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I n t e r v i e w w i t h
KATHERINE MCGUIRE
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Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Interviewer: Mary Lohr

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Approved: Katherine J. McGuire
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Katherine McGuire

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Date: April 6, 1988

Interviewer: Mary Lohr

Ms. Lohr: This is Mary Lohr interviewing Katherine McGuire for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on April 6, 1988, in Denton, Texas. I'm interviewing Ms. McGuire in order to obtain her recollections concerning the Denton Christian Women's Interracial Fellowship.

Would you tell me when and where you were born?

Ms. McGuire: I was born in Dodge City, Kansas, in 1921. So that's awhile back.

Ms. Lohr: What is your educational background?

Ms. McGuire: I have a bachelor's degree in music education. I didn't do anything beyond that.

Ms. Lohr: What about grade school and high school?

Ms. McGuire: Well, I was a fortunate child, I think, to live in a stable situation. It was fairly usual at that time. I went to the same grade school that all my friends went to and continued with the same kids through junior high and high school largely. We were all

poor in the Depression, so many of us stayed home the first year of college. I did. I went to junior college one year before I went away to school.

Lohr: Did you attend segregated schools or integrated schools?

McGuire: No, we had integrated schools. We didn't have a large black population. We had a small black population and a small Mexican-American population.

Lohr: How did you become interested in integration?

McGuire: Well, of course, we became aware of the problems surrounding integration before we moved to Texas. When we came here, having lived all the time prior to that farther north--having lived in Kansas and having lived in Colorado and Wisconsin and Michigan and Indiana--it was an adjustment at first here to find what I perceived to be rather a delay, that people were behind here in terms of integration. I know that just the year before we came, we missed out on demonstrations that we'd heard about at the local theater and some of those things.

I was delighted to be invited to an afternoon tea one Sunday. When people who already belonged to the Interracial Fellowship were asked to bring a guest, I was glad to go and glad for the opportunity for that kind of interaction because I had no other way of knowing any black people in Denton, Texas.

Lohr: What friend invited you?

McGuire: I believe it was a friend who just lived down the street

who was the wife of our relatively new minister. She and I had quickly become good friends since we were geographically close together, and we went to things together. She was kind of surprised that I hadn't already been invited, since someone else had invited her before I had been invited. So she's the one I went with.

Lohr: Was this at Trinity Presbyterian?

McGuire: No, First United Methodist Church. Perhaps Linnie McAdams or someone has told you, but I don't really know what all the churches were who organized this. I'm sure you have that information somewhere, but our church was one of those because there were other people from our church. Like I say, the opportunity to become friends with black women was really a rarity. My understanding is that one of the reasons that motivated some women to do this was that they saw such a need for friendships that couldn't be developed just as, say, for instance, a domestic to her employer (which is what most of the relationships were between white and black women at that time and before that time). So this was a whole new idea. While it wasn't new to me, because I had lived other places where I had had black friends, in Denton, Texas, it was new. In fact, in Wisconsin I have a very good friend who was a fifth grade teacher at one of the grade schools where I was a visiting music teacher (I went to several schools). We became good friends because

not only did we have that relationship, but we were in the same church. They had integrated our church by coming to being a part. So we felt like we were well along the way compared to what I found when I came here.

Lohr: Was integration pretty far along in the North?

McGuire: I wouldn't say it was pretty far along. It's just that I grew up where one didn't think it was strange to have someone from the black community--we didn't call them "blacks" at that time; rather, we would have said somebody from the "Negro" community, which is what was called at that time, or "colored"--sitting behind you at the football game. The first time I realized this might be unusual to some people was when a young girl came to our high school, when she was a senior and I was a senior, from Arkansas. She was a darling girl and immediately made friends with many of us, and we took her to the football games. She was appalled and surprised and uncomfortable to discover that somebody black was sitting right behind her at the football game (chuckle). Then she laughed at herself because she realized this was nothing unusual for any of the rest of us. So she had her consciousness raised very quickly. But I grew up with that kind of setting. Like I said, we didn't have large black community, but there were always black people there. I grew up knowing black people, but not intimately. We never had any friends who were black, and

we never had anybody in our church who was black.

Lohr: When did you come to Denton?

McGuire: We came in the summer of 1962.

Lohr: What was it like in Denton racially then?

McGuire: Well, I wish I could remember, but it wasn't too long after I'd been here that I got involved in the Interracial Fellowship and learned through that how far we had to go. I hadn't lived on this street too long--we lived in Denton two-and-a-half years when we moved to this present address--and some of my neighbors (who are gone now) invited me to have coffee one morning, and somehow this came up. One of the women said she realized there were some black people moving up on Oak Street, and, of course, it was mostly the student population. Still, she was very aware that black people lived near by, and she made this rather derogatory comment: "You give them an inch, and they'll take a mile."

Somehow that got my back up just a little bit, and I told her the story about my own consciousness, and I tried to put myself kind of in her shoes, saying that I knew kind of how she felt. This wasn't really quite true, but I wanted to be able to say something to her that would perhaps help her along the road. I told her about my black friend in Wisconsin who really was my friend. In fact, when we were getting ready to come to Texas, I had broken my ankle at Eastertime. We were

moving here in June, so I was getting around on crutches, and my husband had to be here to teach the first of June and left me there on my crutches with my three young children and a babysitter. This black friend who taught school called me one day, and she said, "I'll give you half a day of my time--whatever I can do. I can babysit for you, or I can take care of the children, or I can cook, or I can come over and help you wash your refrigerator," because we were going to rent our house. I said, "That's wonderful," but right then I was thinking, "What I really need to do is that I've got to get my carpet shampooed." I was not going to be able to that because I was still on crutches. We didn't have a lot of carpeting, but I wanted it to be shampooed before we rented it. She said, "Well, Clarence can do that!" This was her husband. So it was agreed that they would come over on a particular evening. They came to my front door--this was after dark--and she came prepared to do whatever I wanted her to do. I opened the door, and she said, "Miz McGuire, I'm Mandy and this here is Rastus, and we come over here to help you learn how to get along with southerners when you move down to Texas." [Ms. McGuire's friend was mimicking the stereotypical way blacks allegedly spoke and acted during that period.] She just laughed, and it was like that all evening--just one wonderful laugh after another. But they were

laughing at themselves and preparing me that maybe it wouldn't be quite the same in Texas. My husband called from Texas right about that time, and I was just laughing from something they said. He said, "What's going on down there?" I said, "We're having a party."

