

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

With
Georgia Abelman

Conducted By

Jerry Wasser

May 1998

This interview is with Georgia Abelmann for the City of Glendale oral history program. It is now May 6, Wednesday morning at 10:25 a.m.

Jerry Wasser: Georgia, usually I begin these interviews by asking the age of interviewees. In fact I am not going to do that. My mother always told me that it is probably an indelicate question to ask a lady.

Georgia Abelmann: I'm sure.

Jerry: And I will not do that. I know that you were not born in Glendale.

Georgia: No.

Jerry: Can you tell me where were you born?

Georgia: Yes, I was born in Holly, Colorado which is South Eastern Colorado down from Colorado Springs. And I had a very normal childhood there. The family were very involved in community and business.

Jerry: What brought you to Glendale?

Georgia: Well, my husband and I, as I had mentioned that we traveled around the world for 20 years and of course he was doing this before we were married. So he had a lot of time with Mobile Oil Company. So when he retired we, well we have bought a beautiful home on east coast, but somehow the winter that we returned from Tropics of mostly tropical life I would say. He said: "I don't like this cold weather" and I said, "No." And, the snow at that time was up to beyond probably said about three feet banked in our garage door, driveway, we couldn't get out and couldn't get in. He said: "Do you really wanna live here? I said: "No, not particularly". But we bought, thinking we would. So he had family here, I had my mother and father retired in Long Beach come out here, so we thought this was a good move. And so we just came out and start looking for a home and this is where we ended up in Glendale.

Jerry: What year was that?

Georgia: 1963.

Jerry: And what part of Glendale that you settled in?

Georgia: Right across the street here. We looked and looked for homes and at that point there wasn't too much on the market that was desirable. We've gone all the way up to San Francisco and all the way down to San Diego, just kind of looking. But we liked Glendale and his sister

lived here, and it is close to Long Beach and the idea of the desert, and the mountains, and the coast, you know.

Jerry: So it was in Mountain Central Avenue area.

Georgia: Right here across the street, 1401.

Jerry: Central?

Georgia: Yes, and we waited for that to be completed. We bought that first over there on the front where the fountain is. It was just perfect for our life style at that point. That's when I got the idea of going to business.

Jerry: When you first moved to Glendale? And what business was that?

Georgia: I went into the uniform business. I grew up in retail. My father had department stores and I am just...I was more comfortable behind the counter than in front of the counter. So as I said, he laughed at me and said: "Well I give you a year. How much money do you need?" And I told him. He says: "Well, here. Here is a check. Do it and you'll be out of that in a year. And I taught "That's what you think." So I opened my first store down on Central. And it went so well, very well that I moved to a larger place which is where the uniform store that I sold still is in that building, across from Sears.

Jerry: And what street was that?

Georgia: Central.

Jerry: Okay.

Georgia: Right down on Central. So then it went so well, the Galleria was being built and so I put a store there.

Jerry: Oh, my gosh.

Georgia: And it went so well and so somebody said: "Yes, we need something out in the valley here, why don't you open a store?" And I thought maybe I will. And I checked it out. And I opened a store in Newhall, which is called Santa Clarita Uniform.

Jerry: Did you feel that there was a particular niche for uniforms, and how did you arrive at that?

Georgia: Well, I just sort of shopped around Glendale. And at that point they were beginning to build convalescent homes and a hospital. They were expanding Memorial in Glendale. I knew Adventist had expansion plans and they really didn't have anything here. There was one store in the surgical supply which was just one manufacturer and they had no shoes, anything just uniforms. So my mind began to work and I thought uh. So I opened and as I said it just flourished. So then I went to USC because I had few friends that were going to school out there. I thought uh I am going out. So I called the secretary of the Dean and I said: "I would like to make an appointment." And I told her what I was up to. I said: "You know I have been out checked the school and your uniforms in your medical departments they're disgusting, there is nothing professional about them, they are not matched up, and I would like to speak to the Dean." So, she said: "Okay, I'll make an appointment." Which she did. So I went out. He was very cordial and I told him what I thought about the appearance of the students. And I said him not only that I don't think your staff looks particularly well dressed. I was very brusque. He said: "You know you have a point, what is it that you want me to do?" And I said, "I want you to sign a contract that I can have full control of the uniforms." He said: "Signed." I walked out of there with a contract. So then I spent ...they were just beginning to have around the clock, around the year schooling so he said: "What you want to start with?" I said: "Well, I have jackets, lab coats, that sort of things in mind but I do think their trousers are disgusting. They all look different, there are some washed, some pressed." He says: "Okay, trousers." So that's the way it started. And I had that school for 23 years, until I retired.

