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Association of National Park Rangers Oral History Project, 2012-2016



Florence Townsend
October 29, 2013

Interview conducted by Lu Ann Jones
Transcribed by Teresa Bergen
Digitized by Marissa Lindsey

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NPS History Collection
Harpers Ferry Center
PO Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
HFC_Archivist@nps.gov

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New material that Flo Townsend added during transcript review is included in brackets.

Audiofile: TOWNSEND Flo 29 Oct 2013

[START OF TRACK 1]

- Lu Ann Jones: So, I usually just start with a brief introduction to the recording. This is .wav file 018. And this is LuAnn Jones. And it's October 29, 2013. I'm in Saint Louis, Missouri, for the Association of National Park Rangers Ranger Rendezvous. And we're continuing our oral history project for the second year of intensive interviewing. So, Flo, if you could give me your full name and also a consent on the recording that this is fine for us to be doing this interview.
- Florence Townsend: All right. My name is Florence Idelle Townsend. I certainly consent to this interview. I'm looking very much forward to it.
- Lu Ann Jones: I think I said in the email correspondence that even though our focus is on your Park Service career, I'm always interested in who people were before they got to the Park Service. And even before Federal Employment. So, could you tell me just a little bit about when you were born, the year, if you don't mind, where you were born and some about your family background, that would be great.
- Florence Townsend: Okay. I was the oldest of six children, four girls and two boys. Born in Portland, Oregon, December 28, 1946 [Florence Idelle Rowe]. My parents, very interesting individuals, were driven by, of course, what had happened previously in their lives. My mother, unbeknownst to all of us as we were growing up, had been a prisoner of war during the Japanese occupation of the Philippine Islands in World War Two. So she was, besides being an American citizen, a citizen of the Philippine Islands. She was an independent woman who had strong family connections and felt very strongly about family and keeping it together, as well as a desire that her children be educated. [She graduated from college the year I graduated from high school.]
- Florence Townsend: And my father was the type of individual who instilled hard work ethics into all his children. He was a dental technician by trade. And subsequently I have one sister and a brother who are also dental technicians. So that's kind of interesting in looking at that part of the family.
- Florence Townsend: I went to high school in Spokane, Washington. Although I was born in Portland, Oregon, I grew up in Spokane, and graduated from high school. There was no family money to send us to college, so I took a job with McRae and Connor Company. That was a toy wholesaler. And I was the secretary-steno to the president of the company for a couple of years.
- Florence Townsend: When they downsized, I went to the Spokane County Treasurers' Office and worked for them for two years.
- Florence Townsend: In the meantime, I had gotten married to a man who was in the Marine Corps. After his service in Vietnam, we were transferred in 1969 to Washington, DC. I took the Civil Service Commission exam and sought a

letter of recommendation from our local congressman. At the time, it was Tom Foley, who [later became Speaker of the House]. He just recently passed away. [getting choked up] I treasure that letter that he provided to me. I began with the Civil Service Commission test. And then had offers for interviews from the State Department and headquarters Marine Corps.

Florence Townsend: I took the job with headquarters Marine Corps. So, I was a civilian Marine for four years, 1969 to 1973 [Florence I. Ebeling]. During that time is when I started some additional college classes. I took a couple in Spokane when my husband was overseas. Then I started back to school at the community college of Northern Virginia. That kind of launched my 42-year odyssey to get my degree. It did, in fact, take me 42 years. I graduated magna cum laude from the University of Nebraska in Omaha in 2010. [laughs]

Lu Ann Jones: Congratulations. [laughs] What kinds of classes were you taking there?

Florence Townsend: In the beginning, because it was the '60s, office work. Production typing and stenography and that sort of thing. I discovered the field of psychology in Virginia. And I loved that field. And ultimately my degree was in psychology and communications.

Lu Ann Jones: Uh huh. Uh huh. Well, those years, particularly being in a branch of the service, must have been interesting years of Vietnam. Can you talk some about what you were doing specifically in that job and just what it was like to be there in Washington?

Florence Townsend: Well, it was an exciting time. Being there at headquarters, I had the opportunity to work with officers who had been to Vietnam, who were directing work that was being done, and directing troops in Vietnam. It was, the administration, or the administrative side of the Marine Corps, the G1 Division. And so, the Branches that I worked with had to do with transportation of people and transportation of things. I started as an administrative clerk GS5 and received promotions through supervisory administrative assistant GS7.

Florence Townsend: When my husband received orders to Edzell, Scotland, I moved out to Denver. We subsequently divorced. But that's where I picked up my first job with the National Park Service.

Florence Townsend: One of the things that I really learned at headquarters was the importance of protocol, as well as the importance of confidentiality and loyalty. I learned how to draft correspondence, which served me well throughout my career. But it was protocol kinds of things and the confidentiality, the clearances and so on, that really struck me as extremely important along with the hard work ethics, the integrity and honesty. Those things that I learned there at headquarters served me well throughout the rest of my career.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, how did you make that shift from the Marines to the Park Service? How did you do that?

Florence Townsend: That was very interesting. Because at headquarters, when the colonel came in, when the general came in, you stood up. It was always, "yes, sir," "no, sir." And you stayed until the job was done.

Florence Townsend: When I went to work at the Denver Service Center, my immediate bosses were the personnel officer [Robert Walton] and the training officer [Larry Hovig] for the Denver Service Center. Very nice gentlemen. Larry Hovig was the training officer.

Lu Ann Jones: How do you spell his last name?

Florence Townsend: Hovig. H-o-v-i-g. And I believe when Larry left, he went to the North Atlantic Region as the regional training officer. At least, that's how my memory is.

Florence Townsend: The transition was difficult. For me, it took me a while to realize that I did not have to stand up when the boss came in. And I did not have to say "yes, sir," "no, sir." I never could bring myself to calling him "Bob." It was always "Robert." I still had that formality that I had to cling to. And other than that, the transition workwise was the same in that we had lots to do, we had to get it done, it had to be letter perfect. The material wasn't classified, so that part of it was a little more relaxed. But it was the personal formalities that personally I had a hard time dealing with.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. So, what exactly was that job? What did you do?

Florence Townsend: Well, I was the secretary to the personnel officer and the training officer for the Denver Service Center. Shortly after I arrived, Larry Hovig transferred. He left, and I assumed the acting training officer duties. That's when I learned about the training field. Now it's called employee development. And I loved it! It had to do with talking to people about what they wanted to do in their careers and why, and how to get them to that place. How to get them developed, get them the training that they needed.