But, anyway, I told that story to my friends at the coffee, and it was quite silent for a while. Then she said, "Well, I guess you're a lot farther along than we are." She was trying to be charitable, as I was trying to be charitable; but I just wanted to help things along a little bit, so I told my story. It was hard for her to imagine having a black friend and then this black friend who could laugh at herself in their situation. The poignancy of that, I think, came through in the story, but I told it in more detail than I told it to you.

Lohr: Where did the blacks live? Were they living in houses? I mean, there weren't any apartments then.

McGuire: In Denton?

Lohr: Yes.

McGuire: Almost all the black people in Denton lived in southeast Denton. One of the earlier projects of the Interracial Fellowship, once we had been together for some time...and, of course, the whole reason for being was friendship; we said we were not going to be an organization that does anything. But after a while, after you get to be friends and you're comfortable with

each other, then you need some other reason for being, so we did take on the project of helping to get the streets of southeast Denton paved. Trudy Foster...I've told her many times, and I've told black people, who agree with me, that there should be a street out there named Trudy Foster Boulevard because she was really the planner and the instigator. She's the one that went down to city hall and camped on their door and said, "You've got to do something."

So what we did as an organization, we would go on Sundays two by two, one black one white. We had a notary public at the black Legion hall down in the black community who would stay there. We would go with our cars from door to door and would take people in our car to the city hall to sign the necessary papers to give the...what do you call it? I want to say right-of-way, but that isn't it. They had to give easement rights to the city. There were papers that had to be signed in any case, and most of the black people weren't able to go to city hall when they were open. So we made this possible for them to have their signatures notarized, and we did this until we had done all of southeast Denton. We found out where the absentee landlords were and all of that sort of thing. So once that was done, there was no reason for the city not to move forward to getting the streets paved. Of course, they did do it, and they did

it because they realized that they had overlooked that part of the community so long. They did it for a much lesser price than it normally would have taken to get the job done. There was a little bit of fussing about that from some of the white community, but not very much.

So the Interracial Fellowship really was a strong force in getting that to happen. But, my goodness, now that raised my consciousness because I went into homes like I've never been in before--homes with dirt floors and maybe some linoleum over part of the room.

Lohr: Just over the dirt?

McGuire: Over the dirt. And homes with no running water. That was the first time I realized...and I'm sure there were probably some white people that perhaps lived that way, but I had not seen it. Then that was reinforced for me a little later when I became a volunteer at the Denton Christian Preschool, which also was organized by an ecumenical group. Several churches got together and decided we needed to do something for preschool children who were culturally disadvantaged and maybe disadvantaged economically and all kinds of ways. Always we had a few more black children than we had anything else. We tried to keep some kind of a mix. But when I began to pick up those children--and, of course, they were generally the poorest of the poor--we would see the same situation. I was always astounded when a cute little three-year-old

came bouncing out of a house where there was no running water and be spanking clean. And I would wonder how they did it (chuckle).

Lohr: Was this many years after you began the Interracial Fellowship that they were still going without running water?

McGuire: I wouldn't have any idea, even today, how many people live like that, and, in particular, in southeast Denton. But when I drive through there, I still see places that look like they are inhabited, and they're very much like the places we saw back in those years. I'm sure there are people who still live that way. They have little to live on, and they get by, and they eke out some kind of a welfare living or whatever and have a roof over their heads. I just really wouldn't have any statistics on how that is.

Lohr: When the group first started, it was mostly social? Is that true?

McGuire: Yes, my understanding was that that was the whole reason for it, was to provide a social environment for black women and white women to become friends.

Lohr: What were the meetings like at first?

McGuire: Well, I don't know what the beginning ones were because I wasn't there at the beginning. We always had programs of various kinds. Sometimes they were designed to point up the problems of racism. What I mainly remember was that

once we did become friends, once we had a reason to work together maybe because we were officers together or we were hostesses together or whatever and began to know each other on a personal level, we began to trust each other. That trust evolved into a helpful kind of thing, particularly for the black women.

I can remember one woman who had a son in high school, and I did, too, at the time. She called me--her son was playing football--and she told me her particular situation. She wanted to know what I'd thought would be the best way to handle it. Should she go to the coach? Should she go to the principal? What should she do? I don't even remember exactly what the situation was, but she felt as though it involved racism. And I think it did. I can't remember what the specific situation was, but the advice I gave her kind of reinforced her and gave her the courage to do what she needed to do.

Also, she knew she now had some friends with a little more power because the white women simply had more power. We had the power that they didn't have. Maybe it was because we had some kind of status in the community one way or another, as we had a husband that was a professor or whatever, or if we had children or if we had some kind of dealings with the administration of the schools, they knew we were parents that cared about our own kids and cared about good schools. So we had a

certain kind of power. I never knew that for a long time; it took me a long time to learn about that. And it's still true, even today. A lot of us don't know that we have power. We talk about reverse racism, but we still are the ones with the power even now.

So our most interesting meetings, it seemed to me, would be the ones where we would share concerns. When the black women felt free enough to tell their stories, they did come out. A lot of them were appalling to us and meant that we felt a certain amount of guilt and all that. But it was so wonderful for them to feel like they had some kind of a forum and that somebody in the white community cared about it. So for those of us who were in it, it was wonderful. We were able to deal with school problems that we wouldn't have been able to do before.

Lohr: Do you remember any of the stories that they told?

McGuire: Oh, some that are fairly common now--common to most black people--like, not being able to get gasoline just any place you wanted to, for instance. I remember one woman telling about her son who was in World War II or maybe Korea. I don't know. Anyway, he was in uniform, and his being in uniform made such a difference. It gave him a little power that he hadn't had before because he was wearing the uniform of the United States Army or whatever. So people were less likely to turn him away.