Jerry: Oh my gosh.

Georgia: And it was big account as you might know.

Jerry: I would imagine?

Georgia: And I worked with the Gerontology and they wrote me into that department. So, I just opened up and then I started doing other accounts.

Jerry: Did you feel that doing business in Glendale was a good atmosphere for you? Did you feel like you got support from the business community and the City government as well?

Georgia: Yes, I did.

Jerry: And how did that manifest itself? Did you join the Chamber of Commerce?

Georgia: Absolutely. I did that. I became community-minded, actually. I didn't just stop in Glendale. I went to Good Sam Hospital, I worked with graduate students from the colleges for nursing, what you call it now, registered nurses. But any way those divisions. I did graduating uniforms, I did their school uniforms, I did parochial schools in Burbank. I even did restaurants, country clubs. I mean, I really went out. And the first thing I knew I was invited to do fashion shows in Anaheim when they were having medical conventions, dental...In Beverly Hills I went to those hotels put on these shows. And when the pants and suits came in Good Sam called me that if I would come out and do a modeling demonstration to see if they would of approve of this pants suits. Of course I made it very professional appearance with girls. I took my own models, hats, shoes, the whole thing you know. And then had some men do some modeling...

Jerry: So you actually design the uniforms, as well...

Georgia: No, but if they told me what they wanted. I suggested and I did work with the pictures, and said, "What this is do for you?" I liked that. I did have a local manufacturer in Los Angeles, in the garment industry who things to order. I did the pink ladies, volunteers for the Memorial Hospital, for Adventist Hospital. I mean, it just opened doors and it just continued to open the doors. The staff of these hospitals, their nurses, and we made concentrated effort to make our people look professional. Of course they don't wear coats anymore, and they are not required to wear white even if you are in RN or whatever in LVN, but I worked on this possibilities, and they worked. So I did very well, when I retired I sold my stores and I said; "That's it, I'm happy, I've done well."

Jerry: Georgia, I know that you've been active with Glendale Adventist Hospital. Was it the uniform business that got you interested in the hospital? How did you get involve?

Georgia: No, not particularly. Like I said I was involved with Memorial Hospital as well as Adventist at that point. I interpreted whatever needed to, I supported them, it just seem to be a natural thing with me. I just

comfortable whatever I was involved. And like I said I used to go out and do fashion shows for nursing graduate classes in the Valley and towards as far as in Orange County. If I could see an opportunity I pursued it. I had enough background in my family that this is really like a game for me. I enjoyed it so much. My husband he just couldn't believe it.

Jerry: What was your perception of the politicians in town at the time? Were they favorable to business?

Georgia: Yes, I never had a problem with the political side of Glendale in my particular work and as I said I supported people, I felt were worthwhile. I contribute to them. I am not a politician, per say, if I don't believe in something I can not except it and say, oh sure, whatever. I have to have reasoning and belief in people.

Jerry: I know that Glendale has a reputation as being a very conservative city. And I think we often get bogged down on those terms of conservative and liberal. And possibly the reason that it has this reputation as being conservative city because it has always been seem to be business oriented.

Georgia: I think you truly are right on that.

Jerry: Do you feel that, that was the case when you started your business in late 60s early 70s?

Georgia: Yes, I did. The Chamber of Commerce was just beginning to really develop at that point too. And they gave a good push to the business area. Because really I don't think they had that. Before it was really something that they were pursuing. And as I said I worked with them and I was elected to the board, which I served 3 years. I don't know it's just very easy procedure for me.

Jerry: Were there other civic organizations that you were involve during this time?

Georgia: Oh, yes, I got involved with symphony. Of course at that point it was growing and I think the last...the first concert that we enjoyed was at the Hoover High School, I believe it was, and so right after that Mr. Heff got us into the Chandler, because he had, he was into that particular group.

Jerry: That's up at L.A. County Music Center.

Georgia: At the Chandler, Downtown and Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. So, we joined, and we came very active in symphony. I ended up being the president of the Women's Guild. I served on the Board twice, big Board. Because I really was interested. Music was my thing, when I was in college. I've studied voice from the time I was twelve and hoped to be an opera singer, nothing else. But, due to heart problem, collapsed heart valve, this is something that develops when you using your voice and... that's what killed Lily Pons. You are too young to remember her.

