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Harpers Ferry Center's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Oral History Project



Paula Beale  
March 5, 2020

Interview conducted by Winnie Frost and Betsy Ehrlich  
Transcribed by Rev.com

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#### START OF RECORDING

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:00:00 --start this out. Okay. So, I'm going to start off by introducing us here today. I'm Betsy Ehrlich at the Harpers Ferry Center and we also have--

Winnie Frost: 00:00:11 I'm Winnie Frost. I'm a retired National Park Service employee.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:00:16 Our guest of honor here today is--

Paula Beale: 00:00:18 I'm Paula Beale and I'm Chief of Media Development here at Harpers Ferry.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:00:23 We're here today to chronicle Paula's career. It's March 5th, 2020, and we're at the Storer College room. Winnie and Paula, do we have verbal permission to do this interview?

Winnie Frost: 00:00:35 Yes.

Paula Beale: 00:00:36 Yes.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:00:36 We also have signed agreements. If there are any questions you don't want to answer, that's fine. It's totally voluntary, so Winnie is going to get us started with the first question.

Winnie Frost: 00:00:45 Okay. Great. Well, just a little preamble. I had the joy of working with Paula a few years and the sort of her, well, non-supervisor because you can't supervise her. She's too good. Okay. Paula, so today we're going to talk about a little bit about your life and then move into your career. We're going to start off with your childhood, where you're

born, where you grew up and did you ever go to any national parks while you were young?

- Paula Beale: 00:01:17 Okay. Yes. I grew up in Saint Henry, Ohio. It's a little town by Dayton, Ohio. Farm country so we were an hour from any kind of interstate. So, just a lot of playing outside time, riding my bike all the time, right?
- Winnie Frost: 00:01:38 Were you on a farm?
- Paula Beale: 00:01:40 No. My dad was 1 of 16 kids, and so he had the local farm. Every week, I was at his family farm. The tradition was to give it to the eldest son, which was my dad's brother and my dad helped maintain the farm, but a requisite to my mom marrying my dad was that she would never live on a farm. So, we lived in town, but I always feel like I grew up on a farm and the county I'm from is from one of the highest agricultural producing counties in all of Ohio to this day. It's farm country for sure. Even though I say I live in town like you could smell the cow manure where I lived.
- Winnie Frost: 00:02:19 That's wonderful.
- Paula Beale: 00:02:20 Yeah. No. I mean, it was like a great childhood. I have great memories. Local library, local pool, I had total freedom, total access to go anywhere.
- Winnie Frost: 00:02:28 Are you the oldest or--
- Paula Beale: 00:02:30 I have three other siblings and I'm the third. And then, the youngest, I kind of feel like I'm the youngest, and then the little brother was born five years later. He had his own childhood, right? We definitely broke the parents in. Then, he came along.
- Winnie Frost: 00:02:48 Then, he got all the privileges.
- Paula Beale: 00:02:50 Yes. Then, he came along. Right. You mentioned national parks, Winnie. So that's interesting because growing up, we never went to national parks. I mean even to the point right before I took this job at Harpers Ferry, it was my first kind of foray into the Park Service. I didn't know much about the Park Service up until I took my job.
- Winnie Frost: 00:03:10 Well, we'll want to hear about how you got that job.

- Paula Beale: 00:03:13 Yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 00:03:13 You mind if we wait?
- Paula Beale: 00:03:15 No. No. Yeah. I was just saying that like we just did not visit national parks. We would as a kid go to like state parks. We'd go to lodges and camp out at state parks. I rarely probably left the state of Ohio as a kid just because my parents were more working class and they were raising four kids, our vacations were--they didn't have a lot of time off and our vacations certainly weren't elaborate.
- Paula Beale: 00:03:42 I didn't really go to national parks as a kid, but I did go to state parks. A lot of outdoor activity. I certainly had an appreciation for state parks growing up.
- Winnie Frost: 00:03:54 Well, it's interesting you should say the natural parks because when I went to Dayton years ago, they have some incredible museums. I know eventually that's where you kind of went into as your profession. Did you go to any of those or were they--?
- Paula Beale: 00:04:15 Yeah. No. My parents, we would go to those. My dad had a huge appreciation for museums. He loved, and it's more my dad than my mom. He loved history and they would have-- You have this State Historical Society in Ohio and they had these various sites. We lived near, it's called Piqua, Ohio. They had kind of like this settling of Ohio, right? The white settlers in Ohio.
- Paula Beale: 00:04:46 They would have living history days, and that's one of my earliest memories is my dad taking me--my siblings were miserable. They hated it. It was going to a log cabin and it was people's first-person interpretation, so people dressed up in the period clothing. It was really about kind of the life of a pioneer and the life ways, like how did you cook? It was all about, just really struck me like, "Oh my gosh. Life was just about survival." You got to figure out how you're going to eat, how you're going to sleep, what are your clothes coming from.
- Paula Beale: 00:05:22 I don't even know how old I was. I just remember that was just a huge moment for me looking back. I loved that feeling. I loved it that they made history come to life. I didn't even care if it was, they were or were not the real thing. The material culture and the items that they had in

this house and outside the house, they just made it so real to me that I just fell in love with the things.

- Winnie Frost: 00:05:46 That's something that kind of was in the back of your mind, not that it was like, it was aha moment for the moment but-
- Paula Beale: 00:05:53 Oh, yeah. School field trips, going to the local historical societies and they would show--my friend's mother ran our local historical society, and so the class in fourth grade, you had your Ohio state history. That's in curriculums, right. We went, one of our field trips is going to the local historical society 20 minutes down the road.
- Paula Beale: 00:06:15 My parents hadn't taken me there and we had special access because it's only open certain hours of the day because my friend's mother ran it and the school decided to make that a field trip.
- Winnie Frost: 00:06:25 Cool.
- Paula Beale: 00:06:26 It was just walking in and all of these things, these old things, and she would just pick up, and she would tell the story behind this. They had an arrowhead collection. It was just this potpourri of things. It was kind of like that just kind of sucked me in. I just had a huge, I love, I just loved history growing up. When I noticed my friends in school hated history, hated it, and I always felt kind of odd because I'm like, "I'm fascinated by these classes." I loved history.
- Winnie Frost: 00:06:53 Aha. Well, this is a real aha moment we're finding out.
- Paula Beale: 00:06:56 Right.
- Winnie Frost: 00:06:56 Because I remember in Dayton they kept saying how there were so many brilliant people, and was such an industrial place that so many inventors, like the sewing machine, all kinds of things and they had this museum full of things people invented.
- Paula Beale: 00:07:13 And they have the air force base there so they also--
- Winnie Frost: 00:07:15 Yes.
- Paula Beale: 00:07:16 Yeah. I can't remember the name of that museum, but like aviation. There's a lot of that history at Dayton--

Winnie Frost: 00:07:21 Of course.

Paula Beale: 00:07:22 --[crosstalk] the Wright brothers.

Winnie Frost: 00:07:23 Right.

Paula Beale: 00:07:24 Of course, then later on in life, I didn't work on the project but my husband did, and so it brought us back--

Winnie Frost: 00:07:30 Oh that's so cool.

Paula Beale: 00:07:31 --to Dayton.

Winnie Frost: 00:07:31 You had something to talk about together?

Paula Beale: 00:07:31 Yeah. Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:07:36 So, listen, let's move on a little bit. This was very enlightening. Now, we move into you're getting older, and then besides everybody that you dated, we'll move past that.

Paula Beale: 00:07:46 Oh that's the brief, very brief. Not much to tell there.

Winnie Frost: 00:07:50 Oh, she's editing herself today. You decided to go to college, where did you go?

Paula Beale: 00:07:57 Right. I went to Ohio State. My family lives--Columbus, Ohio which is where Ohio State is, is absolutely central in the state of Ohio. You can drive out two hours from that center and be kind of anywhere in Ohio. I was exactly two hours away. My family lived 11 miles from the Indiana border. I'm about as far west as you could go on the state. So, two hours from Columbus, but it's really funny, and I decided to go to Ohio State because I'm from a really small town, my graduating class was 90 kids so to go from that to one of the largest universities in the country, I think at the time was second to Texas.

Paula Beale: 00:08:41 I look back and I'm just like, "Why wasn't I more intimidated than I was at the time?" I was just like ready. I was ready to go to Ohio State. It was just such a big school that I just can't believe looking back, I think now of my own kids going there and I'd be terrified of them going to such a big school, but you just kind of make your own community. You eventually find your niche.

- Paula Beale: 00:09:11 I decided to go to Ohio State because they offered so many majors. I knew something I loved was history, but I didn't see myself as being a history teacher, and so I thought, "I'm going to go to Ohio State because I'm going to see what they have to offer. I'm going to experiment with classes." I knew I was not a math person. I just wanted to take the bare minimum in classes to get through that I had to take.
- Paula Beale: 00:09:37 I knew that I was interested and curious about science but not to the degree where I had to kind of become so proficient in it for a career. But I loved English, then I decided to, I majored in history, majored in American History, and then I minored in English. English was purely selfish because I loved reading novels. I could read, you know study American literature, study British literature, and I didn't mind at all writing papers and writing essays.
- Paula Beale: 00:10:07 And in history while--oh no. I loved it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:10:09 Who are you?
- Paula Beale: 00:10:11 No. I loved it. I just like I loved reading these novels, and then because what I realized is, you're not wrong, you have to make an argument, and then support your argument. I feel like I developed some of those skills as an undergraduate at Ohio State.
- Winnie Frost: 00:10:26 It sounds like your degree was really almost in American Studies.
- Paula Beale: 00:10:31 Yeah. It's definitely humanities for sure.
- Winnie Frost: 00:10:33 Yeah. Humanity. Yes.
- Paula Beale: 00:10:34 American Studies, absolutely. I loved those classes. I knew that it was a good fit for me because I couldn't wait to kind of work on the assignments.
- Winnie Frost: 00:10:44 You mean those term papers?
- Paula Beale: 00:10:44 Yeah. You know what I mean? Like when that happens--
- Winnie Frost: 00:10:49 Oh my goodness--
- Paula Beale: 00:10:49 You want to do something you love and if ever my dad ever told me anything is, "I don't care what you do, you just

need to love it." But it will say my dad being working-class, so he drove a cement truck from the time he was 18, and then he managed the cement, worked for the same cement company till the day he died when he was 65. He's working class so when he hears that his daughter's going to major in history, he's got some questions. He's calling--

- Winnie Frost: 00:11:15 Like what is she going to do with it?
- Paula Beale: 00:11:16 But he was so great to give me freedom because he said, "So, what are you going to do?" And my mom too. My mom was okay with it, but it was just, "What are you going to do with that?" I said, "I really, I don't know." I said, "I don't really think that I want to teach." Everyone's natural reaction is, "You're going to teach, right?" But my parents were great in that they said, "Well, you'll figure it out."
- Paula Beale: 00:11:39 Looking back, hindsight, you got 20/20 now, and they were just like, they gave me a lot of freedom. They did not pressure me to say, "How are you going to make a living?" They just let me figure it out. I thought that took a lot--
- Winnie Frost: 00:11:55 So when you did graduate, what, or did you do stuff during the summer that was geared towards--
- Paula Beale: 00:12:05 Then, I started to realize my junior year, I need to get it together and figure out what life holds for me afterwards. I pretty much assumed, and I don't think I fall in that category of people going to graduate school because what else am I going to do? I really was taking it seriously that I want to take my studies further. I felt like taking my studies further would give me more options too just because I didn't know.
- Paula Beale: 00:12:29 I felt like if I graduated with a bachelor's degree I wouldn't do anything in history. I didn't know what it would be. At that time, I was thinking about museums because I was so inspired as a kid by museums and kind of seeing exhibits and meeting people who were doing first-person interpretation. I started to look into and talked to my counselor at Ohio State about public history.
- Paula Beale: 00:12:52 What is public history? What does that even mean? Public history, a lot of people hear about Museum Studies, right? That's caring for the objects and there are many different areas in Museum Studies that you can look at. It could be



exhibit planning and design. Public History is often the same way, but you're working largely with the public and curating their history and understanding the history of an area and how do you do that through people through material culture. And you can translate that into exhibits.

