whether the migrations of large whales will be affected because they do communicate over thousands of miles through the ocean channels. The more we disrupt those ocean channels, the more we're risking harming whale migrations, as well as damage to an individual whale's ears, which can result in death. If they can't find their feeding areas – a deaf whale is probably a dead whale.

MG: Were you or your office doing anything around education and awareness to operators who are working with tourists in Florida and discouraging feeding the dolphins, swimming with the dolphins, things like that?

ATS: Oh, we did. I think I mentioned the work with the Stranding Network and just in terms of coordinating efforts with our regional offices, that we didn't have a big enough office to do these programs ourselves, but there were people in each region who were working on marine mammal issues and could work on a do-not-feed program. So, we did some – and again, Trevor Spradlin was the main staffer who worked on our don't-feed-marine-mammals project. It isn't directly permit-related, but it was something that my division took the lead on. I'm always heartened when I travel to see a sign that says, "don't feed the animals," because there were pushes going on at the Fish and Wildlife Service to not feed – don't feed the bears, don't feed the birds – because it can have huge impacts. We had regulations, which still exist under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, to restrict the approach to marine mammals. Harassing marine mammals is one of the things that's prohibited by the law. We promulgated regulations that would say don't approach, stay fifty feet away from a sea lion on the beach. Our agents, our enforcement agents, would occasionally have to intervene when the elephant seals are collecting and having their babies on a beach near Big Sur, and they're just lying there, and people just can't resist going up to one and putting their baby on top of the elephant seal and take a picture. That's something that the agency, I believe, is still actively working on with state and regional office people.

MG: What about shoreside development where nesting turtles might be?

ATS: Yes, that again would not have been something that my division worked on. That would have been more likely the turtle program – Barbara Schroeder, I believe, is still working on that. I think she's thinking about retiring. I'm not sure where her career is right now, but she'd be an interesting person to talk to if she's not on your list.

MG: Sure. Well, is there anything else that stands out to you about your tenure with permits before you decided to retire in 2002? Anything I'm missing?

ATS: I don't think so. I think we've touched on all those major controversies. I do think that public sentiment probably has moved in the direction that we were trying to go, and so the controversies are probably not quite as bad right now. But I know that anytime an animal strands, that's a whole other thing we didn't really touch on, and the Stranding Network was something that my division worked with. I think the office has been reorganized now, so there's a separate division that deals with strandings. But yes, I think we pretty much touched on everything I can think of.

MG: Well, I'm curious about your life since retirement. It sounds like it's been an opportunity for you to do more artwork.

ATS: Yes, it definitely has. Artwork and travel. My husband and I traveled a lot. He died in 2019, and he had Parkinson's for probably 15 years – it hadn't been diagnosed at the time I retired, in 2002, but it came up within a couple of years of that time and – but he kept wanting to travel, and so we took a lot of cruises. That was an easy way for him to travel. So, I've had a lot of opportunities to see even more of the world since I've retired. I still have NOAA friends, people that I see from my career. So, it's had a big role in shaping my life, even though I'm not there anymore.

MG: You've been able to paint and set up a painting business and Website. And I wanted to say there are lots of pictures of you painting on the internet. And you just look so content and serene, so I'm curious what this has meant to you.

ATS: Oh, it's been great. I have young painter friends who are trying to start out as artists. Some people can make it. But it's a tough way to make a living, so I'm really thankful for having had my federal career – I was able to start my government career right out of college and put in thirty-three years and still retire at fifty-five, which was a real blessing for me, and to not have to worry about how much I earn from my art – I sell my paintings, but I don't depend on that to fill the refrigerator, so I'm glad I had the career I had, and I'm glad I had interesting experiences – I do think that the marine mammal portion of my career was the most interesting part and did give me a chance to use my creativity more in terms of relationships and maintaining relationships with people, with lots of different people.

MG: In your survey, you said that your husband would have been a great person to interview, and so I was curious, what kinds of things do you think he would have shared with us?

