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Marin Karraker  
October 29, 2016

Interview conducted by Lu Ann Jones  
Transcribed by Teresa Bergen  
Digitized by Casey Oehler

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ANPR Oral History Project

Marin Karraker

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Interview conducted by  
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The narrator has reviewed and corrected this transcript.

Audiofile: KARRAKER Marin 29 October 2016

[START OF TAPE 1]

Lu Ann Jones: We'll do a little test recording. I usually start out just with an introduction. This is Lu Ann Jones with the National Park Service, and we're here with the 39<sup>th</sup> Ranger Rendezvous and the oral history project, October 29, 2016. And I'm here with—

Marin Karraker: Marin Karraker. I'm the administrative officer at Valles Caldera National Preserve.

Lu Ann Jones: And do you agree to do this interview?

Marin Karraker: I do.

Lu Ann Jones: Good. Let's see what we—

[END OF TRACK 1]

[START OF TRACK 2]

Lu Ann Jones: Okay. So, we'll get started. When we talked earlier, I saw you graduated from Grand Canyon High School. So, you must have grown up in there. So, did you grow up in the park service? So maybe just begin at the beginning.

Marin Karraker: At the beginning of me? (laughs)

Lu Ann Jones: At the beginning of you. The beginning of your story of when you were born and where you were born, and kind of set the stage there.

Marin Karraker: Okay. My parents both worked for the park service. I'll go back a little further.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes.

Marin Karraker: Both worked for the park service in Everglades when they met. My dad was a supervisory naturalist, and my mom worked for him as a seasonal. They fell in love. Got married. She couldn't work for him anymore. But eventually they moved out to Grand Canyon. He was a trainer at Albright Training Center. So, I was born in Flagstaff. They had a hospital at Grand Canyon. The doctor had gone on vacation. Bad timing. So, Mom and Dad ran down to Flagstaff to have me. Nineteen-sixty-four.

Lu Ann Jones: And when had they met in Everglades? Do you know what year they met in Everglades?

Marin Karraker: Somewhere right around '58, I think, '59. Then they had gone to Carlsbad. And then I think it was from Carlsbad that they went to Grand Canyon.

- Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. So, your mom eventually gets back into the park. I mean, she's derailed there for a little bit, but when does she get back into another path?
- Marin Karraker: Right. So, she had three kids, me being the first. Wandered around following my father for several years. And 1977 was about when she went back into the park service. They split up. She longed for the career that she had set aside, and that's when she got back into it. She retired after about 27 years.
- Lu Ann Jones: Wow.
- Marin Karraker: So, she had a good, nice career. Yeah.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, I've talked to several people who grew up in the National Park Service. So how would you describe that life of being a park service kid?
- Marin Karraker: It's great. I don't know how it is for kids now, but then all the kids went to school together. Typically, small schools. We played together. For example, at Yosemite, we were there '72 to '74. After school, we'd take off behind the housing area and go play in Yosemite Creek, underneath the falls, and built forts in the rocks, and be out all day doing that stuff. So, in some ways it was a little traumatic. We'd move every couple of years. And I don't think that's the case anymore. But it was always hard to leave. But then we'd quickly make new friends at the new place. And looking back on it now, I got to live in all sorts of fantastic places and have all sorts of experiences that a lot of kids can't even imagine. So, it was really neat.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, can you take me to those different places that you lived as a youth?
- Marin Karraker: Sure. Uh huh.
- Lu Ann Jones: That would be great.
- Marin Karraker: So, born when my parents were at Grand Canyon. My sister was also born during that period of time. She got to be born in the clinic there at the canyon, which just kind of burns me, and she doesn't let me forget it. But we left there, went to Olympic. My dad was the chief naturalist there. My brother was born while we lived at Olympic. And then we went back east. Bought a house in Vienna, Virginia. My dad worked in WASO in training. Then to Yosemite for a couple of years. Then back east again to Harpers Ferry, and he was the superintendent at Mather Training Center there, which was really cool. And then to Grand Canyon. He was the superintendent at Albright Training Center. I did my junior and senior year there. That was a little traumatic, leaving in the middle of high school. And then I went to college. And then I started my park service career.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, you went to Alaska for college. How did you – yes?
- Marin Karraker: That was my second college.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, talk to me about that.

- Marin Karraker: At Grand Canyon, a class of 14 people, I was a valedictorian. I hate to say it, but it wasn't hard to do. Somehow, I excelled at that school. But had my choice of the three public schools in Arizona to go to college on a scholarship. And NAU [Northern Arizona University] in Flagstaff was too close to home. U of A [University of Arizona] in Tucson was too far away. ASU [Arizona State University] in Tempe was just right, although I later found out it's a very big school.
- Marin Karraker: So, I went to ASU. I was in the marching band, which was fabulous. But there's a reason I lost my scholarship: too much drinking beer after football games. Not studying. But, anyway.
- Marin Karraker: We had gone to Alaska on a family trip after I'd graduated from high school. My mom was moving up to Alaska to work at Gates of the Arctic. And I thought hey, I could go to school up there. So, I applied and got accepted and attended University of Alaska at Fairbanks.
- Lu Ann Jones: And you majored in natural resources, right?
- Marin Karraker: Right. Majored in natural resources. Really, truly, I can't say I always knew I wanted to be a ranger. It was fall back. What I really wanted to be was a tennis player. I wanted to be Chrissie Evert. (laughter) But you have to live in big cities, and places where you can have coaches and proper training facilities and all. I never really knew what I wanted to do in college. But natural resources was interesting. It came naturally to me. And it just seemed like, that sounds like a good idea.
- Marin Karraker: So, I got a bachelor's there. Did two seasons, my first National Park Service experience up there. Got a master's degree, also in natural resources management. Same university.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, what was your first park service experience?
- Marin Karraker: Not your typical one. It was Alaska Public Lands Information Center (APLIC). And they have a couple of centers, and this one was in Fairbanks. So, I worked the summers while going to school. Two summers at the center there.
- Lu Ann Jones: And what did you do exactly?
- Marin Karraker: I don't remember what they called us. We must have been information something. GS-3, information clerk or something like that. It was just a small little location, old historic post office in downtown Fairbanks. We did some walks outside, talks inside. We had movies we showed. It was eight different agencies that supplied information at that center. So, we really had to be knowledgeable about the whole of Alaska and recreational opportunities, even if you had never gone to those places. So, it was kind of unique in that, I mean, what a wealth of information I had to grab hold of really quickly, and then be able to dispense. It was neat.