- Paula Beale: 00:13:23 In my case, that's eventually the path I took. But I'm a junior in college and it's like, "Well, what do I do with this?" My adviser said, "I recommend you look at the Ohio Historical Society." It was a blessing that I was actually in Columbus and that's where the Ohio Historical Society was located. It was 10 minutes down the road from campus from where I lived. I got a job there and I worked--
- Winnie Frost: 00:13:47 Wonderful.
- Paula Beale: 00:13:47 --full-time in the summer, and then part-time during the school year. That was kind of like my dream because they have the museum part, which has lots of exhibits and these exhibits were amazing, kind of from native cultures and they had lots of arrowheads, lots of--also, reproductions. Trying to interpret native history. Then, they move through the span of time. It looks at social history. It's more common people, and kind of what were their life ways? What were the kind of--jobs. How do people live? What are industries in Ohio?
- Paula Beale: 00:14:24 Moving through, it could be politics, some of the bigger names in Ohio, big inventors, people in Ohio.
- Winnie Frost: 00:14:31 Presidents.
- Paula Beale: 00:14:31 Right. Yeah. Exactly. We have the formal museum, but the part that I, and I loved that, they also had the living history part and it was the village. They picked a certain time frame. In this case, I think it was 1860s, so like a 10-year period. 1860s to the '70s, and we had a baseball team, and so that baseball team--it was like a village, and you could--think of Williamsburg. You go to Colonial Williamsburg and it's that timeframe, they interpret that timeframe. You can go into the different stores in the village and see, "Oh, I'm a blacksmith. This is what we had to do to get the things that we wanted." "I'm a tradesman and this is the work that I did."

- Paula Beale: 00:15:07 That's what we had. We had a leather maker there and literally; all of this is supposed to be authentic and based on actual life ways from that time period and very specific to Ohio history. That's where I worked, and my bug was reignited. I took these core courses I think you need if you're going to be a history major, but then working at the Ohio Historical Society really put that bug.
- Winnie Frost: 00:15:40 Yeah. No kidding, right?
- Paula Beale: 00:15:42 I then apply to graduate school. I was very specific in looking at- I didn't know what I was going to do. Was it going to be Public History or am I going to teach history and maybe find a niche where you become a professor someday and you're going to have a certain time period? And that's going to be what you research, you devote your time to that. I wanted to give myself possibilities. I researched programs that offer degrees in American History and Public History and that led me to--
- Paula Beale: 00:16:13 I was accepted to a few schools like in Ohio, Wright State, Kent State, but I was accepted to this program at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. I'd never heard of the university, and talking to my professor, he knew of the Public History program there. I think he knew me well enough to know, "That's probably where you're going to end up and that's going to be your focus." But they also had American History degree, a master's degree.
- Paula Beale: 00:16:39 I got a scholarship there and visited a bunch of different schools with my mom. My mom is like the soldier who took me to all of these places. At that point, I actually did have one meltdown because it's just like this life change. You're not sure what you're doing, you're moving away from your friends and your family. My mom and I just have all these great memories of--I had a break down in a Cracker Barrel, and we looked at one of these apartments.
- Paula Beale: 00:17:08 I'm looking, so I'm accepted. We had finally decided I'm going to go to Western Michigan University.
- Winnie Frost: 00:17:12 You're going to leave Ohio.
- Paula Beale: 00:17:13 Oh, and let me tell you--
- Winnie Frost: 00:17:14 You're leaving Ohio.

- Paula Beale: 00:17:15 --to leave Ohio to go to Michigan is a very big deal.
- Winnie Frost: 00:17:19 I bet it is.
- Paula Beale: 00:17:19 I'm a traitor at that point. I was a traitor to my country.
- Winnie Frost: 00:17:20 Yeah. Your country.
- Paula Beale: 00:17:25 Right. Being Ohio. Yeah. I went to Western Michigan University and the breakdown at Cracker Barrel was because we were looking at housing and decided to stay on campus. I'm coming from Ohio State where I'm off campus, but they recommended your first year, you're even at graduate level is staying on campus. It wasn't the best. It's just like all those emotions collided, "What am I doing with my life? Where do I live? It's crappy housing. I'm going to be far from my mom." Just a breakdown in Cracker Barrel.
- Paula Beale: 00:17:58 That happened, how many years ago with my mom and I still talk about it to this day.
- Winnie Frost: 00:18:01 Wow. Another aha moment.
- Paula Beale: 00:18:03 Oh yeah. Again, my mom was very supportive. Again, they're not sure what I'm going to do. Like, "What is she doing?" But it was very helpful. I didn't pay for it. I had a scholarship. I received a stipend. I was a teacher's assistant, and then I actually had to lead a course. I had to teach a course, US History, a survey course. That's after you've been there for at least a year, but you've got to lead one of these courses, and so my time at Western Michigan was something else.
- Paula Beale: 00:18:38 I mean that really shaped me. I received an award there. It was the Graduate Research Scholar Award and that was after I was really engrained in the Public History program. I'll never forget, one of my first days on campus, I'm trying to set up my account. So to set up, I'm standing in line, setting up account, and there's a man there, kind of a smaller man, kind of like black hair, he's got a beard and he's hearing me set up my account, and as he's talking you could tell, he's from the East Coast.
- Paula Beale: 00:19:11 I don't know exactly where. He says, "Well, I'm a professor here maybe you'll be in one of my classes. This is my first year here. I'm really excited." He's super energetic. Sure

enough, I show up at one of my Public History classes and there he is. This man turned out to be like my absolute biggest mentor I think in all of my career, who just like, he set me up for ultimately then applying for the Harpers Ferry job. He's a public historian, who was leading the program.

- Winnie Frost: 00:19:44 What's his name?
- Paula Beale: 00:19:44 Michael Chiarappa and his last name is something else C-H-I-A-R-A-P-P-A. I met Dr. Chiarappa, and actually Dr. Chiarappa and his wife, Kristin. They're a married couple who both taught at, she came from North Carolina. This was his first teaching position. She was 36 at the time, he was 40, and I met her shortly thereafter, and she was also my mentor because they're both in the Public History program. She was actually my master's thesis adviser, which is a big deal.
- Winnie Frost: 00:20:20 Oh, wow. Yeah, yeah.
- Paula Beale: 00:20:23 They eventually established a program called the Great Lake Study for Maritime Studies and this is a program, it's a partnership between the Western Michigan University and the Michigan Maritime Museum, which was an hour down the road from Kalamazoo. It was a partnership and they wanted to bring in students, they wanted to bring in Public History students to start exhibits up at the Michigan Maritime Museum because they didn't have the staff there to go around and do research, local history research to really try to draw in the local public and to make them appreciate the history because South Haven, which is where the Michigan Maritime Museum is located, was more of a playground for Chicago people.
- Paula Beale: 00:21:10 Two hours from Chicago, they would visit South Haven in the summertime and it's right there on Lake Michigan, and so they were trying to lure that crowd in, so Michael Chiarappa and Kristin Szylvian, married couple. I mean, just so you know too, they were at my wedding. Kristin was a reader at my wedding. Like really just became my good friends. My spare time, I would spend at their house.
- Paula Beale: 00:21:36 We would play marathon Scrabble games. I mean, they're just like--oh we would. I know--
- Winnie Frost: 00:21:41 Scrabble games.

- Paula Beale: 00:21:41 --do I sound like the absolute biggest nerd. That's what I did. Those are my memories.
- Winnie Frost: 00:21:46 Those are wonderful.
- Paula Beale: 00:21:48 I adore them. They taught me, they just had an amazing work ethic and I took these classes and one of the best classes, the class that lured me in. So, I mentioned that I showed up to class and there he is. He's my teacher.
- Winnie Frost: 00:22:04 There you go.
- Paula Beale: 00:22:06 It was a class where we were tasked to go out into the community and meet people and come back and give a presentation on that community based on meeting some of the locals and talking with the locals, which led me to come--I became lifelong friends with some of the locals in the community there because they also then volunteered at the Maritime Museum.
- Paula Beale: 00:22:31 Another assignment in that class that really lured me in was writing a paper on, it's called the Delano House. Again, it brings me back to my childhood memories. It was a house that was part of the Michigan State Historical Society, and they used that house to interpret 1890s women's history. What was women's work life in the 1890s? I was tasked with, and you had to find your own assignment, make up your own assignment. I made my own assignment up.
- Paula Beale: 00:23:05 It was what was women's work like? How do you interpret that through the first-person history? You had to write a paper that showed you researched women's work in the 1890s farm life, how they designed a house to maybe facilitate that farm life--
- Winnie Frost: 00:23:22 Cooking.
- Paula Beale: 00:23:22 Oh yeah. The way the kitchen was positioned for the cross ventilation, where you're positioned to go out and get the water. All these things that I think we take for granted today, you don't really think about but then how do you-- you have to write a paper that shows you did that research, but then how do you translate that to a program that where you can be a docent and lead visitors through the house.

Winnie Frost: 00:23:46 Well, my goodness, everything you're saying here sounds like things we already do in the Park Service and have done for years, and I'm just curious, did you ever do any work with Women's Rights or--

Paula Beale: 00:23:58 Oh for the park?