ATS: Well, I think he would have given his perspective on how the agency changed because he did interact with the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. He didn't actually work for the Interior Department at any point in his career. But as a state laboratory director and working for the states, he had connections with the federal government throughout that time, so he would have been able to give a better picture of how really the working environment changed, how the focus shifted over the years, and the importance of addressing environmental concerns that probably wasn't even – well, I know it wasn't even thought of when he started as a young biologist. His

first job, I think, had to do with killing all the fish in lakes in New Jersey so that they could seed them with fish that people would have more fun catching. They would just use a chemical, which may have had something to do with his developing Parkinson's. Through his AFS contacts, he did talk with several other aging biologists who had developed Parkinson's after using this chemical called rotenone, which is still used, but I think now, instead of wading into the lake with their bare feet and bathing shorts, they go out in hazmat material when they use this stuff. But anyway, I think the fisheries world has changed over the last fifty years of NOAA in huge ways.

MG: Well, what about some of your own personal reflections on your career and NOAA as an agency over the years?

ATS: I think that it was a great place to have a federal career because I never felt as though I was doing things that were rote or were not really making much of a difference. I felt that we were effective. NOAA gave me an opportunity to work on issues that I thought were important and were providing a real benefit – and working with mostly very talented people and very well-educated people and working with the outside groups, the nongovernmental organizations that were working – so in areas that were so interrelated with what we did. I don't know that it's typical of all federal agencies. I think a lot of federal work can be rote. Processing Social Security benefits could be very boring, even if you're managing the process. But I think that NOAA was a great place to work.

MG: Finally, I'm interested in getting your experience of COVID on the record. We're two years into a pandemic. How has this shaped your life and experiences?

ATS: Yeah. Well, the fact that it was coincident with my first two years of being a widow helped me think about it in a different way and, I think, probably made it easier for me to make that adjustment because everybody's had to make so many adjustments in their lives. If everybody else's life had been going on normally – I mean, I wish everybody else's life had gone on normally and that we – none of us were having to deal with this, but I think it helped me to kind of deal with both of these big changes in my life in a way that made me feel less lonely in facing it. I'm very thankful for my art because, as you were saying, when you're painting, you're really just thinking about where to put this next brushstroke, what color am I going to pick up on my brush, and where is this brushstroke going to land, and so it gives one the luxury of not having to think about anything terrible that's going on in the world while you're in a beautiful place. Mostly what I do is outdoor landscapes, and that's partly a reaction, I guess, to sitting at a desk for thirty-three years, because most of my government career, I was sitting at a desk. I didn't travel nearly as much as Dick did in his career, but I traveled some from time to time, which I enjoyed. But after sitting at a desk for thirty-three years, to be able to spend a whole day outside is quite a blessing. So, COVID has affected the kind of art activities I do – I do a lot of organized events for art, and those have made adjustments. Some of them have gone on and happened but, instead of having all the artists meet and paint in one place for three days, some of them have been selecting a group of artists and telling us to paint anytime we want over a one-month period or a two-month period and then having the art shown digitally or sometimes in person. So, there've been little changes. But the actual production of the art is pretty much the

way it would be, COVID or no COVID, because you're usually painting alone someplace or twenty feet from somebody else, maybe, so it's been a safe pursuit to continue during this period.

MG: Good. I'm glad you have that outlet. I'm glad you're able to travel to these lovely places you've described to me, coming up to Maine last year, now on your way to Florida soon. Well, I've gotten to the end of my questions. But this has been a really delightful conversation. Is there anything I forgot to ask you about before we hang up?

ATS: I don't think so. I don't think so. I'll be interested in seeing how the rest of your – how the whole project comes together, when it's done, and appreciate all the work you're doing on it. It sounds like you're finding it interesting, and I'm sure that you are poking around in lots of areas that you didn't think about before.

MG: It's been a wonderful way to learn about the agency to interview people who have been in different parts of it and in different eras. This has been really a treat. I appreciate all the time you spent with me. Thank you so much.

ATS: Well, thank you. Thank you for asking such good questions. Good luck with the project.

MG: Okay. I'll be in touch about the next steps.

ATS: Sure. Absolutely.

MG: All right. Safe travels.

ATS: Thanks.

MG: Bye-bye.

ATS: Bye.

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Reviewed by Molly Graham 2/19/2022

Reviewed by Ann Terbush Schaefer 4/29/2022

Reviewed by Molly Graham 5/10/2022