Florence Townsend: Early on, I attended a class down at Albright Training Center on Counseling and Appraisal. In fact, I think it was the first counseling and appraisal class that was offered there. There were, at the Denver Service Center, a number of young men and women who were recent college graduates, who were called trainees. Intake trainees, I believe. And my job was to work with them and their supervisors in developing Individual Development Plans, training programs, while they were there. I helped them get the training opportunities that they needed to fulfill those plans, as well as to document and to track the progress in those. I loved that part! It was fun for me to see people achieve progress in their plans, and for them to develop.

Florence Townsend: As I recall, there were some real crackerjack folks in those positions: Dan Wenk, who went on to become a deputy director of the Service; Carn Hugie, who was in landscape architecture; and Steve Iobst, a civil engineer. I believe Steve and Dan are now top management at

Yellowstone National Park. Larry Gamble was also a landscape architect. So, it was those kinds of people, among others, but those are names that immediately come to mind and whom I've tracked over the years. Those people were really the ones who launched my interest in employee development.

Lu Ann Jones: How long were you there at Albright doing that?

Florence Townsend: At Albright Training Center, I was only there for a week of training, and then came back to try to implement what I had learned. Albright Training Center was an amazing place. And it had a real impact on me there as well. Bill Wade was on staff there at the time; Boyd Evison was the superintendent of the training center, so I felt that I could consult with them when I had questions. And J.T. Reynolds was there on staff. So, we kind of developed a little network type of thing. They mentored me gently, because I was new to the field, and they helped me gain a real understanding of what training and development was all about in the Park Service.

Lu Ann Jones: So, once you were back at Denver Service Center, who was your constituency in that setting for training and development?

Florence Townsend: Well, I guess it would have been anyone who was going to formal training at the time. And who would be attending training at Mather or Albright training centers.

Lu Ann Jones: But would it be all career fields, or just—

Florence Townsend: Yes, it would have been all career fields. I don't remember how many training forms, if you will, came through my office. But it was also a time when Individual Development Plans were becoming very important. At the time, supervisors were required to counsel their employees on career opportunities and career goals and identify training courses that would help them meet their goals, and to get to their career objectives.

Lu Ann Jones: What had happened that this had become more of an emphasis? I mean, had something changed that now people were focusing more on Individual Development Plans, or this kind of career training?

Florence Townsend: Well I think in the '60s, probably, or the late '50s, there was a thing called the "plan for the man." I remember seeing a small booklet that had that title. And you know, nowadays it would have been "the employees' plan," or "the plan for the employee." But at the time, it was "the plan for the man." The Park Service was progressing, they were going beyond that to really include all employees, not just those who had field ranger or superintendent potential.

Florence Townsend: I believe it was sometime in 1974 when the Rocky Mountain Region was established. The Denver Service Center was there in Denver. But then a whole regional office was opened and staffed. There was a gentleman by the name of Al Maxey who was the regional training officer at that time. Al and I talked about the field of training. He was really my mentor. He

took me under his wing and taught me about the philosophy of the National Park Service and what training and development really, really meant. He introduced me to the U.S. Civil Service Commission's training center, over at the Denver Federal Center. He introduced me to the American Society for Training and Development and got me interested in learning how to teach classes. I sat in on a training session called "Managerial Grid," which was very popular with the National Park Service for some years. It developed managers and supervisors in their managerial kinds of activities.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, because I'll probably retire and still say I'm fairly new to the Park Service, but I haven't ever worked in a setting where there is the focus on training. Having been in an academic setting, it's assumed you develop yourself and you train yourself and you continue to read and develop in your field. So, it's been very interesting to be part of an organization where of course people have to be kept up to speed and have to learn to do a number of things in order to do their job. So how did he explain the role of training in the Park Service in the '70s, and how that fit into the mission of the Park Service?

Florence Townsend: Well, one of the early training sessions that I went to was called Orientation to the National Park Service. That was open to all employees, not just field park rangers and technicians. That's where we learned about the history and mission of the service, where we fit, what was so important about what we National Park Service employees do. Why the national parks were important, why they were protected. And that class was given to almost every employee, to my knowledge.

Florence Townsend: There was another one [Introduction to NPS Operations] that was for more professional employees in the park ranger and park technician jobs, more the field-oriented people, where they learned more about the ranger skills kinds of things. The things that the rangers have to do out in the parks.

Florence Townsend: I think that over time, those training classes were diluted to some degree, largely because of budget and time away from the jobs. But the people who went through those classes really melded together as a team in that, by team I mean felt really part of the National Park Service family. And they kept those connections over their whole careers.

Florence Townsend: I remember the excitement and the change in employees when they came back from those training classes. It meant the world to them. It was like their futures were so open. The possibilities were unlimited, that with time and dedication and experience they could do almost anything they wanted to do. And that was huge to me.

Lu Ann Jones: Well you've mentioned, you've mentioned at least one mentor. So, at what point did you begin to see your own career, or begin to see oh, there are possibilities here for me, and begin to think strategically about where you might want to head in the Park Service?

- Florence Townsend: Al was a master at identifying in people what they might be good at and where they had some potential. I had talked with him about how can I learn to be a better trainer? How can I learn, clearly, I had not been to college, how could I learn to do what the National Park Service wanted me to do as a training officer? So, the Counseling and Appraisal class was huge. Orientation to the National Park Service was huge. Just talking with him. We would sit and visit about NPS philosophy and who does what out in the parks.
- Florence Townsend: An opportunity came up with the U.S. Civil Service Commission called the Training and Development Leadership Opportunity. It was a six-month, on-the-job experience with the Civil Service Commission where I learned to teach two classes. One was Introduction to Supervision, and the other was Supervision and Group Performance. For six months, I was part of the training staff over at the Regional Training Center. I worked shoulder to shoulder with Larry Mitchell, who was a professional trainer with them, and really learned how to do those classes. By the end of those six months, I could do a 40-hour class on my own, from beginning to end.
- Florence Townsend: It was an amazing experience. I taught classes in Idaho, Montana, Utah, Colorado, and there in the Denver area. The traveling part was interesting. Meeting the students from all of these other agencies was very interesting. And it was just a huge growth opportunity for me.
- Florence Townsend: When I came back, I talked with Al Maxey and I said, I really want to be a training officer like Larry Hovig was. Not just in an acting capacity, but "I would love to be like you, Al, a regional training officer."
- Florence Townsend: And he came to me one day and he said, "Flo," he says, "we've got an opportunity for you in Omaha, Nebraska." I'd never been to Nebraska. Omaha? What? And I said, "Well, okay. When?" He says, "Well, can you leave this weekend?" "Uh, yeah. Sure."
- Florence Townsend: And so, he helped me work through that. And in three days, I'd packed up my stuff. I'd just moved into a new apartment within the last month! I packed up what I could in my car and drove east. I'd never been to Omaha. I mean, I could find it on a map. But I didn't really know anything about it. And the gentleman whose place I was filling in for, Fred Hickman, had cancer. He was not able to come into the office anymore. He was in the hospital. Unfortunately, Fred passed away while I was in Omaha. I served as the acting regional training officer from August through December. While I was there, I taught a Supervision and Group Performance Class. And I learned more about what a regional training officer does.
- Florence Townsend: At that time, we had Individual Development Plans, a requirement for every employee. It was called a Department of Interior Form 10-143. They had a system, back in the day, when they used punch cards and computerized information. They documented training records for all employees. So, I learned about all of that, and kept his program going.