Jerry: I remember the name.

Georgia: She was my ideal. But what happened to me, was same thing that killed her. But that point they didn't really know too much about it. But when they told me in college you know, look you got to give up this voice because you are too intent on it and because my heart suddenly I mean I was in hospital, suddenly nobody could figure out what was wrong, but anyway it just broke my heart. And so then I pursued other interests. Got back into retail, so do speak.

Jerry: But the Glendale Symphony was kind of outlet for your interest in music?

Georgia: It was very important.

Jerry: Did it help to bring the community together, do you feel?

Georgia: The community yes, responded beautifully to the symphony, which I was very grateful because sometimes small towns like this will not. Of course I think the big thing at that point, the money people in Glendale went for the support of this because of Pip. He was a banker and a smart man as you know. It was just something that just grew automatically and I think the prestige of being at the Music Center made people want to be involved and our symphony grew and grew. And I remember when I was membership chairman of the big Board we came in with 365 members that year. I mean we worked hard but you know I am a marketer, let's faced, that's my fun thing. And we had buses from Riverside and buses from the Valley bringing bus loads of people to the symphony. Carmen Dragon was our symphonic director, he was wonderful and until his death he really brought this up. I know our symphony appeared on the Christmas program on NBC, every year.

Jerry: Oh, I didn't know that.

Georgia: Oh, I remember how wonderful it was, that was nationwide.

Jerry: Do you feel that programs like that brought national attention to the city as well for it supported the arts?

Georgia: Absolutely. We were recognized and I felt that after Carmen left us it was not... it was kind of down hill there for a while because people, they loved him. They loved his kind of music, and he did give class and dignity to the Glendale Symphony. He was wonderful man. So it's just so many things happened. We went along great but again I think we lost memberships. While we were downtown because of the fact of drive and beginning the criminal aspect that were showing up in Los Angeles and the people, older couples, and women who were great supporters they just said: "I am not driving downtown, I don't wanna be in downtown." Then our other big factor was the fact that the Board of Directors in the county there whoever was running the Chandler, they wanted to bring opera and ballet and that sort of thing and they were booked so tightly that they just kind of...well, the Glendale Symphony, you know we can get rid of him, it's not a Los Angeles thing. So they gave us only Sunday nights. And we knew that would not bring a full house. So the "Alex" was being developed, that something we were into, you know. And we just lost our place in downtown.

Jerry: So the Alex Theater is now the home of the symphony?

Georgia: That's where we are.

Jerry: And how do you feel that that's working out?

Georgia: I had hoped that there would be more enthusiastic for the people here to really rally, but I feel that the big detriment is the size. When people first went there I thing also the acoustics were not good. That balcony which we called the "founders" which was the expensive seats, of course, that sold out very quickly, but again we had that problem with this narrow aisles, railings to go on which was not really sold out. The orchestra is yet they were skipped sold out but I think that was just the beginning of the disaster in complete. If it's just wasn't going to make it and we are only having three concerts. We do not sell season tickets which is very sad. I regret that but, you can't sell season tickets if you don't have a dedicated program that's going to

hold that Symphony up. And what we have now that's not do that.

Jerry: Do you feel that will change in the future? I know that the City has a move a foot to promote arts in Glendale. And there is Arts Strategy Task Force that's looking all sorts of all aspects of the art whether it's music, or public art, sculpture, all sorts of things, gallery space. Do you feel like perhaps that Arts strategy Task Force and if the City truly develops an art policy?

Georgia: It could be, excuse me [the telephone rings]. Where were we?

Jerry: We were talking about the Arts Strategy Task Force and if you felt that may help revive the Glendale Symphony as well?

Georgia: I feel that we can not do it as long as we are in the Alex because it's...I love the Alex and they are doing great job and some of their programs and promotions are working beautifully, but as far as symphonic music or anything above like light opera, that's not where it's going to draw or be successful. First place, there are not enough seats to make it successful financially. That's number one. I have talked to Larry Zarian and some of them in the past. What we need is a larger building. If they had something like even the Civic building there in Glendale Civic Auditorium. I guess it could be made into something, but after the earthquake and I saw what happened to Fashion Square I said, "There is the ideal spot. We can have a wonderful facility there, it's got parking, it's in the center, it's off of a freeway, you know blah, blah, blah." Georgia was on a roll. Well, you could see we were gonna have a little shopping center there. Some more little small time shops okay, doesn't bring any prestige. Well, I know they are after tax money, but again as a limit to having a city that speaks out, or a city just another shopping area. So with opening the South Glendale to another mall sort of thing, which I guess we could call it that, like Galleria 3 or something.