One of the most interesting meetings that we had--

and I maybe repeating, too--was when Harve King appeared. I'm not even sure now whether he's fully retired from North Texas, but eventually he became dean of students at North Texas. I don't even know if you've heard that name. He grew up in Denton, and soon after he came back here, his sister, who was a member of the Interracial Fellowship, said she was sure that he would probably come and talk to us. She was proud of him because he had achieved quite a bit. I think perhaps he was the only one in the family who had achieved the education he had. I'm not sure about that. But, anyway, he came, and I think the meeting was at our church. We had a blackboard provided for him, as he had asked for. He was so full of things he wanted to say that he had trouble with keeping with what he had planned to say. One thing led to another, and I don't know whether he felt like he had a sympathetic audience, but he knew he had an audience. He thought he was going to be covered by the press; somewhere he'd gotten that idea. I don't believe anybody from the press was there. Some of his anger came out when he told about things that had happened to him as a boy in Denton. There were some terrible, terrible things had happened to him as a child. So after he got through all that--and he was so angry--his sister, who was very uncomfortable, said, "I don't believe he knows who he's talking to." Somehow, she

wanted to get through to him that he was speaking to a friendly audience and that these weren't people that he needed to educate. It came out later that he thought that the press was there, and he wanted those stories to make the paper. Eventually, after he had got all that out on the table and all his anger about the kinds of things that were done to him as a child by white men who had...what was it they did to him? They made him dance, anyway; he was a little barefoot kid. And they did something that kept him hopping on his feet. I've forgotten how they did it. Anyway, it made me cringe to hear the story.

So when he got through with all this anger, then he backed off and talked about the white people who had been good to him and how he never would have done what he had done if it hadn't been for them. So he was ambivalent, but, my, you still sensed such a lot of anger and resentment and hostility. All of us were just kind of...it was good for us to hear it, even though we didn't need to hear it in that we were unsympathetic or anything like that. But I think that some of us maybe had an overly smug feeling about how we weren't racists or whatever (laughter).

I was telling a retired English teacher from North Texas about this the next day, and I was still kind of chaffing a little bit that Harve would be telling us. I

was saying that he didn't need to convince us! After all, we were the "good people"; we were the "good guys." Her response after I...she was very interested, and she said, "Isn't it wonderful that he can do that now, that he can talk like that now, and not have to worry that it wouldn't be okay or that he would get into some kind of trouble!" She was just latched on to the aspect of it that it was wonderful, that the climate was safe enough so that he could talk like that and get all that out. Well, I really just hadn't thought about it that way, so I always thought that was quite an interesting observation. That was good for me to hear from this woman who was much wiser than I was.

Lohr: Well, you mentioned that the women began to trust one another. Was there not trust at first when the group started?

McGuire: No, there really wasn't. In fact, I remember one young black woman saying...this was after I had been in Texas for some time. We were sharing with each other how we happened to get into the Interracial Fellowship. She was talking about how she had been invited by a friend, and she wasn't too interested because she was afraid somebody would think that she was "uppity"--that was the word she used--because she was now going to socialize with white women. She didn't want anybody to think that she was "uppity," so it took awhile for her to decide that she

wanted to come. after she came the first time, she was comfortable with it and was expressing her gratitude, too, for the group and the ways that it had changed her in terms of her attitude toward white people because it was her first opportunity, too, to know white women at a different level than she had before.

Lohr: How were the people chosen to come?

McGuire: I don't know that because there was a sizable group already by the time I had joined. In fact, I think some of the meetings early on were a little bit on the clandestine side because there was still a lot of uncertainty. One of the early speakers that came was...oh, I'm not going to be able to think of his name, and I'm sure one of the other women will have mentioned it. But he was the man who wrote the book Black Like Me. Are you familiar with that book? He was from Cleburne. In fact, he was burned in effigy over that book. But I think they were pretty careful about who they invited to that meeting to hear him speak and all.

My own awareness of the touchiness of it at the time was when my husband and I were sponsors for our junior high youth group at the church. I think we were in our second year of doing that. It was suggested that we should have some articulate person in the black community to speak since we were going to be talking about brotherhood or whatever. We knew there was a man who

worked at the Record-Chronicle as a janitor because he had to keep food on the table, but he was an ordained Methodist minister--the first black graduate from Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. There was no place to assign him to a church except some little tiny church. He was assigned here to Mount Pilgrim, which wasn't...well, was it C.M.E. [Colored Methodist Episcopal]? There were a couple of other black churches that are Methodist, but they weren't our Methodist. They were their own thing. I wasn't apprehensive, but I thought, well, maybe it would be wise for me to check with somebody that had been around longer than I to see if this would create any problems. I'd thought it would be neat to invite this man. So I asked the woman of the couple who had preceded us as the sponsors of this, and they were long time Denton residents. I said, "Do you see any problems with inviting this man to come and speak to our junior high kids?" Her response was kind of a big sigh--"Oooh!" She said, "I don't believe I'd muddy the waters."

Well, somehow, that created a negative response from me. For some reason I really, really wanted her to reinforce the idea that it was a good idea, and when she didn't do that, then I got my back up. So we went ahead and invited this man, and we advertised it in the church paper that he was going to come. It was a good meeting--

no problems whatsoever, none at all. But I thought about that woman's apprehension and what it was based on, and I'm not sure just what all.

Like I said, she lived here always, but her only association with black people was that she hired a black woman who came and did her ironing. She didn't have her iron in her air-conditioned house; she put her out on the porch, screened porch, so that the heat would stay out there. The black woman would be out there. That was kind of an eye-opening thing to me at one time. I went to a social function at her house one time when this woman was there. That's where she had been ironing, was out on the hot, hot screened porch.

So a lot of little things like that stick in my mind. When I jump ahead to the present time, I feel regretful, really, that there isn't still such an organization. But we learned, after we'd been in existence for some time, that it really had served its purpose for us, especially when we all had children in the public schools, because that turned out to be so helpful and we could talk things over that were helpful to all. Gradually, as our children got out of school, there came to be less of a need, and all of us were getting more involved. About 95 percent of the black women were employed, and the white ratio of employment was going up and up and up, too. So it was increasingly

hard to find somebody who would take the leadership roles for the organization. Even though we were rather loosely structured, we always had co-chairs; we had a black and a white. The year finally came when we just couldn't get anybody who said they'd take the responsibility, so we just kind of drifted away.

Then, oh, maybe three or four years after we hadn't had a meeting, one of the women who has already been interviewed, Carol Riddlesperger, and I decided that we just regretted it. We didn't get to see these women. We didn't see them because our paths simply didn't cross. We weren't in the same churches; we didn't live in the same neighborhoods. We just didn't have any reason to see each other. So we had a Valentine party and invited all the old-timers that we could think of, that we thought would enjoy doing that. Oh, we had wonderful time!