People going off to Mather and Albright Training Centers. Handling the money that was allowed for the training budget.

Florence Townsend: Because Fred passed away, the job was open, and I applied for it. There were 28 applicants and I was selected. It was like, oh, my God! How did this happen! It's so wonderful. And you know, I have Al Maxey to thank for those opportunities. Ever since, I've been trying to pay that forward.

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah, I think people are really lucky when they find a mentor who's able to see within themselves what their own strengths are and everything. Well, how did you, talking to Wendy Lauritzen yesterday, she's moved around a lot. How did you just adapt pragmatically to a move like that?

Florence Townsend: Well, if I had had time to really think about it, I probably would have anguished over it and maybe made a different decision, I don't know. But I think in retrospect, my strength in making decisions and going for what I wanted and not looking back has really held me in good stead throughout my life. Of course, I had to go back to Denver and have my things packed up and moved. But that was, in the early '70s and I grew up pretty much in the '60s. It was about women being independent and strong and doing things for themselves. So, I was just kind of caught up in that!

Florence Townsend: In my personal life – when I moved to Omaha on the detail, I met Scott Six, whom I later married. Well, in December. Talk about a whirlwind life from August to December. I picked up and moved to Omaha and met and married a man in three months. It was a wonderful experience all the way around. I was rocking and rolling through life, you know. [laughter] Just in my late twenties. It was all good.

Lu Ann Jones: So, you go back, and you start, how long did you stay in that position as the regional training manager?

Florence Townsend: I stayed in that until 1988. I think it was early in 1987, maybe late '86, when I looked back at my career and I thought you know, I've been in the training and development field all this time and I really love it. But do I want to be in this for the next 15, 18 years? What is it that I really want to do?

Florence Townsend: At the time, I had decided that I would like to be a park superintendent. But I didn't have the park experience, so I had set my goal as being superintendent at Mather Training Center. That was potentially doable. But at the time, you know, as the regional training officer, I went into the job as a GS-7-9-11. And then I got a promotion to a GS-12. The opportunities to go to a park superintendency – at that time, a new superintendent at a small park was a grade 11. And so, I would have had to take a downgrade.

Florence Townsend: I let people know who could tell me whether or not I had a chance what my goals were – my supervisor and colleagues, people I interacted with, people in the training field, that this was kind of what I wanted to do. And you know, I got some counseling on what kinds of development

opportunities I needed and that sort of thing. And still today I think acting assignments are a good way to judge a person and your own self whether that's a good fit for you.

Florence Townsend: And I did have an opportunity to serve as an acting superintendent at a park, and—

[END OF TRACK 1]

[START OF TRACK 2]

Florence Townsend: And that was an amazing experience.

Lu Ann Jones: Where was that?

Florence Townsend: Well, it was at the Lincoln Home [National Historic Site in Springfield, Illinois]. And the superintendent was also interested in employee development and training. When he [left for two weeks, I served in an Acting capacity. We worked together for a week before he left.] It was a nice fit. It was actually during the time of the rehabilitation of the Lincoln Home. I don't know if you heard about that project or not, but they took the home apart and numbered everything: the boards, the bricks, and rebuilt it. It was during that time. So, I got to see what was at stake for the Lincoln Home and the whole process. And that was a very exciting time.

Florence Townsend: At any rate, I subsequently still wanted to think about being the superintendent at Mather Training Center, but I realized that it probably wasn't in the cards.

Florence Townsend: There was a fellow at the Midwest Regional Office there in Omaha whom everyone just really respected. I had many opportunities to interact with him. His name was John Kawamoto. He was on the Training Development Review Board. When we would be considering employees for Mather or Albright training sessions, I would meet with these senior managers and we would evaluate and prioritize training nominations. John Kawamoto always said, "There's more than one way to the top of Mount Fuji." And that has stuck with me my whole life.

Florence Townsend: My mom also told me that "it's okay to change your goals. It's okay to change your priorities." And so, as I was looking towards the future, it was for promotional opportunities. Not just the money, but new things to do, more responsibility, more opportunities to contribute.

Florence Townsend: Then the job came open for the Public Affairs Officer, I thought, "I can do that." Well, the reason behind my thinking that I could do that was because when I was the Regional Training Officer there in Omaha, I also was involved with ASTD, the American Society for Training and Development, which was the professional group for trainers that I had been involved with in Denver.

Florence Townsend: As part of that involvement, I had done news releases for ASTD. I'd been involved in planning special events, conference planning, and that sort of

thing. I believed that I might have some transition skills that could qualify me for that.

Florence Townsend: Also, during my tenure as the Regional Training Officer, one of the huge responsibilities that I had was planning superintendents' conferences. And so besides understanding what was in training courses offered by Mather and Albright training centers that field employees were looking at, besides understanding what was in those courses, then I learned what managers needed to develop them, also what kinds of issues were facing the National Park Service. And so, in developing a superintendents' conference, I had to look at what the national issues were, what the critical and emerging issues were at the park level, and so on. So, I learned to put together conference and certainly not just by myself, I didn't do it in a vacuum. I did it in concert with park superintendents and the regional director. But I would put together a conference that met the needs at the time of those superintendents and regional office managers who would be attending.

Florence Townsend: One of the neat things about that was that the superintendents' conferences that I put together also qualified, not the entire time, but the majority of the hours for management and supervisory training requirements and equal opportunity training requirements. So, there was kind of a dual purpose. I was getting their training requirements met as well as remaining up to speed with national issues.

Florence Townsend: That experience helped me not only be more visible to top management in the region but helped me really better understand what regional management was about and what the issues were. So, I did apply for the public affairs officer's job and was selected. That was a huge turning point for me.

Florence Townsend: The big surprise in going into public affairs was the Freedom of Information Act. I had dealt with some privacy issues being part of personnel human resources. But the Freedom of Information Act, which is about open government and the people's right to know what is going on and what kinds of documentation are in the files on whatever kinds of issues, that was a real surprise to me.

