

## **Interview with Glenda Martin**

**Interviewed by Kathryn Brewer**

**Interviewed on April 11, 2000  
at the offices of the Minnesota Women's Press, Inc.  
Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**KB:** Glenda, last time we were interviewing we were cut off by what we perceived was a faulty recorder, so we had a very abrupt ending to our first interview. I'd like to start by picking up where we left off. You were describing at that point a famous meeting that had been held at Carol Pine's [member of the advisory board] house. You had just introduced that topic and then the interview stopped. Could you pick up on that meeting?

**GM:** I could. First of all, Carol Pine has been a long time supporter of the "Women's Press", and of course has been on our Board. She always maintained very strongly that it's all right to make a profit in the company, and she would come to the board meetings and kind of gently encourage us. [laughter] It got to a point where it was really clear, and she recognized that, that we needed to have a shift in thinking among ourselves--the people who worked here.

She asked us to come to her home, and she spent a day taking us through a process that she's done with other companies. Actually I have to think now who was there, because it wasn't all the staff. There were board members there, and certain staff were there--we'd have to go back and look exactly who was there. It was a very structured, but also...you know, you've done some of those kinds of things where it can be sort of 'pokey'.

Carol's very good at it and we were put into forced choice situations around all kinds of issues that relate to the company. Out of that came some direction that, at the time, we really had not paid attention to. I think that that particular meeting was where we began to own, for ourselves--Mollie [Hoben; Co-founder and co-publisher] and myself especially--that what we were doing was important, but that financially we could make money at it and it would be okay. It was not a negative to make money at doing something we felt was so important.

**KB:** What was that conflict in the first place? Why was there such a clash between making money and doing something that's important?

**GM:** Well..Right. Oh, god. It's such a darn women's issue it seems to me, and it's also the way women were raised, especially women of my generation. Mollie and I are nine years apart in age. When we went to college, the three things we could be were a nurse or a teacher or.... What was the third thing? I can't even remember.

That was what you did. If you didn't follow that career path it was sort of...well that's not for women. So, what I think happened was college educated women were raised to do all kinds of good and socially conscious [work]. Certain kinds of people stay with it--whether you're teaching or whether you're taking care of people in physical situations. So that when we started the company, coming out of that kind of education--she and I--and also having particularly worked in the field of working with handicapped kids...

We both taught regular kids as well, but then when you take that extra altruistic kind of... "Isn't this wonderful working with all these handicapped kids?" They used to tell me all the time when I was working with the blind... People would literally say this to me all the time.... "Well, Glenda, you will go to heaven for sure because you have worked with blind kids." Well, come on! First of all, these are just kids and they deserve the same as any other kid. Sure you have to teach them a little differently because you have to know some other skills, but it's no different than teaching any kid. Boy, that's hard for people to see.

I think when you come out of that kind of altruistic behavior, altruistic education... We were out there in the world doing good.... Then to start something that we were passionate about and also we felt did good--which was feminism, though everybody wouldn't agree--it wasn't really important to us that we put monetary value to that.

However, it's always been interesting to me that it was clear to us--and we never deviated on that--was that we started it as a for profit business. I think I mentioned that before. I'm sure there are still people in this community--fifteen years later--who still believe we're a non-profit. We would have people call us all the time asking for assistance. Or people would come in the store and expect certain things from us, as if we were a non-profit.

**KB:** Because it was a women's organization?

**GM:** Yes. A women's organization therefore you are [non-profit].... Judy Remington's book The need to thrive [published by Minnesota Women's Press] really talks about the women organizations for that ten-year period here in the Twin Cities, and what happened [to them]. Many of those were non-profits, and many of them do not exist anymore.

So it's interesting to me that she [Mollie] and I came out of that 'do-good' background, but at the same time clearly knew that we wanted to say, "This will be a for-profit business." Of course for irony's sake, it was a very long time before it became a 'for-profitable' business. But I do believe that there was some kind of knowing there...and where in the heck that came from I couldn't even tell you at this point.

But the way we went at things was very much based on what we had known before. And one of those things, I think is that I'm more hard-nosed than she is. That comes from my management background. There are times you have to make management decisions for the larger good, and it's tough because someone goes away feeling bad or hurt. That was

always--not recently but for many years--a real balancing act between Mol [Mollie Hoben] and myself. She always is willing to go even another mile to be sure everybody's happy and I just know that there are times that you have to bite the bullet and say, "This has to stop or this has to be shaped differently". Of course, Kathy Magnuson [Founder and General Manager] has been key in that because Kathy, like me, knows that there are times that you just have to say, "Enough, already!" In the long run you are really doing the other person a favor. It may not seem so at the point, but in the long run you are. So that's always been a balancing act between Mol and myself.

However, it's interesting that *she*, Mollie, is much more attuned to the budget and the carefulness with how the budget is managed, and whether we're meeting goals within the budget area. I sort of just don't give a rip! [Both laugh]. I understand it, but I just sort of don't give a rip. That plays out today too, you know, as well as in the early years.

So the Carol Pine time was kind of that whole shift in our own heads to, "All right...we've got to think about this differently." Of course, once you make even a little shift like that it takes a long time to swing the organization, and even to hold true in your own belief structure, because you're so used to doing it another way. So, you....

**KB:** ....You continue to revisit it.

**GM:** You do, that's exactly right.

**KB:** ...Personally and as an organization?

**GM:** Very much so, even though we are at such a different place now... That's why the whole oral history is so fun. I even forget that all kinds of things happened that we've just plan forgotten, and yet were part of the building of what we have now. That's why it's been doubly important to do an oral history. It's [the meeting at Carol Pines] kind of a watershed in a way. I wish I could tell you the year.

**KB:** I think we've got it elsewhere.

**GM:** You've got it. Okay. I do remember--you know how you remember things... Carol owns some wonderful things, some very creative things, and I can just remember being in the space and the kinds of things that were there. That's one of the things that tells me that somehow it's all stayed with me. It kind of says that out of being in that good space and also being freed up a little, because she doesn't have ordinary *stuff*.... She has some very interesting artistic stuff, and so it's not like sitting in a formal conference room or in a big room where the chairs are all lined up. We were able to stretch our heads in an environment that was stretched already. I don't know if that makes sense. [Both laugh]

**KB:** Yes.

**GM:** It was really important, and I've never forgotten it. I give Carol tremendous credit for hanging with us when sometimes she was just shaking her head. I know Mollie has met with her recently. I have not. And I know Carol...I think she's very proud of what's happened. I know that in the oral history piece in the "Women's Press" --the fifteen-year edition [an eight page insert published in March 29, 2000 edition]--what Marcia Appel [member of advisory board] says gets to be so important. Because Marcia too was part of pushing us as an organization to understand the importance of monetary value to what we were doing. So, yeah...important time....

**KB:** Well, another important time, it seems to me, that is kind of linked to all of that is when you made the decision to move out of the Security Building to the new location.

**GM:** Right.

**KB:** In other interviews you've been given a lot of the credit for that, so can you talk a little bit about how that happened?

**GM:** Well, it was in our fourth year as the 'book shop', and the book groups were being held up in the Security Building in this teeny-weeny space. As the library kept growing and growing, we had no place to put all this stuff. Of course we had more staff and there wasn't room for the desks. We didn't have computers yet, so we were using cutting tables to lay stuff out. I kept saying to them, "You know, we've gotta move. This is just nuts. Just for our own mental health, this is just nuts."

I wanted us to stay right in this area, because when we founded it--and I think I said that in the previous interview--it was so important to me that we be on a bus line. ...That we be accessible to people who didn't drive. So I didn't want to be away from University Avenue, and I also wanted to be right on the border between Minneapolis and St. Paul--which of course, we are.

When we found the Security Building, I also did that. I met with real estate people; we'd go up and down University Avenue. We did it again. I mean I met with some people. And there are always some possibilities but also this space that we're in now--at 771 Raymond--had sat vacant for quite a period of time. There'd been some kind of metal place or something, where they made a...

**KB:** Machine shop?

**GM:** Yeah, right! ...They made hard things! It was really a mess...just a mess. I thought, oh god, there's just no way that...but the location was right. And we wanted to be on the ground floor with a storefront so we could have a really visible bookshop. So, it made sense that this space should work.

This went on for a number of months. I would come over and stare through the windows and so forth. Then Epilepsy [The Epilepsy Foundation] took the other half of the

building. And Scott, who owns the building... And when I saw what they had done, I thought, "Ah, well, okay maybe it's possible." He and I then began to talk about what was possible here. We laid out a plan and he ripped all the stuff out and put it back together. So we moved.

And I don't know if this story... I know it's in our oral history in the "Women's Press", and I repeat it over and over and I just think it. We can't say it enough in the oral history. That the day that we moved down there that thing happened in Montreal--the killing of the fifteen women.

**KB:** Tell that story again, because that is a story that you conveyed via e-mail. It's really not in the audio portion of the oral history.

**GM:** Okay. Well, what I remember... We went through weeks and weeks and weeks of rehabbing this place--putting it together, so it was going to work. Of course we didn't have enough furniture, and we had all those books to move and so forth. I remember, I was doing something called 'Salon' at that time--where people would come on Friday night and we would sit around [talking about] ideas up in the Security Building. And so I said one night, "We need some help moving stuff, and so if people are willing..."

So that next Saturday, people began to move the books for us--which was major, because at that point we had a lot of books for the library. Over a period of a week, we did all the moving. I don't think we ever hired anybody. We literally as a staff and people who cared about us helped up move everything from the second floor over there into here.

We finally got it all spiffed, and I was going to hold my first book group here at the "Women's Press". We'd only been open like maybe a day or two--not more than that. It was like dusk, and that very day that I was to do that book group was the day that fifteen women were killed in Montreal. They were killed by a man at the university--the department was the engineering department, I think--he felt that women were taking men's roles, men's *spots* as students within the engineering department. He was very resentful of that. He came into a classroom of students--male and female--and killed all the women, none of the men. I don't remember whether he killed himself.

It was very powerful. The interesting thing about that, Kathryn--which really says something even about what we've tried to do with the "Women's Press"--it was almost not covered. ...Almost not covered in *any* media in the United States, including the New York Times and certainly not here in the Cities [Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul].

**KB:** [Quietly] That is very interesting.

**GM:** ... Yeah, it is. ... There'd be a little something.... And Mollie and I were following the Canadian Broadcasting System the whole time, because it was *huge* on the Canadian... We were tuning in and taking notes and doing all kinds of things about that.

So we were really aware of what had happened, and felt--oh, I don't know--invaded somehow. It was so typical of the stuff that we think passionately reporting about. It was either that very same day, or maybe the very next day that I came to do my book group. Of course the windows were down here...you know we have these big windows here.

**KB:** Describe the windows...

**GM:** There are four huge windows across the front, as well as the front door that is all glass. They must be...ten feet by ten feet. I don't know, each window, whatever that measures--it's big. We hold our book groups out in the main room surrounded by the bookshop books. I can remember just standing there, first of all thinking, "Oh my gosh, the windows are so clean and everything is kind of in place. It felt good to have this sense of, "By damn, we pulled it off!" We got this place, and we're where we should be and so forth.

Then I can still remember looking out the windows, and the cars were going by on Raymond because it was going home time--between 5:30 and 6:30. There were so many cars going by and I thought, "Oh my god, we are so visible. It would be so easy for someone like this man in Canada to come and shoot all of us around the table." Then it was an instantaneous response, and I just have never forgotten this because I said to myself, "And that's exactly why we have to be here. Visible. We have to be right here where lots of people can see us."