Just as recently as about a month ago, I attended the World Day of Prayer, which this year took place in one of the churches in the black community, Moore Street Baptist. I always look forward to those meetings because more black women come to those meetings than any other meetings, just like the white women go to the ones at their church. But here came this woman that I hadn't seen for some time. Oh, we greeted each other warmly and had a big hug and all that. I said, "Alma, did you take

off to come today?" She said, " Well, my hours have changed." World Day of Prayer was on a Friday. So she said, "I went to work at four o'clock this morning and worked four or five hours." She had completed her hours for the week so that she could come. As we talked on, she said, "You know, we just need to get together. We don't have to have a big meeting or party; we just need to be together so we can talk." So that kind of fueled the fire, and I said, "Oh, we really do need to do that." And I said that to someone else. We haven't done it, but we think about it and regret that, really, without making some kind of a special effort, it's hard to maintain the friendships.

There was some effort long ago. Linnie McAdams wanted to institute what was called, I believe, "Amigos." I don't know if it's even in existence anymore, but the idea was to have families kind of adopt each other within the context of this organization and plan to do things together as families. It just never did get off the ground.

We did have, at least once a year, a function for the husbands of women who were married, or if they had a boyfriend, which in a few cases some did. Those were always happy, fun times. The men really enjoyed it. I think we had a picnic or two. We involved children maybe a time or two.

Lohr: Were the husbands as comfortable at those meetings as the wives were?

McGuire: I think they became comfortable very quickly. I know my husband is glad for the few people that he came to know, and usually that would be whomever he happened to sit by. One of the people that just comes to mind--and I don't know whether she's on your list to interview--is Billie Mohair, who works at the library at North Texas and has for many years. Her husband, Clyde Mohair, is one of those. For some reason or another we were seated at the same table or something with them. Well, from that time Clyde was one of the few black men in this town that my husband knew who he was and could wave to when they saw each other on the street or stop and pass the time of day. Then later my husband became one of the sponsors or maybe the sponsor--I'm not sure--for a student organization on campus for the promotion of...what do they call it? I should ask him. It's the society for the promotion of black music, since he was a music educator. So he came to know more black students that way, and, of course, as years went on we had more and more black students that way, and, of course, as years went on we had more and more black students on campus. A good many of them were graduate students, and that's where my husband was teaching, at the graduate level.

Lohr: In the early times, did you have any fear of ostracism

from either the white or the black community, as the case might be, that you were meeting?

McGuire: No, I never did, and I doubt if any of the other women did because the women that gravitated toward this kind of organization were generally women of pretty strong convictions. We were all women who were involved in other things and who'd already kind of--what do you say--paid our dues. So people that you knew in the white community knew what kind of a person you were and had already come to have some feeling about you, hopefully positive. So when you made this kind of decision to do this, why, they might even take a second look at it and think, "Well, if you did something like that, maybe it has some merit." Of course, this is part of what I mean when you talk about power. You have built-in power because of your economic situation or your status, such as your husband's profession or your own profession. So if you've paved the way for yourself, so to speak, then when you embark on something like this, your white friends aren't quick to condemn you. They want to think, "Oh, well, she's a pretty good gal, so I better check this out before I think that's too bad an idea."

Lohr: Where were the meetings held?

McGuire: A lot of them were held in homes, which is where we always liked the best, of course. When we were at our largest, it was kind of hard to do this. We met

sometimes at the Legion hall in southeast Denton because that was more convenient for the black women. We met in churches sometimes--Trinity Presbyterian, Saint Andrew's Presbyterian, Christian Church, First United Methodist (that I remember right off), Catholic church, Saint Paul's Lutheran--because we had women from all of those churches.

Lohr: How many members did the group have at its largest?

McGuire: I suppose in my archives I still have a list somewhere. It strikes me that we may have had--I don't know--fifty, sixty names on our list.

Lohr: Was it about evenly divided between black and white?

McGuire: Pretty well, pretty well. In our last years, as we were struggling to find some leadership and to get new blood in the group...some of us felt like we needed to be getting on out because we saw that the greatest help was for women who had children in school, and that's where we were doing the most positive good, we felt. But in our latter years, we had...goodness, I'm not going to be able to think of her name right off. She was in the Art Department at North Texas. She was so delighted to know that we had such a group. She was attractive. Lucas was her name--Margaret Lucas. I suppose that maybe it was even the last year we had it, and I know she came a few times. But she was like nearly everybody--so busy and so many things already on the schedule, very hard to find

the time. And it was certainly difficult to have the same time all the time, so you didn't expect to have very good attendance. But we began to find black people living in the white community. She was one example of that. Dr. Moses Simmons moved here and was head of the agriculture office, which had an office in the post office, and they immediately moved into the white community. They were ostracized slightly, and a couple people moved out.

Lohr: What year was this?

McGuire: Oh, goodness! Fifteen or sixteen years ago, I suppose. I'm not really sure. I saw her yesterday, as a matter of fact. She opted to go to a white church--she was Baptist--and she still goes. She's an active member in Highland Baptist over here. In fact, she's probably the only black face that's ever been in that church--she and her family (chuckle). It is interesting to me that some of the families now gradually are moving out. Now the gentleman I told you that was dean of students for a while at North Texas, Harve King, when he moved back to Denton, he moved into the white community, over on what we fondly call "Idiot's Hill." I don't know that you've been in Denton long enough to know where "Idiot's Hill" is. That's where his home is. Wayman Dever, who was in the School of Education--I believe he's retired (I'm not sure) and is no longer married to his wife, who was a

member of our organization--they moved into a house over on "Idiot's Hill." We met at her house. They may have had some harassment; they had some phone calls and things like that.

But I must say that when there was a big change...well, there were so many changes happening so fast, and when Dr. Matthews retired from North Texas--and he'd been president for a long time--there was a big change. Dr. Kamerick came from Kent State, and he instituted so many changes that it made some people's head swim. To a lot of people, he wasn't popular. I personally liked him very much, and so did my husband. He instituted faculty government at North Texas State. We didn't have a senate or any of those things. We knew a lot about it because my husband was on the first committee of twelve that set about establishing what kind of government they would have or needed.

Dr. Kamerick was nearly run out of town by...oh, we had a...what would you call it? We had a newspaper at that time that was an alternative to the Record-Chronicle. What's the name of it? The Enterprise. They would make snide remarks about Dr. Kamerick or about other people in the community they didn't like or they felt were too liberal or whatever.