- Lu Ann Jones: Well, Alaska's such an outdoors place. You like tennis. But were there other things that you were doing in Alaska to kind of take advantage of the environment there?
- Marin Karraker: Yeah. I like all sports, and I played all sports growing up. But I also like hiking and backpacking and camping, and got into whitewater canoeing there. I was always a little fearful about that. So, I found my way to lots of outdoor adventures. Skiing, both downhill and cross country. And just being out there in all that wildness. Yeah.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, you get your undergraduate degree, and you begin to work in public lands. At what point do you decide that you are going to, or do you have the opportunity, or do you decide that the park service is something you're going to pursue?
- Marin Karraker: So, I did the two seasons at APLIC. And was getting my master's. Was married at the time. And that fell apart. What I knew was I needed to go home. And home was still Grand Canyon. My dad was still there as the superintendent at Albright. And I knew that was a safe place to just get back to and figure out what's next.
- Marin Karraker: So, I moved home, and I got an SCA [Student Conservation Association] position at Yavapai Museum on the South Rim. So that's a real park. (laughter) And it was neat because with SCA I wore a different uniform, but I did everything the rangers did. You know, I prepared my own programs, gave the same walks and talks and hikes. Manned the information center. It was my first real experience, in a real park, this is what we do. And it was fabulous.
- Marin Karraker: So, the next season I got on as a park ranger, interpretive ranger. I did two long seasons at Yavapai, and then I got a term fee position, also at the South Rim. And then we went on from there.
- Lu Ann Jones: Well so many people, you know, you're a fee collector, right?
- Marin Karraker: Mm hmm.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, what is it about that job that makes it both challenging and interesting?
- Marin Karraker: (laughs) You know, one of my biggest challenges – and this surprised me and will probably surprise you – but I'm pretty smiley and I was then, too. Always happy. It didn't matter how many people came by my booth. I had to ask them the same questions, ask for the same ten dollars or whatever it was at the time. But every interaction was a new one and a fresh one. And I loved it. But one day, one of the rangers came through in his patrol vehicle. I was all smiley with him, just like anybody else. And he said, "Why are you so happy?" And I couldn't believe it. That was a challenge. After that, it was like this awakening. And I don't even, I couldn't even answer him. I was so dumbfounded. But it just was like a slap in the face. Well, that's what I'm supposed to do. What's wrong with that? From that point on, unfortunately, that little interaction had a lot of influence. And from that

point on, it was always a bit of a struggle by the end of the day. Well, why am I so smiley? This is a boring job. Why am I doing this?

Marin Karraker: But I think, looking back at being a fee collector, and thinking about fee collectors now, in so many parks, they're often the only person in green and gray—

Lu Ann Jones: I was going to say.

Marin Karraker: —that a visitor will see. And that first impression is so important. So, whoever sticks their head out of the booth with their flat hat on correctly, that may be the only ranger that kid in the backseat sees, or that visitor from France or wherever, who's never been to a national park. It's so important. So, any position, whether it's fee collecting, cleaning the bathrooms, being a superintendent, we all make an impression, whether we know it or not. That in itself is kind of cool.

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah. I mean, that's your orientation to a park, often.

Marin Karraker: Exactly. Exactly.

Lu Ann Jones: Pulling the maps out and all of that.

Marin Karraker: Right. Right.

Lu Ann Jones: That's a drag that you had to kind of battle against that, you know. But that's interesting that that was also kind of a lesson learned.

Marin Karraker: Very early on. Yeah. Yeah. And this may be something we talk about again later, but as far as moments that have been important to me, and things I try to remember, we have a lot of fabulous moments and very valuable lessons in a positive fashion. But even those that seem kind of negative, like that one or the supervisor I had who just wasn't a good supervisor, those are valuable lessons, too. And you remember those – and that's not how I want to be. That way, you can turn it into a positive.

Lu Ann Jones: So just sort of take me from there as your different positions unfold. Yeah.

Marin Karraker: Okay. Okay.

Lu Ann Jones: And kind of how you're again moving from those positions. I mean, I really am fascinated with career development. Kind of what happens, kind of planning, what happens serendipitously, and just that kind of combination of things. Yeah.

Marin Karraker: So, I stayed at Grand Canyon. Was still a fee collector. My father passed away quite abruptly. He was still at Albright. The Rangers Skills classes would come in. And Charlie Strickfaden has been here [at Ranger Rendezvous] this week. He's a superintendent at Fort Union. He was in that class. Every week, they'd play volleyball, and I would go play, too, down at the school. I had gone out of town

that week and they were playing. My dad did a time out and dropped on the floor and died of a heart attack.

Lu Ann Jones: Oh my gosh.

Marin Karraker: And the connection I have with people like Charlie who worked on him that night, you know, it's just – I don't know. So that was earth shattering. He was my hero. And I was living in his home. So where do we go now? So, I had to grow up really quickly.

Lu Ann Jones: You were in your early twenties or mid-twenties then?

Marin Karraker: Mid-twenties. I was 28 when he died. So, I moved into park housing on my own. Sometime after that I moved from fees, got my first permanent job. Back then, they had the clerk typist test, which I don't even remember at this point what I did for that. (laughter) I don't remember typing. But I scored well and was able to get a permanent job. It was an information receptionist, which doesn't exist anymore.

Marin Karraker: I ended up working out at Desert View on the South Rim at Tusayan Museum. I was also on the side working as a basketball coach for the girls' team at the high school. This was the same team that I had been on when I was in high school. So that was kind of cool. I was in two worlds. I was in, you know, my schooling world and I was in my more adult career world, I guess. But I had remarried, and we were out at Desert View, getting ready to have a baby. I have a 21-year-old daughter now, Hannah. When she was three weeks old, I resigned my position. We drove to Olympic National Park and her father, my ex-husband, was a sub-district ranger there.

Marin Karraker: So, I became a fulltime mom at a ranger station at the end of the road. Really, truly, end of the road. The trail came right up to our cabin. Knocks in the middle of the night, "We need a ranger. Where's the campground?" You know, the kid is sleeping. So that was hard. I was no longer a ranger. And I could kind of feel what my mom must have felt. You know, you get this identity and then it's gone. You've got another identity; you're a mom. But I missed that other part.

Lu Ann Jones: Can I just ask you, so what did it meant to you to be a ranger?

Marin Karraker: It was, well, it was a legacy more than anything. I still felt like I was trying to figure out what I wanted to be. And truth be told, I'm still trying to figure that out. But it was like it was my heritage. I was supposed to be a ranger. You know? Both my parents were. And I was so proud of my dad. Hundreds of rangers passed through both Mather and Albright training centers. And even now, somebody will say, "Oh, I knew your dad." And nothing but great things to say. I wanted to honor his memory. So, when times are tough in my job, I remember that. That's the reason that I did it, why I joined, and why I stay in it. It's something in here. Inside. Yeah.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. That's neat. So how long were you at the cabin at the end of the trail?