Jerry: I know that they've been talking about that as well. Georgia, just to change subjects I know that you have a daughter. When you first came to Glendale had she already been born?

Georgia: Oh, yes. She was... back when we came here from the East coast, she was in a private girls college in Virginia. In fact Melanie grew up traveling with us and

overall it was so wonderful. My husband said, if I cannot take all my family I will not go these foreign jobs. Of course he's been on South American most places before we were married because he was their representative in foreign oil. This pipe-line that he helped inspected from all these countries- Indonesia, Africa, Nigeria, Ghana. Then we had been sent to Canada and then from Canada we'd go to the Middle East. We wouldn't take a thing but our clothes. But, Melanie was a child and they said: "We'll take care of that, the housing, her school". Usually there were religious schools of all the areas where we lived, largely Catholic and Adventist I might say. "We can supply a tutor for her" and they did, and she received an education that was I mean you couldn't just go out and buy it because she was living in these areas where the culture, languages was... they were nothing I mean she could learn a language in six weeks, where I'm stuttering over as a tourist. Mobile always sent us to the Berlitz School in New York before we would even go to countries, so we had an insight. For me I had to run a household but, fortunately most of the places that we were in, as a matter of fact all of them, Mobile had trained employees to fit the situation for us. So I got a few words and waved my hands a lot and they knew what I was trying to say.

Jerry: Did your daughter spend any time in Glendale, at all?

Georgia: No, not until after...After we retired here she went to University of Arizona. She was studying an art, she was into sets lighting a design for the theater. She has a natural talent for that. So then she finished in Arizona, and then she went to Pasadena Play house when it was still the thing, as you remember. It was a great school and she loved that and she was in some of their productions. So, her life is something you could write a book about.

Jerry: So she never really attended any of the Glendale schools.

Georgia: Never, no. She did not.

Jerry: I wonder what her impressions are places like the Alex, The Noise Within, and the Glendale Community Theater.

Georgia: Well you know, she has never been to any of those places because she lives in Texas, and she has a very busy life. Her husband was killed in an auto accident on the

7th of November...

Jerry: Oh, I am sorry.

Georgia: And I had been in the hospital for 4 weeks with this accident that I had. And he was here with her for a week then he went back. But I was home here weak, no little more than that, put out of the hospital because I was there 4 weeks. I had a around clock nurse because I was in the cast from my shoulder to end of my fingers, I couldn't do anything for myself.

Jerry: Oh, no.

Georgia: So I had around clock nursing and I got a call at 6 o'clock one morning. She said: "Mel had been killed the night before"...

Jerry: Oh, no.

Georgia: She was devastated, she still is, but she is a lady. I mean, she has adjusted to all kinds of situations. So, she is doing this very well. I just came back from there, she had moved into a new house, she bought a new house.

Jerry: Oh, that's wonderful.

Georgia: Because the one that they built out in the Hill Country which was to their on specifications, it was absolutely magnificent. The hills now are covered with the blue bonnets and all of wild flowers, not just a few here. I mean it's like a blanket on the hill. They loved that and she is a nature lover and her husband went along with all this. She had wanted a miniature donkey. Their place was fenced in, but the 28 acres free land they had fenced in also. So she got her two donkeys. She had two white geese because they are like watched dogs, you know. She had two miniature dogs in house...And the deer would roam all over there wild, you know. It was just like a dream place and what she said was "I can't stay here." So she has a beautiful home in town, which I was helping here get into, of course.

Jerry: I am glad to hear that is she starting fresh.

Georgia: She has two children, wonderful kids. The little girl s was a two and half pound preemie. She is a born athlete. She has won awards for every sport. And Christian is a fine young man, that's her son. I mean,

we are very close-knit as a family which is wonderful for all of us.

Jerry: Georgia, I would like to explore a little bit more of your civic activities here in Glendale. I know that you were Woman of the Year in...Can you tell me which organization that was? I know that's a Business and Professional Women.

Georgia: Yes, this is the Verdugo Hills Business and Professional Women. I was their Woman of the Year, and the other business and professional -- I was the executive of the year. Then... I can't tell you I always...