Mrs. Kamerick really had a hard time because she had a large family of children. Her youngest child is the

same age as my daughter. I had heard her say sometimes that that daughter was having a very hard time adjusting to Denton. So on my daughter's sixteenth birthday--we didn't make too big a deal out of it--I said, "Let's invite one of your best friends, and then let's invite Cathy Kamerick." We took the three girls and went out to dinner. We had them come here first and come here afterwards. Mrs. Kamerick later told me, "You have the dubious honor of being the first ones to invite my daughter into your home since we've lived in Denton, Texas." Well, they would have come in the fall, and this was at the end of April. So I sensed her own kind of anguish over her child's loneliness and all.

There were several things that she said. By this time my husband had tenure, so I didn't worry about anybody accusing me of polishing the apple. I asked her if she'd be interested in going to the Interracial Fellowship, and she was very interested. That particular time we went to the Mohair home. Billie (the one that I told you worked at the library) and her husband, Clyde, lived in a sizable old house out in southeast Denton. We had such a big crowd that a lot of us had to sit on the floor, including Mrs. Kamerick. She asked me not to introduce her as the wife of the president of North Texas, that she was just Elaine Kamerick--which is the way I did it. A lot of them did not know who she was in

terms of her husband. She said, "This is the best time I've had since I've been in Denton." The upshot of that evening is that she did come again. Then the following year, when we were setting up the year, she invited the Interracial Fellowship to have a meeting at the president's house, and we would have a style show. It was wonderful! And we got publicity (chuckle). Well, it not only got publicity, but it hit the Enterprise (chuckle). It was just the kind of thing that would set the Enterprise off: "Well, this proves that this is that terrible liberal president. What are they doing?" It was that kind of thing. I don't know that it specifically mentioned that.

Anyway, Dr. Kamerick only stayed two years, but he certainly made his mark here, and in our opinion he made a very positive mark. He was desperately needed at this university.

But my own concern at this point is that it's so terribly gradual that you don't really see much progress. And when you can't have friendships and you don't know people, the color still seems to be a big dividing line, and that's too bad. But I think it's still very real.

Lohr: When were your meetings? Were they regular--on certain days of the month?

McGuire: Yes, they were once a month, and I don't even remember what night we did it.

Lohr: You did have officers? You had a slate of officers?

McGuire: We mostly just had co-chairs. We didn't have dues; we didn't take minutes. We didn't do any of those things. I believe what we had was sort of an executive board so that when it came time again to choose the next officers, they were the ones that did it. I guess if any decision had to be made, they did it. But it was very loose.

Lohr: When you decided to take on projects, how did you decide which projects to take on?

McGuire: Well, we didn't do many projects. That one I mentioned--the streets of southeast Denton--some people even resisted doing that. Some said, "Well, this isn't what we were organized for." But some of us were beginning to sense that we really needed a little bit more direction and that we needed a little more justification for being. And because we'd come such a long way in terms of our friendship, it seemed that now was the time that we do something. And there were certainly plenty of needs. The street paving was the most ambitious project. We were called on a time or two for something just because we were a structure. At the time of our ten-year milestone--I can't tell the year, but perhaps somebody else has told you--we had quite a celebration. We got a lot of good publicity, and our featured speaker was a man who, himself, had created tremendous controversy when he was hired to come to North Texas. He was called a poet

in residence--B.F. Maiz. Have you heard that name?

Lohr: Yes.

McGuire: Well, he was controversial not just because he was black, but also because he had been in prison. It was quite a brave step for the university administration to decide that this would be a great experiment--talking about rehabilitation. They had known this guy pretty well--some of them--when they were in Fort Worth because he was at the facility over there, and they found that he was very skilled with group dynamics. He was able to do things within the prison with prisoners. He had skills he didn't even know, himself, that he had, I suppose, until that time. He was very charismatic both in looks and demeanor.

When he came to our campus, he was advertised as being available to come and talk to classes and so forth, so my husband signed him on--he'd been here just on campus for two weeks--to come talk to his class. I think it was his music history class. My husband said to me, "Would you like to come?" I said I would, so I went. Already, there had been the beginnings of the hubbub and stirrings of objections to the university hiring this guy. Some of the campus poets even had their noses out of joint a little bit because he was billed as the poet in residence, and they probably had some legitimate gripes in that regard. But, my goodness, he was able to

talk articulately on a wide range of things, and he tied them all in with music and his own background and so on. I was mesmerized by him. I thought, "My goodness!" His poetry is the kind of poetry that really needs to be listened to rather than to be read, especially if you listened to him do it.

So I was already very aware of the stir that had been created, and I heard it, myself, among some of the women I knew. I knew they were "clickedy-clacking" over the bridge tables about this guy. So I came home and sat down and wrote up a letter to the chairman of the board of regents and to the president of North Texas and told them what I thought about him and how I felt sorry about the people who were doing all the clucking of their tongues. And I said that if they could hear him, they would feel differently and that he was...you know, I went on. Well, I later found out that they had been getting so much flak--so much from so many quarters--and that letter turned out to be real opportune that it came when it did. They said it was a very dark day, and here came this one positive note. I didn't tell my husband that I did it because I thought, "Well, I want to be totally responsible for this." So he didn't know about it for a while, but he had heard about it from one of them, I think. I don't remember. I may have told him after I dropped it in the mail. But the upshot of that was that

I got to be pretty good friends with the chairman of the board of regents (laughter), and I became a lifelong friend of B.F. Maiz because he was very aware of the hot seat his benefactors, you might say, were on. He had written to his stepmother, and she came to this campus to visit when he was doing a marathon of poetry. He was sitting in a rocking chair over at the campus ministry building where this was taking place, and he introduced me to her and said something. She said, "Oh, you're the one!" So she had known about this letter that had kind of salved the wounds momentarily. It didn't last long because he didn't last long on the campus. They were able to keep him--goodness--maybe only six months. I've forgotten how long.

But he was the keynote speaker at our Interracial Fellowship celebration--tenth-year celebration. I wasn't present--we were out of town--but I heard it was wonderful, and they were thrilled with it.

So there's just lots of bits and pieces like that that when you look back you can't believe that this much time has passed that has. I would love to see that same kind of organization existing today with women who have children in public schools--white and black. But, you know 95 percent of them are employed women, and they simply don't have the flexibility in their schedules to organize and do the kinds of things it takes to keep

something like that going.

Lohr: Were the schools in Denton integrated when you came?

McGuire: No.

Lohr: How did that happen?