Winnie Frost: 00:23:59 Or work through them or go see it or learn about it or know about it or--

Paula Beale: 00:24:04 No. Right now, we have a project with Women's Rights in the Northeast region. If you're referring to this specific park--

Winnie Frost: 00:24:12 Sure. Yes. I am.

Paula Beale: 00:24:14 So, for that park, they're getting their new exhibits and they want it in time for the anniversary. That's happening right now. I was temporary project manager for the Northeast and now--but we're working on it now in Media Development working on new exhibits there.

Winnie Frost: 00:24:32 It's just remarkable. I mean everything you've been talking about so related to the Park Service, but did you know about the Park Service?

Paula Beale: 00:24:40 Right. I'm doing these projects, just in love with these projects. I'm feeling really good about and, again, I feel like it's because I also have these mentors who, they were just so key to I think finding a spark in somebody and realizing like, "Wow." Because I'm telling you, I aced those papers. Those were easy classes to me because I loved it and it wasn't work to me. It was like I loved doing these projects. They just exposed me to so many things.

Paula Beale: 00:25:13 What my first job, so after I did get my master's degree in history, it was in American History and Public History, my first job was working for them. They had a grant, and so it's soft money and it only lasts so long, it lasted three years and the grant with them was put--I worked for the Michigan Maritime Museum and I kind of wore lots of different hats as I helped them with their education program, outreach to schools, helped them with their exhibits. I would work the front desk. Just a small place where you're wearing lots of hats. I was getting the museum experience.

- Paula Beale: 00:25:50 I also worked as a registrar as part of an internship. I did lots of internships. I worked at a local library for their Oral History Program which was interviewing women who were active during World War II. That was very interesting because some of the women, their husbands went off to war, they were taking care of the farm and they didn't think they contributed anything, even though they kept their farm going. It was a great program. So, all of these, and I loved it.
- Paula Beale: 00:26:19 I'm just kind of mentioning all these different things that I had access to that were just like history, related to public history, exhibits. Then, eventually--
- Winnie Frost: 00:26:28 You stayed in Michigan?
- Paula Beale: 00:26:29 I stayed in Michigan.
- Winnie Frost: 00:26:30 You didn't go back to Ohio?
- Paula Beale: 00:26:31 No. I didn't. I didn't. My first job out of graduate school, then, again, was working for the museum, and then working with them on this grant, which the intention of the grant was to talk about- This will sound very boring, but it was interesting, when you dive in it and it's interesting, fisheries' rights. Lake Michigan fishery--the right to fish in Lake Michigan is highly contested.
- Paula Beale: 00:26:53 It was looking at the different groups of people who have a stake in fisheries and looking at that over time and where we are today, and can we have an exhibit that shows all these multiple perspectives because these groups do not get along. I was the lead researcher on this project. I had to go and gather the perspectives. Some of that was oral histories, it was gathering material culture.
- Paula Beale: 00:27:23 You need to really dive in and make--you had to establish relationships in the community. I needed images. Those weren't in museums. Those images were in personal collections.
- Winnie Frost: 00:27:34 [crosstalk].
- Paula Beale: 00:27:36 I had to establish a huge network so this was taking me to Wisconsin because it was Lake Michigan--

Winnie Frost: 00:27:42 Oh no. Now, you're in a third state.

Paula Beale: 00:27:44 Oh yeah. I'm all over. I'm like all over the place.

Winnie Frost: 00:27:46 Yeah. In the Midwest.

Paula Beale: 00:27:48 It also took me to native cultures and that was an amazing experience. The planning for this looks like a two-year process to the point where we then built the exhibits. We had to just--it was curating everything right and working very closely with Michael and Kristin to write the text, to make sure, you just had to be someone who could get along well with people and establish relationships. If anything, you learn how important relationships are and building trust. If they're going to loan you and these were loans, some of their--to them, they're precious artifacts, precious images, and share with you their stories, you just had to really spend time building relationships.

Paula Beale: 00:28:27 I loved it. I mean, I loved getting to know people for this project. Then, it became a traveling exhibit. I was overseeing where it would travel. It would be a traveling exhibit accompanied with--people would speak. If it was going to be about native fishing rights and we were in Chicago too. I was tasked with--

Winnie Frost: 00:28:45 Illinois.

Paula Beale: 00:28:46 Well, that was the most interesting interview too because I met a white sports fisherman who owned a fishery right, right there in the heart of Chicago. He said to me, "Well, you know how I am the biggest fishery around?" He said, "I pay my natives because they had fishing rights." He hires the native fishers--

Winnie Frost: 00:29:09 Clever.

Paula Beale: 00:29:09 --to go out and he brings--then, but you know what he said then? This may be where you cut it. He said, "You know what I do then?" He said, "I have problems. I have problems with them native fishers." He pulled his drawer, he was sitting in a desk, pulled the drawer and gets a gun out. He's like, "I take care of business."

Paula Beale: 00:29:29 There I am like 26 years old, "Okay. Moving on to the next question." Like you just [crosstalk]--



Winnie Frost: 00:29:36 Can we go to a little restaurant?

Paula Beale: 00:29:39 Yeah. You were just exposed to so much just--

Winnie Frost: 00:29:41 Right. Right.

Paula Beale: 00:29:41 --racism and--

Winnie Frost: 00:29:42 That sounds so weird you would do--

Paula Beale: 00:29:44 --so it sounds like a boring project, but it's our job to make it interesting in an exhibit. So like examine, it was for survival right fishing Lake Michigan. It gradually turned into, it's a sport. It became a sport because looking at all the other industries that support sport fishing, a money maker, it's a money maker. You could say it's to protect the natural resource and that is absolutely part of it, but it was- It was very interesting to study these different perspectives and to hear the natives were like, "We've been around from time immemorial."

Paula Beale: 00:30:18 The white fishers are like, "Hey, I'm a sixth generation fishermen and the state is cutting me out of my ability to make a living and pass it onto my kids."

Winnie Frost: 00:30:27 How do you think Native Americans feel?

Paula Beale: 00:30:29 It was just like, "I'm all in. At this point, I'm all in." But I'm realizing this is soft money, right? I knew that I'm not going to work at that museum forever. I wanted some of those projects. I loved those projects. I looked, at the time, it was the American Association of Museums job postings, and I saw a job at Harpers Ferry. It was an exhibit planner. I didn't know what Harpers Ferry Center was.

Paula Beale: 00:30:59 I knew National Park Service, but at that point, I don't even know--I may have been to one. I couldn't even tell you what they were, one or two national parks in my life. I went to my professor, Dr. Chiarappa. I said, "Dr. Chiarappa, would you know Harpers Ferry Center?" He did. He was very familiar. He was familiar with HABS/HAER. Now, he for years when he lived in New Jersey, he was working on restoring a schooner. He worked very closely with HABS/HAER, and he said, "Yeah. I know Denver Service Center. They are these two centers for the National Park Service."

- Paula Beale: 00:31:34 He said, "But Paula, it's really hard to get into these centers." He's like, "You could put in your application, I'm just letting you know don't get your hopes up for this."
- Winnie Frost: 00:31:44 This is a federal job that, it's not soft money.
- Paula Beale: 00:31:46 None of that really dawned on me. I didn't know. It's just like, "It sounded interesting." Exhibits and all of these different places because I was already like, I had like, I'd taken the bait, and so I'll explore this, however, by the time I've read the job announcement and, again, this is old school. I'm not even reading this online. I'm seeing this in a hardcopy newsletter from the American Association of Museums. The application was due in three days.
- Paula Beale: 00:32:16 At that point, you had to submit your transcripts. I had to contact all of my schools, FedEx it in one day. At the time, I've spent a fortune to have all this done. Then, it was a complicated process. It's--just to submit the application and this was not online, like it's pretty simple now online, did it all, okay. I mean, you have to write your KSAs, I spent a day probably on a seven-page document for this--
- Winnie Frost: 00:32:44 But you love writing.
- Paula Beale: 00:32:45 It all worked out. Right.
- Winnie Frost: 00:32:47 It was a good project for you.
- Paula Beale: 00:32:47 It worked out.
- Winnie Frost: 00:32:49 A personal project.
- Paula Beale: 00:32:50 Right. So, I've submitted it, but I will say, unlike today, where it may be months and months until you hear something. I'm sitting there in the office, Kristin is sitting beside me and I get a call and, "Hi, this is Mary Herbert with the National Park Service Harpers Ferry Center, you applied for this job."
- Paula Beale: 00:33:08 I look over at Kristin, I'm like, "Its Harpers Ferry Center." Her eyes become huge like, "What?" She runs out and tells her husband, Michael, and they're like, "Okay. We'll give you space. We'll give you space." She called, "Yeah. We saw your application and thought it was really interesting." She said, "We think it would be good if you came out to the

Center just to see what it is because we know you would be moving from a distance and to see if this is something that's a good fit for you."

- Paula Beale: 00:33:38 I said, "Well, yeah. I'd absolutely be interested." She said, "Yeah. If you could come out"; we made a date. But the more I sat on it, the more I thought, "Is this a job interview? What is this?" I called her assistant, David J., David [Javier].
- Winnie Frost: 00:33:54 Oh my.
- Paula Beale: 00:33:55 David, I will never forget. David said, "Well, Paula, this job is yours to screw up let's just say that." Because I'm like, "Is it an interview?" It was. I flew out and was like blown away. My parents even got the atlas out and my dad was like, "Where is it?" He's looking at West Virginia. I'm like, "Keep going. Keep going. It's--" There it was finally on the atlas as far east as you could go.
- Paula Beale: 00:34:25 Yeah. I flew out and I'll never forget the interview because Neil Mackay, and at his retirement he said, "You know I'll never forget you at the interview, you had a purple and black sweater on. Don't ask me why I remember people's clothing." But Neil Mackay, Cindy Darr. Cindy was such a snazzy dresser. I'll just--Cindy had her skirt on, her heels, just a snazzy dresser and Mary Herbert and they showed me around.
- Paula Beale: 00:34:50 They brought me into Mary's corner office and just asking me a series of questions, but it was not intimidating at all because I felt like I really loved what I was doing, and so you love talking about it.
- Winnie Frost: 00:35:03 They're not intimidating people.
- Paula Beale: 00:35:04 No. No. They were so warm.
- Winnie Frost: 00:35:07 They're very engaging.
- Paula Beale: 00:35:07 They were so warm and just engaging and I felt welcomed. Cindy kind of emphasizing, "We really want new people with new ideas so don't feel like it's conforming to with the NPS. There's an NPS culture for sure but we want to hear what your ideas are as well." Neil asked me about an

evaluation because I've done an evaluation on an exhibit we were doing for a lighthouse.