It was just such a powerful moment for me, because it wasn't just about being in *this* place that we finally put together--but that we were making a statement of presence. I've never forgotten it. I can stand in that same spot today and look out the window and honor the fact that--we are starting our eleventh year in this space--that was such a right decision. Somehow the coming together of that horrendous thing in Montreal strengthened the reason why we needed to be here and be visible.

**KB:** As it's turned out over the last years, have you felt vulnerable on certain occasions in this building?

**GM:** Yes, we have. ...Not so much in the last years maybe. Though I must say I just heard someone say the other day... You know it also has to do with that whole thing about how fearful one is about things. You know most of my book groups are almost all weekend ones now. But all my evening groups are done from six until eight in the evening. Well, in the middle of summer you have light until eight o'clock, nine o'clock at night. In the middle of winter, it's dark at five. There are a lot of people who get very fearful about being here after that time.

I've never been fearful--not physically fearful--except in the rare occasions where I can remember... Men--I don't think I've ever seen women do this--but men come up and put their hands up against the glass, and peer in to kind of see what's going on. Well, you

know, it could just be an interest thing or it could be...you never quite know. Then of course there were times where we had people who would put...

**KB:** Graffiti?

**GM:** Yes, graffiti on the windows. Now I'm not even talking about the latest graffiti art on the building. I don't think that's a "Women's Press" thing...

**KB:** The building?

**GM:** Well, the crazy kids that go around and do it, you know.... But these would be really statements that were directed at "Women's Press". Then I always remember a guy who used to come by--and I don't know where he lived--but he would come by and if the book group was meeting, he would stop and then he would spit on the windows. He wouldn't say anything but he would spit on the windows.

**KB:** My word!

**GM:** Yes. First of all it's just so stupid on someone's part, but there's all kinds of people. And then the other thing that I remember well... I won't even describe [unclear], but there were some men who always used to eat at Key's [Restaurant, next door]. They would then stand right here by the conference room where we are right now--which is the corner right next to Keys. Of course you can hear very well through these walls. The guys would stand there, knowing there were people in here in the conference room, and raise their voices and talk about, "Well you know what this "Women's Press" is. It's a bunch of lesbian dykes in there just trying to take over the world."

Well, you kind of begin to know who those people are going to be, and you just let it roll. You can go out and take them on, but where are you going to go with that? We just have never, never responded to that. Of course, depending on what issues we take on in the paper--though again, not so much now--we would get phone calls. And of course Carol Schuldt [office manager] and all of our staff who answer the phone, they're pretty darn savvy. Of course, we've had to call the lawyer a few times to just be sure of our own... Paying attention to things that we need to know in responding to people who are bopping in. I just maintain it's just part of doing business. Of course, you learn from it--even the kind of responses that you give.

The one other thing that's really nice is an artist here...Pat...oh, what is Pat's last name? I'm not going to remember. This is very bad. She's an artist, and for years she would send--to all kinds of people but I know here to the "Women's Press"--little art projects that she had made in honor of the Montreal women. It was a reminder every year, and that was her point. Let's not forget. ...Which then is like being in the company of other good women who are saying, "This is something we must remember."

We knew that when we started, we were going down a path that all kinds of people would say, first of all it doesn't amount to much or isn't worth bothering with. ...Or, why would you want to do that? But it's what we had to do. It wasn't a question of any of that. It was what we had to do. So....

**KB:** From an organizational standpoint or a business standpoint or a new opportunity standpoint...what's been the impact of moving into this building, do you think?

**GM:** I think first of all it made us real to a lot of people. This little paper comes out, and it's that free thing over there on the racks. What is this? [laughter] But when you have this kind of physical space where people can actually walk in the door and do some things, I think it just made us real.

More than that.... People who come to book groups here... Over the years for many of them to even make a decision to do a book group with Minnesota "Women's Press", already they're aligning themselves with something that they might wonder about. And the courage for some of them--not all--but the courage for some to step across the threshold... We needed to have a place like this where they could literally just open the door and step across the threshold.

When we were in the Security Building, which first of all is a--sorry Joseph--it's a grungy building. Joseph owns the building. It's a grungy building. You had to go up these dirty stairs, and then even when you got to the space, you didn't know whether you were going to go in this door or this door because there were other kinds of businesses and so forth. This has a clean look. You just have to open that door with the name on it and come right across the threshold. It's made a big difference.

Plus it made very much an impact, I think, on this community--this South St. Anthony business community. Because here we are with Keys--Keys has been there twenty-five years you know--and though we've only been in this space ten years, we've been in this corner for fifteen years. We know the folk up and down here. In fact I did a piece one time for Mary Birmingham for The Center for the Book on this neighborhood. I went around and interviewed all kinds of people--which was sort of fun to do--and found some things I didn't even know. Because if you go across the street, there are some big buildings over there where there are lots of different offices and people doing interesting things.

What has helped me is knowing that we were part of a neighborhood community and recognized as that. I've always liked that. It's always been real important to Mollie. She lives in St. Anthony Park and she's very active in the St. Anthony Park community and known in the community--that's more important to her than it is to me. But I must say it made us more credible, and it certainly made a difference in how we could operate--because of course we have more and more staff, more and more stuff. So it just made it easier to do what we do.

**KB:** Well, is it time to think about moving again? Does this location satisfy the current [needs]? I hate to ask that question because that opens up “what is the future?”...This is perhaps not the time...

**GM:** Except I would say just one more thing about the facility. You know we expanded about two years ago in this facility. In fact, Epilepsy left their space and our big decision was whether we should take over all of that space. I felt we should. I felt we should take it all because that would have been double the storefront and doubled all the space behind the storefront. So we would have had twice what we have now. And boy, that discussion went on long and hard for a long time. Ultimately it was decided that we would only take part of that space. I would say, still, I think we should have taken it all.

That's part of the difference--even when we moved here--of 'gutsiness'. I don't want to be self-serving on that, but I know I'm 'gutsier'...

**KB:** You're comparing yourself to Mollie now as opposed to anyone else?

**GM:** Yes, yes I am. It's like, "For crying out loud. It just needs to be done. Take the step and do it." But she's more careful and thoughtful, and of course looking at the money and so forth. You know when we moved here, we didn't have hardly any money. Yet it began to shift as we made those moves. I think the same thing would have happened if we had taken on the rest of the space. ...But we didn't. We took on part of it and that's been good. I was glad for that.

One of the things... If one could ever have predicted that we would be the way we have... Well, there's no way that it could have been in the beginning, but it's too bad that we don't have our own building--our own owned space. When you just look at the amount that's gone out for rent and for part of the remodeling--even though our landlord has certainly done some but we've also paid for a lot--and just as an investment. In retrospect it would have been [good]. But who could have predicted? There's no way we could have known.

**KB:** That's right. It was tough enough just making it through the payroll. [Laughter]

**GM:** That's exactly right. It's an interesting thing to think about the future. We can come back to that later, but that whole thing of producing a newspaper in the current media world--you know in the internet world and all the stuff that's going on--there's some really big questions about what does it say about physical space in just producing something. I'm not talking about where people gather, but you know, in just producing something. I think there's some big questions there. I think it's going to be fascinating over the next two to three years to kind of see what happens. I really do. There are big questions being asked by our lead staff about that.

**KB:** I would like to just end the discussion on the space by talking a little bit about how you interact with the space. One of the interesting things is that you do not, nor have ever

had--the way I understand it--an office at the "Women's Press". ...Not even a mail slot. Can you talk about that?

**GM:** I did have a mailbox, but I didn't have a telephone slot.

That's so interesting. [Pause].

Partly I haven't ever because the space was always needed for other stuff. If I took X amount, then that meant that someone else couldn't be using it. It was important that people had good space in which to work. The other part of that is obviously I had offices for years, when I was doing previous life stuff, and they never seemed very important to me. They became like window dressing or something.

It's always been more important to me to mix with people; to sort of move around and kind of feel what's going on. I know it sounds corny, but that is how I go at it. It was always true, even when I did my other management stuff. I don't think you make good decisions without being among the troops, no matter who the troops are that you're responsible for. Mollie too goes among them, but she's never as intimate or personal with them as I am. Of course there'd be all kinds of people in management who say, "Oh, you can't do that." But that's the way I go at stuff, and I end up knowing a lot of things because I do go at it that way.

I also know that at least for some people that worked here, because I've made that kind of personal connection with them... I don't mean to become buddies or friends. I'm not taking about friends in a deep, profound way, but liking each other and having respect for each other. I do know that for some it's made major difference that I've done that. And it makes a major difference to me, because I think that's part of what we do in understanding our employees, our staff, and being aware of where their next need is in their own growth. That was true even in what I used to do.

I think I told you I used to drive the Personnel Director crazy because I, every year, would enhance whatever role the person filled. Not for everybody, because not everybody's not ready to be moving out. But when people are ready I think you need to be able to respond to that, and it strengthens your organization.

I also am not, like Mollie, a very prescribed... For example, answering the phone calls and taking care of the kind of dailiness that needs to happen--and it needs to happen and you need to have people who are carrying it forth and doing it well--I don't do it well and I don't want to. So I don't. I know for some people that can be somewhat hard, but I think for most of the people, they sort of learn to live with me.

What I'm really always doing is looking at direction. What's the emphasis about what we are doing here, and what does it look like as we continue to do what we do. Partly because that's what interests me... I don't know if I'd even call that management; some people would just call it erratic. I don't know. [Both laugh].

I did a lot of work at home. I certainly have noticed now that I'm down in Arizona... I have my own little separate house. My husband and I have our house, but there's a little house as well, and that's really where I work. I've never had a whole little house. When I say that, it has a bathroom, and a big room, and little fireplace, and then all my computer stuff, and all my books. When I go there I know that it's not to do task things, it is to do writing. It is to do thinking about if I'm trying to put together a series of books that I would like to use for a particular project. I've gotta spend a lot of time looking at the books and pulling them out and saying, "Okay, maybe this would work." First of all, I love doing that.

One of the things that happens here, any time when you work in a place, people interrupt you. I don't mean that negatively, it's just part of the name of the game. For me, my work is sort of being fully into myself and be able to... But you've got to have that outside stuff coming to you, so that when you are alone--when you are with yourself trying to think ideas--you also are taking into account the things you've talked about. That's one reason I always talk with staff...you know...and did. I think you build a community in a different way when you do that. I think that's one reason a lot of my book groups work, because I also do that with my book group people.

**KB:** Well, let's talk about book groups a little bit. You talked about them in the first interview. It might be wise to just provide an overview in terms of how large that effort became and where it is today, and how you're thinking about book groups today.

**GM:** Okay. People say to me, "Glenda, you have the perfect job." Maybe I said that before. What I always say to them is, "...But it took me fifty years to create it." [laughter] Because in the first book group I did--and I mentioned that in the earlier interview--I was fifty and that's when we started the company. Maybe I was fifty-one when I did the first one. I think I also said in that first interview I had a group that I used as my research group. For a whole year I met with them to just see, "Is this idea going to work?" It was very clear to me half way through that year, that it was going to work, and we began. It was that hoping and charging... and so forth...