McGuire: Well, let's see. My daughter was in the ninth grade because she came home with stories; and my son would have been in the fourth grade at the Lab School, which was the North Texas Lab School at that time. They remember those times. I wish I could recall them, but I didn't give any thought to this. I should have boned up on some of these stories. Well, I remember my daughter being a little bit put out with some of the things that were said by the teacher that she thought fueled the tension--not intentionally but simply by their racist remarks or their lack of sensitivity. I'm sure it was true. It was a hard time for everybody, particularly for people who had grown up with segregation. It was a hard time.

Lohr: Was there any trouble that you remember?

McGuire: Because someone was black? I can remember when my youngest child was in junior high, and I think it was in auto mechanics or something. They were able to take a class where they had manual training for six weeks and auto mechanics so they could try out all these things. He liked all those things, and he wanted to take that class. There was a black kid that kind of picked on Tim, and I don't know why. To this day I'm not sure why.

Whether he felt like Tim wasn't anybody who was going to give him any trouble--and he was looking for trouble--and he thought he was safe with him, I don't know. But I remember getting involved with calls from the school and one thing or another. The principal or counselor had called him aside, hoping that he wouldn't be too upset about it, and he was trying to create a sympathetic picture of the boy that had been picking on him. Which he did. He was successful in it, that this boy came from a difficult home situation. He painted all this picture. Tim wasn't creating any ruckus, and I guess that's what they were trying to keep from happening. They wanted to be sure Tim didn't come home and complain to his parents and stir up something (laughter). There were things like that, and I know there was some trouble in girls gym classes. I think a lot of that was simply because we didn't have teachers that were adequately prepared for integration. So the transition was a difficult time for some.

Lohr: What about in the town in general--eating facilities, restaurants, washaterias, and things?

McGuire: Well, as far as the eating, I remember how I felt gratified when the time finally came when black people would feel brave enough to test the waters and see that, sure enough, we were integrated. I was glad to see that they were willing to risk the hassle that they knew they

might get. Plenty of them had gone through hassles all their lives, and some of them just weren't willing to risk it. But they began to take the risk, and I always felt gratified when I saw a young black family somewhere eating at the cafeteria or whatever.

Lohr: Did couples in the Interracial Fellowship ever go to restaurants together--black and white couples?

McGuire: I don't believe that we ever went to a restaurant. I can't remember that we did. I think partly that was...well, I don't know. I started to say that partly it was because it was so hard for people. If we even planned a dinner that we did ourselves, it would always have to be so late for all these working people. I know that we went to some plays as a group. We would meet at someone's house maybe or meet at North Texas. I think we usually met at somebody's house and then went together to a play. We deliberately planned some of those events so that we would be seen intermingled as a social group in a public way.

Lohr: How did the community react to that?

McGuire: I don't think there was ever any problem because generally it was something at North Texas. If there was any problem, you didn't hear much about it.

Lohr: Would you have if this had been in the general community, do you think?

McGuire: I don't know and I don't really know why, really, when

you asked the question. We didn't have that many eating places, for one thing, and there were not many places you could go with that large number without planning something in advance. When we had something that involved eating, we usually did it ourselves simply for the money factor. As far as our Christmas dinners, we did all that ourselves. Our church let us do that for several years. There were several of us that were members and were responsible for cleaning up and making sure the church was locked and all that. We were allowed to do that. The only thing we paid was a little extra for the janitor to open up for us. In the first year or two, he locked up, and then he allowed us to lock up after that. I don't think it would happen today. I don't think they would let us do it now. I think we would have to pay. We've had so much trouble in our church. We've had a lot of trouble--break-ins, robberies, and all that kind of stuff like we didn't use to have. So they're much more security conscious now. It wouldn't be because we were an integrated group. It's just that they wouldn't let us lock up and open up and have free rein of the facilities like we were able to do at that time.

Lohr: Were you in on the tutoring of the black children that were going to Denton High?

McGuire: I never did any of that, myself.

Lohr: What about the preschool? Didn't your group sponsor that?

McGuire: Well, no, we were just...many of the people in the Interracial Fellowship were volunteers at the preschool--some of the same people that were interested in the same things. There's some even now that have been volunteers there from the beginning. I haven't done that for about four years or so. I expect maybe I'll go back to it. Now that my husband is retired, I'll get him to be a volunteer, too. But my experience with Denton Christian Pre-School helped me again to get much more familiar with the black community and what the problems were of the poorest of the poor. I soon learned that there were people in the black community who were...you know, if they weren't middle class, they were about to be middle class, and they were chaffing under the burden of these people that were right there in their midst. They all lived there in the same place, and there would be these tacky-looking, awful-looking places. Then in order to build a house, they built it there somewhere--right next door to some crummy place. It's only just in the most recent years that they've begun to branch out. The Mohairs are out in Southridge, for instance, now. I've spoken of them twice. So there are just some isolated cases of people branching out and living out in the white community. So you can say there's true integration, but

it's just not widespread. Some of them, I believe, prefer to be in the black community. And they're still in the churches. You know, our churches just didn't integrate.

Lohr: They're not integrated?

McGuire: Well, they're welcome to attend, but the white churches just missed the boat. When the black people were ready to integrate, the white churches were slow, and they weren't ready.

Lohr: Why do you feel that is?

McGuire: Well, it's racism. It's just as simple as that, I think. the Methodist church made great strides, and, of course, they did integrate structurally--the United Methodist Church. The CME [Colored Methodist Episcopal] and the AME [African Methodist Episcopal]...the CME is the one that's Mount Pilgrim in Denton, and they had an opportunity to vote at their conference to become a part of the United Methodist Church, and they voted against it. But we'd gotten past the peak of when they might have been the most interested. One of the women I knew best from that church also worked at our church--she was a hostess, we called her--and she was bitterly disappointed that the church didn't vote to integrate with the United Methodist Church. I think what she thought would happen would be that their little church would close up, and all their members would come over to

our church because they had such a struggle. I think she thought...she loved our church, and people loved her, and she thought, "Oh, this is the way to go." But it didn't happen in her lifetime.

Lohr: Do blacks not feel comfortable coming to a white church?

McGuire: No. I think what's happened now is that black people all across the country have discovered and figured out that that's where their voice is--in the black churches in the black communities. That's what they have, and they're right. That's where the action is with the blacks--in the black churches. That's the way I feel about it. And Moore Street Baptist is a pretty good example here. They built this new church, and it's the nicest church in southeast Denton now and probably the largest. I imagine all the rest of them are struggling, struggling, struggling because it siphoned off an awful lot of people. The go-getters gravitated to that church.