- Paula Beale: 00:35:30 I said, "Well, I did a front-end evaluation." Neil said, "Wait. Hold up there, you know what front-end evaluation is?"
- Winnie Frost: 00:35:35 I know. I would have said the same thing.
- Paula Beale: 00:35:37 Yeah. It was just like, "Yeah." I said, "But, you know what? I kind of just did this on my own and we wrote the questions up." I said--
- Winnie Frost: 00:35:44 That sealed the deal.
- Paula Beale: 00:35:45 Yeah. Well, and we talked about it. I said, "The biggest thing we learned is people thought that individuals actually lived in that little bitty lighthouse. They had no idea that it's eight feet in diameter." I loved the interview and by the end of the interview they were giving me recommendations on where to live.
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:02 Oh my.
- Paula Beale: 00:36:03 It was like, I think it went really well. Then, in hindsight, at the time, Harpers Ferry Center was hiring--[inaudible] were rebuilding I think at the time and they were hiring three exhibit planners at the time.
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:14 What year was that, Paula?
- Paula Beale: 00:36:15 I was hired in April of 2000. It was Lisa Royce, Polly, and myself. They were both hired I think as a 12. You know how you find these things out later. They were able to bring on one more person. They hired Lisa and they hired Polly. It was a 9, 11, 12. They were able to bring me in the budget. They were able to do it-
- Winnie Frost: 00:36:42 They could accommodate a nine.
- Paula Beale: 00:36:43 They could accommodate that nine and I look back and I'm like, "Thank goodness they did." I'm like, "I don't have to be your top interview. I'm just..." I look back, I'm like, "I'm just so grateful." When they hired me too, it's just like, I feel like I've been so lucky. I was hired as a 9, 11, 12. I believe hired--brought in as you should be brought in,

because as a nine, they were really true to what the nine is, and Neil Mackay was my mentor.

- Winnie Frost: 00:37:08 Wow.
- Paula Beale: 00:37:09 I mean to this day, Neil has taught things till the day he retired last week. It's like I'm always learning from Neil. I was just like would really shadow Neil and Chris. Chris Dearing was a designer. He'd been there for two years or two or three years at the time. I really partnered up with them and would shadow with them. One of our first jobs was new exhibits out at Sagamore Hill.
- Paula Beale: 00:37:33 I would enter data into the database--
- Winnie Frost: 00:37:35 Okay. First of all, you were hired as--
- Paula Beale: 00:37:38 I was hired as an exhibit planner, which was a ladder, a 9, 11, 12.
- Winnie Frost: 00:37:43 What does the exhibit planner do?
- Paula Beale: 00:37:45 Right. So the exhibit planner, you can do some in-house work and you can do contracting work as a COR or contracting officers representative.
- Winnie Frost: 00:37:52 Great. Thank you.
- Paula Beale: 00:37:53 Yeah. I did, as a nine, largely in-house work, which I was thrilled to do. Loved it. But as a nine, they also said, "We're going to give you a couple of smaller contracting jobs like very appropriate to the grade." That's when I did some evaluation contracts. I look back as a nine and I like I couldn't have had a better time as a GS-9. They also sent me to training. I went to conferences. I had training.
- Paula Beale: 00:38:23 I saw more places in the United States my first year that I ever thought I would in my life. My parents were amazed. It was back in the day I sent postcards. They sent me out to shadow with others. I went out to Manzanar. I'd never seen the Pacific Ocean and I'm meeting former Japanese American internees.
- Winnie Frost: 00:38:42 Perfect for you.

- Paula Beale: 00:38:44 They sent me to Selma to Montgomery and I'm meeting the people who crossed over on the bridge. I'm just like--Bob Vance who's standing there in these photos by Martin Luther King. I'm just like my head is spinning my first year like, "I just won the lottery." I couldn't believe my opportunity. I still feel that way. I still feel like, "Sure, there are bumps along the road, you know?" I still feel that way. Just so lucky and honored--
- Winnie Frost: 00:39:12 You just got a big ounce of adrenaline going here girl--
- Paula Beale: 00:39:16 Oh yeah. Oh no.
- Winnie Frost: 00:39:19 --with the excitement of it, I love it. It's so wonderful.
- Paula Beale: 00:39:21 That first year just hired as a nine and there's mentorship. Bumped up to an 11 right after that. Now, they're giving me, I'm still doing in-house work, to understand because I feel like to then be able to do some contract work, you got to understand what you're asking the contractors to do and the Park Service has a process and I love it because on my previous job, I didn't have a database.
- Paula Beale: 00:39:44 I had nothing like that set up. It was me just trying to keep track of all these paper documents, and I came to the Park Service and David Guiney had done so much work on the museum exhibit planner, the FileMaker Pro database. I was blown away by it. It's like, "Oh my gosh." It was intuitive. David was right there. I could ask him questions. It was an easy way to organize all of your information within your fingertips, at your fingertips.
- Paula Beale: 00:40:12 I didn't have to spend 10% of my day looking for information. It was right there. I really kind of became trained up in the database and how that works, but then also going to meetings where you're leading planning sessions and trying to work with parks to understand, what are your goals? What do you want visitors to walk away with from this exhibit? Doing research to finishing up a Sagamore Hill exhibit, finding images, helping to write text, all the things that an exhibit planner does. In addition to then working my foray into contracting was being the COR for an evaluation contract, where we work with Harris Shettel for the Manzanar exhibit.

- Paula Beale: 00:40:56 The Japanese-American internment camp and that was amazing because we worked with, again, Harris Shettel who's really kind of a father, the father to evaluation. Again, I read Harris's books when I was- In no other job would I have the opportunity other than for the National Park Service to have access to that. He was an amazing man. I learned so much from working with Harris Shettel.
- Paula Beale: 00:41:24 We worked together, set up, we talked about, well, what is this front-end evaluation going to be about? We wanted to know, what do people know about internment, World War II? What do they want to know? Really kind of studying visitors to make sure that exhibits then are going to be reflective of that or exhibits are going to be responsive to that.
- Paula Beale: 00:41:45 Part of that first trip and, again, this is my first trip seeing the Pacific Ocean so I'm like overwhelmed. We set up interviews with Los Angeles Unified School District. I think that's what it's called. Biggest school district in the country and we set up interviews on campus. You've got diversity there. There it seems real diversity and that's what we were after too. We wanted to hear from kids.
- Paula Beale: 00:42:11 What do kids that age know? Because we wanted these exhibits to appeal to kids too. Again, that's like as my GS-9 level, then they're bumping me up to the 11, and ultimately, to the 12 where there's still a healthy mix of doing some because I had such a respect for doing in-house work with the combination. I think you have to do that to kind of maintain expertise and understand and being able to work and understand contractors, what contractors are going through.
- Winnie Frost: 00:42:38 And kind of help with leading that process so that it reflects also the National Park Service mission and the stories that the way they want to tell it.
- Paula Beale: 00:42:49 Exactly.
- Winnie Frost: 00:42:51 But regarding all this, at that time when you were the 9, then the 11, and then the 12, you were in a division, is that correct?
- Paula Beale: 00:43:00 Right. As I mentioned Mary Herbert. Mary Herbert led the division and she's still--

- Winnie Frost: 00:43:05 It was the division, what was it?
- Paula Beale: 00:43:06 It was Exhibits. It was just the Division of Exhibits and Mary led that division, and so at the time. Let's say you had an exhibit project that had a film, Mary would then work with Brian Jones. Brian Jones led the AV Division. We would kind of negotiate how much money would go to Brian's group and a lot of times Mary, I think had some control over that, but it was a collaborative effort. Mary was one of those people who I got to know her after a while and learned that she was a single mom. She raised five kids and she was a model for me.
- Paula Beale: 00:43:45 She was just, I really looked up to Mary because Mary was one tough cookie too. I didn't want to cross Mary, but I knew with Mary, I also knew though I could go to her if I had any problem. In a hat, I respect Mary because she hired me. I think she took a chance on me. I'm some young kid out of graduate school and they took a chance on me and ultimately, Mary's was the one who signed the dotted line to do the hiring. Yeah. Mary ran that division.
- Winnie Frost: 00:44:16 In the division, there were different groups, right?
- Paula Beale: 00:44:20 Right. You'd your group of planners. We call ourselves, we were categorized, classified as staff curators at the time because we did do some in-house work, but we did not work actively to curate a collection, for instance, that really fell under the purview of parks, but we wanted to know what their collection was. We're not going to preserve it, we're just going to say, "Can this be an exhibit? Can it not?"
- Paula Beale: 00:44:42 Yeah. You had planners, you had your designers, and you had your producers. Those were the three kind of main categories.
- Winnie Frost: 00:44:49 Was there a lead for each project?
- Paula Beale: 00:44:52 Yeah. I mean I think that we probably at the time didn't necessarily say, "The project lead will be--" You knew who the project lead was though, and if it was a project where it was contracted, whoever the COR was on the project was considered the project lead. But back in the day, when we had more staff, you had a full team. So, just because you had one person who could be the COR for the project, I



think at some point, we kind of had this shift where we were always media specialists, and then referred to as CORs.

- Paula Beale: 00:45:25 We're trying to get back to, and I know I'm jumping ahead, trying to get back to know we're media specialists first and foremost, right? Who happened to also be able to COR. But back then I feel like you had these full teams so that COR is not alone. It can't be and that's partly why parks want to come to Harpers Ferry because you're going to get a team of experts, not one individual who I know exhibit planning, but I, at some point, in this exhibit planning design process, I need a designer to really look at everything for the technical aspects as well as just--
- Winnie Frost: 00:45:57 The fabric--installation.
- Paula Beale: 00:45:58 Absolutely. Right. You're going to have the producer too, and it's the team that's always kind of providing review comments and it's not just you alone as the COR on the project. I felt like we definitely had that collaboration and that teamwork.
- Winnie Frost: 00:46:11 Everybody sat in the same area?
- Paula Beale: 00:46:13 Oh yeah. Yeah. I've been a basement dweller my entire career--
- Winnie Frost: 00:46:16 You have been--
- Paula Beale: 00:46:16 --at HFC for 20 years.
- Winnie Frost: 00:46:17 Oh, that's the garden level.
- Paula Beale: 00:46:19 Garden level, regardless.
- Winnie Frost: 00:46:20 The garden my dear.
- Paula Beale: 00:46:21 But it's okay. They redesigned and the lights coming in so it's all good.
- Winnie Frost: 00:46:25 Okay. Now, you're a 12. You're having the time of your life and you got a great division, Division of Exhibits, and then what happens?