Florence Townsend: FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] was one of the biggest challenges that I had to deal with in public affairs, it was pretty exciting at times. But there was a full gamut. Actually, the first one, the first Freedom of Information Act request that I had to deal with that was a heavy duty one was from an individual who was serving hard time in prison in the Midwest for the murder of his wife. He was at Ozark national scenic river ways, on a float trip. And I had to read all of the grisly details of that entire case to determine what could and could not be released to this person. That was very hard.

Florence Townsend: Another example of reviewing everything involved with a Freedom of Information Act request came from a reporter who was doing an

investigative type of piece on the Cerro Grande fires down in New Mexico, where the prescribed fire exceeded limits and burned private property and threatened Los Alamos labs. That was a hard one, too. [From complex reports to simple forms, and] everything in between, you know. FOIA was a real challenge. And to do a good job, you really do have to get your head into every document.

Lu Ann Jones: Well who trained you about how to do FOIAs?

Florence Townsend: The Office of Personnel Management held classes. We also had some Department of the Interior meetings. But pretty much you were on your own. You really had to read the law and read the excerpts of cases so on the job training [and learning was critical to understanding FOIA].

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. I happened to have read about that fire not too long ago in preparing for interviews with Deny Galvin. And he was the deputy director at that time. And he has some papers out at Harper's Ferry Center, and I went out to look at those. And that fire was prominent among those papers. So, was your office handling the kind of on the ground stuff for that fire? I mean, how would a big national event that's going on in the region, what part, what role would the Regional Public Affairs Office play? And what role would the National Office of Communications or whatever it would be called at a particular time, what role would they play? And then the park level.

Florence Townsend: Well, the main reason that I was involved was because my boss, the regional director, Bill Schenk, was the leader of the investigative team for that fire. And so, because of that connection, I was the FOIA officer who handled Inquires. All of those documents were shipped to my office for review. And then I worked with the Regional Solicitor's Office on what could be released and what should be protected.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Other FOIA requests? You said the murder that was a grisly one. Others that were particularly memorable?

Florence Townsend: Well there was a case at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore where a private business had an in-holding. They wanted the National Park Service to do certain things. I recall there was, at one time, and this was early on as my tenure as the public affairs officer, 22 requests for documents from this one company. They wanted the National Park Service to provide a parking lot for their concession. And we said no. This issue went on for probably 10 years. There would be requests for documents and we would process them and so on and so forth. That was a memorable one only because it was so contentious, and it had the potential for Service-wide impact.

Florence Townsend: But generally speaking, there were requests for documents from people who had business in the parks and things didn't go their way exactly. So, they wanted everything, you know, records of all letters, memoranda, electronic mail, memorandums of call, that sort of thing. And there were

individuals who had career questions and wanted documents related to management decisions about eligibility for positions or why they were passed over. That sort of thing.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. In that first public affairs position, you were handling FOIA requests, you were organizing conferences. Were there other parts of those duties that, part of the cluster of activities you were engaged in at that point?

Florence Townsend: Well, the fun part, the really fun part, was special events out in the parks. Dedications. Anniversaries. Directors' travel or Secretary of the Interior travel into the parks for those kinds of events. I think my interest was piqued when I was in headquarters Marine Corps. I mentioned the protocol kinds of things. That was a fascinating aspect of public affairs to me – it was the kind of “who’s on first” type of thing. And making sure that all the T’s were crossed, and the I’s were dotted when the Director of the National Park Service came in. You know, we had to have briefing statements on Park issues. Information about who that director was going to be meeting with and the background on the individuals, just so that he or she wasn’t caught by surprise by someone at an event at one of the parks. If they had an axe to grind or, or if they were instrumental in a management decision. We’d get a lot of mileage out of complimenting them on a particular aspect of a program or their involvement in a project in a park.

Florence Townsend: So, conferences were a minor part in the whole scheme of things. Really, briefing statements on issues for the regional director and briefing statements for management, like the Director of the Park Service and the Secretary of the Interior on issues, those were the things that probably took up the most of my time.

Lu Ann Jones: Did you deal directly with news media at that point? Or was that up to somebody else?

Florence Townsend: No, I did. The superintendents dealt with their local media the most. It would depend on the issue. Sometimes we would get calls on contentious park issues, like the Stillwater Bridge at Stillwater, Minnesota. It was about a historic bridge over the Saint Croix River. There was a time when our region was involved in evaluating the proposal to remove the historic bridge and build a new, safer one. Because the river was a national resource, and the historic Stillwater Bridge had certain significance, there were many meetings, many phone calls, discussions, etcetera, over a period of years on how to handle all of this. When it came right down to the decision on whether or not the project was going to move forward, there was an investigative reporter from the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* whom I could set my watch by. He would call me at the same time every day to get an update on what was going on. That was, that was stressful. But generally speaking, you know, you knew what the issues were going

to be or what the background was. And those kinds of media inquiries were fun. They were easy to deal with.

Lu Ann Jones: So, you have great notes there. So, I'm going to just let you take a look at your notes and tell me where you want to go.

Florence Townsend: [When I started in Public Affairs, we determined that our offices' mission was to preserve, protect, defend, enhance and sustain the reputation of the National Park Service. Whether it was through media contacts, conferences, speeches, FOIA requests or congressional inquiries that mission was paramount. A great deal of time was spent researching, collaborating with park staffs and preparing responses to congressional inquiries made on behalf of their constituents. We carefully and consistently prepared timely responses to ensure that the public understood management decisions and the Service's mission based on the Organic Act.] [Editor's note: See page 24 of transcript for original context of this note.]

Florence Townsend: I would say that my career with the National Park Service was the best. I had wonderful opportunities. I had support. I made lots of friends. My associations with people across the Service were positive. I developed lifelong friendships during a process that I felt I was making a contribution to the National Park Service, and to employees. And that was so gratifying.

Florence Townsend: When I talked about falling in love with employee development or training, to me, the name of the game was employee development. It didn't matter what job an individual had. If you could develop goals and focus your career in a positive direction and make contributions along the way, that was the best. My personal involvement in developing people, that's where I found the great joy, in the day-to-day operation. Peggy O'Dell, who spoke at ANPR today, was one of the first trainees that I dealt with as a regional training officer. She was a supervisory park ranger here at the Arch in Saint Louis, grade 7. And she and I became friends, and we tracked each other throughout decades. Peggy was a young woman who had huge potential and was willing to work very, very hard. She learned to seize opportunities. And work with mentors along the way. And that's, employee development, the "name of the game."