Lohr: Have the white churches ever extended a welcome hand?

McGuire: Well, we always had a few, but they were generally students. There are United Methodist black churches. In the Methodist church, we had what we called a central jurisdiction. There were all these jurisdictions, and there was one called the Central Jurisdiction, and that was the black jurisdiction. Then when we integrated, that was disbanded. That had advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantages were that--just like in

a lot of other things--the black people then were in competition with whites and white officialdom for their own status and to make their way. Of course, we have black leadership at many levels in the Methodist church now. But locally we did not have a black United Methodist Church. We had CME and AME, which were different. I remember going to the service in Dallas--the First United Methodist Church--when our North Texas Conference became one from...I forget what the black conference was called. It was a very moving ceremony. I don't remember the year, but it was a good long while ago, though.

Lohr: Do you remember integration at North Texas?

McGuire: My husband could put dates to things much better than I could. We should have him in on this piece of the interview. When we came there wasn't but just a smidgen, by comparison to later years, of a black student population. This became a pretty popular campus for black students during our time here in the past twenty five years, but I can't put a date to when this began to happen, really.

Lohr: Did it go smoothly?

McGuire: I think so. I think that most of the people that were involved in it would say that it really went well.

Lohr: What about black faculty and staff?

McGuire: Well, one of those early ones was Harve King, who I

mentioned. He was a local boy. I think he's retired or partially retired now. There are more than the ones that I know about, that I know personally. I mentioned Margaret Lucas on the art faculty. We had at least two that I know of that came in during this time on the education faculty. We did have a black music faculty person who commuted from Dallas, and I think he even came here with a cut in salary because he felt like it would be such a feather in his cap to be part of the music school at North Texas. I forget where he'd been teaching, whether it was in a public school or whatever it was in Dallas. I don't know that he retired out of this job or whether it just got to be too much of a hassle. He wasn't on the faculty for very long.

It seems to me like we're over that point of where we were for a while, where there was so much pressure to hire blacks, to make an effort to hire minorities, and the affirmative action and all that business. It may be that we've backslid because we haven't had that pressing us. But, also, it's just taking awhile for the qualified blacks to become readily available to us. I remember when my husband was talking to one of his black graduate students, and he was kind of dreading, actually, the integration that was coming in the schools. He said, "I'm going to have to compete with white candidates." His own background had been so poor in his growing up and

his own music education was so limited that he was just desperately trying to play catch-up. He knew that there were a lot of gaps in his background. I thought that was an interesting observation coming from a black person, that he thought it was going to be tougher for him.

Lohr: Did the group take part in voter registration?

McGuire: Yes, it did. I really remember more the League of Women Voters doing that, but I know we did, somewhere back there, participate in voter registration and were trying to get more black people registered to vote.

Lohr: What about jobs programs? Did you do anything like that?

McGuire: I remember our having programs about jobs--trying to educate ourselves--but I don't remember that we particularly did anything that was significant, ourselves, as a group.

Lohr: You mentioned the paving of the streets. That happened after urban renewal failed, did it not?

McGuire: Well, when you say urban renewal failed, I don't know whether you're talking about the Dreamland Apartments...

Lohr: No, I'm talking about the election when the town was so divided.

McGuire: I can't say. I'm just not clear on the dates and times. Do you know what I'm talking about when I talk about Dreamland Apartments? Did you ever hear that?

Lohr: Yes.

McGuire: It is now the Phoenix?

Lohr: Yes.

McGuire: And, of course, Dreamland started out as a big dream when everybody thought this was going to be wonderful, and it deteriorated and deteriorated. And the black people agonized. The black people who had homes over in that area agonized over it, and they were bitter toward the blacks who had what they thought was an opportunity and blew it--that they didn't take care of anything, and it just got trashy just like the places they had lived previously. As far as urban renewal, that's what I think of. Of course, eventually, there was a big debate over whether to try to rehabilitate Dreamland. Of course, they did and they thought they were going to be smarter the second time around and monitor it better. They established restrictions and set up rules and guidelines that people were to follow, and then they were going to be monitored. I haven't heard anybody evaluate that for some time, so I don't really know. I don't think it's been so wonderful thought. I just don't know.

Lohr: How did Dreamland come about?

McGuire: I don't know who was the first "brains" behind Dreamland. Have you had any occasion to interview Eleanor Hughes?

Lohr: No.

McGuire: Eleanor was Denton's first woman mayor. She's over at North Texas now. I forget what her job is actually

called, but it's something to do with the community (liaison or whatever). She was one of the brains behind the first Elderhostel, which is on campus right now. She's not doing that now. I think Pat Warde is doing that. Anyway, Eleanor...and I can't remember whether that was...I think...I know that Dreamland came prior to Eleanor's first go-round as mayor. It just seems like she had a hand in it. She was a very visionary person and very organized and a very caring person. I just feel like if she wasn't already the mayor, she may have been on the planning or something, and she would know. She would remember about that. I don't have the dates and times in my mind. I just know I would go pick children up there for the Denton Christian Pre-School, and it was just disheartening.

Lohr: Whose idea was the street paving?

McGuire: Well, I'm sure it had been talked about a lot of times. Whether it really got talked a lot about in our Interracial Fellowship, I don't know what was the catalyst. But, again, I mentioned Trudy Foster earlier. She was the one who decided we needed to quit talking about it and do something about it. The obstacle seemed to be getting the people to sign their right-of-way deeds. I think that's what they were called--right-of-way deeds or right-of-something deeds. So she figured out a way to do that. She would get maps from city hall,

and she was down there talking to whomever. She organized it in such a way that all the rest of us had to do was to say, "Yes, we'll help." She was the guiding light; she was the brains behind that.

It was during that time that the mayor appointed a committee--an interracial committee--and I think that's when Zeke Martin was mayor. That was, I think, one of the positive things that came out of his administration--the appointment of that committee of twelve. It's not as though they did a whole lot, but it was during the same period of time, and it gave them some kind of a place for communication. Just like in our Interracial Fellowship, we had a place to communicate. So there were white people and black people on this committee of twelve. Somewhere in all that the decision was made for the city to pick up more of the tab than it normally would've because those streets had never been paved. They figured that it had been neglected so long that nobody would object, and there wasn't much hollering about that. I think everybody felt like it was only right. But I still will stand on Trudy Foster being the one that should be remembered as the catalyst for getting it done.