Paula Beale: 00:46:35 Then eventually, we reorganized by region. We had a regional realignment in 2010--

Winnie Frost: 00:46:42 But before that there were a few other--

Paula Beale: 00:46:45 --and even before that we had project management.

Winnie Frost: 00:46:46 Did we have that--Aiming for Excellence--

Paula Beale: 00:46:47 Oh. Oh. The Aiming for Excellence? Yes. We did. Oh I'm skipping lots of chunks of history, Winnie. Yes. We did. We had a period of time where it was like, "Hey, let's reorganize." I think part of that and I could be wrong. This could be revisionist history right now. I think part of the whole Aiming for Excellence purpose is basically have a better run organization. That would be part of it.

Paula Beale: 00:47:16 I recall some things where questions would come from the parks regarding budget and we couldn't give the answers or budget was already spent. It was like, I've always in my mind saw it as partly, how do we get to a place where in a sense it's better managed?

Winnie Frost: 00:47:35 Good point.

Paula Beale: 00:47:35 I mean that's part of it. I know there was more to it, and so Aiming for Excellence was a very big endeavor. Winnie, you would know more than I would how long that endeavor lasted. But I recall lots of all-employees staff meetings. Yeah. Lots of all-employee staff meetings and an outside firm being brought in to bring the group together. We went through a series of exercises. I was on a series of committees as were others.

Paula Beale: 00:48:01 Then, it resulted in a pilot team. Right, Winnie?

Winnie Frost: 00:48:03 Oh yes. That's right. Pilot team.

Paula Beale: 00:48:04 Winnie, and this is where one of my other mentors and role models, Ms. Winnie Frost, comes into play.

Winnie Frost: 00:48:10 I'm not in that category.

Paula Beale: 00:48:10 Oh no. Oh, Winnie. I have so many good stories with you, Winnie. Yes, you are. Winnie, you were in a leadership position. I looked at any women who were in leadership

positions. I mean, I think you can be a leader in any job that you're at but you were in like the leadership position. I absolutely looked to you as a role model.

- Winnie Frost: 00:48:30 Well, it kind of was a precursor to project management kind of system where it was--
- Paula Beale: 00:48:35 Right. Experimenting. Right. So that one--
- Winnie Frost: 00:48:37 But, yes. Contracting officer on our team.
- Paula Beale: 00:48:39 Which was hugely important.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:48:42 Very important.
- Winnie Frost: 00:48:42 It was wonderful.
- Paula Beale: 00:48:44 It was wonderful--
- Winnie Frost: 00:48:44 I know.
- Paula Beale: 00:48:45 --to have that access in contracting was there and as part of your decision-making and the communication was seamless.
- Winnie Frost: 00:48:51 We met every week and he would come to all the meetings.
- Paula Beale: 00:48:54 Right. One of the projects that we had for the--so the pilot team was meant to let's see how this project management system works. Let's have a project manager, and then we'll have a representative from each media type, and then we'll run a project through that. Let's experiment with that and see how it works.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:49:11 Who else was on the team?
- Paula Beale: 00:49:12 Michele Hartley was on the team representing AV. Well, with--
- Winnie Frost: 00:49:16 Caitlyn.
- Paula Beale: 00:49:17 Yeah. Was Caitlyn on it too? She was a planner.
- Winnie Frost: 00:49:21 Yeah.

Paula Beale: 00:49:21 She was a planner. We had to have a producer. Yeah. I can't remember--

Winnie Frost: 00:49:25 Well, the only producer we had really was Susie Hanes.

Paula Beale: 00:49:27 Okay. Maybe that was Susie. I was representing Exhibits. Did we have a designer, Winnie?

Winnie Frost: 00:49:34 Well, what I did was I complained about it that we didn't have a designer--

Paula Beale: 00:49:38 Yeah. That we needed one.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:38 --that we need one. We got Susan Farkas.

Paula Beale: 00:49:39 Okay. Yeah. That's right Susan Farkas was on--boy, this was a while ago.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:45 Yeah.

Paula Beale: 00:49:45 This is kind of tapping into the memory well here.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:47 It's like 2006 or so.

Paula Beale: 00:49:49 Yeah. But one of my memories, Winnie, yes, it was because Glacier was one of our projects. I loved going out to Glacier with Winnie. Lots of great stores there.

Winnie Frost: 00:49:58 Oh wonderful.

Paula Beale: 00:49:59 But the one that I love is that I was seven months pregnant with my son. Ethan was born in 2006, and we went out to Glacier, and you're going to do new exhibits for the St. Mary Visitor Center. You get to know the park. They take you out. We went on this hike, which is kind of up a mountain, there's no kind of, you either are or you aren't. We were up the mountain and they had, they wanted to have a railing system to hang on to but it was a chain that they bolted to the side of the mountain and the walking path was very narrow. I'm like, I exercised throughout my pregnancy--

Winnie Frost: 00:50:32 She would go out in the morning in the dark at St. Mary's and go jogging. I said, "What about the bears? What are you doing?"

Paula Beale: 00:50:39 Yeah. I know. Poor Winnie. We were on this hike and I'll just never forget, Winnie is like, "Okay. Hike is over. We got a pregnant lady; we're going down this mountain." She was just so--

Winnie Frost: 00:50:50 I was beyond [inaudible]--

Paula Beale: 00:50:51 Winnie was so sweet.

Winnie Frost: 00:50:52 --if anything happened, my god.

Paula Beale: 00:50:55 Winnie was just so sweet. Winnie was in charge and Winnie got things done as a project manager. If you had a problem, you needed something, you went to Winnie. Winnie was the bulldog who would get it done. In a nice, sweet way you always brought chocolates to every one of our meetings.

Winnie Frost: 00:51:09 Well, you're so lovely too--

Paula Beale: 00:51:09 So I learned--

Winnie Frost: 00:51:10 But this is about you. I do remember when you finally said, "I'm going to have this baby. I don't know what I can do on the Glacier project."

Paula Beale: 00:51:19 I know.

Winnie Frost: 00:51:20 Remember, we're having so many problems with the native tribes, the Blackfeet--

Paula Beale: 00:51:24 Yeah. Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:51:25 --in particular.

Paula Beale: 00:51:25 But it was worth it in the end because the exhibits came together. I think the park, and that's what you do with the exhibits. Sometimes you use it as a bridge and like we don't like that because it interrupts our schedule, but at the end of the day, it's an awesome thing that the park can use that project as a bridge to tribes and to build relationships and that's what Glacier did.

Winnie Frost: 00:51:43 Yeah. It was a lovely project. I think it was a beautiful outcome.

Paula Beale: 00:51:46 Yeah. The film, the video part that Chuck oversaw was awesome.

Winnie Frost: 00:51:50 Yeah. We had Chuck do that. That's right.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:51:52 Didn't you get an award for that?

Winnie Frost: 00:51:52 I think we did.

Paula Beale: 00:51:55 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:51:56 Yeah. I think we did.

Paula Beale: 00:51:57 One of the best moments I have was taking my family out there later. My kids were with me and my in-laws, and so it was just fun to be able to, because we don't always get to see the products, you know the exhibits installed. Then, my kids seeing all of the visitors interacting with it and learning and so I love that.

Winnie Frost: 00:52:13 How fantastic. You just brought up an excellent point how we don't ever get to go see the product. I still haven't seen- I've just seen pictures that people have brought back but we never see the product. You, Betsy, in Publications, you get to see the product.

Betsy Ehrlich: 00:52:32 I get to see the product.

Paula Beale: 00:52:34 Right, and we're trying, we're asking contractors to professionally photograph or if they're openings, so we just had the Jimmy Carter exhibit open up in Plains, Georgia, the high school there, and we could go to that. So, there are some we can go back to and who's going to miss an opportunity to meet Jimmy and Roslyn Carter?

Winnie Frost: 00:52:50 No. Right.

Paula Beale: 00:52:50 I wasn't there. I wasn't part of that job, but it was pretty special.

Winnie Frost: 00:52:55 Yeah. No kidding. Yeah.

Paula Beale: 00:52:56 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:52:57 Those are unique moments but usually that's if the park has the funding to support that at the end I guess.

- Paula Beale: 00:53:03 Right. And local projects, we definitely try to go back to some local--I tend to go, we take our kids once a year or twice a year on bigger vacations and we always go to a national park, and so sometimes we're able to go to places where we've worked on projects and so those are special moments, especially as my kids get older.
- Paula Beale: 00:53:25 When we went to Sequoia, which is one of my favorite parks. Chad worked on the exhibits at Sequoia. This was maybe two years ago. My kids were 11 and 8, and we're there and his exhibits even though they were 18 years old, of course, they probably reprinted the panels, but they didn't change the design. The design was still--
- Winnie Frost: 00:53:47 Aren't they porcelain?
- Paula Beale: 00:53:47 I'm not sure.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 00:53:48 I think so.
- Paula Beale: 00:53:51 They had a black background, and so I think it's somewhere in the sun. I thought that there was some fading, so they replaced some but I'm not sure about that, Winnie. But we got there, and we went to--it was like the General Grant tree and there's one, there's a wayside there. At the time, all of the--it was filled with, surrounded by international visitors. You didn't hear any English being spoken in the lot.
- Paula Beale: 00:54:13 They're pointing to the wayside, and then pointing up to the tree and they're having conversation about. My son, it was like one of the best moments. My son said, "Dad, that's your wayside." Chad was like, "Yes. It's the wayside." He goes, "Look at those people learning from the wayside." He goes, "They're not speaking English." He's like, "They can understand your wayside," because graphics were so important.
- Paula Beale: 00:54:37 He's like, "They understand it." My son wasn't even amazed by Sequoia at that particular moment. It was that his dad works on that wayside and all these visitors are like getting like helpful information from his wayside. That was an awesome moment--

Winnie Frost: 00:54:52 Yeah. That is really awesome. Is that the one where he shows different things and compares the Sequoia to the Washington Monument--

Paula Beale: 00:55:00 Exactly. Yeah. Then there's another one.

Winnie Frost: 00:55:02 Statue of Liberty.

Paula Beale: 00:55:02 That's exactly it, Winnie. Then, there was another one. It's want to climb a Sequoia? And it's from the bottom- so it's telling you, right? Well, guess what? You'll be climbing and it compares the height to different things. It also compares the volume of the tree like it could carry this much, let's say fuel to get you around the world four times. It just made these great analogies and it spoke to a lot of people.

Winnie Frost: 00:55:22 Such a learning moment. Yeah.

Paula Beale: 00:55:24 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 00:55:25 Yeah. I mean we all know that, that wayside, we all enjoyed it even at Harpers Ferry as well as out in the field.