- Marin Karraker: (laughs) We were at the cabin at the end of the trail for only a year and a half. It was Lake Ozette, which is on the coastal section of Olympic National Park. A hundred and twenty-six inches of rain that winter. And I would tell Jim, my ex-husband, I'd look out the window with Hannah in my arms and just watch the rain all day.
- Marin Karraker: There was another family at the end of the road. It was all forest service or private logging until you got to us. There was another family – I don't even know what to call it, a bride you pay for. You'd have to scratch all this. She came from—
- Lu Ann Jones: A mail order bride.
- Marin Karraker: A mail order bride. It was a mail order bride from Thailand, I believe, who'd married a much older American man. She had a young boy about, just a little bit older than Hannah. That was our only friends for a year and a half. And at least we had them.
- Marin Karraker: So, we were there a year and a half. Then Jim took a position down in Death Valley. So, we went from 126 inches of rain to 126 degrees. I loved Death Valley. Oh, my goodness. That park – each park has something – that park has so many things. It's got history, it's got beauty, it's got geology. It's got 11,000 feet down to minus, whatever it is, two hundred something. It's just phenomenal. So, we were only there for a year and a half. But I went back into a part-time position as visitor use assistant. They didn't have fee stations. We collected fees in the entrance station, at the front desk. So, we served alongside interpretive rangers, pretty much doing the same thing. Childcare was a bear there. So, I ended up having to reduce hours. But before that I got the opportunity to – that was at Furnace Creek, at headquarters – got the opportunity to start working up at Stovepipe Wells, another location in the park. And I'd have about a half hour drive each day. It was just beautiful. And that place is just gorgeous. So that was Death Valley for a year and a half.
- Marin Karraker: Jim had always wanted to be a pilot, and he was a backup pilot at the last two places he had worked. There was opportunity at Glen Canyon to be more than backup. Still backup, but a lot more hours, because they do a lot more flying. So, we moved to Page, Arizona. We were there for, from 1998 till oh, 2009. About eleven years or so. So that was nice for Hannah. It looked like she was going to repeat my experience of moving every couple of years. But we settled in Page. Her dad and I eventually split up. But Hannah got to do preschool through eighth grade in Page. And it's a real community, you know?
- Marin Karraker: I worked for the Natural History Association giving tours at the dam – or dam tours. (laughter) You weren't supposed to call it that – the first summer. Then I got on as a seasonal interpretive ranger with the park. Then I was an acting education specialist for a while, when that was open. And then I got a permanent position. I was a sub-district interpreter at Dangling Rope Marina, which is about 30 miles up lake. I had my own boat. Hannah's dad, she would stay with him for

the days I was on. I would boat up to Dangling Rope. Little apartment up there. Work at Dangling Rope and Rainbow Bridge and do my four days or whatever. And then come back home and would have Hannah for a long weekend. It was neat. It was really hard as a family. But it was so great that I had that opportunity.

Marin Karraker: Then the special park uses coordinator position came open, and that deals totally with permits. And at Glen Canyon in particular, they do a lot of filming. So, as I told you over the phone, some of this is so obscure. Print ads for Valtrex, you know, a herpes medication. A commercial for Nexium which is acid reflux medicine, I think. How does that fit?

Lu Ann Jones: How did it fit? (laughter)

Marin Karraker: Well, both of those, I think, maybe there was some imagery about the sandstone being rough. And you take this medicine, and it soothes things out or something. I didn't ask too many questions. But movies, usually it was like B roll or things you wouldn't really know about. One of the *Planet of the Apes* movies was right before I took the position. But also, there was a movie, Kathy Bates and Jessica Lange and somebody else. I have to think about what it was called. But they shot there. I'm not thinking. Shoot.

Lu Ann Jones: That's okay.

Marin Karraker: There was another movie [called *Evolution*] that Julianne Moore was in. It was kind of in the vein of *Ghostbusters*. Just awful. But you know, I have a copy of it, because you will find my name in the small print. Other things, too. Yoga videos. And I have a yoga video that was Rodney Yee, who was apparently kind of a big yoga guy. And I use it. At the end, we go to the credits and there's the permits coordinator: me. But it was just a neat opportunity to see a world that I didn't know. The Marlboro Man was shot there once. But yeah, a world I didn't know, just really interesting.

Marin Karraker: And it was just me. I was the only one who did that job. So, it was really specialized. I'd hang out with film crews at dawn, and at dusk. It was just really neat.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, how did you train for that job? I mean, it seems like there you'd have to understand something about rules, regulations, laws that would govern use and things like that. So how did you – and one of the things that I find really interesting in the park service is how people do go from one job to the next. They don't stay in one thing, necessarily where, like – so how did you learn that job?

Marin Karraker: I was an interpreter. So, I knew how to talk with people and talk to people.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. Yes.

Marin Karraker: They have special park uses training. Lee Dickinson is in Washington.

- Lu Ann Jones: Yes.
- Marin Karraker: Love her. She puts on training twice a year. And for somebody that high up, you know, the first time I met her, first training I went to, here's my number, here's my email, call anytime. That was years ago now, and we still communicate.
- Marin Karraker: So, I went to training. The person who'd been in the position before me, and the person before her, were both good friends. So, I had people to ask questions of. That job, like a lot of jobs, I think, we hold, it's kind of a fake it till you make it. Just do the best you can. And certainly, brush up where you can on policy and regulations and all that. If you don't know, ask questions. I think, especially with film crews and you know, site managers, directors, producers, they always want more than you can give. The attitude had to be friendly but firm, you know. I can't give away the bank, you know; ask for what you want, I'll go and see. But I could never make promises. And once you give them that inch, they're going to take a dozen more. So that was always challenging. But a lot of it was just learning as I went. And really, truly, it was kind of a fake it till you make it. And always present myself as the authority. They were the visitor. I hopefully knew the right answers and could guide them. And they could still get what they needed and wanted.
- Lu Ann Jones: One of the questions that we often ask is about supervisors along the way. So, by this point, you've been in the park service for a while. Were you beginning to see kind of supervisory styles or leadership styles that you were taking note of? Or saying that that's the kind of person I want to be, or I don't want to be like that person? Can you talk about just those kinds of relationships in terms of the supervisory roles?
- Marin Karraker: Right. Well, definitely. I don't think that, I didn't have a mentor at that time. And you know, we've talked about mentoring this week [at Ranger Rendezvous]. And I think it's really catching on now. I think that there's more of a drive for mentoring. And I'm a mentor. But I didn't have a mentor back in those days of Glen Canyon and previous. But I was definitely seeing people that I wanted to emulate or that I would ask for advice from, and people that no way, I don't ever want to be like them. I still see that, and I try to take the lessons from both sides.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, what was something that you wanted to emulate, and something that you didn't, you tried to avoid that?
- Marin Karraker: (laughs) Something I wanted to emulate – and I do – was, as I was moving up, and with the position in permits being specialized, I dealt one on one with all sorts of people in the parks, all the way up to superintendent. Before that, I would have been real timid and kind of, you know, that's not my place to talk to a chief or superintendent. But Kitty Roberts was the superintendent at Glen Canyon for a while. And she was very firm. She was a strong woman. But she was approachable. And if you knew your stuff, she'd talk with you all day. So that was

fabulous. That gave me the sense that yes, I can talk to these people. They're going to try and help me.