Jerry: Do you recall which years those were?

Georgia: I think the woman of the year for the first term was 1988. The Executive of the Year was at Oakmont Country Club. That was...it had to be before 1990 because Ernst was still alive. He was in the hospital at the time and I know Jay Myland, who was...If you knew him or remember him, he was the man of Executive of the Year. And they had a...both place had beautiful parties for that luncheon ...

Jerry: Can you tell me little bit about the criteria for each of those awards? I'm fascinated that you were chosen.

Georgia: Well, I think probably the Woman of the Year...I was involved with not only the chamber, the symphony but I worked with the March of Dimes. I was very involved with that when they had it going here, the American Heart Association. I was the first chairman to organize that American Heart group and they gave me an award for regional volunteer because I was very active in getting the message to Glendale. We had our first big fund raiser was at Oakmont 20 years ago, when we started that out and that was back. That had to be about '87, 1987, because that was when my husband had a stroke. That's why I said, "I can't do it"; he said, "Yes you can, you need some activity." All I had was my stores at that point. Anyway, I accepted that and I said: "Okay let get this off the ground", and Lynn Raggio and some of that group were very active with me on that. They were great. So then March of Dimes, Heart Association, Red Cross. I'm on the Board of the Salvation Army now which I enjoyed as a group.

Jerry: That would be Glendale chapters of these groups.

Georgia: Yes, all of this with Glendale. I don't know we

just...I just love activity, I guess you would say. It's always a joy, a challenge, and Chris and I got involved with the hospitals. I've been on the Board of the Adventist for 14 years, which I keep saying, "I'm getting off." They say, "No, we're rolling you over" I said, "I'm black and blue from being rolled over." So anyway that has been interesting for me in fact, I did their uniforms their pink ladies, volunteers. I designed their jackets and selected the fabric. I had a man, a manufacturer in Los Angeles, made them. Same way with Memorial. Theirs were aqua jackets and pink ladies at the hospital. I worked in emergency room at night for few months. Then my husband became ill, this was back in the early days of course, I would say in the late 60s because I got that account very quickly. So after that of course then he became ill with Parkinson's - it wasn't recognized - they just knew he was not well so the doctor said, "You know, I don't know how far this is going". But anyway he developed this and so I said, "I can't work with the hospital, not any more. I have my own problems at home." But I remember it was quite an experience. That emergency room could really throw you. I had a couple of experiences that I would never forget. That was a learning experience, but it was sad too.

Jerry: Probably you would see some very sad and very horrible things that no one could imagine.

Georgia: Yes, we had this one woman that was brought in and they say D.O.A., dead on arrival. Well, they went to work on her and in 3 weeks she walked out of that hospital.

Jerry: Oh, my gosh.

Georgia: That was an experience. I mean, everybody was hurrying around. I was like get this, do that. I mean, I worked under direction all the time because that's all volunteer can do...

Jerry: Sounds like a medical miracle.

Georgia: Yes it had to be. I couldn't believe that this woman was blood out on the emergency... I mean the ambulance brought her in and they kept talking on radio phone in route. But they were ready for her. I mean, they had that chest thing you know where you... oh that scares you to death.

Jerry: Yes, CPR.

Georgia: Yes, I mean they're gonna break her bones. Of course they didn't but, she finally went out of there in three weeks.

Jerry: Georgia, you mentioned a name that kind of sparked my interest. You said that when you were working with March of Dimes in Glendale that you did serve with Lynn Raggio. Is Lynn Raggio...?

Georgia: No, Lynn was Heart Association.

Jerry: Lynn was a Heart Association. And she is the wife of Carl Raggio who was a former City Councilman and Mayor. Is that one of the inroads that you made into working with the City of Glendale?

Georgia: Well, I suppose you could say it. At the time it never occur to me as being inroad to anything...

Jerry: Because you seem, inadvertently, like you are master networker, even before the term networking may have become popular. That you were making all sorts of contacts in all sorts of areas, in civic organizations and city government without even realizing, perhaps.

Georgia: It never occurred to me that I was doing that, I guess. Which made it easy. Because it was an effort. I just sort of eased into situations, and first thing I knew they had doing things. Like the Symphony, you know, I never had any intentions of being the president of women's committee nor serving on the big Board, or any of that sort of thing, or being membership chairman for the whole Symphony. These things I just entered them without ever giving it a thought.