**KB:** How many book groups have you had?

**GM:** Me personally?

**KB:** ...Or the organization. Whichever works easier in terms of coming up with a scope?

**GM:** I would say if we went back and counted there would be between one hundred and two hundred, I'm sure. Now they're all different links, you know. Some were just one book where we spent a month--met once a week, one book. Some would be twelve weeks where we met every other week around a theme or around an author. Some would be once a month where we meet around a theme again, and some of those book groups are still going. We've got some that are ten, eleven years old now.

There was a period of about four or five years ago where in fact we were doing many, many book groups to bring in more money into the company...and did. But that also meant that all kinds of women besides myself were doing the book groups.

It is really clear that the kind of approach to book groups is very different depending on the individual. I reviewed not long ago ten books on how to do book groups. So, my god, you could have a hundred million rules about how to do it. But the personality of the person becomes really key in how you lead it, but also how you encourage everyone to be part of it.

Of course a lot of the book groups that happened were because people said, "Can we do a book group on X?" It was just an interest of a few people and so we did it. Or, for example, when Women Who Run with Wolves came out...Estes' book--we probably did eight book groups on that book. I tell you what, I wouldn't be able to do another one, ever! Yet for a lot of women... I'll bet we had a hundred and fifty women that did those book groups. And many of those women, it's the only one they've ever done with us. Somehow that book, it touched a lot of women. There was something in there that just really... As I travel around, that's true not just here, that's true around the country. Who knows why? There are certain books that that just happens with.

I would say that one of the things that's happened with book groups is there is a tremendous community of book group women who have been in book groups. Like Sunday, when we had the birthday [Minnesota Women's Press, Inc. fifteenth anniversary in April, 2000], there were some people here who aren't in book groups now but who have been. In fact, one woman who came quite late was reminding me of the two or three that she had been in probably five, six years ago.

I got a long letter from a woman who lives in Hackensack, Minnesota who was in the first or second paid book group--which was after the research group--and we were charging at that point sixty dollars or eighty dollars for the group. I made it very clear, it would help support the paper--that's what it was about. Julie came to me with forty dollars, and I knew she didn't have much money. She was a single mom--three kids I think at that time. She said, "This is all I have for now. Would it be all right if I started?" I said, "Well, of course."

I can remember thinking, "She really can't afford this. I should just let her be a part of the group." But I took the money. And before we were finished--I think it was a twelve-week group--she paid that other forty dollars. It was a turning point in her life. What happened in that book group was a turning point in her life. What she said to me, it was the first in her life that she had ever spent money on herself--to say, "I'm worth this amount of money for myself." If I hadn't taken that money, it would have denied her the opportunity to say, "I'm worth it." I just got a wonderful letter from her for the fifteenth year [anniversary]. Mollie said she was in here a couple of weeks ago just to say hi, and see if I was around. I got a Christmas card from her...which I don't all the time.

I have followed that in Arizona. I have these book groups down there in Arizona and the book store woman where I do them, well she didn't want to be charging money. I said, "I won't do it unless we charge money." We don't charge very much. But it's that whole point again of saying, "What we're doing is valuable." I'm not even taking the money; it's coming to the "Press", as it should. I think people give a different commitment when they do that. They put the money down and say, "All right, I'm really doing this. I'm not just signing up because it doesn't cost anything. It doesn't matter whether I come or not". It's a very different thing.

That was a really important thing that I learned early on--probably almost fourteen years ago now. I've never deviated from it. Now the prices sort of go up and down--depends upon how long the book group is, and so forth and so forth. I know Denise Schiebe [original planning group; present book staff] is just... We did a book group for a period of time where we charged each time a person came. If they didn't come then... It cost five dollars a time, but if they were there they didn't pay it. We did that for quite a while, and Denise then has changed the group. Now it's become a regular book group--a yearlong book group--and that meant that it's going to cost a bit more. Whether people come or not they pay a certain amount for the year--for twelve times. Denise has said she's only lost one person in that process. It was important for people to stay with it.

I don't want to overstate the money because it isn't that...it's what money represents.

**KB:** Well, the other aspect of those book groups is of course your leadership, and I've heard this from a number of people that I've interviewed. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about how you developed as the leader, because certainly it's not something you were doing twenty years ago. You were a leader but you were a leader in a different capacity.

**GM:** Different way. Yes. Well you know that word is always so interesting, Kathryn.

**KB:** It is. I don't know what word is best to use, so I chose it... There are all sorts of patriarchal connotation to word 'leader'...

**GM:** Yes, there are. There are. Well, I think more the word for me would be... Ah, god, how do I say...? I'm a believer in the human spirit. I'm also a great reader. I know if people can be exposed to a wide range of views, and can be open to being exposed--they don't have to go along with them all--no matter whether you're in a school district or whether you're here at the "Women's Press", that first of all enriches the individual's life. If they then can be in an environment where they can feel trust from the other people that they're with, the growth that can occur for each individual can be profound. So I ongoing honor that human spirit. I'm just verbal enough and 'out there' enough--which, according to my mother and grandfather certainly has always been true since the time I was two... I have got myself in some real tough spots, because I either speak up sooner than I should or I take somebody on.

In some ways it's selfish. I learn so much from the tremendous views or the different approaches of how people go at responding to each other, to me, to the books, whatever. What that does is enrich me. What I'm hoping is that providing an opportunity for people to be heard, but around ideas written by a lot of different people, there's a kind of richness that I think is incredible.

**KB:** But having said that, pulling it off--actually executing it so to speak--how do you execute it so effectively?

**GM:** I'll tell you a couple things I do--especially doing these groups down in Arizona where I'm really with women fifty-five to seventy-five years old...very different kind of cut, slice of humanity... I would say the majority are not very liberal. Arizona's a very conservative state, very different than Minnesota. Sure, there are a lot of Midwesterners down there, but they're not just Minnesota people. They come from all kinds of places. I try to be careful when I go into new groups, even here at "Women's Press"; I don't try to beat people on the head.

What I want to have happen in groups--and this is what I do--is I want each of us to hear from every woman in the group. So I start each group with a question usually pulled out of what we've read. Now I don't mean like, "What did the author intend?" For example, with the 'Annapurna' book [Annapurna: A Woman's Place], which is the [story of] women climbing the Himalayan Mountains twenty years ago-- the first women's group to climb there. When I read Annapurna, I cannot imagine climbing a snow and ice mountain over months. It's just incredible to me. I just would never do it, but those women *had to*.

It's kind of like, we *had to* start the "Women's Press". It was just there; it was a passion. There was just no question. So my question to the women in the book groups was, "What have you just *had to* do? What have you felt passionate about, driven to do? ...Became part of your mission in life to do. Well, first of all, even being asked that question for many of these women is sort of, "Oh! Oh!" I always start then with my example. I do that on purpose, because I've had time to think about it and I want to be sure that they don't see this...

You know, I always tell book groups two things: they are not school and they are not therapy. I always say that up front. People do not have to have read the book, whereas in some book groups, I mean the rules are...! But no, we don't do that.

So anyway, my example of the mountain--not that I felt that I had to climb it--was creating this company. So then the women begin to tell what they had to do, what they were passionate about. Now this was the fourth session that I had met with these women--the fourth session, so we had read three books already. I had already asked them the leading question, you know. The first time, oh my god, they just froze. It's almost like school; oh, what will be the right answer! Of course there's no right answer. You know, if there are fifteen people there, there are fifteen very different answers. Of course, I

honor that 'ongoingly' so that then people begin to have a level of trust, a level of comfort. So by the time we got to Annapurna, which was the fourth book and that was the question, the responses those women gave me just blew me out of the water.

It has literally been the turning point for me to be able to survive in Green Valley. That's because the stories they told of what they had to do. Most of them would not call themselves feminists. But in my article that I wrote for BookWomen [bi-monthly reader's journal published by Minnesota Women's Press} last issue, I call them feminists--and I don't mean openly. I don't say, "You are a feminist." But I go through my definition of what I call metaphoric mountains that they've climbed.

A woman I've gotten to know fairly well, who has had four little kids, her husband died when he was forty. And she had four kids to raise. ...And she raised them as a writer. I mean, that's how she provided to raise these kids. Kathy is now, I think, in her sixties, and she would call herself a feminist. I know she would. This is one independent, together woman who is experiencing the world in a wonderful way. People like that, who knew to take their own lives on and do well with it with spirit and a liveliness, I call them feminist even if they don't decide they want to do that.

When you do that, it's like you're kind of giving... It's not necessarily being leader, though people call me teacher and make jokes about that. The other thing I do also is I always read a small piece--even though it seems 'churchy' in a way, but I want them to know certain authors. What I do is find a little paragraph out of something that will relate to whatever book we're reading. I read that, to kind of open the time. We do some logistic stuff first--you always have to do that. Then do that, and then ask the question, and we begin. And that could take up to a half an hour, forty-five minutes depending upon what the women have to tell.

I know for many women down there it's made a difference. I know that's true here. Now here at the "Women's Press"--course those that have gone for ten years--we know each other pretty well. There's always new things to know, and then also to share. There are women who'd never miss book group, even though they don't see those people any other time during the month. They need to come and sort of check in or check out the rest of the group, which is a sense of an ongoing book community. That's very strong, I think. I think it's just kind of believing in people and providing an arena where you can say, "I believe in you, and I want you to believe in me. Here we are together; let's talk."

**KB:** Okay, that's helpful. Talk about the weekend reading retreats.

**GM:** It's one of my passions! I'll just make a brief point about the book groups on the road, which aren't quite as old as the reading retreats. We've been doing reading retreats maybe about eight years now. With books group on the road, we always read authors from wherever we visit. So if we go to Maine, we read Maine women authors. When we do reading weekend retreats we read around a theme. And I get to develop the themes! Which of course is just...I love doing it!

The reason I love doing it is because it's always like, "Oh boy...what's going to be intriguing?" Then, more than that, how do you build a booklist? Which five books are you going to choose? We need five books. It's only for a weekend. We go from Friday after supper to Sunday afternoon.

What we do is we discuss these five books. It's somewhat structured but there's also free time because we usually have these held at retreat centers--in the woods. It's a chance for readers to get away, because of course we've got all age ranges. We always read poetry because I think that's important to do. We always read a children's book. We always see a film of some kind based on what we've read.

We've done sense of place, which is one of my favorites to do. Last year we offered 'the sensual self: living with passion'. ...Drove people crazy. We only take eighteen, nineteen people at a time because of the facilities. We had to do it three times because it just filled up, filled up, filled up. It was amazing....it was amazing, the discussion...! My reason for using that is because it's a really about living fully with the five senses--really paying attention to what we see and what we smell and what we taste, and so forth.

Of course some people wanted it to be more sexual. I said, well what you do in your rooms is up to you! [Both laugh]. Because sensual immediately seems sexual. It can be that, of course, but it was much broader than that. It is true that a couple of the books that I chose for that...one is Ann Fatima's ExLibris: Confessions of a common reader. To me, reading is a passion, and I wanted to say to--I know these would be readers--reading is passionate in their lives. It is to me sensual. We had great discussions. What's going to happen this year now in the fall, September, October... We've just scheduled a third one--I don't know whether you've heard--it's on intellectual homelessness.