Marin Karraker: On the other hand, you're always going to find people in any organization who do look at that ladder, that chain and so no, I'm a chief, I don't talk to GS-5s. You know, go talk to your supervisor. And I don't have to remember that; it's ingrained now. That's not how I'm going to be. I'm an 11 now, and I know every seasonal on our staff this year. I pride myself on that.

Lu Ann Jones: So, then kind of keep moving along.

Marin Karraker: (laughs) So, okay, so we're still in Glen Canyon. Special park uses. It was in the management office. I actually worked in the superintendent's office, and that allowed me to get into public affairs. My supervisor was Char Obergh, who was there forever and ever.

Lu Ann Jones: Can you spell that name? The transcriber will love you. (laughs)

Marin Karraker: Sure. "Char" is for Charlotte, C-h-a-r. Obergh is O-b-e-r-g-h, Obergh. And she was the management assistant. I don't know that she worked in any other park besides Glen Canyon. But I got to be backup public information officer. She taught me a lot. And it was exciting to do that stuff. Sometimes very stressful, especially in a park like that where we'd have deaths, and we'd have kids get lost. Some of the stuff was traumatic. And you were dealing with the family and sensitivity issues. I really enjoyed the work, both because it was challenging and because I felt that I had that sensitivity to serve in that capacity. So, I was doing special park uses and backup public information officer.

Marin Karraker: Then they did a reorganization, and they created a business management division out of what had been concessions. They moved me down the hall. So no longer was I in the superintendent's office. I was in business management, and they tacked onto my position commercial use authorizations. So, it made sense. Permits and permits.

Lu Ann Jones: What's the difference?

Marin Karraker: So special park uses is anything an individual or group wants to do that the general public cannot participate in. So more than just the filming, commercial photography I told you about. First Amendment rights. People who want to have weddings, family reunions. If somebody wants to run a triathlon in the park. You know, an athletic event. So, it's something that's not sponsored by the park as well. Commercial use authorizations are for commercial activities. So, if you don't have a concessions contract, you're not a big company doing the lodging or the food services, you might have a CUA, commercial use authorization. There would have been to provide for things like kayak tours. Or we actually had some more specialized ones for houseboat repairs, hiking tours, things like that.

- Marin Karraker: When I took that program over, they had 164 commercial permits. A lot of the companies in that local area held more than one. But it was way too many, and they could do just about anything. So, we really kind of consolidated the program. Put more meat to the regulations and really enforced. And we brought it down to sixty-something. But it was still so much work.
- Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. So, you said that you were moved down the hall. So, did you have any say about this new appointment?
- Marin Karraker: No, no, please! Don't make me! (laughter)
- Lu Ann Jones: Why were you, well, you had been doing the permits, right?
- Marin Karraker: Right. I didn't have any say. No, you know, it was for the good of the organization.
- Lu Ann Jones: Right. Right. Right.
- Marin Karraker: It made sense to somebody to move that position down there. And it really did. Because concessions and commercial uses go hand in hand. So, it did make sense. But it felt like taking a step back, even as the work was doubling. But they did do an accretion of duties. I got a grade increase out of that. That was nice.
- Lu Ann Jones: Yeah.
- Marin Karraker: But, so, I did that for, I guess a couple of years. Both of those aspects together. Special park uses and commercial use authorizations. I had been a GS-11 for a couple of years and was ready to do something different. A friend of mine had been working in a similar capacity. She was also managing a fee program at Haleakala in Maui, and she was leaving. She contacted me and asked me if I was interested in doing a detail. And of course, I said sure, let's go to Maui. (laughter)
- Marin Karraker: So, it was supposed to be a 60-day [detail]. I went over to Maui. I took Hannah with me. She finished up her school early so she could go with me. That was a little unfortunate because it's the top of a volcano. That's where I was living. No other kids. And that didn't go so well. But I was the acting, BRP, business revenue program specialist. BRPS. So doing the permits. And overseeing the fee world, the fee management program. So, new challenges. You know, new locale. Fell in love again. These law enforcement rangers. (laughter) But I'd also put in for a similar position at Golden Gate. Same time. Haleakala was an 11; Golden Gate was a 12. And the very same day, I swear to you, Golden Gate called and offered the 12. Same day as Haleakala said, "Do you want to stay?" Oh, my. I was in love.
- Marin Karraker: I chose Haleakala. (laughs) My daughter has never forgiven me. But what she doesn't understand, she was in eighth grade at the time, is how much it cost to live in San Francisco. My brother lives there. All she could see is oh, we'll live in the city, you know, and on my GS12 salary it will be fabulous. And what I was

envisioning is we'll live somewhere across the bay. She'll go to school and do her activities there. I'll commute into the city. I'll never be able to go out and see the activities that she's participating in.

Lu Ann Jones:

Yeah.

Marin Karraker:

So, I chose Haleakala. Her father was still in the park service. He was moving from Big Bend to Boise, to the National Interagency Fire Center there, to be part of the fixed-wing program. And she was going into high school. And so, we made the decision that she would go to Boise. She is blonde. She's Anglo. It's tough on kids in Hawaii if you're not local. I was really concerned for her. And the level of education, I didn't think, was up to par. So, she went to Boise and flourished, and that was a great decision.

Marin Karraker:

So, I was in Maui for a year and a half. And that was an experience. I loved my job, worked way too hard. But saw a side of Maui and the Hawaiian Islands that tourists don't get to see. You know, it's paradise. It's beautiful. But beneath the surface, there are families who are working two, three jobs in the service industry to try to make a living. There are a lot of racial tensions between native Hawaiians and everybody else. And it's just not as pretty when you know all that. And it's very expensive. I was far home and far from my kid.

Marin Karraker:

So, the law enforcement ranger and I decided to look into a dual career. We found positions in San Juan Island up in Washington State. He as a chief ranger. Promotion for him. Me, I was going to go back to interp. And it was actually a demotion for me. I took a downgrade to go. That love stuff gets you every time. (Lu Ann Jones laughs)

Marin Karraker:

So, we went to San Juan Island, and that, too, was beautiful. It's gorgeous. Again, it's that island situation. So, you're isolated. A little easier to get to the mainland. But things were expensive. There's a different mentality. But we enjoyed our time there.

Marin Karraker:

Eventually I had the opportunity to move into the vacant administrative officer position. I'd never considered admin. But I felt stifled in interp, and was kind of starting to look at the future, and where I wanted to go with this. And that position was available. The superintendent there who I'll always be grateful to, Lee Taylor, she gave me the opportunity. And I knew nothing about admin. But here I was, the new AO [administrative officer] at San Juan Island.

Marin Karraker:

So, I came in just as FBMS was coming on board. I can't even remember what that acronym stands for.

Lu Ann Jones:

What year was that?