Paula Beale: 00:55:31 Right.

Winnie Frost: 00:55:33 You were telling me, you would take your family to parks. I remember you took your dad to Zion, was it?

Paula Beale: 00:55:39 Oh my gosh.

Winnie Frost: 00:55:41 Before he passed away?

Paula Beale: 00:55:42 Yeah. So, my dad, he was diagnosed with cancer and was terminal. He reached a point where he felt good and we said to the doctor. We said, "Well, we want to take him on a trip somewhere, is now a good time?" The oncologist is like, "Absolutely, take him now." And as I said my dad just working-class family of 16. I think my dad would have excelled in college, but college was just never an option for him. They never even discussed it. Didn't ever traveled, and so, I said, "Dad..." He'd never been west of Mississippi.

Paula Beale: 00:56:16 I said, "Dad, you want to go on a family trip?" It would just be about my dad. It would be my mom and my dad and only my siblings. So, no spouses. We all had spouses, we



all had kids, leave them home and it's just our family trip. He didn't even hesitate a beat. He's like, "Yes." Then, it fell on me. But I'm okay. I'm a planner. I'm like, "We're to make this trip happen."

- Paula Beale: 00:56:41 I had a brother flying in from Chicago, my sister and other brother from Dayton and Columbus, and I'm coming in from Virginia. We did the grand circle. We had everyone fly into Phoenix. My brother had a condo in Phoenix. We then went to Grand Canyon. You can imagine like, I mean--
- Winnie Frost: 00:56:59 Because he had never been on any of these--
- Paula Beale: 00:57:01 No. My dad had never really been to a national park--
- Winnie Frost: 00:57:03 That's what I thought you told me.
- Paula Beale: 00:57:06 When he helped move me into my place here, and then he saw Harpers Ferry, he visited the park and he's getting to know kind of what I do too, and he was just in awe. I love to see my dad like he has the same appreciation for all these places that I do and I--
- Winnie Frost: 00:57:20 He's the one that took you--
- Paula Beale: 00:57:21 Yeah. Yeah. It's like--
- Winnie Frost: 00:57:22 --when you were little.
- Paula Beale: 00:57:22 Right. I get to work for these places and save these, like help to save these places and make other people appreciate these places to save them, right?
- Winnie Frost: 00:57:30 Yeah.
- Paula Beale: 00:57:31 It's like NPS mission. My dad's on board. He is just gung-ho on board.
- Winnie Frost: 00:57:36 Any of those parks that you went to, did you, had you worked on any of them?
- Paula Beale: 00:57:40 Eventually. We went in 2010. It was May of 2010. My dad died in September of that year. I had been working on new exhibits at Bryce Canyon, but they were not installed yet, but I could speak to them and tell them, "Hey, see this area

in the visitor center, Dad? See all these people lined up, we're putting new exhibits in so that the exhibits can help kind of reduce the burden on the ranger and they can, people can--" Even though we know parks love the rangers and want to all make that personal contact, but the intention is to help visitors with orientation so they may not have to wait in line so long to visit.

- Paula Beale: 00:58:17 My dad is getting to know to that. Yeah. We went to Grand Canyon and that was like a life-altering moment where you realize you're really nothing in the timescale, you're just a blip. We took him up to Zion, which I mean these are all my favorite parks for lots of reasons but a lot of reason is going back to that family trip. We then went to Bryce Canyon, spent some time, spent a block of our time at Zion. Went to Bryce Canyon.
- Paula Beale: 00:58:47 Then, my dad, you know where I'm going with this, having worked for a cement company all of his life always wanted to see the Hoover Dam. We looped around and we stopped at the Hoover Dam--
- Winnie Frost: 00:58:59 Wow.
- Paula Beale: 00:59:00 --and that was a life-altering moment for my dad too. At the time, they were still building the bridge. There's the bridge that goes over and we were just in awe. We were in awe of the Hoover Dam, don't get me wrong, but that bridge was amazing. You could see people up there working, like little ants. Like the size of little ants just kind of working up there. It was amazing.
- Paula Beale: 00:59:19 We went on the tour. My dad was amazed. Had never been to Vegas, we did Vegas. We just made this like--
- Winnie Frost: 00:59:26 Wow. Your dad had a lot of stamina.
- Paula Beale: 00:59:29 He did. No. He was doing great. He was doing great. It was just like great family time. My brother who's a graphic designer afterwards, I was keeping a journal. Right before I went on the trip, Chad was very sweet, and he gave me--
- Winnie Frost: 00:59:42 Chad's your husband.

Paula Beale: 00:59:42 Yeah. Chad gave me a journal and a pen and said, "Here, you want to--" I'm going to cry. "You want to write down memories from this trip."

Winnie Frost: 00:59:49 Oh dear.

Paula Beale: 00:59:50 That's what I did. I wrote down, and some of them are hilarious. I wrote down memories from the trip and came back and my brother said, "Hey, do you mind sharing your journal with me?" I mailed the journal to him. John, my brother came back with these books that were The Laney's Westward Vacation.

Winnie Frost: 01:00:12 Oh my goodness.

Paula Beale: 01:00:13 He had all of the photos and there were quotes from the journal, documenting what we did each day and he made copies. They were leather-bound books for everyone in the family. It was just like we talk and--I can't believe it's been 10 years, but we talk about that to this day.

Winnie Frost: 01:00:26 Absolutely.

Paula Beale: 01:00:27 Yeah. I loved that the family, my family, I think largely because of my job has a huge appreciation for the parks. They had it before, but I don't even think that they knew the scope of the National Park Service and all of the parks that fall under that.

Winnie Frost: 01:00:42 I'm sure they call you whenever they want to go and see something.

Paula Beale: 01:00:44 Oh yeah. I'm their in. I'm their in. I don't know everything, but I'll get the information.

Winnie Frost: 01:00:49 Let's get back because, I guess we got to keep moving here. Let's get back to now the pilot team's over and suddenly, we're in the whole project management kind of system or way of operating--

Paula Beale: 01:01:02 Right. So, in 2010 then, I was assigned to the Intermountain Regional team. We're organized by regions and each region has its own project manager, a project specialist, and then media expert representing all the media types. I was with that team and Justin Radford, who was also a very big influence for me because I just respected

how he was as a supervisor with me, that I knew I could go to him with anything, and that he had high respect for high quality projects, high quality products, and customer service did mean something to him.

- Paula Beale: 01:01:41 I think really throughout my career at Harpers Ferry, that I think that's a common theme, a common thread for the people who I've admired and worked with that really stands out to me is customer service is paramount. I was on that team--
- Winnie Frost: 01:01:57 And follow through with that customer service.
- Paula Beale: 01:01:59 Yeah. Absolutely. That's from 2010, and also, I would watch Justin. I know he had, there were some problems that came up, and then you watch, and you see how is he going to handle the problems, never in a vacuum. It was always bringing people together. That was me kind of learning like, I admired that in a project manager position that you don't have to be the expert, but you have to know enough to know when you don't know it and bring the experts together.
- Winnie Frost: 01:02:28 That's an excellent formula.
- Paula Beale: 01:02:30 I was on that team from 2010 until 2014. It was--
- Winnie Frost: 01:02:36 As an exhibit planner.
- Paula Beale: 01:02:37 As an exhibit planner. I was an exhibit planner for 14 years. One day then Justin pulled--this was right before a staff meeting. He pulled me into the room before all the other staff arrives. He said, "Well, Paula, I'm taking another job." Justin was going to move on to the American Battle Monuments Commission.
- Winnie Frost: 01:02:55 In Paris.
- Paula Beale: 01:02:56 In Paris. Tough life. He said, "So, we want you to be the acting project manager for Intermountain Region. You know the projects. We want you to be the acting." He said, "I'm pretty much, I have the paperwork ready." He said, "Paula, because I'm asking you to do this because I know you won't volunteer to do it yourself." He said, "But I know you can do it."

- Paula Beale: 01:03:18 He's like, "You can do it." You know what? He was right. If I were to this day an exhibit planner, I would still be happy. I know that I would be happy because I loved the work. We're just so lucky hit the reset button for every new project, new team, new topic and that keeps you here for years. I think that's why we keep so many people at HFC.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:03:38 It's a really good point.
- Winnie Frost: 01:03:38 Yeah. That is a very good point.
- Paula Beale: 01:03:39 Yes. So, I kind of felt like that was a defining moment for me because it was just like, "Wow. I'm being asked to--" I didn't want to say step up but do something that might be out of my comfort zone, even though I'm familiar with the projects, but there were lots of things I didn't have to do that a project manager does.
- Winnie Frost: 01:04:00 Mostly the budget, right?
- Paula Beale: 01:04:01 Oh yeah. Budget is a big one.
- Betsy Ehrlich: 01:04:02 There's math involved.
- Paula Beale: 01:04:02 There's math I know, I know basic math Betsy, basic.
- Winnie Frost: 01:04:02 Good point, Betsy.
- Paula Beale: 01:04:09 Yeah. Then, I became the acting and after the acting was over, they had advertised for the permanent position, which I applied, and I got the permanent position. From 2014 until today, but that's soon to change. I've been the project manager for Intermountain Region. Yeah.
- Paula Beale: 01:04:35 For Intermountain Region too, one of the first challenges I had was that was in April, every May we typically like Justin would go to the IMR office because a big role that you have is keeping relationships going with the regional office. It was their work session and you present all of HFC's projects. You'd give a status report and that's to the regional director and all the associate regional directors.
- Paula Beale: 01:04:59 I was named acting in April, and in May, you're on. It was just like that was a big defining moment for me because I was very nervous to do that. I mean who loves to speak publicly anyway, but then to speak with--I don't even want

to say faking any kind of authority because I was very honest with the group. Hey, I really studied. I took the time to study all of our projects. I knew mine. I didn't know all of the jobs. They were just Intermountain is awesome. I love the Intermountain Region. They're so warm and so welcoming.

- Paula Beale: 01:05:33 Because Justin, those were some big shoes to fill. I would never fill those shoes. I'm a different person. I had to kind of accept like I'm different from Justin and I'll do things in a different way. I've learned some things from Justin for sure, but I'm not going to be him. The Intermountain Region loved Justin. You kind of stepping into it already feeling a little less than and you didn't have the experience, but I just kind of plowed ahead and I feel like I did the work, and to me, the work was the homework on knowing what is the status of jobs and so--
- Winnie Frost: 01:06:01 And the money.
- Paula Beale: 01:06:03 Oh first and foremost--
- Paula Beale: 01:06:04 That's the biggie. The biggie is the money.
- Winnie Frost: 01:06:05 That's the biggie.
- Paula Beale: 01:06:06 They want to make sure you're going to obligate and obligate on time. We're going to spend our money.
- Winnie Frost: 01:06:10 Give them the right expectation of when the job is going to be done.
- Paula Beale: 01:06:13 Exactly. Right.
- Winnie Frost: 01:06:14 So they can their opening ceremonies.
- Paula Beale: 01:06:14 Right. That was a big confidence booster for me that I faced it. I faced my fear and like, "Okay. I can do this." It sure does help when your team is awesome. Had an absolutely awesome team. That for a project manager, I mean you're really nothing without the team--
- Winnie Frost: 01:06:34 Absolutely.
- Paula Beale: 01:06:35 --and so just they did it. I mean they did the work.