Florence Townsend: There were also those who would come to training classes and their attitude would be like, "Here I am, baby. Train me." Those people, generally speaking, didn't have the kinds of careers in the Service that the "Peggys" would. They didn't seize those opportunities. They didn't take risks. They didn't make themselves marketable.

Florence Townsend: The highs in my career had to do with helping people achieve what they wanted to in their careers. Like Peggy. Like Dan Wenk. And there are scores of others that had successes like that that I take great pleasure in knowing that I was part of their careers.

- Florence Townsend: I did some very fun things. For example, when I was the regional training officer – forgive me for bouncing back and forth – but there were two videotapes, video programs that I developed, or produced, when I was the regional training officer. One was called “Boots, Breeches and Stetsons.” The other was “Total Image.” “Boots, Breeches and Stetsons” was a program about the NPS uniform, and it being one of the most respected and revered images in the country. To me, the uniform reflects the reverence for the resource and the respect for the visitor. The “Boots, Breeches and Stetson” program captured 80 years of history of the National Park Service uniform.
- Florence Townsend: The second one was called “Total Image.” And that was about the appearance, the awareness of the uniform, the attitude and pride of the employee. And it reflected the employee’s service to the public.
- Florence Townsend: Those two videos were in use 15 years later, after I’d put them together – aafter I produced them. They were shown even at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Brunswick, Georgia, where they talked to the rangers going through the basic law enforcement program about the importance of how you present yourself.
- Florence Townsend: I received a Superior Service Award for those in 1999. I was so surprised! Because it was so long after they had been produced. But apparently, because of the impact those two programs had on so many employees, it was like, wow! That is so cool! I mean, I went to work every day and did stuff and moved on to the next project. And it’s like, wow, that is awesome!
- Florence Townsend: I received a Crystal Owl Award in 2000. And that was in recognition of my overall contributions to employee development. And you know, I was going to work every day doing something I loved. To be recognized for, you know, publically, for going to work every day and doing something I loved was huge to me!
- Florence Townsend: That taught me how important it is to take those moments, to recognize people that work for you. I had a number of people work for me who, because of what I did (you know, employee development’s the “name of the game”), worked with them at the entry level. Shirley Klum [(Shirley later remarried and became Peterson)] came to me as a GS3 in the training program, and she ended up as the personnel officer [human resources officer] for the Midwest region. Carol Solnosky started with me at the 3 or 4 level, and she ended up as the human resources specialist at the 12 or 13 level. Shirley Peterson, who I said had been the personnel officer, also became the regional training officer after I left. Patty Rooney, who started with me as a grade 5, is the public affairs officer for the Midwest region now. It’s important to recognize those people along the way for their commitment and dedication and their accomplishments. You never know what kind of a huge impact it’s going to be on that person years later.

Florence Townsend: When I was in training, I oversaw the Upward Mobility Program. I don't know now if that's still used, but that was a very successful program in those years when I was in training. It helped people achieve their potential in that it gave management an opportunity to move employees through training and counseling and development, from one field to another, or move them from one grade level to another. By nurturing them along the way they helped them achieve their career potential.

Florence Townsend: And I'm not sure that now we do that as much as we used to. One of the things that I worry about is that our culture has changed. Our social network has changed. It seems that we've lost those close connections that used to be. Employees and supervisors used to be closer in that there was better communication about expectations. Clearer communication about expectations and accomplishments led into growth and development opportunities. How you're progressing and that sort of thing. I think we've lost some of that. Upward mobility really afforded the opportunity for supervisors to develop and nurture employees with potential who not necessarily had the background yet, helped them along. There were individuals who would be in clerical positions and ended up as associate regional directors because of that program. You know, they were given the opportunities. They had the potential. They had the will. They maintained the focus. And they learned how to make things happen for themselves through and with other people. I think that's huge. And I think we've lost a little bit of that in these later years when we are more disconnected than connected.

Lu Ann Jones: I think this is really interesting. I have a couple of questions. So, on the one hand, as the training officer, so you can have a great effect on people if they're open to that. But what role does their immediate supervisor play in that mentoring, in addition to what you were able to do? So that's one question. That kind of relationship. And then how would you describe, or how do you account for the change in culture that you're observing?

Florence Townsend: [pause] I think it has to do with escalating expectations all the way through the government. The "do more with less" mantra that we've heard about for a couple of decades. The one-minute manager, but that was catching people doing something right and recognizing that. It takes more than one minute, for god's sake! But the notion of recognizing people for their accomplishments, that remains, that part remains.

Florence Townsend: The escalating expectations phenomena, to me, means you expect more from your people because more is expected from you. The time constraints are less realistic than they used to be because of our ability to communicate instantly and electronically. That has changed some things. Instant information and instant availability, that expectation. It used to be that our requests from Washington would come and you'd have a few days. And now it's less than 24 hours. Well, hello, you know, if it comes in at five o'clock at night, and the people at the park have already gone home, how are you going to get that put together?

Florence Townsend: I was noticing that in the last few years, before I retired, which was in 2004. And I think it has, you know, the text messaging and all of that has just exacerbated that problem.

Florence Townsend: The performance expectations, that phenomenon puzzles me. If you're not connected to your employees personally, and I don't mean personal lives, but I mean face to face kinds of things. That relationship is stretched because an employee wouldn't be as committed to you if he/she didn't understand how important it was—

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Florence Townsend: —that they go the extra mile. And it's just the expectation. It's not the connection and what the rest of the story is behind it. And being far removed, we'll say Washington, for example, people in the Department, how far removed they are from the field employee where the rubber meets the road, so to speak, they don't understand what kind of machinations the field folks have to go through to provide what it is that they want now. And that stretches across job lines and responsibilities.

Lu Ann Jones: Well how, and I did read your bio sketch, but it's in my computer now and I can't refer to it. [laughs] So what was your last position? You had moved from; we were talking about when you moved into public affairs. So how did you move up in that particular career field?

Florence Townsend: Okay. Interesting. In 1988, I moved into public affairs and I was the regional public affairs officer reporting to the regional director. In 1994, when the Service restructured from ten regions to seven, and they restructured their management teams at the regional levels, there were changes in reporting requirements and lines of authority.

Florence Townsend: And at that time, I still reported to the regional director, but was more of an issues advisor. I was considered more as a member of the management team. Not to say that I wasn't as the regional public affairs officer. I was. But the job really had grown as far as being an advisor and being consulted with on issues. [My title was Assistant Regional Director, Communications.]