Jerry: But it seems likely that's probably a quirk of fate because you have this background in music and you kind of fell into the Symphony.

Georgia: Oh, yes I did.

Jerry: It seems like you probably had an interest, somewhat, in city government and probably history as well. And I think that's probably evidenced by your service on the Historic Preservation Commission that the City has. And you served on that Commission for 6 years?

Georgia: For 6 years, yes. And it was very interesting because I didn't know about Glendale, but I learned...In fact I went over the bridge on the other day the one on the way to just the side of Glendale Avenue. What do you name

the bridge?

Jerry: The Glenoaks Boulevard Bridge.

Georgia: And I saw this and I thought this places keep popping up, you know. Then I have a friend that... who is the Indian? What was his name we went to his cottage up here? Now I can't remember. But anyway I have a friend who has been a very good friend of this man and his young wife...

Jerry: Iron Eyes Cody?

Georgia: Oh, that's it Iron Eyes Cody. I was thinking of something like that but I couldn't recall it. Anyway, every once in while you just run into situations like that and they were telling me about this man how interesting his life has been and about his wife. I don't know doors just sort of opened up it seems at that point...

Jerry: Georgia you know that I was the staff liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission when you served as one of its members. There were lots of projects that you were involved with and deliberated on and made recommendations to City Council. Some controversial, some we helped applicants with their homes and commercial properties. There were probably at least one or two major projects that occurred and were designed while you were sitting on the commission. Probably one of them was the Alex theater.

Georgia: Yes indeed. I do remember.

Jerry: Can you describe some of your feelings, your impressions how the Alex was before the renovation and then during the design phase and perhaps now that it has been completed and in operation for about four or five years?

Georgia: Well, I remember the Alex the first time. I was visiting here with my parents and we had friends here. They asked us to come and they took us to the old theater of course with my mother and I. I remember it was lovely because it had a lot of character, personality, the whole bit, you know. But little did I ever think that the day would come when I would be inside watching or looking at some of the future changes they were making in all like down the stage, down in the basement, up on the top, and looking at artifacts and that sort of thing. I mean, the way that all this just comes about, it's always amazing to me and I know we've

been there several times checking some of the things with the ...who is the gentleman from the City that he used to be, he would be there with us to join us the changes they were anticipating and..

Jerry: That was a representative from the Redevelopment Agency who was involved in the renovation of the theater and also a restoration architect who was hired by them.

Georgia: Yes, yes I do remember that. And it was amazing things that they had planned to do and which most of them were carried out. I remember changing the front entrance into theater. That was interesting. I don't know it's lovely the way it is but when you think about the way it was before I think you feel it's kind of lacks the personalty maybe of the old structure with all this change.

Jerry: I know that the rehabilitation of the theater was, if you will, politically charged before it occurred. I think many citizens and, perhaps, at least one or two of the council people who were sitting on City Council at the time were very concerned about the amount of money that was going to be used, that was designated for the theater purchase and it's rehabilitation. I know that the structure was probably in pretty sorry shape when this was all occurring and it probably been, at best benign neglect for years and the theater corporation, movie theater corporation that had been operating it wasn't really maintaining it. Do you feel that it is a benefit to the City now that it's been rehabilitated?

Georgia: Oh, indeed. I'm very pleased with the Alex and it does have a place here and I think that probably should be emphasize more than it is. At this point they have a little of this, a little of that, and some of their productions and some of their presentations are very exciting. And now they're showing old movies which I love...this when you go back to those days. The big stars, of course, all gone and now this morning Frank called and said that Jean Raymond had passed away. I knew him personally also with this group of people and I have known her since I've been here, and the service is tomorrow at Forest Lawn which I intend to go...but I mean it takes me back to those movies which they were showing at that time. But there is a place for the Alex here and it distresses me to see that it hasn't done financially as well as we all hoped but I think there is still a possibility that with the right guidance it can still be a great place. Like the Noise Within I know they called and asked if I would come and

help them raise money, membership, I said, "I can't, I have it up to here" and they said, "Well, what would you suggest?" and I said, "Number one you have people that really come all the time, and they do, they buy season tickets. First thing you must do is to get a letter out to these people to tell them how important they are to make this go further, that they have made it a place in Glendale." I guess now the City is thinking about giving them space or money whatever they need which I can understand because it is a repertory sort of thing. Today they are presenting a different thing and have you ever seen any of their work? Their Shakespearean productions, I am overwhelmed, I am truly overwhelmed because the art, costuming, the sets how they manage without, you know, just bringing it on stage like the Center Theater does. I just sit there awe. I couldn't believe it.