Marin Karraker:

Two thousand and twelve. Financial—

Lu Ann Jones:

I'm going to go in there [hotel room bathroom] and just cough.

Marin Karraker: Okay. Go cough.

Lu Ann Jones: (coughs) That's better.

Marin Karraker: Yeah?

Lu Ann Jones: So, yeah, [unclear]

Marin Karraker: Two thousand twelve, I think—

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. Yes.

Marin Karraker: —the new financial system, FBMS. Fortunately for me, I came in at the very same time, exact same time, in admin. So, I didn't have to unlearn anything, you know?

Lu Ann Jones: Right.

Marin Karraker: We did the field training and went to training, it was a weeklong, I think, in Seattle. And there were admin folks from all over Pacific West. And you could see it. Some of these, mostly women, but some of these AOs who'd been in for 20, 30 years, and you could just see, I'm not learning another program. And you could see retirements happening because of FBMS. So, I still don't understand that system. It's not user-friendly. I know the processes that I need to know to do what I need to do. And my staff as well.

Marin Karraker: So, I jumped into the admin world, and stayed at San Juan Island. I was the AO there for two years. And I wanted to get back to GS-11 somewhere. So applied lots of places. And—

Lu Ann Jones: (coughs) Sorry.

Marin Karraker: That's okay. And got an interview at Chamizal National Memorial in El Paso, Texas. I'd been there once for a public affairs training, and everything I saw about El Paso, oh, my gosh, I never need to go back there again. So, of course, they offered me the job. (laughs) But it was time for something different. The ranger who had gone up with me to San Juan Island had moved on to Sequoia/Kings [Canyon]. So, it was my turn to move. So, I headed to El Paso with my cat.

Marin Karraker: El Paso, I have a better appreciation for it now. The best Mexican food in the world, and super cheap. El Paso is a strange town, city. You know, it's right there on the border. Juarez, Mexico, is right there. El Paso is very safe. Juarez is not. Fort Bliss is there. So, there's a big military presence and military families, a lot of young families. There's a Hispanic American presence, and those families. And here I am, middle-aged woman with a cat who's lived all over the place and has no roots. I couldn't figure out how to fit in there.

- Marin Karraker: So, I was there for only eleven months as the administrative officer. Much bigger budget than I'd had previously, so I gained a lot of experience there – dealing with people and having employees that I was supervising. So, it was a good experience professionally, but not so good personally.
- Marin Karraker: I had come to, I had gone to a training in Lakewood, at the Intermountain Regional Office, for admin. I had met Rena Fugate, who was associate regional director for business affairs, that sort of thing. And it's another one of those people in a high-up position who said, as soon as you met them, "If you need anything, call me." She opened her segment of the training that way, you know. She'd been in for a gazillion years, and very respected. "If you need anything, call me."
- Marin Karraker: So, at Chamizal, I was really unhappy. I was unhappy with myself for making the move and then not wanting to stay, because I always feel the sense of commitment, you know? You say you're going to go there, you put in your time, and that's what you do. But I felt like I was dying inside there. It wasn't where I wanted to be.
- Marin Karraker: I called her. For the next half a year or so she was my confidante. She was my mentor. And she would call me just to check in, if she hadn't heard from me in a while. "How's it going," you know. And she probably had her other connections that could see what the parks were doing. So, she was kind of keeping track of what was going on at Chamizal.
- Marin Karraker: I would drive from El Paso to Durango, where my mom lived. She retired there. And I would drive up [Interstate] 25 and then turn onto [Route] 550 to go up through northwestern New Mexico. And I would pass the exit for Highway 4. And the sign for Valles Caldera National Preserve and Jemez Springs, and never went up there.
- Marin Karraker: And then I'd seen an announcement. They were announcing all these positions for this place. And I finally heard that they were going to create a new park. But the announcement for the admin officer position was local hiring only, as I guess all those positions were. It was like, darn. So, I couldn't apply.
- Marin Karraker: So, I go back to Chamizal. And then I get a call from Rena. "Hey, we're opening a new park. Do you want to come on a detail as the AO?" Oh my goodness. That's huge. I had no idea how huge. To stand up a new national park unit is just huge.
- Marin Karraker: So, I was so honored. And I was scared to death. And, "Of course!"
- Lu Ann Jones: So, tell me, what is it to stand up a new place?
- Marin Karraker: Well, if it, I guess this situation turned out to be a little different. But it's the only one I've stood up. But you know, some new parks are purely new parks; they start from nothing. This park is different in the fact that it had been a trust. It was



Valles Caldera Trust, and run as, they said, an experiment in public lands management. There was some association with the Forest Service, so they used their programs and all that. So, I inherited a program, basically, from the trust. When they did that local hiring authority, what they attempted to do is bring as many people from the trust into the park service. Small community, you know, a lot of people are going to be displaced.

Lu Ann Jones: (coughs) I'm so sorry, but somehow I have this tickle in my throat. Sorry.

Marin Karraker: It's okay. (laughs) It's okay. You're the one that's got to work with the recording. (laughs)

Lu Ann Jones: The transcribing service, I'll have to pay a little premium.

Marin Karraker: So, I got there and Rena was there. They had been doing a transition for quite some time. I wasn't aware of it. But for about a year, I think, they'd been working on transition. I showed up beginning of October with about 28 people who'd been hired from the trust – brand new park service employees – myself and the chief ranger. As luck would have it, the chief ranger was the chief ranger at Haleakala. We'd worked together. Of all the people they could have put together, we had worked together. So, two of us trying to herd and train a bunch of kittens and puppies into the park service way. All the policy, the processes, the programs, everything. Now! You know? (laughs) So we hit the ground running. And I'll tell you, we've just gone through a year. Hardest job I've ever done. I work way harder than I should. You know, they talk about work and home life balance, and I have none. (laughs)

Lu Ann Jones: (coughs) I'm sorry. Let me go in here [hotel bathroom] for another minute. Try to cough again.

Marin Karraker: Okay. (laughs) Okay.

Lu Ann Jones: Okay. Fingers crossed. So, it's been a very hard, a very challenging year.

Marin Karraker: A very challenging year, yes. We've done a lot of training. We've done a lot of retraining. For these people, some positions just kind of naturally flow into the park service way. Especially like the bio techs and the art techs, and folks who are doing science. Science is science. Maybe the paperwork changes but their positions, you know, they were easy to transition into. Others, you know, we had somebody who ran the gift store for the trust and now she's the fee program manager, and she's doing special park uses. The permits that I used to do. So, I know what she has to do. She's way overloaded, but she's giving it her best. So, there's been varying degrees of success.

Marin Karraker: But we're in it for another year. I thought, really truly, and naively thought, we'd go through everything once. A first year of everything. And the second year's got to be easier, right? (laughs) No. Some people have left. They've decided it's not for them. So, we've had a couple of people come in from the park service, which I

think is going to help. So, we're still, some of these things, even though we've done them once, we're going to be doing them over and over. And I guess that's true anyway. Over and over. Yeah, it will get easier with time. But it's just, it's huge. But it's so rewarding.