Winnie Frost: 01:06:38 I think it's a combo though if you totally respect what they bring to the team and that you can help facilitate it.

Paula Beale: 01:06:47 Yeah. My attitude as project manager is, I work for the team. My job is to make sure, because you're the media expert, you're why they come to HFC. They want media expertise. My job is to make sure you can do it and you have what you need, if there are problems, I'm here for you. Jobs will run on time. Sure. There's that. There's scope, schedule and budget, but it's the team and making sure you're in a good place and I work for you.

Paula Beale: 01:07:13 I think they need to know that I'm rolling my sleeves up and I will work as hard--I've always admired that in my own supervisors like if they're rolling their sleeves up, they're working as hard if not harder, you have buy-in, like you said.

Winnie Frost: 01:07:26 Right. You're listening and following through.

Paula Beale: 01:07:31 Yes.

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:07:31 Who was on your team?

Paula Beale: 01:07:33 We have Chris Dearing, who's Chris too from 2010, has always been on that team. He was the designer. At the time, Joyce Morris was the producer, and then Joyce left shortly after--actually, not shortly after. Joyce left in, gosh, maybe 2016, and then we brought Karen LaZurie on to fill that position, Anne Tibuola is the AV producer.

Winnie Frost: 01:07:57 Anne Tibuola?

Paula Beale: 01:07:59 Anne Tibuola. Yeah. Eric Epstein is the AV equipment specialist on the team. At the time, Mark Johnson. So, everybody had a planner, designer, producer, and Mark Johnson was the planner. You want to talk about a team--

Winnie Frost: 01:08:13 Yeah. No kidding.

Paula Beale: 01:08:14 --I mean, holy cow. That was a powerhouse team.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:17 That was a powerhouse team. Absolutely.

Paula Beale: 01:08:20 Intermountain was always really complimentary of me when I go on these trips and I would always emphasize-- throw up the pictures of the team members because--

Winnie Frost: 01:08:30 They would be working with them.

Paula Beale: 01:08:31 --if I look good to you now, it's because of them. They're doing the work. It was never lost on me.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:37 You got such a Catholic upbringing.

Paula Beale: 01:08:38 Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:38 My stars.

Paula Beale: 01:08:44 It's true. I was raised Catholic.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:46 I know. I'm hearing it loud and clear.

Paula Beale: 01:08:47 I have the Catholic guilt complex too. I've got it.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:49 That's what I mean.

Paula Beale: 01:08:51 Alive and strong. It's alive and strong.

Winnie Frost: 01:08:52 I'm sorry. I guess we're in a secular setting but--I'm sorry. I couldn't resist.

Paula Beale: 01:08:52 It's alright. I'm not a practicing Catholic to this day but I'm sorry, if you were raised a Catholic as I was from birth to like senior year of high school, it's like, it is ingrained in you. There are many good things I learned.

Winnie Frost: 01:09:13 Yes. There are. There are. Well, they're definitely coming out in everything you do. Did you ever go on any of those regional reviews with the--

Paula Beale: 01:09:21 Oh yeah. No. No.

Winnie Frost: 01:09:24 --and with Justin?

Paula Beale: 01:09:26 Yeah. Justin did that. Justin, that's one thing I really respected him as a supervisor and kind of like a leader, and that he really worked hard to build people up around him. It wasn't just get the project done, do this, it was, he would find ways to offer you opportunities to--



Winnie Frost: 01:09:46 Grow.

Paula Beale: 01:09:46 --to maybe grow. Right. If you want, if you chose, and so he would offer that. Chris and I would go on these regional reviews, we would present to the region when we had to go to the film and advisory board. We would present those projects and Justin would sit back and listen and we were on.

Winnie Frost: 01:10:05 Do you have a favorite project? You better say Glacier.

Paula Beale: 01:10:09 I love--you know what? That's definitely one of my favorite parks and it involved everything.

Winnie Frost: 01:10:10 She was having a baby there.

Paula Beale: 01:10:17 No. Really. Glacier probably is absolutely one of my favorites. I do have to go back to one of--oh Lassen. Yeah. You know what? I do have to mention Lassen. Lassen is where we became engaged.

Winnie Frost: 01:10:31 Oh my stars.

Paula Beale: 01:10:31 We'll probably get into that later.

Winnie Frost: 01:10:33 Yes. I was going to say, "This afternoon we'll hear about Paula's other life here in the Center."

Paula Beale: 01:10:40 Yeah. But there's so many, as I said, I mean, I have seen so many places and I've been, one of the most awesome moments to me was going underneath the Lincoln Memorial. This was not for work. This was because I made a connection on a project when we did the World War II Memorial brochure, made a connection with the visitor services head--the chief--who was able to get me a parking spot for my family when we were visiting.

Paula Beale: 01:11:07 He said, "Do you want a Ranger to take you on a tour? We offer this. We can do that and gave us access underneath." My family thought I was a higher up after that in the program. I'm like, "No. I'm an exhibit planner. I just--" But this guy was just so nice and offered us these services. We went underneath the Lincoln Memorial. It's not lost on me that we have access to things that regular visitors just don't have access to.

Paula Beale: 01:11:37 It's really hard to pick just one. There's so many projects and so many places.

Winnie Frost: 01:11:41 Oh golly. You're so politically appropriate.

Paula Beale: 01:11:44 But it is. It's so true. The ones that really stand out to me are like those life defining moments when you're pregnant, right? Like where I was on some of these projects, but also some of the first projects like I ever went on. Seeing the Pacific Ocean, going to Manzanar--

Winnie Frost: 01:11:57 To Manzanar--

Paula Beale: 01:11:57 --and meeting the former internees. Meeting the people who crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. Gosh. Those are just amazing. Yeah. It's still today. I mean, you can hopefully hear this in me. I'm still amazed.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:14 Definitely.

Paula Beale: 01:12:15 I know I hit the lottery with the job. I look back because I look back at my dad's life and why, gosh, he drove a cement truck and you got up days when you did not want to go to work, you hated going to work. I don't hate coming to work. I'm like, we are so--I just feel so privileged.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:30 And I think it's a beautiful location.

Paula Beale: 01:12:32 My gosh. Yes. Oh my gosh. Who gets to go walk on the Appalachian Trail for their morning lunch.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:38 There you go.

Paula Beale: 01:12:38 I'm sorry.

Winnie Frost: 01:12:39 Their morning lunch?

Paula Beale: 01:12:40 Their lunch walk. Yeah. I have had morning lunches but--

Winnie Frost: 01:12:45 Paula, I hear that recently you also assumed an additional job, is that right?

Paula Beale: 01:12:53 Right. In 2018, I think it was October of 2018, the director, the new director of the Center, he had been hired--I think in May of '18. He asked me if I would act for Media

Development, to be the Acting Chief of Media Development.

- Winnie Frost: 01:13:10 Media Development, under them, what do you have these projects?
- Paula Beale: 01:13:14 Exactly, so whenever we mentioned--
- Winnie Frost: 01:13:14 Regionally aligned.
- Paula Beale: 01:13:15 --regional teams, and so underneath Media Development, you have your regional teams. At the time, because we were really challenged with staff and we continued to be, just capacity. I would remain the project manager for Intermountain, but we're getting close to naming another project manager as an acting until we can hire the permanent for that.
- Winnie Frost: 01:13:38 Ok.
- Paula Beale: 01:13:40 That's what I did until the job was advertised. I think the job--that was October of '18--job was advertised in November of '19. Did apply for the job and got the job. I think it was finalized in January. It's March--
- Winnie Frost: 01:13:55 January of this year?
- Paula Beale: 01:13:56 January of this year.
- Winnie Frost: 01:13:56 Oh okay.
- Paula Beale: 01:13:56 So it's very--so, I've been in an acting capacity and now, it's in the permanent position.
- Winnie Frost: 01:14:05 There you are where the former Cindy Darr, who hired you, helped hire you and now you're in her shoes. How about that--
- Paula Beale: 01:14:11 I'm glad to mention Cindy because Cindy's another, again, a role model who happens to be a woman, right? That I really look up to. Something I learned from Cindy, you try to take these lessons and these pieces, you take the good and the bad. I look at supervisors or people in leadership roles and what did I like that they do? What are some of the things I would never do that you know didn't appreciate?

Paula Beale: 01:14:39 And trying to just kind of like have a repository built up. I try to model the things that I really admired, and with Cindy Darr, just relationships matter to Cindy. Cindy had her finger on the pulse, life-work balance meant a lot to Cindy. She had an understanding that, you know what? If you are miserable at work, you're going to be miserable at home. Let's make that life-work balance and vice versa. Let's make that life-work balance work.

Paula Beale: 01:15:06 She really cared. You definitely got the sentence from Cindy that she cared about you. She wanted you, she worked for you. She wanted to make sure, what can I do for you to make something right? Do you need something? Do you need equipment? Do you need us to adjust your schedule? I absolutely got that from Cindy, and I admired her.

Winnie Frost: 01:15:28 That's a very good point. I thought we talked about that this afternoon in relationship to, having children and how the management did accommodations, but I think we can talk. Is that all right if we talk about that this afternoon?

Paula Beale: 01:15:39 Oh yeah. Absolutely. Yeah.

Winnie Frost: 01:15:41 Well, congratulations.

Paula Beale: 01:15:42 Yeah. Thank you.

Winnie Frost: 01:15:42 Do they have a project manager for the Intermountain Region?

Paula Beale: 01:15:47 We will. We'll probably have an acting, and then we're going to advertise for a permanent.

Winnie Frost: 01:15:50 Okay, so right now you're still going to--

Paula Beale: 01:15:51 Yes. Right now it's me.

Winnie Frost: 01:15:52 You're still doing that--

Paula Beale: 01:15:54 You know what though? I reached a point where I had to look at myself and say, "Am I serving Intermountain Region very well?" No. You feel like you're not doing a great job, maybe on both. It was time to be really honest with myself and say, "I need to--", because I didn't want to double up any other project managers, but I think that,

could I do a better job or project manager? A project manager could.