**KB:** Oh!

**GM:** Yeah, see! ...Exactly, exactly. [laughter] I've been using that phrase ever since last May. It's a Susan Sontag [author] phrase. It was one of those that just leapt off the page at me. It just engraved right across my forehead. I've been saying it to all kinds of groups, because it gets such mixed reaction. I now have chosen the books for it--the five we're going to read. We also have a two or three page suggested reading of others that I think relate to the topic.

**KB:** How long do people have to read the books? Are you sending out...

**GM:** Right now, right now. We're in April right now. We are sending out the list.

**KB:** So you've got the whole thing all set up.

**GM:** Yes, we've got the five books chosen and Denise will be sending out stuff. What's been happening, just in the last little while, we've had so many people sign up. Just yesterday we set up a third one. So, we'll see whether it also will fill. Clearly two of

them are already filled and we have this waiting list. So what it says to me is that for reading women, the importance of getting away for a little time for self, but also with other people--women who care about books and about reading and about ideas--being able talk some in a place that feels right is just really important. Of course we have many repeat people who've come with us for many times.

**KB:** Do you see yourself doing this sort of thing on an ongoing basis, whereas you may not be quite as active in the traditional book groups? I don't know whether that's inflammatory or not.

**GM:** No, no not at all. In fact, you're right on target. In fact, Katherine Dutton--who is one of the co-directors of the place where we go--she wrote me recently on the email. Of course, it's important to them for us to come, because they make money. ...And that's fine, I'm glad for that. She said, "Well, if I set up a room here for you at ARC [retreat center in Minnesota], would you just come and live here and do book groups every weekend?" Well, I have to tell you that wonderfully appeals to me. Now how long one could do that would be another question.

It does wonderfully appeal to me, because first of all, I love putting them together. I love being able to see an intermix of books. The five I put together for 'intellectual homelessness', people are going to say, "What have these got to do with intellectual homelessness?" Of course I love that--then the whole idea is, what do they have to do with intellectual homelessness?

So I'm sort of thinking with Katherine, well yes...I may just come and live at ARC for a while. I probably could, truly. It gets interesting, because I truly believe that if you could spin it right, you could sort of ongoingly have a lot of it happen. And then...how long you could stay with it...you know...is another question. The fact that we will do three on the same topic... The same is true down in Green Valley [Arizona], where of the four groups we do, each group does the same book--which is very different than what we do here at the "Women's Press".

**KB:** Do you find that better or worse?

**GM:** You know, it's not better or worse, it's just really different. I was concerned about repeating--oh my god, how many times! ...Like what happened with the Estes book. But I must say, every group is so different, it's like a whole new experience each time. I like that. I like that a lot, because it has to do with the people. So, it's a passion of mine, I have to tell ya [sic]! [Laughing]

**KB:** Well, we talked about BookWomen--the formation of BookWomen and how it's evolved a little bit last time. I'd like to follow up with that and ask you to talk about where you see it going in the future.

**GM:** Right. Well when that deadline comes around every two months, Mollie and I sort of says, "Oh my gosh, oh my gosh!" [laughter] I must say I think it's pretty darn interesting how we have reached all kinds of people that we probably never would have believed that we could. The one thing that's hard about it, of course, is to keep new subscribers coming, because you always have subscribers who drop off. I think we're close to a thousand; I don't know what the number is right now. We don't expect to have ten thousand subscribers--I mean that was never the issue. I guess what I would say going into the future--at least as far as the way it is now--it will go in the future as long as Mol and I want to do it. And the neat thing is...

**KB:** Do you see it changing in any way?

**GM:** I don't know. I don't know. We're in our fourth year right now. There've been small changes...things we've learned as we've gone along. I don't, right now. Who knows what may evolve. I find great satisfaction personally in doing it. I sometimes wonder if it's a little self-serving...well, it is self-serving, damn it! It is! Let's just admit it. [Both laugh].

What it also does for me is forces me to focus--because my head is always just going, going, going--it forces me then to focus on trying to get something done. I'm not a great writer. Mollie is a really good writer. I'm not. But I can say some things if I work at it. It helps me to be able to do that. When you have something like this that has to come out all the time, it causes you to have to really go at it in a bit of a different way. I know I'm always crabbing about doing it, but I do it and actually it's real important to me to do it. You know I also do the 'five favorites', which again is a bit self-serving...

**KB:** And by 'five favorites'....?

**GM:** The 'five favorites'... This was my thing to do--I mean I named it. I do five books each issue: a book that's old--one that's old can be both fiction and nonfiction--a new, a true, a poetry.... Books old, new, fiction, true, and poetry too...am I right there? What am I missing? ....An old book, a new book, a fiction book, a true book, and poetry too.

What that does is first of all that keeps me paying attention to the genres--for example, a new book might be in fiction or nonfiction. I like the kind of a circumscribing--if that's the word--it puts me into a mode that causes me to have to pay attention in a certain way and I like that. And it's clear: these are my opinions. These are not book reviews. It's, "Glenda's read this book, and here's a little bit about it, and here's what I think about it."

With 'five favorites', they are favorites. I know there's one here that I'm looking at right now, which is a new book by Ursula Hegi--which is way up on the books seller list right now, called The vision of Emma Blau. I really liked the first half, and I can't figure out the second half. I say that to the readers. She also wrote Stones from the River, which is a book I like very much. So I wanted to read it, but I can't quite figure out the second half. So I'm waiting to hear from others who've read it.

**KB:** One of the things that's interesting to think about is that you're kind of a heroine to the people that are located around the "Women's Press", and who come to the book groups and who participate in all these activities. You're appealing now to readers who perhaps have never met you.

**GM:** That's true.

**KB:** What kind of a difference in relationship do you have? Why would they be interested, for example, in what Glenda's five favorites are? [Both laugh]

**GM:** Exactly. I ask myself that question a lot, in fact. It is interesting, and the mail we get--we don't get tons of mail but we certainly get it--of how many people respond to the specific things I write... I don't know whether it's a style thing--almost a sort of...not in your face, but just sort of letting it hang out, you know? People pick that up. I'm sure for some, they just think, "What is this!" And, "Who is this woman?" But for others, it hits a point that is just right for them.

A couple issues I did a big mystery thing, which basically was just saying here's what I think about all these mysteries. I read a lot of mysteries. I call them 'popcorn read'. A lot of people read mysteries by women right now. It's really interesting the response we got to that. You know, people writing and saying, "Well, Glenda, you didn't mention so and so." Or, "When is your next list coming out?" Or, "I went out and bought da, da, da, da." You know, that kind of thing. Sure that's hitting a particular genre of reader, I do understand that. We don't do it all the time, and shouldn't in BookWomen. I don't know what it is. I really don't know.

**KB:** Well, speaking of favorites let's talk about the great book list.

**GM:** Oh yes, oh good. The great book list...

**KB:** ....Because that is a list of favorites.

**GM:** It is a list of favorites there: 236 on the great book list. We've been doing that now since 1986. You know it's my tongue in cheek, I couldn't stand it when we first started book groups and people would say, "Well there are just no great books by women." You know, there are *the* great books by the great white males, but there are just no great books by...well I just couldn't stand it. So I would say, "Wait a minute. Let's talk about what we mean by great books."

So right in the very beginning--probably within the second year of book groups--each time a book group finishes, we look at the books we've read and we choose the one that's not necessarily the greatest written, but that is the most provocative, provided the best discussion, and that you'd most want to give to a friend. ...That kind of criteria. So, we've collected those now for all these years.

In fact we're just getting ready to publish a second edition of the great books book. We now have a subhead for our second edition. It's called The Great Books: Because Women Say So! It's done with an explanation point, sort of like, by darn! ...And 'women have said so'. Now you can certainly argue. We could have big discussions about what is this one doing on here!

The one I remember most--and it's not even in print though we have copies here, used copies--was the book about Roseanne Barr [television personality]. Now who in hell would ever think that...! But I remember we read six books in that group, and yet this was the one that the group chose. Now I could go back and look and see what other five books we read. But by darn, that's the one that surfaced so it's on the list. I can see most book reviewers saying, "Are you kidding?" But by darn there's some real important stuff in there about how she grew up and about her. I don't apologize--what's on there is on there, and it's honestly on there from those groups that read them.

We make a real effort to keep all of them here in the store, though many of them are out of print, so we have a lot of used books. We're always searching for books that are on our great book list so that we have them available for readers. It's been great to do, and I think important to do. I really do. I know the other night I spoke to a group, and we have twenty orders as soon as the second edition is ready. It will be ready in about a month. So that's great...at least twenty people are going to want it. We published it in very small format, but now it's going to be about eighty pages.

**KB:** Eighty pages!

**GM:** Well, because we're also telling about different kinds of book groups. There's the stuff around it as well. It's all annotated.

**KB:** So it's a new product, essentially. It's being converted over to a new product from the list.

**GM:** It is. It is. You got it. That's right. Exactly. We're going to find out how well...

**KB:** How much are you going to charge for it?

**GM:** We don't know yet. We did a pre-publication charge...I think it was nine dollars. It's probably going to have to be more than that. We will know once it gets printed and everything.

**KB:** How will women find out about that?

**GM:** Well, one thing, it will go in BookWomen. It will be in the "Women's Press" ongoingly [sic]. There are certain key places I want us to send it, just so people know--people who are kind of in the book world. It is really interesting. I just saw a brand new book out here--because you know the books come for review and I've gone through all of

them--and there's one that had to do with reading, and in the back listed as a resource is our original great books, The Great Books: Minnesota Women's Press. So you know how stuff just kind of gets out there in the stream and it goes ways you never know.

**KB:** Well, we've spent a lot of time now talking about what it referred to as the Center for Feminist Reading at the "Women's Press". Before we leave that topic, is there anything more you want to say in terms of that entire effort? You've talked about its history, you talked about many of the things that you do in that area. Are there any other things you want to say about that effort? ...And your complete involvement in it?

**GM:** Well, I think I said to you that when we named the "Women's Press", people said we couldn't name it the "Women's Press" because nobody would read it. ...Or they would think it was a lesbian press. It was so clear to us that it had to be called the "Women's Press", which we've never regretted. That is what it had to be.

But we were always careful about using the word 'feminist'. In the last four or five years, we have embraced the word feminist on purpose. We feel it's a very positive term, though it is incredible the number of people who see it as basically negative. I remember when we started what we called the Center for Feminist Journalism, and Mollie was going to try to write some pieces about what it meant to be a feminist journalist. And I still remember when Cynthia [Scott], our editor, said, "What do you mean this newspaper is what feminist journalism is. You don't need to say anymore than that."

We have a new tag line on the "Women's Press", which is "The newspaper of Minnesota's Feminist Voices: Independent, women owned." I love it. Yet it took us fifteen years to get to say something that both Mollie and I love. Cynthia is the one who really was able to put that together. This paper is feminist journalism, in my view. You can come up with all kinds of definitions of feminism because there are multiple definitions. To me, it's a way of life.

So when Mollie started the Center for Feminist Journalism, I said, "Well then we need to call the books division the Center for Feminist Reading, because that is what it is." When I have been doing my suggested reading list for my Arizona people. I really debated putting at the bottom of all the suggested list..."From the Center for Feminist Reading". You never know whether you're going to push people away, but I've done it. On every page it says The Center for Feminist Reading. To me it's like claiming the wonderful positiveness of what this means--which is to be, I think, independent women in a positive, strong way. That doesn't mean alone women, but to be your own person.