Marin Karraker: When we had our celebration, I think it was October tenth. Sally Jewell [secretary of the Interior] came, and Sue Masica [director of the Intermountain Region]. Jorge, the superintendent and myself, we all stood for a picture. And it's on my wall. To stand there with those people, you have no idea what that meant to me. And I'm so proud to have been chosen to be part of this park. And it's kind of a tip of the hat to my dad, you know. Your kid is doing good. She's following in the footsteps.

Marin Karraker: So, there's tons of challenges at Valles. And it's fabulous. And I'm exhausted.

Lu Ann Jones: When you said that, going back, so when you said that when you went to San Juan Island, you were in the dual career program?

Marin Karraker: Not officially a program.

Lu Ann Jones: So, what, yeah, I mean, you were trying to both be working at the same park.

Marin Karraker: Right. Right. So—

Lu Ann Jones: (coughs) Sorry.

Marin Karraker: That's okay. So, at San Juan Island National Historical Park. Yeah. You know, the park service has talked a lot of years about a dual career program. Maybe there used to be an attempt at a program. I couldn't see it. I think the year we were looking for positions together, I think I applied for thirty-some before we found something that would fit the bill. Same park. And it wasn't ideal, because I had to take a downgrade, you know. And I think that compromised our relationship, that stress.

Marin Karraker: The dual career idea is really fabulous. And I wish it would work for folks. I think what a lot of couples find is they stay together. Somebody makes a sacrifice, like I did. Or they choose to work in different places. And that works for some folks. It didn't work for my relationship. And so, it ended.

Marin Karraker: Other folks, we've got two law enforcement rangers at our park, their wives don't work in the park service, you know. And typically, you'll see the wife is in a medical field, she's a nurse or something, or a teacher. And usually it's the wife, has been my experience, anyway, who is finding the outside job. And that works, too. But if you meet in the park as rangers, you fall in love as rangers, and then one person has to change their identity, that's hard on a relationship. So, I don't know that dual careers can work as a program. I think couples are very lucky or fortunate when they can find a situation where it works. Yeah.

- Lu Ann Jones: You said in our conversation that you were aiming to be a superintendent yourself. (Marin Karraker laughs) So do you think, what do you think needs to happen for you to move into a superintendency?
- Marin Karraker: Oh, I'm working on that today. As we speak. (laughter) You know, as I said earlier, I made a commitment to stay.
- Lu Ann Jones: Right. Yes.
- Marin Karraker: And I've made a commitment to stay at Valles for three years. But people keep telling me, you know, if the opportunity comes available, you're not tied to anything. And I know. It's more internal than anything. ANPR is a prime example of how to network, and that's what I do. I'm very grateful to the people who've helped me along the way, like Lee Taylor, the superintendent at San Juan Island. We keep in touch. She's provided valuable lessons to me on how to be a good supervisor – and she was a first-year superintendent there – and how to be a good superintendent from the get go. So having folks like that in your corner, and staying in touch. Networking. You know, I've been able, with this position, as I move up, I've been able to meet higher-graded folks in other parks. I think also as I've gone up in grades, and as I've grown up, maybe I'm fooling myself, but I feel more empowered to just to grab somebody. "Hey, I'm Marin Karraker. Tell me about your park." I'm just a little bolder, I guess. (laughs) And I'm truly interested. But I'm also planning my future. Where would I want to go?
- Marin Karraker: So, a conversation with somebody today who was actually instrumental in – how do I want to say this? We probably better strike this. But instrumental in the knowledge I've gained about Valles and its history. You know, just in conversation with him today, he suggested that a position might be coming open somewhere. And wow, wouldn't you be great for that. And I'm like well, yeah, wow, tell me more. And it's down the road. But it's nice to dream, you know?
- Marin Karraker: There are folks who find their park who are just going to stay there forever. And whether they stay in one position or they work their way up, sometimes I wish I was like that. I think this goes back to my childhood and always moving. It's just in my blood, and that's what I do. So, I'm always looking for the next opportunity. And it's opportunity for me to move up, but it's also an opportunity for me to share what I know and what I've learned with other folks. And I think that's kind of cool, too.
- Lu Ann Jones: How do you think you've developed as a supervisor? And people who've kind of taught you those supervisory skills or philosophy? Kind of what do you think you've picked up from them?
- Marin Karraker: As I said before, I definitely picked up some ways I don't want to be. And those might be even more important lessons. I've never supervised a large group of people. So that still seems a little daunting. My crews are usually small, a half dozen or so. But that's all right, because you get more one on one. Both when

things are going really well, and when they're going poorly. So I think I tend to be a more personable supervisor. And I don't know if that's good or bad. Some people say you shouldn't get too close to your employees, because it kind of muddies the waters. But I care about my employees as people. I don't want to just know them as my budget tech and my admin tech. I want to know something about their lives. We don't need to delve too much into the personal, but we're humans, and I care about them as such. So, I like to know my employees. I think you build that trust, that's going to pay off professionally as well. I feel like I've developed some really good relations with the people that I supervise. Some folks are older than me. So, it's not really that I'm mentoring somebody.

Lu Ann Jones: Right.

Marin Karraker: In the case with Valles, though, my employees, two of them are older than me. But because they're new to the park service, I am mentoring them. And that's kind of a neat scenario. But I try to be in partnership. Yes, I'm the supervisor, and they're the employee. But unless there really is a need to be the supervisor, I try to see us all on the same plane. We're the administrative division. We're working as a team for the rest of the park. And so far, that's served me well.

Lu Ann Jones: As a supervisor, what do you dread? What's a situation where you have to be a supervisor, it's like, oh my gosh.

Marin Karraker: I told you the other day I was working on EPAPs, (laughter) our performance appraisals. I don't dread those so much. They're a lot of work. And I think most anybody will tell you that EPAPs [Employee Performance Appraisal Plans] have some value, but they're very subjective. And some supervisors will put lots of good narration in them. I try to do that, because people want to know. They want to know that you've been watching, and that you can say yes, he did a great job on this or that and give some specifics. But I've had supervisors who don't put anything there. And you work so hard to get nothing? Some people might not care, because they want the grade or whatever. But I want to know what I did well and what I need to improve on. So, the performance appraisals are a lot of work. And I don't know that I dread them, but I don't look forward to them.

Marin Karraker: As a supervisor, what do I dread? I've had a situation with an employee that just wasn't cutting it. It was both performance and conduct. And that's hard, because as I stated before, we're a team. And I try to get on some sort of personal level with my people. But when they're not holding up their end of the bargain as far as their performance, it's hard for me to then step back and be the supervisor and, you know, do the reprimands or do whatever I have to do to get us back on track. And that's what I dread. I've only dealt with it as far as getting anywhere down the road with reprimands and all, I've only dealt with it once. And it's hard. I don't like it.