Jerry: And it seems like they are operating in a piece of Glendale's history as well. They are operating in the old Masonic Temple..

Georgia: And when you go into the stage there I know our Oakmont League, we have one night every year that we go and we have a caterer serve our dinner in this one room and then we go up to the dinner again, and it's very impressive and everybody loves it, I mean we sell the place out that night through our members of course, but it does have a place and I am pleased to see that the City try to help them to get along. The Center Theater you cannot beat that for productions of any era. Believe me they do a beautiful job and again, I am always appalled at the way that they come off with the sets and everything it just ...it fascinates me, I have to say that.

Jerry: Do you think there is truly a theater district now in Glendale? I know this has been talked about for the last several years.

Georgia: That's true they have talked about that. Well I like to think we had a theater district. I don't know what they have in mind for the Noise Within but bless their hearts, there in the end of the street. Of course now that end of the town is going up I think there is more future for that particular theater but I don't know what their plans are, what possibilities are actually. And I said I like to see the Alex have further development and more success financially, of course. I don't know how. Still in fact Martin Kane just came called and left a message on my phone Friday which he asked me to return

the call, I haven't done it because of this thing which I mentioned, the luncheon yesterday that I was totally involved in ...I've got to get back to him to see what is going in his mind.

Jerry: Georgia, while you were on a Historic Preservation Commission for the City there was another project that came down the pike as well and that was the restoration and rehabilitation of the Goode House on Cedar Street. As you know that project had gone through so many iterations, so many versions for so many years probably since at least the early 80s. Had several owners, had all sorts of problems with development plans and eventually the City bought it and in conjunction with the Crippled Children Society developed an apartment complex around it and you're involved with recommendations to City Council with the other Historic Preservation Commissioners on its restoration. I know that those of us on the City staff who worked on the project before the rehabilitation was approved and began felt as though we could stand the security fence at the house in late 80s and early 90s and if four of us stood at the fence on the sidewalk and took a deep breath and blew really hard the house will fall down (laugh). You would never know that now. What are your feelings towards that property now and it's impact on Glendale? How do you feel like Glendale has treated it's Historic resources? Do you think that it makes an impact on the rest of the community?

Georgia: Well I do. I think the originally no one had any idea what this would be expanded into, which it is now. I think they thought probably restoring the house itself you know like after the earthquake and everything with foundation everything was kind of rugged. I don't think any of us realized the possibilities at that time and I was just amazed of the structures and how they had to go through it and to see what they had to do for the handicapped people and then you see them after they settled in to see their response and what it has actually done for some people that had no future at all as far as normal kind of living, but they do now and it makes you feel good that something was done with that particular piece of property and there is no way you can value it financially actually because what it covers and what it stands for.

Jerry: You know I would imagine I don't know if you would of agree with me but, I would imagine that historic properties like the Goode House and its associated apartment complex for the handicapped and then

properties like the Harrower Laboratory, another project that you worked on which is now school for mentally handicapped children.

Georgia: Yes, I remember that.

Jerry: It seems as though Glendale at least, perhaps, part of its historic identity is dealing with diverse groups in using its historic resources to provide space for their well being and enrichment, as well and education...Do you agree with that? Do you think that Glendale those that intentionally, promotes that intentionally?

Georgia: Well, I feel, I don't know who spearheaded this from the City itself. I have no idea, actually, at this point. I remember when that building was a chiropractic school. Of course, I sold uniforms to the students. So when we went through it to see what the possibilities were, I remember, I thought that's great I'm still seeing these students they were from the chiropractic school. But I think it's amazing I know there were certain areas that had to be totally redone like the entrance there on the back side that doesn't make ...

Jerry: On the alley side?

Georgia: Yes. Those renovations or whatever you want to call them it was very exciting to think that they had this kind of thing in mind. I don't know who originally pushed for this, for the mentally retarded do you know?

Jerry: I don't either. I think that the school started before my time with the City as well.

Georgia: I am sure, I'm sure it did. I worked, I've been on the board for the retarded association for the adults. I find out they're interesting too what the City has contributed to these senior, I call them senior retardation types, they are over all. There are some older one believe me but I know we just had a fund raiser for that group last Saturday, called Derby Day. So I worked with all ages on this sort of things and it's good fascinating to see the possibilities of a human body and the human what's the way to say human like the outsiders anyway that make an effort to make these people at least normal as much as possible.