So it fits. It fits for me now. I don't go around screaming it, but on the other hand I don't hide it. It is what we are. As I told you, my friend Rita, she just doesn't understand it, and she's one of the most independent women I know. She would never call herself a feminist. She feels that by doing that, we alienate a lot of people--that we would be able to incorporate more if we didn't. But it's sticking true to what "Women's Press" was about. We had to, you know? It's not up for grabs. It is what it is.

**KB:** Thank you. I think we're going to now move into things like management and strategic direction of the Minnesota Women's Press. You've been involved in management for many years of your prior working life. So, I'd like to talk about your role in the management and direction of the Minnesota Women's Press, starting, I think, by how you perceive you've historically influenced the day to day operations of the Minnesota Women's Press.

**GM:** Boy. The only way I can say I influenced that at all is my.... I am so clear of the importance of the day by day documentation, need for response to day by day happenings... I understand all that very well, but I also don't want to be circumscribed by it almost at all. But, if you decide that for yourself, then what you have to do from a management view, is you've got to be damn sure that you surround yourself with people who do it well...and like doing it.

It's not just a matter that you don't want to do it, so someone else needs to. No, what you do is find people who love to keep records, who love to respond to the ongoing surface questions that are part of any organization, who are keeping a budget, who are sending out the bills, who are keeping the advertiser list, you know...all those things. I know what has happened over the years is the people that we've had doing this have generally been really great people, and I think satisfied with the role.

A person I think about right away is Sue Dahlen [accounting and subscriptions]. Sue played a number of roles here at the "Press". But the one she plays now, which has to do with the keeping of the records of this place, is perfect. I mean not only that she understands the questions--she keeps all the financial records--she understands well the larger questions that need to be asked around the detail that she does, which is what makes her so valuable. I know she likes doing it.

The other person that of course is so key... Of course the reason is in the beginning Mollie did day by day. We kind of have to pull her away from that because she's so good at it. [laughter] But the person that has really [done this]--especially day by day, Kathy Magnuson [General Manager] does much of it--is probably Norma Olson [Systems and Production Coordinator]. She really understands systems and how in fact all those systems have to be integrated--every system has to work together. It's really with Kathy and Norma that the structure of day by day and the necessity of keeping the kind of data that has to be kept has occurred. ...And that's what happens. You get good people to do it who understand it and do it.

**KB:** Now have you always had that position?

**GM:** For myself personally?

**KB:** For yourself personally.

**GM:** Absolutely. Absolutely.

**KB:** Right from the beginning.

**GM:** Absolutely. It's not that I can't do the tasks. I can do them. At one point Denise Schiebe and I--I think in the second or third year--we were trying to keep the books the best that we could. Of course, Denise and I each can do that. It's not either one of our first loves, but we can. We understand the importance of it. But it's not where I think I do my best. And it's not where I care to do my work.

**KB:** What about personnel decisions? Which is kind of a day to day...

**GM:** Well, for a long time Mollie and I did those. In fact, it probably was more often that we often agreed, but those would be areas where we could disagree too. As I said to you before, that whole thing of when things aren't working well because of something personal going on in someone's life, or they're just not doing their job very well...then how you handle that... I would be much more assertive than she would about it, and much crisper. It's just like, enough already. She would go another mile with it.

I know sometimes we've gone too far in allowing people to do their own thing rather than say, "We can't do this anymore...we've got to take..." It's very different now. Mollie and I neither are really directly doing the personnel decisions, but that's also because there's a lot of structure in place now on which personnel decisions are made. Probably Kathy Magnuson... Also Cynthia certainly does her editorial people--her writers and so forth. But Kathy and Norma are now the production people, with Kathy doing the overall. So, clearly when there are questions or tough decisions, we're all involved in doing and paying attention to that.

**KB:** Well, lets take a look at the longer term, strategic direction and think for a moment about how you've historically--from the beginning--influenced that. We can talk about specific areas if you'd like.

**GM:** Ok. Well, as you can tell just listening, I'm never shy to share my thoughts. I don't do that with everyone, but I certainly do that with Mollie. We've worked together so long--you know we've known each other a very long time--and we worked together in our former educator lives. In fact, we had a huge Title 4c grant that, among other things, we did. We not only carried forth some new ideas but also wrote about those new ideas and so forth, before we ever started the company.

So, I really feel that what we see now with the company is a reflection of each of us but it's also a reflection of the two of us together. One of the things I would really like for more people to learn for themselves, is that when two people come together to create something--no matter what it is--that the strength of diverse personalities and ways of going at things can *so add* to what gets created. Now, it's hard work. I don't just mean physically hard work. It's that whole mental pull, and differences in values. We've certainly have had that.

I always accuse Mol of being the ultimate Socialist. She--though she never name calls, I tend to name call, she doesn't... I'm married to a man who even though his life work as a professor was to deal with stuttering--speech pathology--his undergraduate work was all in economics. He's very aware of the principles of economics--what you pay attention to. I don't think he'd call himself capitalist, but he understands the capitalist environment really well.

So the areas where that has become probably the most difficult, but at very different points for Mollie and myself, is the whole idea of gain sharing. I know it's a real strength of what we're about as a company, and has really made a difference to the staff. People work hard and everybody shares in whatever profit there is made. In principle I like that very much. Yet I know I would never have driven for it like she did. It was just absolute with her--once we made profit.

The other place is part of my being pulled between she and my husband, is I own the most stock in the company. Now Mollie and I together of course own the majority, but I own the most. Of course my husband feels that, for the risk of putting up the money, that Mollie and I each as stockholders take great gain from the company. Mol doesn't think we should ever take gain as stockholder. I mean ever! [laughter] Now if the company were sold, then... But as an ongoing operation, that there's no reason. Of course the reality is our stockholders have always said, "Don't give us money back. Just give us enough to pay the taxes on what we owe, and put that money in staff." That says something about our stockholders, of course. Overall, I'm fine with that. But it is really clear that she and I are at a different point. That's partly my pull between Dick and her. I'm not saying I'm going around 'angst-ing' [sic] over it, but it is a difference.

The other thing is... Mollie is really the one that... You know that whole thing of whether you're a fuzzy thinker or not? Mollie is a very clear thinker. If there's a problem to be solved, she goes at it step by step by step. She can also step back and then she thinks it through, but it's step by step by step. Where I more likely will hear the problem and will kind of mumble around about a lot of possibilities. Well, it could be...or maybe...or what about....? It's a very different way.

I know that I become a really good--more than a sounding board--more of a 'bouncer-offer' of ideas. She's the one, though, that then puts it in form. So, you know the whole thing of having a formalized mission statement, she's the one that put it down. I mean we were pretty clear together about what we thought we were doing. But until you can do some of those formal steps, which then put you to the public, you've got to be explicit. She is a wordsmith and I am not. Every morning she does the--whatever it is--the crossword [puzzle of the] New York [Times]... Those hard things, and she loves doing it! She loves playing word games. Of course that comes out of her family, and the fact that she's done journalism since she was sixteen. It's a whole different way of thinking about words and how you use words.

She will really get on me--like what was going to happen at the birthday party. She's very gentle about how she does it. "Well, we might not want to say..." ...Which of course would be exactly what I would say. [Laughing]. It has to do not with the idea but with the words used to describe the idea. That's because she's very sensitive to people hearing words and responding to them. Whereas, if I said it this way, maybe I really meant it this way...maybe we could describe it a little more this way. Every word doesn't hold the same immediacy or power for me that they do for her.

I do know that with feminist ideas that we come at together. We just go at it the same as to what's important. Now we might use different words to describe it, but the stance or the living out of the feminist ideas, I think we do it [the same way]. In some ways she much more...I don't know if she's much more liberal than I am, but she acts on [it]. She's very true to the causes that she cares about. ...Truer than I. You know, the whole environmental things... It's not that I don't appreciate it...in fact rail at it. But she lives it better than I do.

Just like right now I'm sitting here with my bum knee. Of course she'd say, "Well, a little exercise...". Of course she exercises every day, and I'd be lucky if I did it once a month. So it's kind of the difference, you know, just how we live our lives...difference in people.

**KB:** How have you negotiated those differences when it comes to the direction of the company?

**GM:** I think there have been almost no time where we've really... She's not a fighter. That's not what I mean. She is a fighter; she fights hard for what she believes, but she doesn't do it in a confrontational, angry way. She just holds true to what she's about. Whereas I can be very...it is like Cynthia says, that whole volcano thing... "Holy shit, you mean this is what we're going to do?"

She knows me well enough to first of all not overly react to that, but also to know that if I am responding that way that clearly there's something that's coming up. She often times then will come back later and say, "All right. I know you were upset about... Does this help?" ...Or by describing it or naming it in another way, or looking at options of what might work.... She almost never would first of all use those words, or come at it in a volcano way. She just wouldn't. It's not part of who she is. I think we know each other well enough to know when something has been hurtful in some decision we've made, or in some way that the decision was made. We may not talk about it immediately, because sometimes it needs to rest, you know, but I think there's almost never a time that it doesn't eventually get talked about.

There are a few points where we come down where we don't agree, and we won't. We're just at different places, and there's nothing wrong with that. But we have to know that we're at different places, and then how we go at it. I do know that within the informal culture here at the "Women's Press", when I've been here--now since I won't be

here all the time now--I know I've had a lot of influence. I'm just talking about being again with the people...when you're listening to them, paying attention to them, talking to them in a forward way, not just in a formal way. It's not hard for me to do. In fact, it's important personally to do, because I hate surface stuff. I mean I can only play that surface game about twenty-two seconds and then let's talk about some real stuff here. I don't even care almost what the real stuff is. To me, that's where so many people are. That's one reason books are so good--and that's why the staff book group has been so interesting--because it's allowed us to have a different perspective, a different interaction with our staff people, because they all work so damn hard. These people work so hard. When we do staff book groups, at their request--you know, we didn't lay that on them, people come who choose to come.

The difference of being able to sit around a table together with some staff members--because they don't all come, all of them aren't that kind of a reader, and that's fine--but what you do is you begin to know them in some different ways because of the discussions with the books. I find that very rich. Not only do they get to hear us in a different way, but we get to hear them in a different way. It's like we're a group of people talking to each other. That's really good, especially because we have a tremendous age range with our staff.

**KB:** Do you think that you've been able to institute things like book group and enough policies, procedures, practices--however you want to label them--that when you're not around some of the slack gets picked up by virtue of just having institutionalized those things? What happens when you're not here with regard to those things?

**GM:** Yeah, well I think that if in fact we haven't created something that will last, then the question is why did we bother. It won't last in exactly the same way--nothing does, whenever people take it forward. But it's so important to me. That's part of why doing oral history is so darn important--the foundation of something that I have great hope will go forth, and that there's a strong foundation through to go forth with. That doesn't mean just anybody would want to do it. The right people would have to form together to do it. I hope if it doesn't make it, I'm dead, so I don't have to know. [laughter] It's been an important thing to do and it isn't just something that should dwindle away. We've tried to really pay attention, especially as we were in this transition time.

The one other thing I do want to say is that no matter that Mollie and I have very different styles, we both persevere and we have stayed with it--we have stayed the course. You've heard me say this before, Kathryn, Mollie always when we started said, "Oh gosh, I wonder if we can make it a year." And it was so clear to me we had to make it for ten. And I said that over and over and over, even when we were the poorest. I said we have to keep going. It's kind of like that thing I said to the Annapurna people [book group reading book on climbing Annapurna mountain], "...what do you *so* have to do?" I really believe that if we couldn't be at it ten years, we shouldn't start. You have to be able to be there long enough to have some impact.