Lu Ann Jones: What kind of advice did you get about being a superintendent? And I guess, what does being a superintendent mean to you?

- Marin Karraker: More often than not, I've gotten the, "Why do you want to do that?" (laughter)
- Lu Ann Jones: And why do they put it that way?
- Marin Karraker: I don't know. And sometimes it's people who *are* superintendents. Sometimes it's people who just don't have a clue. And it's just recently that I've kind of asked myself, why do you want to do that? But I still want to do that. Ask me your question. (laughs)
- Lu Ann Jones: So well one, you said that a superintendent gave you some advice about kind of how to set the tone from the start.
- Marin Karraker: Mm hmm.
- Lu Ann Jones: So that's, I guess that's one question. And then, what does it, what does being a superintendent mean to you?
- Marin Karraker: Okay. So being a superintendent, I think, it comes back to the legacy thing for me. And it's in my blood. I don't believe in a lot of the higher being stuff and all that, but I think I'm supposed to be one. Somewhere inside, I feel that. That this is what I'm supposed to do. And what being a superintendent is, is guiding your people down the right path, making the hard decisions to fulfill the mission. And that's hard. The mission itself is hard enough because of the conflict in it of conserving, but allowing everybody to enjoy it. But our park units, they're so diverse. And some places, it just blows my mind, how could a park superintendent or management team manage something like a Yellowstone or a Yosemite? But I see the superintendent as being part of a team, just like I try to do with my group of people. You know, the superintendent, at the end of the day, is the one who has to decide, who's going to take the fall for making a poor decision. But I see that person as being part of that management team, and guiding that park down the road, through the fiscal year, and on, and on and on.
- Marin Karraker: I have said that when it's my turn, that I don't want to be the superintendent who never comes out of their office, who doesn't know the name of the seasonals because they're so busy or they're too important or whatever. I don't know if this can happen, but this is my plan. I want to be the superintendent that makes the time, that finds the time, to go out to the work sites, go hang out with maintenance and see what they're working on. Go to an interpretive program and listen to what your interpreters are saying. Go sit with the budget analyst, which they should be doing anyway. Be a part of the whole. Not just sitting in that office somewhere down the hall, waiting for the papers to come down to sign. I really want to still be involved in every aspect of the park. And I don't know if I'm kidding myself, if that's possible. But I'm going to try, you know?
- Lu Ann Jones: What are some questions that you've thought about that we haven't talked about yet? Anything from kind of the bigger philosophical questions that come, that I had posed?

- Marin Karraker: I looked at the questions that you gave me. And I guess I'm not there yet with the bigger philosophical, you know?
- Lu Ann Jones: Right. Yeah.
- Marin Karraker: I read some of those as being for folks who are retired. I've got 19 years in, which, sometimes I think about it and it's like, that's not a lot. But other times it's like yeah, that could be a career for somebody. But I just don't feel like I'm there yet to talk about my feelings about, you know, how the park service has progressed and where we're going into the next century. I think I'm more narrow focused on my park at this time. And maybe my region. And me, selfishly. And where I'm going, and where I could take a park in the future.
- Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. Well, where has ANPR, what role has that played in—
- Marin Karraker: Not a big enough one. Yet. Like I said, my mom was in ANPR from the get-go. I always thought, that's a cool organization. I had gone to a Rendezvous when I was pregnant, 1994, I think it was. And that one was in Tamarron, right outside of Durango. And so, you know, 21, 22 years ago. So, I was 30.
- Lu Ann Jones: Excuse me.
- Marin Karraker: That's okay. I was the Karraker kid. I mean, I still am. A lot of these folks are retired. "I knew you when you were this." I'm still the Karraker kid. I'll always be the Karraker kid. But then, I truly was. I didn't have a career with the park service yet. So that was my first taste of ANPR. And there was really this connection of folks. Back then, as I recall, it seemed more a group of people that were pretty much the same generation. They were all similar places in their career. And there was that real camaraderie. A lot of drinking. Stories about my mom dancing on the table with whomever. Social hours. It sounded like a lot of fun. But they also did good stuff. They had great sessions for learning.
- Marin Karraker: But I raised Hannah. I was more involved with my family and my job. I went to another Ranger Rendezvous at Jackson. Now I couldn't even tell you when that was, maybe 12, 13 years ago. Again, I've seen the same thing. It seemed like it was still that same group of people, you know, my mom's age. But having a lot of fun, and just a chance to get together once a year and share stories, you know.
- Marin Karraker: Two years ago, I went to the one in Estes Park, and it was my chance, finally, to feel like an adult, you know, and feel like a career employee. My mom was there. (laughter) And her cronies were there. And they're still here. It was a chance for me to start reaching out to people my age and develop that networking, and to see the sort of programs that are available and where they're trying to go. I think the mentoring that is being talked about and is being done is a fabulous thing. Before that, they were really concentrating on seasonals, and how they could help seasonals. One thing that sticks out in my mind that I use is, there was health insurance that they helped to bring in, available for seasonals. And I partook of it, because I didn't have insurance.

- Marin Karraker: So, I think when they focused on folks coming in, that's really valuable. It's nice to recognize the old folks, you know, and celebrate them. But it's so fabulous, I think, that we're making more of a push to bring in the new members of ANPR.
- Marin Karraker: When I was at Estes Park, I'm like, I need to do more than just come to Rendezvous. Unfortunately, since then I moved to Chamizal, moved to Valles Caldera. And here I am again. I've got a year in at my park. Kind of settled. And I'm thinking, I'm jazzed again. I need to be part of ANPR. And I really do at this point. So, ask me again in five years the influence ANPR has had on me. But I hope also that I will have had some influence on ANPR by that time. I think it's a fabulous organization. I worry with this older generation, as they pass away, that ANPR won't be replenished. But I'm hopeful. And especially with the Supernaugh Scholarship that they're able to bring in new people and reenergize. That's a great thing.
- Lu Ann Jones: Yeah. Yeah. So, you mentioned that you were a mentor. Are you, through what auspices are you a mentor?
- Marin Karraker: So, when I was at Chamizal, Intermountain Region has an administrative advisory council. We have calls with all of admin over the region once a month, and I got to know Ken Bigley, who is in ANPR. He, they were talking about mentoring. He gave me a call one day. "We need you." I'm like, oh, no, what? You know? I'm busy. IMR had a formal mentoring program, and they were hooking up people. They had somebody, she's the secretary at Amistad, secretary to the superintendent at Amistad. She had been with AmeriCorps. So, this was her first permanent position. It wasn't really that she wanted guidance in her position; she wanted more well-rounded, what's the park service all about. You know, mission and history and moving forward, and who better but a park brat. So, Ken said, "We need you." And I said okay.
- Marin Karraker: So, her name's Debbie England. She and I started talking about 18 months ago now and went through the year-long formal program with IMR, and that was really good. But after that we made the decision to keep talking. She is on a detail right now as the assistant to the superintendent at Grand Canyon, the new superintendent at Grand Canyon, and that's huge. And she's loving it. But you can imagine her fear as she's getting ready to go over, knowing this is, you know, this was Chris Lehnertz who was regional director of Pacific West, Golden Gate superintendent. This woman's huge, and I'm going to go be her assistant? So, Debbie was really nervous. But I think she's really shone. And I love talking to her and just getting the reports back.
- Marin Karraker: The other mentoring I do is kind of by accident, but it's so cool. When I was at San Juan Island, still doing interp, the little info desk at American Camp, this girl ran up to me. I remember her as being much younger, but she said she was in eighth grade or something like that. She came up to me and talked for a while. And then she left, and then she came back. She said, "I want to be a ranger. What

do I have to do?” So, you know, I talked to her for a little bit. She was with her family. I gave her my card and said, anytime.