Florence Townsend: Once when I was in Washington, D.C., and a request came down from the Secretary's office. They wanted a briefing statement on an issue that was critical and emerging. And they wanted it now. When I would be in the regional office, I would work with the park superintendents and we'd get briefing statements together and send them in.

Florence Townsend: Well, I was in Washington, and I told the Regional Director about the requirement. And it was like, "Well, Flo, just do your magic." Okay. That kind of gets to the escalating expectations because they knew I could come through.

Florence Townsend: There was a huge trust level between the regional director and the directorate and myself. And the superintendents. And that took a while to develop. There were many times when the regional director would tell me or tell someone else that I was their conscience. It was then that I realized that, that gave me the license and the confidence to really advise them honestly whether it was on the record or off the record. And they respected that. I mean, if they expected me to be their conscience, by God, you know, I was going to do that.

Florence Townsend: There was one time when the expectation of a decision was very, very high. There were reporters who wanted to know, there were local people who wanted to know, I don't want to give you the topic of it. But the decision was expected, and it was a high visibility type of thing. I finally got the decision about 4:30 PM or a quarter to five.

Florence Townsend: I had to call the reporters and let them know. But before I did that, before the regional director left, I said, "That was a really chicken shit way to do business." Because they [management] knew what the answer was going to be, but they waited until close of business on a Friday to avoid the interview. To avoid the honesty of the decision. And I just had to say that I thought that was wrong. I mean, that was being the conscience of the regional director. And he respected me for that. He didn't like it, he respected me for that. That incident was a huge learning experience for me.

Florence Townsend: When I transitioned from public affairs officer to assistant regional director for communications, I was really elevated to being an integral part of the management team. And I loved it. It was great. The superintendents depended on me and I depended on them, and we had a really good relationship, as well with the regional director and in the Washington office. So that was when I really moved into management.

Florence Townsend: In 1994 I was also tapped to serve as the acting chief of public affairs for a month. That was a huge learning experience. But it helped solidify in my mind that I could really do, you know, that kind of an important job. And it was in February when there was the budget rollout. I had to answer questions to the Associated Press and others on the whole proposed budget for the NPS. That was a real interesting time.

Lu Ann Jones: At what point did you start dealing with the department? You said that, for example, say, when the secretary of the interior would come, you would be part of the planning team, or in public affairs.

Florence Townsend: Mm hmm.

Lu Ann Jones: So, at what point did it go from beyond the Park Service to seeing even a bigger picture of dealing with the Department of the Interior?

Florence Townsend: It was the early to mid-1990s. We always went through the Office of Public Affairs in Washington. We did have direct conversations with the Assistant Secretary's or Secretary's office. But it had to do with issues on

briefing statements and when they were going to be available. Or a late afternoon/early evening request kind of thing. Or travel. Who the secretary was going to be seeing. Or not. And that, it depended on the administration. Some administrations were more involved, you know, at the lower levels than others. But the protocol was to go through the Washington office.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, so what difference did it make for you and your job who the director of the Park Service was, for example? Or over the years, if you thought about how directors came and went, how that affected your job?

Florence Townsend: As a regional training officer, it didn't make a lot of difference. But as the public affairs officer, because a director would travel into our region and need to have appointments scheduled and briefing material and that sort of thing, it was always that way. Some directors were more independent than others. They were all wonderful to deal with. And you know, they certainly had their different personalities that you had to take into consideration. I mean, I traveled with Bob Stanton to various park events and activities. And he sometimes would come, and we'd hit five parks in a few days. And I would travel with them. They all had briefing packages on issues and events and people that they were going to meet and that sort of thing.

Florence Townsend: I probably shouldn't say this, but it was important to have that package ready for the director even before he came. Oftentimes they would get updated materials when they arrived. And I would work my heart out putting together a full package for the director. Then I would brief him as we would come to stops, at parks.

Florence Townsend: And at the end of a multi-day swing through the Midwest Region, we went down to Homestead National Monument. We came in late in the evening. I gave him a package for the Homestead event, told him who he was going to meet, and what we were going to do and what time and where to be.

Florence Townsend: Then the next morning, down at breakfast, Bob Stanton said to my boss, "Flo gave me the briefing material. You know, she thinks we read this stuff." He says, "Sheeit." [laughter] Oh, I just laughed! I thought, my gosh.

Florence Townsend: But every director has been, that I worked with, from, Roger Kennedy and William Penn Mott and Fran Mainella and Bob Stanton, they were all, you know, heart and soul park people. Even Director Mainella, who came from the outside, they were all very interested in the parks. They had their agendas. But they were also very good about meeting our agenda, too, and taking those things into consideration.

Florence Townsend: One of the neatest events that I ever went to was the 50th anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education* in Topeka. That was a very high visibility event where Justice Breyer from the Supreme Court was a speaker, and President George Bush was a speaker. Fran Mainella was a speaker. And

Director Mainella, you know, was not noted for staying on script. She was a bundle of energy. And you know, she would just charge ahead and do her job.

Florence Townsend: But as I recall, we picked her up at the airport, and she had an aide with her. He wanted to sit in the back seat with her, and I said, "No, you sit with the driver." I sat in the back seat with the director, and I said, "We need to go over your speech." [whispers] This was so ballsy of me. [laughter] "We need to go over your speech. And I want you to read it out loud."

Florence Townsend: And so, she did. And she made a little change. She says, "We can't talk about values." And I don't know how many times we've heard this week about values. But Director Mainella said, "We can't talk about values." We made that one minor change. But she ran through her speech, and she did a fine job.

Florence Townsend: I said, "Now we need to do it again," which she did. And it was really a good thing, because it meant something to her when I said, "We have to stay on script because of who is here and because of the potential of things going awry. We don't want that." And I have to give her great credit. She stayed on script. And it was perfect. I've never tried so hard to channel a director, you know, with the parameters of staying on script as I did with Director Mainella. But that was such a huge event and could have been very difficult.

Florence Townsend: I mean, the Assistant Secretary [for Fish and Wildlife and Parks] Craig Manson was there with his aunt from Kansas City. On his way from the hotel to the event, he had to go by the protest of the activists from Westboro Baptist Church. That was kind of dicey. We had been in many meetings with local law enforcement about the potential protests and that sort of thing. You know, demonstrations and all. So, we were pretty nervous about how smoothly things were going to go. But it all turned out very nicely.

Lu Ann Jones: So, remind me of who those protestors were.