That's why the fifteen years [anniversary] has been so important to me. We ended up-- whether that's a criteria or not--on the front of the Star Tribune [front-page article in Minneapolis paper about fifteenth anniversary] ...By damn, we did! It may have taken a long time to get us on the front page. It says something about the newsworthiness... This was on the front page of the paper, not in the variety section. I think that's a very different statement about something that has had a newsworthy impact on a community. Who knows how the decision was made to put it there. I don't have a clue. And I guess I don't even...well I guess I do care. I'd love to know, actually, how the dynamics went.

For me says we've done what we set out to do. The other thing is the oral history project. See, I think that the fact that the Minnesota Historical Society recognizes that this is a piece of history of Minnesota...that it is credible to be part of the historical society is very satisfying to me. I feel really strong about that.

**KB:** Let's close this section by just talking a little bit about the feminist ideals and values that have governed the "Women's Press" and how you've influenced them. What I'm thinking about it is...there's a formalized mission statement....

**GM:** Yes there is.

**KB:** Then there's a set of ideals that have guided the day-to-day activities. What I'm questioning is how you think you've influenced those. Am I asking a question that I've already asked?

**GM:** No, I don't think so. [Pause]

**KB:** Have you verbalized your feminist ideals in such a way that you think they've had a permanent and lasting effect on the organization?

**GM:** Well, all I can do is give you a little example. The one I'm going to give you-- which I thought I already did here [looking at papers]... Yes...is the one by one of our staff members who has been with us for eight years--Linda Grubish [sales staff]. When Linda first came to us as this young, wonderful young woman, I'm sure that the feminist word was not part of who she was at all. She was good at what she was doing for us-- which was selling ads--but I just don't think it was an issue for her.

I was truly taken when I read some of the pieces that you pulled out of the oral history--of Linda's words when you met with her. It's that whole thing of, do you toot your own horn all the time... Of course I know I'm ego driven--I understand that--but when Linda was able to say that, "My definition--this is a quote from Linda in the oral history [that appeared as an excerpt in the fifteenth anniversary issue of Minnesota Women's Press]-- "My definition of feminism is in terms of a person. Glenda is the epitome of feminism in everything that she is and does. In my mind, she is 'feminism'." Whoa...![Laughing]

**KB:** Yeah, that's a powerful statement.

**GM:** I couldn't agree with her more. Feminism is--not in terms of Glenda--but in terms of a person. I would just tell you because I use that in my article in BookWomen... To me, it's women who claim their own lives, who take risks, who are passionate as well as responsible, who respect others' choices as a celebration of the tremendous diversity of the lives of women. I think that may be a little different than some feminists would say, because, you know, there's sort of an agenda. But I think if you go back and read the dictionary definition, my god, basically you're talking equal rights. Don't we believe in equal rights? Well, you know where that all goes...

It certainly is believing in equal rights, but it is this part that I think is really what feminism is about. It is how I choose to lead my life and how I choose to talk about how I lead my life. It's honoring, which we do all the time in "Women's Press", that underlying thing: every woman has a story and all of those stories are important. No one story is more important than the other. I don't care what the woman has done with her life. In my view, no one story is more important or should be more celebrated than any other woman's life. That's a hard thing for people to buy. You know? Because we're so stuck in...if you do this then you're better than if you do this...or if you made bad choices...

**KB:** [unclear]

**GM:** That's right. Exactly. You do a story and people say, "Well you'll never do a homeless woman." Of course we have, you know. You'll never do a woman who's been in prison." Well, of course we have. Those stories are all part of woman's story. So for Linda to say this is like a wonderful affirmation to me, and it's not because it's Glenda, but what she knows is, it is in the terms of a person.

**KB:** Well, given that definition, I think it would be an interesting time to think about whether this organization then is a feminist business.

**GM:** Okay.

**KB:** It certainly sounds from your definition, that what you've described *is* the Minnesota Women's Press.

**GM:** All right. I think it is. Since we are a business, then... Yet you know when Kathy Magnuson has worked hard, and you have worked hard to talk about feminists in business, and is that an oxymoron? Well, I don't think so. It goes back to, how did Mollie and I know we were going to be a for-profit? There was never a question that we were going to set ourselves up as a for-profit. We had to do that because when you incorporate you have to become a not-for-profit or you have to become a Subchapter S or a C Corp. Those are your choices, and there was never a question. We investigated the C Corp and the Subchapter S, but it was really clear it wasn't going to be a non-profit.

Boy it would be fascinating to be able to recall what was playing in us at that time. It might have been having worked in educational institutions forever--including the big University of Minnesota. ...The difference of "nonprofits"--which educational institutions are, supposedly. Maybe it was just that we were saying we're not going to be that. I just don't know. But somehow we knew, and it's good to know that we knew.

**KB:** Yeah. One of the difficulties that Kathy has faced, since there are so many different kinds of feminisms, how do you attach a particular form of feminism to a business and say, "Alright now. We've demonstrated that a business can be feminist." That leads to another question. Given the fact that there are so many kinds of feminisms, and given that it's likely that not everyone here at the "Women's Press" has a common definition, how do you reconcile those differences here? What has been the practice?

**GM:** That's right, they don't. Well, I think that how you reconcile them is that you honor each person's view. You may not look at the feminism the same way they do, but you honor their view. Now you may take them on in some of the issues related to it. Clearly, the whole thing of choice related to abortion...my god, all you have to do is utter those two words and people go nuts! And they have for...how long? A lot of feminists go nuts. It isn't just other people out there.

There are certain kinds of triggers that people can... It depends upon how much time, or how much energy you're willing to give to the arguments. Or you say, "Well my stand on that is this...and you can agree or disagree." Maybe some of the staff members are 'this' and others are not. I'll say, "All right, that's where you are at this point. We've heard each other." Not that we sit around and--well, the editorial people do because they're looking 'ongoingly' as to what goes into the paper. Even some of the ads or the stories we choose to run...

I give Cynthia all kinds of credit when she did 'feminist for life' [an article on pro-life feminists]. It seems odd to me, but...there they are. Some of those women are strong feminists. I know of some of those women. So that's one of the diversities. It's not like we have to all fit in some box.

I keep thinking about my Green Valley groups [Arizona book groups currently in process] because it's been such a lesson for me. I would love to think that I could go to any kind of a community and--it would take some doing, but you'd set stuff up, and people would come, and you'd begin talking books and so forth--that the same thing would happen almost everywhere you did it. ...Not maybe in Afghanistan, I don't know. You have to be able to talk the language, and you've got to find people who are readers and all that... So, all ready you've done some sort [of division]. It would be fascinating to me to do that. I'm not going to go tool around the U.S. doing it, because first of all you don't do it just quickly. It's a whole kind of process that's important to go through.

I do want to just quickly say that one of the reasons that Mollie and I have also been able to create this, is because we've known each other a long time, and we've had so many strong experiences together that became the foundation--became a kind of knowing. That's true with Denise Schiebe as well. Denise was one of my six secretaries in my former management life. She hated being a secretary. I mean detested it! That's why I hired her. She applied for the job, and I didn't know her at the time. It's been incredible of course, what's evolved out of all that. Denise and Mollie and I, because of several things that we took on related to our former life... ...And even Mollie and I before that, because you know she was a student of mine at the "U."

It's all of that knowing and experience that we bring to the beginning of this company, and it has also allowed us to work together as well as we do. It isn't like we just all of a sudden fifteen years ago said, "Well, let's do this." It was built out of some major things that happened, including that big federal grant, but also including some stuff I used to do privately with organizations. Denise and Mollie would come along... Oh, we had great fun with that. So you never know what are the kinds of things that become a foundation for what you ultimately create. I had to have all those experiences in order to create my perfect job at age fifty. [laughter] I needed to know those things because they informed me to create what we did. I think that's important stuff. I think people need to be aware that things can evolve out of very unlike experiences, but together you can come to a point where some kind of magic happens--which is what has happened.

**KB:** Well, given all the common experiences that you've had, but also all the differences that you've talked about earlier, when conflict does occur how do you face that conflict? How do you resolve the conflict?

**GM:** Between she and I now, you mean?

**KB:** Between you and Mollie.

**GM:** Okay. Well typically what probably would happen now anyway, because I'm in Arizona, is she would have sent me a stack of stuff--because she keeps me up on like all the stuff--and so then I would be reading it all through. Then I think, holy cripes, what is this! Then I either call her on the phone and say, "What is going on here?" Or I go on the email and say, "Is this really what's happening?" Typically she would explain from her view. Of course since I've been here, I've talked to some other people on certain issues to be sure I've got enough of a picture for myself. She and I... I don't know how to tell you... It's almost like we've never not [sic] been able to work it out, even though sometimes it may take time. Sometimes things have to rest for a long period of time, and we just kind of have to let them be.

**KB:** Then you just come back to it....

**GM:** That's right. ...Or some other things happen and we say, "Oh, remember when we talked about this? Look how this fits with this." That's the thing about being connected for a long time, I think.

**KB:** Is there a defining critical moment in your relationship that you can point to and say, "Things changed after this?"

**GM:** Boy, that's interesting.... I'll tell you where I think the turning point was, which is indirectly related to the paper. When I was doing my management world stuff, I think I told you that because of the huge new school district, I got to hire all kinds of teachers. That was my job, [to hire]people to come to this new school district. Because I taught at the "U", I had taught all these people to teach blind kids, and one of the things we were doing was hiring teachers to teach blind kids in this big regional program.

What I literally did is, I just went and called all my best students that I had taught, and I said, "Guess what...there are jobs here, do you want to come?" At that point, Mollie had taught blind kids for a couple years up in a northern suburb, and she was teaching junior high school English in Minneapolis public schools. She'd been doing that for a while and she was ready for a change. She had been one of my... Well, clearly one of the better students--I was going to say my best...I don't know...maybe she was my best--I had a lot of good students. She said, "Sure, I'll come."

So that year I probably hired twenty teachers, and of course it was great because we were starting this whole new effort. There was a lot of excitement. And the first year, we called ourselves the Vision Team and we did well. We had a lot of strong people and a lot of exciting things happening. As we went into the second year--and of course I was leading that team, there was no question. This was before I went into bigger management. It's that whole thing that if you're successful at something then they decide to give you more. You know how it goes. You know that yourself.

I was doing all kinds of things with the Vision Team that had just never been done in this school district before. One thing was, we met every week because these are itinerant people. They went out all over Hennepin County, so they were traveling, traveling, traveling. We had a home base and I maintained that, because these people had to operate so independently, that at least a half day a week we were all together, which was unheard of in the district at that time. That's where we began to build our team and our expertise within it.

By the second year it was really clear to me that Mollie's responses to whatever kinds of issues I put forth were the ones I listened to first. I had a lot of good people, and I got lots of responses from them, but hers were always extremely thoughtful and never diminishing in any kind of way. That's just how she goes at things. She and I began to be... Always before she'd kind of been student teacher--I was teacher, she was student. That first year, I was still kind of "the boss" or whatever, but in that second year I could really begin to feel that shift. In fact a couple of my staff members told me later--cause I

know a lot of these people well--they said they could see it happening, which I thought was pretty interesting. I wasn't even aware of it in the beginning. It was because I valued so much her perspective on some of the issues that we were facing. Because she's such a good writer, I was also having her doing a lot of writing. That's how we got the Title 4C Grant, and we spent five years doing that Title 4C Grant.