Marin Karraker: Maybe a year later, she called. Well, I was still there, and we just kept up the conversation. She’d call once in a while. She’d email. She’s from Texas. When I found out I was going to Chamizal, in Texas, and of course it’s a big state, but that’s okay, she was so excited. She’s in Lubbock, Texas, which isn’t too far. But lo and behold, she had family in El Paso. So, she and her family came down to Chamizal one day. I was so nervous. I’m telling everybody this story, I’ve never met this girl – although I know now that wasn’t true – I’m so excited. You know, she found me at San Juan Island, I’m going to be her mentor and all. And she showed up. It was so wonderful. Her family.

Marin Karraker: She said, “Marin, I’ve got to tell you. We met before at San Juan Island.” You’ve ruined my story. So, she is a junior at Texas Tech now, studying anthropology. She’s interested in law enforcement, too. Two seasons ago she worked as a volunteer at Gila Cliff Dwellings. And couldn’t find her position last summer. She started a little too late putting in applications. But I’m really hopeful she’ll be able to get her first seasonal position this summer. And it’s so neat. She’s my daughter’s age. And it’s just so neat to see this person whose career is beginning. She has the passion that I wasn’t really sure of back then. And I’m so excited to see where she goes with that. So.

Lu Ann Jones: Mm hmm. That is a nice feeling to have.

Marin Karraker: Uh huh. It really is. I tell my daughter, you know. Hannah went into musical theater. But now she’s studying, she’s political science and pre-law at USC [University of Southern California]. And that’s exciting, too. So, I’ve got this kid, Hannah, my kid, who’s doing that sort of stuff, which is neat. But I’ve got this other kid, Antonieta, my mentee, who’s my other kid now, who’s doing the stuff I kind of wanted my real kid to be doing. (laughter) So I’ve got the best of both worlds now.

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah. Yeah. Well, are there other things that you’d like to talk about in the context of the interview?

Marin Karraker: Hmm. I just revolve around the sense of family, I guess. Both what the park service has been for my family and meant for my family, and the fact that the park service is my family, you know? It’s a big organization. But it’s so funny how small it is. Events like this, Ranger Rendezvouses, where you don’t see anybody, somebody for a year, two years, five years, and you get together at one of these things. It’s like you never left each other. Or the situation like at my new park where the chief ranger happened to be somebody I worked with at Haleakala. You know? It is a small, small world. In some ways, we are family, and we’re pretty tight. And that’s really awesome. You know, people have said, “Would you go to a different agency?” No way! This is home. Besides, we have the best uniforms. (laughter) I can’t give up the green and gray for something inferior.



- Lu Ann Jones: So, what do you make, though, of allegations at Grand Canyon and other places, where Chris Lehnertz is basically sent there to—
- Marin Karraker: Clean up?
- Lu Ann Jones: —take care of things. And where the members, some members of the family disappoint [because of sexual harassment charges].
- Marin Karraker: Right.
- Lu Ann Jones: I mean, how to repair that damage?
- Marin Karraker: Right. Unfortunately, I guess, even in our own families, there will be members who disappoint. And it's sad that it happens, but it happens. What disappoints me is that stuff like this has been going on for years, and people knew in a general sense. Anybody who worked at Grand Canyon or was associated with the river, and it's happened in other places. It's just too bad that it went on for so long. I imagine this won't be the last time. There's something about human nature. So, all we can do is expose, you know. I say get rid of the folks that we can't rehabilitate, you know, or who just don't get it, especially when it's just repeated examples of the same kind of behavior. Those folks aren't going to change. I guess there's no promise. We don't want to sully our reputation with that. So, I think it's great that we've owned up. It makes me sad that all of us have had to go through sexual harassment training because of the actions of a few. But you know, that's often how it goes. But it is a good reminder. I think it's a fabulous reminder for my new park, new park service employees, to see that we take this stuff seriously. So, if it's not – and again, it's been mentioned this week. It's unfortunate it happened on the heels of the centennial, during the centennial. You know, kind of dampened our spirits during this period of celebration. But I'm proud that it has been brought to attention. I think Grand Canyon made a fabulous selection in Chris Lehnertz. I met her when I was at San Juan Island. I think she's awesome. I think that was exactly the right decision.
- Lu Ann Jones: She did a detail, I think at the beginning – well, I mean, I've only been in the park service since '09 in the Washington office. She did a detail, I think during the transition, and so I had a little bit of contact with her. She's good.
- Marin Karraker: She is good. Yeah. I think that was a good choice for a lot of reasons. So, I rambled there a bit.
- Lu Ann Jones: That's okay.
- Marin Karraker: That's my [phone?]
- Lu Ann Jones: That's all right.

- Marin Karraker: We're always going to have challenges like that, unfortunately. But I think that we're a grand agency. And I think if we own up to our mistakes and do better going forward, that's all we can ask for.
- Lu Ann Jones: Well, thank you so much for doing this.
- Marin Karraker: Thank you.
- Lu Ann Jones: And I'm so sorry I got to this coughing. I think it's probably the dry air or whatever.
- Marin Karraker: Probably.
- Lu Ann Jones: But thank you so much for sharing your story and your reflections.
- Marin Karraker: Thank you. I'm so excited for this. I'm so glad I got to see the presentation this morning and then talk to you guys. It's a neat idea. It really is. I hope it can be continued.
- Lu Ann Jones: Well, I think we'll see. To my way of thinking, I think it's kind of a year reflect on what have we done? Like I said, we've been kind of running, running, running. And I think this is a year to kind of take stock and when somebody asks is it going to go on, I should say that's up to ANPR. That's not up to me.
- Marin Karraker: Sure. Right.
- Lu Ann Jones: So, I think that discussion will happen this year. I assume it will.
- Marin Karraker: Good. Right. Well, good. Well, if not in ANPR, some other format.
- Lu Ann Jones: Yeah. And the thing is, well I'll turn this—
- Marin Karraker: Sure.

[END OF TRACK 2]

[END OF INTERVIEW]