Jerry: And involve them in the main stream of life.

Georgia: Yes, it's true because that's what they have done. I know with the senior group over here, they have their

work with the South Bay workshop and they have these three homes for them and they live a very normal kind of life. So when I saw the Goode House what it had become, to help people who otherwise would have no opportunity to be a person of their own and then see them mentally retarded over here on Broadway, isn't it Broadway?

Jerry: Yes, on Broadway, on 920 East Broadway.

Georgia: Yes. Broadway. It makes you feel good, it makes you wonderful. Gee how long it takes the world to recognize these wonderful people. They do have a lot to offer, really.

Jerry: Georgia, I'm actually going to winding the interview down.

Georgia: I'm sure you have nothing... (laugh)

Jerry: No, not really. Actually I could talk to you all day along. And I actually like to, if you willing in some point in the future, interview you again and perhaps get some additional insights into Glendale. Normally, I don't like putting interviewees to a test but if you are willing I'm going to put you a short one.

Georgia: Okay, I like it.

Jerry: If you could describe Glendale in a word or phrase, how would you do it?

Georgia: Well, it's a surprising community because of the fact that we have...when I came here it was a quite little like a village. We had "Chef's Hat" on Brand here that was one restaurant that was open on Sunday evening for dinner. And we used to go to Beverly Hills, to Pasadena, every place to just have dining out the way we called it, but it has grown so quickly I remember when I visited here the street cars...and my friends... down the corner here and what was this actress...this property was built on her...this building was built on her property...

Jerry: Oh, really.

Georgia: Marie Drexler, her home was here and I remember when I listed these friends here they would say this is Mary Drexler property. This stuff across the street was not even in yet it sort of stopped at Mountain. Then I remember when they came back a couple times and Kenneth Road is being developed and all this sort of things... but now Glendale is a surprising community to me not

only the fact that we have an ethnic groups which is great, which offer a lot you know. Having lived around the world with all nationalities, you know I can accept any color, any religion, any thing at all because it's human and it's the way it is.

Jerry: So you feel that Glendale is kind of microcosm of the rest of the country. And kind of melting pot?

Georgia: Yes, to me like I say I'm very comfortable with this because it doesn't bother me.

Jerry: Georgia I'm gonna put you to the test on one last question. Where would you like to see Glendale go in the future?

Georgia: Well, I'd like to see Glendale...I think, the thing that concerns me doesn't bother me but concerns me is the traffic problem with our high rises bringing more people in and they are not going to live in Glendale. As you know, so many drive 50-60 miles every day to work because the one thing they can't afford is property in Glendale. There is quite a contrast in the cost value of real estate. And the other problem is the fact that the traffic is hazardous as you know, it is congested, and when you watch it right now coming up here 4:30 in the morning coming off the freeway or on the freeway it's frightening. You wonder with all these new highrises and all these new people coming what's going to happen to the City as far as traffic and congestion. All this always which just makes more and more because we have no...I'm for over you know building not subways but building over the freeway which would eliminate the possibilities of earthquakes and that kind of thing. I mean expenses for horrendous for subways. I know I lived in New York and in the East, in London and Paris and all of this. I don't know, I don't know where it's going. But the cars that local automobile traffic is... I don't know what it's going to do.

Jerry: Georgia, I'm sure that if there are people in the future who care about as much as you do about your adopted hometown. I'm sure that the City of Glendale will be in good hands.

Georgia: Well, I don't know like that. Like I said I'm not a politician to get out and waive my hand for a cause. I like humanity, I like to think I might contribute to life itself, and to the people in that sort of. Like in overseas I used to do some work like that with the natives of different countries. They were interested in

me, I was interested in them so we had a good relationship sometime it only lasted for a month because we whisked off to another country (laugh) but, you know, people are very important to me. People, I love people.

Jerry: Georgia, and that has truly come across in this interview.

Georgia: Oh, really?

Jerry: It's truly come across to me in the seven years that I've known you.

Georgia: Is that right...

Jerry: And I'd like to thank you very much for this interview.

Georgia: It's been pleasure meeting with you.

Jerry: And bring it to a close. It is now about 11:25 in the morning, on May 6. Thank you very much.

Georgia: You're welcome. It's been my pleasure.