That's not directly [related] to the company, but that began to change the relationship of what would come, and then that ultimately moved us through several things that we did to ultimately starting the paper. The little bit we say right on the front here [reading the oral history excerpts from the fifteenth anniversary issue of the newspaper]. ... In 1984, when she sat in my living room and said, "Shall we do this?" And I said, "Let's find out." So, we did.

**KB:** I'd like to move into the whole area of values now. You've talked about this a lot, but maybe you could in some sort of summary form talk about what you think are the three or four most important values of the Minnesota Women's Press.

**GM:** ...That word "values." ...Play on it a little bit more for me.

**KB:** Ideals...is that an easier way to think about it? ...A belief system? ...Guiding principles?

**GM:** All right. I'm trying to think if there are things that I haven't really...

**KB:** Well, you've talked about a number of things but I thought if you could just kind of respond in summary.

**GM:** Right. This seems redundant but I guess I just have to say it again. I have such a strong personal belief of the importance of every individual--that to me, it is a basic underlying value of the "Women's Press". We have tried to honor over and over and over in all kinds of ways--no matter whether we're doing book groups, whether we're doing stories in the newspaper, whether we're talking to our employees, whether we're talking to people who walk in the door to buy a book, it doesn't matter.

Obviously there's some testy individuals that you don't want to have to deal with, but on the other hand it's the testy individuals often who also bring you up short. Then you darn well say, "Okay now why am I reacting the way I am? What about what this person is saying is getting to me?" ...Which is part of the learning process, and so it is that whole value of every person. It isn't even that I have to like every person--cause I don't--but that doesn't diminish that they have value. I just don't think our culture overall pays a lot of attention to that. So to me that's really one of the underlying [values] of everything we do.

Another important thing--and it doesn't quite fit with that--is that women can do anything they decide to do, if they have enough passion for it. Now how has that got to do with

Minnesota Women's Press? What I hope is that what we're doing is as we talk to people, and write for people, and so forth, they begin to own that for themselves--that they can do it. It doesn't mean that they can do everything, but that in fact, if they put their minds to something--if something is of value to them, and they feel strongly about it--it's possible to do it. So we become like a model in some kind of way. I don't just mean the "Women's Press", but any of us who are here--we become that for others to follow. I like that. I like knowing that we are modeling a way of being that is not hugely 'out there', I think. Even though it more and more is...

I also think probably one of the underlying values--probably a big one, because we don't do it an ordinary way... By that I mean, when I look at all the women's newspapers that haven't made it--which really were about fashion and weight loss--there's nothing wrong with any of those things, but that's not all there is. Unfortunately that's what so many of [them do], and that's because of the advertising stuff. That's what helps pay to put those newspapers out. So then you become very cautious, or very careful about what you're going to write about. We just haven't done that. I think we look at women in a much more complex way, and a richer way.

I know a woman in one of my book groups down in [Arizona]--not the Green Valley one--an absolutely gorgeous woman and she's also a millionaire... She's not someone I had known; Carol had asked her to come. The first time we got together I said something, "Well we publish this newspaper where we're not into fashion and all these things..." and Barbara said, "Well, I've been a fashion model for a long time." All you have to do is look at her--six feet tall, beautifully dressed and the movement of her body...just gorgeous... Then I think, "Well, Glenda, you put your foot in it here." Yet as I've gotten to know Barbara...it would really be intriguing to have more in depth discussion with her about...

**KB:** That topic?

**GM:** ...And more of what makes her, her--which includes this wonderful way of her body, and the way she goes at things and so forth. So, it's like you never know when you sort of dismiss something... But it has to do with what you emphasize. We're just not going to emphasize that.

**KB:** It continues to be done elsewhere.

**GM:** Elsewhere...my gosh, it's overdone elsewhere, I think! How much you want to buy into any of that... Then we could certainly talk about TV or any of the other sort of medium, and what kind of messages we are giving to the young ones coming along. We do things differently. We just do. And I like that a lot. Partly because I want my life to be different. I don't want it to be routine and usual--neither one.

**KB:** Let's return to the whole notion of impact. I'd like to have you think about impact any way that works for you. You can talk about it on a personal basis, you can talk about

it on a journalistic basis, or on the basis on how it's touched other women. But I'm really interested in what you think have been the most important impacts of the Minnesota Women's Press existence.

**GM:** All right.

**KB:** I know that since you look at the individual as well as the collective, that you'll talk about both. [laughter]

**GM:** Okay, all right. 'Gotcha.' [pause] It's sort of interesting. I was going to say the company has shaped my life, but I'm not sure that my life hasn't shaped the company. In fact it probably does go both ways. It is like leaving something that I think it is my soul. That sounds pretty corny, but I think it is. It's like my essence. There's great satisfaction in that--extreme satisfaction. It's like in these years--now in my sixties--in some ways it's kind of like it's what I was meant to do? Who would know that it would necessarily spin quite like this? But it has been my life for fifteen years. Other things have been going on in my life as well, but it has been integrated in. I thought the piece--again in the book that we were given on the Fifteenth [anniversary] written by different people... Carol Pine was one of the early people with us. Carol wrote a very nice piece. I don't know if you've had a chance to read it yet.

**KB:** No.

**GM:** One of the things she remembers is that even when things were--and she was writing that particular part to me--very tough in my own life, which is when my son committed suicide and then the house burned, I just never quit. I kept going. And how impressed she was... It's so interesting to think back on that, because I don't feel like I was doing anything but what I was meant to do--even in those tragedies, and they were tragedies. They were huge chunks of time out of these fifteen years--especially with the death of Jeff. It took a year before I hardly knew where one foot was in front of the other. Yet...it carried forth. Now it's true I wasn't there [at the Minnesota Women's Press Inc.] very much. I don't know where I was....I don't know. Even then when the house burned, for me I had to do so many things in relationship to that house to let it go--which was very difficult.

For Carol to recognize that it kept going even in times of really tough personal things, I was so pleased that she reminded me of that, because you sort of forget--that by darn that is what you did at a point in time. And also with my husband's chronic illness, which has been awful for a very long time... I really maintain that what these fifteen years have been about is giving me a life outside of tragedy and outside of chronic illness that's consuming a good part of my life. I wonder for how many people that can be. Often times, if you live with someone with chronic illness, that becomes everything.

Of course, I give Dick a lot of credit. It's been difficult, but he honors that this has been... Even though he never gave "Women's Press" a chance in hell, yet the bouquet

[for the fifteenth anniversary] that he and the children sent, which I really doubly appreciate because he... Of course once the company started making profit, what can he do, this old economist--profit! [Laughing] So, he's at a very different place now and that has to do, I think, with having a passion about something. So all the other things--people who don't believe in it, including people you're close to, and tragedies that happen in your life--it doesn't sway you from something that is so important. You don't even think of it.... Yeah, of course, this is what we do.

If we talk about the impact that "Women's Press" has had on women within the Twin Cities community--I want to just say that for now because you know there are all kinds of communities--I know that the "Press" has certainly had a following. We'd like it to be a bigger following, but it has a very committed following. It's important to these women what this paper says. They pay attention to it; it helps guide some of the things that they're about. I would also say that at the "Women's Press", because the things we do deal not just with the newspaper, but we have really built our own "Women's Press" community. If I look at the book group stuff, that's just a huge community. It's not just an individual book group, but just like what happened on Sunday--we had people from different book groups. Right away they can begin to resonate, you know? Or like all the people that were here Friday night...

There are wonderful stories, and you've heard some of them from some of those people: this is a life-changing place for them. It wasn't just what it did for their individual life, but what it helped them realize--there was a community of people that they could belong to. I say that because one of the things that gets really interesting to me is anytime women come together in community--and it is again that whole thing from the very beginning--then it must be lesbian. That's the only way that you can kind of define women coming together. Certainly it is true, there are some lesbian women, but it's much broader than that--which is exactly what we want it to be. ...All kinds of women from all kinds of walks of life, all ages, colors.

I still remember that first birthday, which I know I've spoken about before, where we honored the twenty-six women that we had profiled. Those women didn't know each other, and it was like they all such a bond right there--they were the women that the "Women's Press" honored. I love it, in the overall [anniversary] issue, for all those fifteen years, the names of all the women we have done is on the back. I mean, my god that's impressive. All those stories have been told. I think that's incredible. To me that is a community. If they were to meet each other at a party or something, and "Women's Press" gets mentioned, Well, I was in X issue." "Oh! You were in X issue? I was in..." You know. Right away those women would be connected.

It's like reading books. I'm reading X book or I ask you what you're reading, "Oh, I'm reading that too." Right away we have a discussion going; there's a connection, which I think is part of community. I'm stunned that anywhere I go, there always are connections of people that one would never predict. Things come up, "Oh, my gosh! You knew so

and so... You've done so and so..." To me that is a larger sense of community, beyond Minnesota certainly. I like that. I like that.

Now if we look at whether or not the "Women's Press" has influenced the local women's community--the local women's movement... One of the things...who is it? A long time well-known feminist writer just wrote...she has a new book out... Oh, it's not going to come to me.

**KB:** It's not Germaine Greer, by any chance.

**GM:** It's not Germaine Greer but it would be like a Germaine Greer. Ah...darn...and it's not Susan Sontag, though she has a new book too. But it's of that ilk, that era. This woman who was a fierce one...I heard her interviewed and I've seen her book and she...

**KB:** Kate Millet?

**GM:** Not Kate Millet. But keep on...we're getting it. Anyway, she is saying that a young woman had called in and said, "But there isn't any women's movement right now." Her response was, "That's true, because there aren't any issues that are driving a large group of women." I think that's true. If we look at the Sixties--and of course there were all kinds of movements going--but certainly there was strong women's movement, which to me was the 'second wave' of feminism.

If you look at the 'third wave' of feminism then that gets really interesting, because if you want to talk diversity, boy the third wave would knock your socks! Because first of all they don't have cohesive struggle--there might be some lesbian women that would gather together and so forth--but I'm talking about broader than that. What will be interesting is if in fact something happens to the birth control issue--to the legal status. Then it would take a while, but it would be very fascinating. These young women haven't a clue what it means not to have birth control. ...And the difference that that has made in the way they've lived their lives--pro and con. I often think that would be pretty darn interesting if in fact it would go down at some point. It would take a while, but pretty soon there would be some real major stuff that would come forth. Then who knows what would be "the" movement.

I do know that locally... Even though we were very suspect by some in the beginning, and people who are not happy with us necessarily--they feel we are too tame, we don't fight hard enough for whatever particular issue people want.. Especially when I read the Fifteenth Celebration issue, it's pretty darn clear that we've influenced all kinds of women at all kinds of levels. When the political women, you know, have their ad in here... When the Sharon Sayles Belton [mayor of Minneapolis] thing was in here.. And then whatever other ones are in here, where women are honoring the "Women's Press"... Yeah, yeah...I know we're a part of it, and I like that.

If you ask about journalism, however, it gets pretty interesting. I think you heard me say that Cynthia and Mollie are going to the StarTribune at the end of the month. The StarTribune has asked Mollie and Cynthia to come and talk about how they can better cover women in their newspaper. That comes off of our fifteenth anniversary edition. I'm sure it comes from the fact that that story ended up on the front page of the Star Tribune. They're going to talk to--I don't know what they told me--thirty or forty reporters, journalists there at the StarTribune.