Florence Townsend: Well, they're the ones who now protest at military funerals and sensitive kinds of events. They're – and *Brown v. Board* was about civil rights and those kinds of things. And they were from Kansas. So, it was an opportunity for high visibility on very sensitive topics. And we wanted things to go as smoothly as we could. And the President was in town. Hello?! [laughs] We've got to be careful about those things. [laughter]

Florence Townsend: Anyway, I mean, they're exercising their constitutional rights to demonstrate and gather peacefully and get their point across. That's okay. That's what this country is about. But still, we were concerned about our event and things going smoothly.

Lu Ann Jones: Well when did you become part of the ANPR?

Florence Townsend: Um, you know, I think I went to my first ANPR meeting to attend, I had dropped in at one many years ago at the Americana Hotel in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. I had another training class going at the time. And they were there, and I dropped in, this was back in the '70s, I believe, dropped into one of their social things. But to be part of the ANPR and to join it was in Charleston, so it was after I retired.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what do you like about ANPR?

Florence Townsend: I like the connections of people from across the Service, the interest at the personal level in the issues that the Park Service is dealing with, and how the networking in the ANPR can help an individual find a job, or find the job that they want, and how they can move through the organization. It's a wonderful way to stay current with issues facing employees in the National Park Service.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, from your perspective, what do you think are the major changes that you saw in the Park Service during the years that you were there? Because they're such critical years in the history of the agency there from the '70s into the early 21st century, really.

Florence Townsend: I think the politics from the congressional folk have gotten to be more pointed. There's always been politics. And maybe I just wasn't close enough to the issues to understand how much the congressional folks were involved with the local politics of parks. That has struck me. Maybe it's my age. Maybe I'm just getting older. A saying that has been with me since the mid '70s was, "If you're not cynical, you just don't understand the situation." I am very cynical now, but maybe it's because I understand more of what goes on in the background.

Florence Townsend: But as far as changes within the Park Service. I think that, and this is from my perspective as employee development is the name of the game, I think the loss of Introduction to Park Operations and the changes in Orientation to the National Park Service, those basic fundamental courses that galvanized employees and set the stage for the relationships between employees and their supervisors, and management. I think those changes were the beginning of the disconnectedness of the workforce.

Florence Townsend: I don't know if it could ever go back to that because the world has changed. Our social networking and communications processes have changed. Our children, my grandchildren, are focused on electronic kinds of things. I mean, everybody knows that the world has changed. But getting things done, you still have to get them done through people. And I believe that to be successful you have to understand what you're doing and why. And now those escalating expectations have turned us into, "Just get the job done. Get 'er done" kind of thing, without understanding why and where you fit and what the long-term ramifications are. I think it causes us to make decisions and move in directions where there are unintended consequences. And it's like oh, crap, you know, if we'd only done this, you know, then it wouldn't have gone in that particular

direction. It's always going to be that way, a little bit. But I think we need to be closer [connected as people].

Florence Townsend: When Peggy [O'Dell, deputy director of the National Park Service] was talking about the centennial, and getting the public involved and so on in 2015, everybody was reminded of the bicentennial minutes back in the '70s. Those were very cool little spots on television. So, our centennial coming up in 2016 will probably have that kind of feel to some degree. But to be really successful within our organization and with the public, I think that connectedness has to be strengthened. Part of that is development of employees and keeping them informed – nurturing them.

Florence Townsend: In a church that John and I attend in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, the pastor said how important it was to “notice, name, and nurture.” Same with employees. Notice them. Keep them involved. Know who they are. And nurture those people along the way – and they'll come through for you. They'll support the organization. They'll go to the ends of the earth for you, and that's what you need.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Well when did you and J.T. get together?

Florence Townsend: Oh, that's an interesting story. I met John on the telephone in 1977, when he was transferred to Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as the chief ranger. He would call me to talk with me about getting his employees into training programs.

Florence Townsend: And he would call me and say, “So how's my favorite regional training officer?”

Florence Townsend: “John. I am the only regional training officer for you in the Midwest Region.” [laughter]

Florence Townsend: “Oh, well, you know.” But he was a sweetheart. He was very interested in and connected to his employees. And he went to the ends of the earth to get the training that they needed. And I really respected that.

Florence Townsend: Well, I met John and his wife and their family on a business trip to Indiana Dunes – wonderful family. They were transferred to the Omaha office in 1987. And subsequently, sadly, Sandy and John parted.

Florence Townsend: So, I'd known him for a long time and known what a wonderful man he was. We'd been friends for a very long time, but it was some years later when we started dating. I was a single mom for 14 years. And it was just a wonderful connection that we had made years before. He knew my family and I knew his family, so it was really pretty cool.

Florence Townsend: In fact, he has a son named Ryan, and I have a son named Ryan. So, my daughter says, “This is my brother Ryan and my other brother Ryan.” [Lu Ann Jones laughs] Who knew?

Lu Ann Jones: Well how did you manage those challenges? We call it work/life balance now. How did you manage those issues as you were a working mom?

Florence Townsend: It was hard. But I learned as a child that you worked hard until the job was done. And it was something that I, whether I was married or not, I worked hard until the job was done. And that was at home and at work. I had two children, a daughter and a son, who were great kids. Both are college graduates with no loans. Both are successful people. So, my job was a hard one, but it was fun.

Florence Townsend: When we vacationed, we went to national parks. The kids had been to over 30 parks by the time they were in high school. So, yeah. They knew that parks were important.

Lu Ann Jones: Well that was pretty cool that you were able to have that connection to the parks and take them there.

Florence Townsend: Mm hmm.

Lu Ann Jones: Basically, this is where I work, in a way.

Florence Townsend: Kind of, yeah. Yeah.

Lu Ann Jones: To a certain extent, at least. Well, are there other things that you wanted to share that we haven't gotten to?

Florence Townsend: I may have touched on it a little bit, the idea of paying it forward.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes.

Florence Townsend: I think that's really important and that's part of the connectedness. That if people give others opportunities, you have an obligation to pay that forward. Somebody gives you a chance, you give somebody else a chance. It just promotes good ethics all along the way. Mentors are important and, if one doesn't find you, you find one. And letting people know what your goals are. Part of that is, you have to know what the goals of the organization are and how you can fit in. But that's a little bit different for each individual.

Florence Townsend: Something that I learned, and I don't know if I mentioned this before. Someone told me once, if you're indispensable, you're not promotable. And what that told me was how important it is to train and trust the people around you. You hire good people; you train them, so that they can replace you. You know, a superintendent's not going to want to leave the park if he doesn't have a staff that's going to run it for him when he's gone. Well, that was my thing. My people who worked for me, they were loyal, and they were nurtured, and they took over when I left. It was all good.