- Paula Beale: 01:16:18 That means, and again, we're a service center. How do you provide the best service? I just need to move that aside because--
- Winnie Frost: 01:16:25 Well, you know what happens with management. As soon as they see somebody that's really a hard worker, they give you more to do.
- Paula Beale: 01:16:30 Yeah. Brendan, the current director says, "It's the curse of competence."
- Winnie Frost: 01:16:33 It's the curse of competence. Very well said.
- Paula Beale: 01:16:37 Right.
- Winnie Frost: 01:16:37 That's a very good point. Well, you have a serious case of that.
- Paula Beale: 01:16:40 No. No. I'll say I am a hard worker. I mean, I've learned that from my mom and dad. We've had a lot of hard workers around Harpers Ferry.
- Winnie Frost: 01:16:49 Yes. Absolutely.
- Paula Beale: 01:16:50 I appreciate that. Right.
- Winnie Frost: 01:16:53 You mentioned staffing problems. Could you share anything about that?
- Paula Beale: 01:16:58 Oh yes. Definitely. It's one of the biggest challenges we have. It's part of the reason why I think I took the job. I just feel like Harpers Ferry Center is at this point, right now where it's kind of a breaking point where if we--we're losing more expertise than we're taking in. What is the mission of the Center? Interpretive media. Why do parks come to HFC when they may have a COR on staff? They come to HFC for media expertise.
- Paula Beale: 01:17:29 It takes time to find the media experts. You're not just going to lateral anybody in because they're available and they can COR. You have to take the time to advertise a job, to vet it, to really bring in talent and rebuild. It's a rebuilding period. I know that. It's not lost on me but it's a

rebuilding time in so many ways. But the biggest I think urgency right now is staffing and getting people because you're nothing without staff, right?

- Paula Beale: 01:18:01 You have to be smart about then the approach. Are you just going to load people up with projects again like you've done? Are you going to be smart about how you rebuild HFC? How are you going to manage differently now when you have the expertise? I was terrified. Don't get me wrong. Absolutely terrified to take the job, but I felt like I reached a point where I felt I had some experience here and I had something to offer and I have a work ethic, and I think it takes somebody who's going to work hard to rebuild and to bring the staff in, but I also have a respect for not working in a vacuum.
- Paula Beale: 01:18:36 I know how important it is. Well, I think when you're rebuilding that it isn't just you in a vacuum and making some decisions, but it's your experts at the table also saying, "Hey, they're on the hiring committee, they're on hiring panels that they're a part of bringing expertise back in."
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:53 Yes. Good point.
- Paula Beale: 01:18:53 I just felt like that's an important time right now.
- Winnie Frost: 01:18:57 Have you ever thought of, or maybe you already have done this is go back to where you went to grad school and see if they have new, fresh graduates maybe?
- Paula Beale: 01:19:07 Well, and that's something, when we talk about bringing people on. That's through FTEs, but that's the other avenue and I think that's part of the rebuilding and HFC is developing the internship program.
- Winnie Frost: 01:19:18 Exactly. Starting at the nine level.
- Paula Beale: 01:19:21 That is something that we're working on so we have--
- Winnie Frost: 01:19:22 Graduate degree [crosstalk]--
- Paula Beale: 01:19:24 --someone identified as taking on like through collateral duties, taking on those duties, but to have a system set up so that we already have an agreement with the university so that the student gets credit. We pay the student that we have

a process put in place just like waysides used to do years ago with the University of Cincinnati. We have a process put in place where it was totally a mutual agreement, in that we all benefit. That the intern is benefiting.

- Paula Beale: 01:19:51 It's actually getting some interns, some design work. Let's say if it's for design or planning work. But we are too and that we're getting work done. It's kind of like you have mutual benefits here.
- Winnie Frost: 01:20:01 And I think they bring [crosstalk]--
- Paula Beale: 01:20:02 It is something we're trying to set up.
- Winnie Frost: 01:20:03 --maybe some new fresh ideas and--
- Paula Beale: 01:20:05 Oh, absolutely. Oh yeah.
- Winnie Frost: 01:20:07 I'm sure you did a lot of that. Of course, you did a lot of that.
- Paula Beale: 01:20:09 In this summer we have, it's for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities internship and it's a program that's run through Washington, but it's already set up, which means it was easier to go through them where we're bringing two students in this summer.
- Winnie Frost: 01:20:24 Terrific.
- Paula Beale: 01:20:24 They're going to work on an actual exhibit project for Harpers Ferry Park doing a schematic design. They're working with our staff. It's mutual park benefit, but, and the nice thing is you could also do a direct hire authority through this.
- Winnie Frost: 01:20:37 Oh.
- Paula Beale: 01:20:39 [Crosstalk] if that works out.
- Winnie Frost: 01:20:40 That's really less cumbersome.
- Paula Beale: 01:20:41 I put that on the new director that we have who's really looking, and he's looking at ways knowing you can't just have FTEs, so we won't always be approved for the 60 positions we need, but you have to, as you mentioned, we need to look through internship potentials, look through the

experience employee workers program, which I think there's another title for that, but like looking through those different avenues.

- Paula Beale: 01:21:03 But it's not lost on anybody that if you do not have people, you do not have the expertise, right? That is a huge priority right now. Amongst many other things but that's something you work on every single day.
- Winnie Frost: 01:21:15 You do have approval to actually--
- Paula Beale: 01:21:18 We do. We just received approval but the biggest challenge that we have in the Park Service right now is the way that human resources is organized.
- Winnie Frost: 01:21:26 Yeah. I was going to ask you that. What who is your conduit because you don't have human resources here, right?
- Paula Beale: 01:21:33 Right. We used to have human resources personnel here and don't know what you have till it's gone. Boy, does that ever mean something to me. I really didn't understand as an exhibit planner the work that they did. It was just that they were there, if I had a problem, "Oh, where's my step increase?" You could go to them or can I use this leave for this reason? You could go to them and you'd get an answer.
- Paula Beale: 01:22:00 Then, I became a project manager supervisor and that's when that started to pull away. That they were not going to have HR people located in every individual park. That it was going to be in a central office and they would serve multiple parks, they would not be located right at Harpers Ferry Center.
- Winnie Frost: 01:22:18 Do you work with WASO? Is that--
- Paula Beale: 01:22:20 We do. The person we work with is awesome. I mean, he's really wonderful but he's overworked. He has lots--he only has so much capacity so when you're dealing, like HFC right now, we need to hire 30 positions. He can only work on one at a time. There's so much involved every time you're going to go out and do a vacancy announcement, make sure all the paperwork's there. He has to then do the cert. He's doing it all. It's just a lot.
- Winnie Frost: 01:22:52 Got to get the security clearance [inaudible].



Paula Beale: 01:22:52 It's a lot. I think we try to explore ways in which there are alternatives to that because we have details--

Winnie Frost: 01:22:57 Right. Any kind of direct hire thing, that's a really--

Paula Beale: 01:22:59 Yeah. But that's definitely been a challenge.

Winnie Frost: 01:23:01 Yeah. I know HR is just a challenge all the way around in every avenue. It's about 10 after. I'm not sure--

Betsy Ehrlich: 01:23:11 Yeah. Let me--

Winnie Frost: 01:23:13 Is that--okay. We're back on. I was wondering, when did you feel most fulfilled in your career?

Paula Beale: 01:23:23 Oh, wow.

Winnie Frost: 01:23:24 Now, you've been saying so many wonderful things. I was wondering is there a particular time or a particular aha moment for you?

Paula Beale: 01:23:31 Most fulfilled. One moment that comes to mind, and this may come in another interview when we bring Chad in, is when I had our first child, our son. I struggled with the fact that I knew I'd be gone from my job for a while, but I had to. I wanted maternity leave. I wanted at least three months to be there. There was no stress put on me whatsoever. That my supervisor realized that, "Hey, no. We want you to be happy at home. If you're happy at home, we know you'll come here and you will be productive, so you tell us, we want to work this out with you."

Paula Beale: 01:24:13 We did. We were able to work that out and I really felt like, "Wow." I'm able to work and not feel that I'm missing out on my career, but yet I can have a family too. That may sound funny that it's not a specific project--

Winnie Frost: 01:24:28 No. No.

Paula Beale: 01:24:28 --this fulfillment from a project--

Winnie Frost: 01:24:30 But it is. It's a project of having a child and how it's affected your work and your commitment to work, and so you're saying your boss, because one of the things I was going to mention was, what part of your fulfillment? Was it

your boss or funding or a place of work, your cohorts, your collaboration?

- Paula Beale: 01:24:49 Yeah. I think at that, I mean that's just something that jumps out at me that I felt like I was really supported. I worked for a great organization that respected that and I knew I was with a great organization. At that time thought, "Well I'm retiring here. If they're going to have me, I'm retiring here."
- Winnie Frost: 01:25:08 And other things happen but we'll have you stand by until this afternoon. But Paula, you have been an amazing person to interview and even though we worked together, I've learned so much about Paula today and what a joy.
- Paula Beale: 01:25:21 Well, then I need to interview you, Winnie. I want to learn about you. You're on the list.
- Winnie Frost: 01:25:26 Betsy's already done that.
- Paula Beale: 01:25:27 Oh, Betsy's on it.
- Winnie Frost: 01:25:28 We went into overtime also, but you have been just a joy to interview for this first part.
- Paula Beale: 01:25:32 Well, I'm honored that I was asked. A lot of times I feel like I'm still new at Harpers Ferry, I'm still learning at Harpers Ferry, and then you look back, you're like, "Wow. You do have 20 years under your belt."
- Winnie Frost: 01:25:44 I know. I can't believe you already have 20 years but--
- Paula Beale: 01:25:46 I can't either.
- Winnie Frost: 01:25:46 --let me tell you, all the oldies but goodies are gone, all those retirees.
- Paula Beale: 01:25:51 I know.
- Winnie Frost: 01:25:51 Unfortunately, a lot of back fills never happened.
- Paula Beale: 01:25:55 Right. But we're working on that.
- Winnie Frost: 01:25:56 Yeah. Well, I congratulate you on your new position. God bless you for taking it up.

Paula Beale: 01:26:01 Thanks, Winnie. Thank you. I need the blessing. I need it.

Winnie Frost: 01:26:05 I just gave her the sign of the cross. Okay. With that, thank you so much, Paula.

Paula Beale: 01:26:10 Thank you, Winnie. I appreciate it.

Winnie Frost: 01:26:11 You will be back--

Paula Beale: 01:26:12 I'll be back.

Winnie Frost: 01:26:13 --for more. Okay. Thank you.

END OF RECORDING