Now, the interesting thing is...most of the places just don't get it. Here's the [general] population and then you have all these unusual populations like women, like Hispanics, like the African Americans... Well, in my mind it doesn't fit. Women is not the same as African American, Hispanic, whatever other slices. Women's to me is much more inclusive. It is, it is. You can't put it, I think, with African American or with Hispanic. No, if you're going to talk about women all across the board, you're going to talk about African American women, and the Hispanic women and so forth. That's very different than saying, "What are the women stories? Lets think about African American stories, and then what the women stories are. That doesn't parallel for me. I think generally that's how it's viewed--kind of as if we're a sub-genre or something. Who's kidding whom? That is a big difference of what we're about, and I don't think most journalism people get it. I don't think most people generally get it. It's that whole thing of fifty-one, fifty-two percent [of the population]. Come on folks. Boy, that's a hard one... It's fascinating. It's fascinating. Anyway they are going to go talk with them and who knows what will come of that.

Cynthia's going up to Montreal to speak to a news organization, because again of the Fifteenth Anniversary issue, and talk with them about how we cover women. Who knows. You get just a little bit of time to say important stuff, and maybe one or two people get it--but that is what it's about. When people say, "Well what do you hope to accomplish in the bigger thing? It isn't about the bigger thing. It is, but you only do that a little piece at a time. That's why perseverance gets to be so important. As you build that, then that ripples out and ripples out. It's not just you then carrying that message, but at least another one or two are carrying that message, and that hits other people. So, it will be fun to see what they come back with after they go. [laughter]

**KB:** Why do you think the "Women's Press" has been successful within this location? ...When women presses in general have not been successful elsewhere. What's unique about the Minnesota Women's Press or about this location?

**GM:** I love that question, and I puzzled about it ever since we met with Jim Fogerty [of Minnesota Historical Society]. It's always intrigued me that Minnesota is unique in ways I just almost never can describe. Living in Arizona right now, people down there have said to me, "Well if Mollie and Glenda would come down to Arizona, a women's press down there would survive because Mollie and Glenda are doing it." But I don't think that's true. It might. It's possible, I suppose. It would never survive in the same way.

In Arizona, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Attorney General are all women--the head of Department of Education--they're all women in Arizona. Come on...that's major in this county. But they're all conservative women--pro-business. They blow my mind! I want to say, "My god, women!" But obviously, they've been successful and the business people love them, and there you go. And so, of course, [unclear] way too fast, They have no social issues that they've taken on. Education is like--what is it--second to the bottom I think in what they pay? It's incredible, just incredible. So to think that a women's press could survive in Arizona? I don't think so.

Arizona to me is very much like having grown up in Idaho. It's a very independent, Republican, western [state]. We know how to do it because we went out there and carved this land for ourselves. It's that western way of going at stuff. I understand it well. My grandparents did that in Idaho, and I appreciate it. But it's not the same as a state as this one, where the history of this state--which is certainly German and Scandinavian, and liberal, and very community aware...

I look at Minneapolis and the fact that those lakes were left for the public. They weren't there for rich people to build their houses. Not that there aren't some rich houses over there, but they're all available. It's not like there's stuff closed off. Obviously there are problems in Minnesota. We know that. Everywhere, there's stuff to be struggling with. I'm glad I raised my children in this state. I really am. I call it a socialistic state, and I don't mean that negatively at all. Of course people give us so much trouble about this governor we have now, and yet in lots of ways I find him refreshing. ...Don't necessarily agree with him on everything, but... It's kind of like, yeah, Minnesota would do that. Minnesota would have a Mondale. Minnesota would have a Hubert Humphrey. They don't make it big time. Big time, yes, but not to be president, and yet men that I admire and feel are very reflective of what this state is about.

So, my sense is that the "Women's Press" would not make it in other places--in other states. To me it would be fascinating to have a group of people come together 'ongoingly' to see: why do certain things survive in Minnesota that just don't survive in other places? I truly believe that part of it is that we're such a highly educated state. What are we, second in the country? Just in the level of education? It's incredible. Who knows whether that will be true in another...just because of the influx of the diverse community that's coming here to Minnesota. But if one cares about those values, then what we do is work with those diverse communities to be sure that they also value education. I think that's part of it.

I think people in the state are big readers. The whole library system makes it work for us, because books are a big part of what we do. So, I don't know. I would love to have a whole conference on "Why Minnesota?" ...Not just about the "Women's Press", but about all kinds of things that get maintained here or carried forth here. It would be fascinating.

**KB:** Well, we're very close to the end and I thought now would be a good time for you to spend a few minutes talking about what's ahead personally here for you and your role here at the "Women's Press".

**GM:** Okay. Well, it's ah...it's a strong question for right now. As you know, my husband and I are now living in Arizona--which is very hard for me to say. Before, when I just went there for the winters, it wasn't so bad. Now, we don't have a house here and we have a house there. I just had to get my Arizona drivers license, and the Arizona license plate, and I thought, "Oh, my god! I've died." Which is sort of silly, really because there's some wonderful things. It's very much like where I grew up--lots of mountains and great sun and dry. There are lots of things I like about it.

I don't like the retirement community concept--which is where we're living. In principle, I don't like it. It doesn't have to do with Green Valley. I mean it in a broader sense. It's ridiculous that people think that if we just gather certain kind of folk together, we'll just have this wonderful life--a wonderful safe life. Oh, Jeezz...! That's far away from diversity--which is what I really like! So, anyway, that's where we are, and the house is fine, and of course Dick's health continues to deteriorate. I have made my choice to stay with him as that continues to happen--which has been difficult, because I've really wanted to be here because of all kinds of things that are happening here at the "Women's Press".

In reality, with our movement toward having three leaders--three 'guiders', whatever you want to call Kathy and Norma and Cynthia--it also seems that somehow it's like so many things, that it's kind of meant to be the way it is right now. This fifteen years is a foundation, and it's now right for another possibility to now guide it forward. That will continue obviously to evolve however it will evolve. I'm assuming as long as I'm a stockholder, and the fact that Mollie and I are directors of the company--because we own the majority of the stock and legally, we have huge legal responsibility as far as the company is concerned--even if I were to move back to Minnesota, I can't think that I probably would be very involved 'ongoingly' with what's here. ...Even just in what they've all done in kind of spiffing up.

It was always my job over the years to kind of organize, you know, to make sure things looked right. Well, I haven't done that for a while and see, I didn't have to, and somebody else did. So I don't really see that I would have a huge role, other than certainly a guiding role, as long as Mollie and I continue to be directors. We have to.

I clearly hope to continue to write for BookWomen. We just met with Cynthia this morning. She's thinking about whether she wants to put more book stuff back into the newspaper, because you know I did that for a long time. It wouldn't just be me--she hasn't decided, but she's thinking about that. So then I need to think about that..

The travel trips are not high on my list as they are on Mollie and Denise's. It's not that I don't think they are important, and I know they are neat for some people, and I've certainly enjoyed the ones I've done.

It is interesting; I'm not ready to give up those retreats. I really like that. Again that's developing even a community for a weekend. It's just amazing what can happen if you structure that well--the dynamics that go on among people who haven't known each other, and there they are to discuss that topic. It's just wonderful to watch, and it works--not always, but it works most of the time. So I don't want to give that up.

I don't have great concern for the company as I'm less here. I really don't. The company is strong--has strong people. It will be interesting to see when Mol makes whatever decision she makes about what's next for her. As you know, she's doing primarily book things now--that's her choice. I'm hoping for her that she can pull more away from [the company], because I think people count on her so much, and she's so gentle in how she guides that. Other people need to learn that even more. So, I'm hoping, but that's up to her. She'll have to do what she decides to do.

I don't have huge worries about what's going to happen. The biggest thing will be, as I said before, whether or not it can...whether or not it's strong enough--and I guess I believe it is, anything can change--but to be it's own ongoing organization. Other folk can do it, even though they may do it differently. I don't have worries about it, I really don't. I don't see my role being expanded in any way, and not through lack of caring. I must say when I came back this time, what did we have...like five new staff members? I couldn't put names to all of them. I've met them, but to be able to say, "Well this is... and this is... and this is..."

**KB:** That must be a strange experience.

**GM:** Yeah, especially the other day when I pulled the two of them forward that I... I mean I knew Kat's name but I hadn't met her. Sue, I think was the other. Now yesterday, Sue and I had a talk about Anne Rice [fiction author]--boom! So immediately now I've got her pegged. Right away it does that. We did an Anne Rice book group and so I was talking to her about that. It was fun to hear her thoughts about how much she likes Rice and so forth. So. ...You can really miss...I don't know, it's kind of like raising kids, you know. It's that whole thing of, oh my god, they're big enough to go out on their own here. My baby!

**KB:** Is it surprising to you that you and Mollie can--given the passion that you've been describing--that you're able to allow this transition to happen calmly....

**GM:** You know, it isn't. It isn't. It will be fascinating now to watch...to see with Mol...course again with that age difference... But it will be fascinating. No, we've spent a lot of time already talking about it. She's not ready to take certain steps I'm taking, because my life circumstances have said that's how it needs to be. I'm really serious, if

Dick were to die soon, or even die whenever down the road, I don't know what I would do. Would I move back here? It doesn't sort of matter.

Let's say I were to move back here. I would not see picking up the...coming back in and doing 'whatever'. In fact, this very weekend now I will be telling my long time book groups that I will not be here this summer. Originally I was going to be back in June, and then go all the way through fall, but that's not going to happen. That begins to make a shift. And it's okay. It's not easy, but it's okay. That couldn't have happened if I hadn't been able to do what I did down in Green Valley, or to know that I could do it some place else. So...so...it's...it's all right. It's all right. And that doesn't mean to say there won't be some kind of tugs and pulls. Anytime you care so much about stuff...and of course the thing about being here is there's so damn many intelligent women! The whole thing of being able to dialogue with them is just really important to me--whether they're in book groups or staff or whatever, it doesn't matter. Who know what it will bring, maybe something that we don't even absolutely predict. And right now with my darn leg! I tell ya, I think I'll just cut it off and stay in bed and read!

**KB:** We're actually done with my questions. Is there anything else that you want to say about this before we turn the tape off? Any final comments that you want to make about the history of the Minnesota Women's Press that we haven't had a chance to talk about?

**GM:** I don't think so. I think the final thing to say though is that...remember I said something about how you never can predict about how things connect? No matter where you are, the strangest things and then, oh my gosh, there's a connection! The fact that you appeared to us--however you appeared--and that you understood, and understand 'how to' and the particularness--I don't think that's a word--of oral history... The fact that you and I went over and met with Jim--which was helpful to me to sort of have a dynamic going there--and to hear the carefulness with which they expect oral histories to be done... It is to me like a miracle that here you are! Here's Kathryn from--however we got you here or however you came to us--and that is one of those magic moments. There's a kind of magic-ness [sic] which people sometimes want religion to answer. Since I'm not a religious person I don't, but I'm always marveling at the kind of connections that do occur and out of that, what comes. To me that's what makes life very grand.

**KB:** ...And interesting.

**GM:** Of course, of course. And never predictable, which is of course what I really like. So, I'm awfully glad you've been here.

**KB:** Why thank you, and thank you for the interview.