Florence Townsend: It's important to do your homework. An example of that was we had one regional director who came from outside the agency. He'd been in state parks. He was more like a corporate executive, as opposed to coming up through the ranks in the Park Service and so on. He didn't tolerate not being prepared. There were division chiefs who did not want to go see the guy. They were afraid of him. He'd bite your head off. And really it wasn't he'd bite your head off; he wouldn't tolerate not being prepared and not having the answer that he needed.

Florence Townsend: He called me up one time and the discussion had to do with a superintendent who wanted to do something, or he didn't want a superintendent to do something, I don't recall exactly what it was. But I had to tell him he was wrong, and why. I said, "I disagree with you, sir. You're incorrect. This is how it's supposed to be." And I said, "And I will bring the references to you." Which I did. We were fine after that. You know, I could work with him. He did not make me feel uncomfortable. He respected me. Do your homework! It's okay to speak up and tell somebody that they're wrong, but you better be able to back yourself up. That was a huge lesson.

Florence Townsend: And I guess that's about it. I tried to tell you about the highlights of my wonderful life with the park service. Oh, there was one other thing that I'm really, really proud of. And that was, when I was in training in the '80s—

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Florence Townsend: I went to a course called The Essentials of Situational Leadership put on by the Center for Leadership Studies. It was in Escondido, California. Paul Hersey, whom you probably have heard of, and Kenny Blanchard with *The One-Minute Manager*, were the two principals in the Center for Leadership Studies. The class that I went to was for instructor training for situational leadership. I was able to bring that to the National Park Service, and it's still being used today, as far as I know, as a leadership training program. It's largely used at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center for law enforcement officers. But that was a big coup for me to bring a program to the Service that was really successful. [The real "success" was] the people who went through it were able to implement the concepts.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what's an example of situational leadership?

Florence Townsend: It has to do with assessing where an individual is on a competency and preparedness scale. The kind of leadership and supervision that you give to them to bring them up through, to where you want them to be on a particular issue, or on a particular skill. It's a way of evaluating and progressing through, like the bell-shaped curve to bring them up over the hump and down the other side from being unconsciously not capable of performing to being able to do it without giving it a second thought, when it's second nature to them. It's a pretty cool concept. And it works in families, too.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Yeah. That's fascinating. So other things that you, or situations that you were in that you think back and think that's something I handled well, or—

Florence Townsend: Well, the superintendents' conferences I'm very proud of. I mean, I did them for 19 years. And we always had managers from the Washington

office attend, and outside speakers on important topics. They were almost always, I would say they were 95 percent, 98 percent successful. Which is a really good track record. I put them together with assistance from the field, some years more than others. After I left, they wanted me to come back and do them. I said no. Thank you. [laughs] I didn't want to do another superintendents' conference. But for many years, they relied on me to do that. That was big. That was a large part of the management development program, so to speak, for the managers in the Midwest region.

Florence Townsend: We did several conferences combined with West, South, Rocky Mountain, Mid-Atlantic/North Atlantic Regions.

Lu Ann Jones: I was going to ask you if you had very much interaction with your counterparts in other regions.

Florence Townsend: Mm hmm. Oh, yeah. No, after the restructuring, there were only seven of us, as opposed to ten. And we consulted with one another.

Florence Townsend: Oh, another piece that I was really pleased to be a part of was developing the competencies for the public affairs field. I led that activity. That was significant.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, what do you think are your greatest strengths as a leader?

Florence Townsend: [pause] I would like to think that I'm a good listener. And that I have an ability to help an individual identify what their strengths are and how to go about focusing those strengths in ways to make a contributions to the organization.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Well it sounds like you've done a great job at doing that. It's been fascinating to hear about that work. I mean, your whole career is interesting. But I think there is something special in being able to help people figure out what their strengths are and how they're going to go about realizing their talents in the world. So, it's been fascinating to hear your story.

Florence Townsend: Oh, thank you. I love the training aspect. I spent a huge amount of my time in public affairs and issues management and communications and so on. I think what I learned in the training field I was able to use in the public affairs and communications field. Because there were many opportunities to communicate and collaborate and develop relationships with entities outside of the National Park Service that would help benefit our mission and objectives. So, it was a great ride. A great ride. I was lucky to like going to work every day.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, that sounds like a great place to end it. Thank you so much.

Florence Townsend: You're welcome. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me—

Lu Ann Jones: Absolutely.

Florence Townsend: —go on and on.

Lu Ann Jones: [laughs] It's been a blast.

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[START OF TRACK 5]

Lu Ann Jones: Okay, so this is wav file 022, this is LuAnn Jones. And Flo Six Townsend. And we're doing a short addendum to our interview that we thought we just stopped. So, there were a couple of things that you saw in your notes that you'd like to continue.

Florence Townsend: One of the most important things when I first went into public affairs was to establish our mission statement for public affairs. And that was to preserve, protect, defend, enhance and sustain the reputation of the National Park Service. And everything that we did was focused around that. Sometimes it was hard to keep that in mind. But you know, when you've got to do damage control on an issue, you're preserving the reputation of the Service.

Florence Townsend: The other thing that I was just very pleased with towards the end of my career was I was surprised with the presentation of the Department of the Interior Meritorious Service Award. That was in recognition of my ability to communicate and the collaborative efforts that I had engaged in as the Public Affairs Officer. And all of the things I did in that job to engender cooperation and the accomplishment of the mission of the National Park Service in the role of the Public Affairs Officer. It was hugely gratifying for me to be involved with the reopening of the Lincoln Home after its rehabilitation project, and the dedication of new units, like the Tall Grass Prairie National Preserve in Kansas and Dayton Aviation Heritage there in Ohio.

Florence Townsend: I was involved with the transfer of the ownership of the Minuteman Missile Site in South Dakota and engaging Assistant Secretary [Craig] Manson in that dedication. He had been at Minuteman when he was an airman.

Lu Ann Jones: How about that.

Florence Townsend: Yes. So that was a really cool connection.

Florence Townsend: Another piece that I was recognized for had to do with the Corps of Discovery II. The launch of the traveling exhibit in recognition of the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition. I was hugely involved with that event at Charlottesville, Virginia. And I edited two of the most popular editions of *People, Land and Water*, the Department of the Interior's newspaper, that had to do with the bicentennial of the Corps of Discovery. I had mentioned the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board*. That was one of the high points of my career, the meeting of Jesse Jackson and coming together of the President and our director and the justice of the Supreme Court all on the same platform at one of our events was just very amazing.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, that's good to have that. I'm glad we did that. So, it won't be any problem here. So, thank you.

Florence Townsend: Yes. Thank you.

Lu Ann Jones: All righty.

[END OF TRACK 5]

[END OF INTERVIEW]