Lohr: Was the group interested in women's rights?

Mcguire: Not really. We hadn't really got into that yet. That really was a later push. My own interest in that came really after our organization had pretty much faded off

the scene. My interest really was...I don't know...Ms. magazine (chuckle). I think I was one of the early subscribers to that.

Lohr: And you said the group finally ended because you couldn't find officers and people who had time to give?

McGuire: We were beginning to be busy. Our children also were getting out of school, and we didn't feel the need quite as much. It wasn't quite as urgent as it was before. We couldn't find younger women to take our places. Even the young women we had had all served their term, and we just couldn't get anybody. Somebody had to take the responsibility for planning where we were going to meet and when we were going to meet. We got to the place where nobody was willing to do that because we'd all gone on to other things and other responsibilities.

Lohr: Do you think that indicated that people didn't see as much as a need for the group?

McGuire: I think we in particular didn't see as much of a need. I kind of grieved for the next generation because I felt like the need was still there. And I think it's there right now. If I weren't so tired in my old age (laughter)...you know, maybe this would be the time for some of us old retired folks to say, "Okay, we'll organize it." But I don't know. I look at the young women...like, my daughter is a perfect example. She burns the candle at three ends, and she's doing something

all the time. She's earning a living and trying to keep her soul intact by being in the Denton Light Opera. And her job takes a lot of night meetings since she works for the public schools. She has to go to all the board meetings, and she writes the column for the paper. She's the public information person for the schools. So she's real, real, real busy. The kind of people that you want, who have the creativity and the enthusiasm, are so drained from the things that they're already doing that I don't know what it would take to get it going again, or if it's possible.

Lohr: Do you think the connections are there to get it going?

McGuire: Well, if I were asked to do it, I would say "no," of course. But if I were responsible for trying to get it off the ground again, I would turn to the women I already know and say, "Give me 'X' number of names from your church. Who are the women leaders from your church? If you can, tell me if they're employed outside the home." That's the way I would start. And if you were to send out invitations for such a meeting, you'd probably get a lot of people one time--I think you would--since there hasn't been anything like that for some time. I have to be honest and say that I don't really know how different it is now than it was when, say, I had my first kid in high school, and in terms of feeling the need that I certainly felt to have a chance to have some black

friends. I felt like it was important. And to live in the same community and never know any of these people, how are you ever going to have a really integrated community without any communication or without any friendships? Of course, we now have black people on boards and different things in community organizations, but it has been mighty slow. But in the mainstream, there is still not very much involvement.

Lohr: So maybe now people think they know one another, but they don't really.

McGuire: I don't know. Maybe they don't even care. I don't know whether the average thirty-five-year-old black woman cares or whether she has any curiosity or whether she thinks it's important for herself, her family, and her community to know any white people on any kind of a personal level. I don't know that.

Lohr: Do you still keep up with the black people that you met in that group?

McGuire: Well, it's like I told you earlier. When I go to something...like I did a couple of weeks ago, I saw this one woman, and she was the one who said, "Oh, we just need to get together just to talk." Then there was another woman that I hadn't seen, I suppose, in two or three years. We greeted each other warmly, and in five minutes she had caught me up on her life. Well, in the meantime she had had a brain tumor; she had had surgery;

her daughter, who's the same age as my daughter, had had a mastectomy at thirty-four years old. This woman's mother, whom she was very close to, had died, and I knew that. She's had chemotherapy, and now they are telling her that they're seeing something else. But she said, "They're not going to cut on me again." I'm thinking, "I'm just hearing this woman's life. I'm hearing everything that's happened to her, but I know nothing. I don't know any of it because I never see her." We hadn't really seen each other in a long time. I've been in her home; she's been in my home. So it's just always just through the Interracial Fellowship that we meet. We don't go to the same churches, and that's one of the reasons I've clung to the Association of Christian Women, which is an ecumenical organization. And it's struggling. Mercy! Mercy! Mercy! You know, it's so hard because it still meets in daytime, and there's just a limited number of women that can do that. And you're either retired, or you're a rare bird if you happen to be a woman who is able to financially stay home with her children and have the option of coming. We have very few of those. So that's the place I see those women. Otherwise, our paths do not cross.

Lohr: What are your feelings and perceptions of the group in looking back?

McGuire: I'm just grateful from a personal standpoint. I'm

grateful for the experience for myself. And it did spill over, I think, into the lives of my children and certainly my husband.

I think one of the things that perhaps grew out of that was that our church and two of the churches in southeast Denton entered into a retreat for our youngsters. Our daughter was in high school at the time. It was an interracial retreat sponsored by our churches. They went off somewhere, you know, to some church camp for, oh, at least a day-and-a-half, at least one night out. I don't know if it was two nights. One of the things that came up out of that was, "We wish that we could go back home to Denton, and it would be the same as it has been here." A lot of things came out. They began to feel free enough to come out with their honest feelings. The reality was that they would go back home, and while they would never quite be the same, themselves, they knew that in the lunchroom they'd all gravitate to their friends. Each gravitated to friends of their own race, and that's the way it was. But I know Susan looks back on that as a very consciousness-raising experience, and she felt closer to the kids who were there. They talked about interracial dating and the gals who resented black guys asking white girls for dates and things like that. It was very interesting.

Lohr: What purpose did the group serve?

McGuire: I think we probably pretty well covered it. The purpose of the outset was to establish friendships and to promote communication between races. And it certainly did that. I wish I could say there were more long-range benefits, but they're not so obvious that I can name them one, two, three. They're more subtle.

Lohr: Did you have the feeling that the group exceeded the expectations of the members?

McGuire: That would sound maybe extravagant (laughter). Probably not. Again, the people who started would be the ones to answer that. I've kind of lost track of how long it had been in existence when I got into it. But it hadn't been too long, perhaps a year or perhaps a year-and-a-half, by the time I was involved in it.

Lohr: When you decided that you would go and then decided that you would go to it regularly, what did you hope to get out of it?

McGuire: Well, it just appealed to me so much more than some of the other options that I had. When I came to Denton, the people were very gracious to me, and I got invited to the usual women's clubs and several things. I didn't play bridge, and my best friend was an avid bridge player, and she'd get so mad at me. I said, "Well, if I were as efficient as you were and worked as hard as you did and got as much done as you did, then I would have time to play bridge. But as it is, I have to pick and choose

because I'm not that efficient."

The Interracial Fellowship appealed to me. I could just see how beneficial it could be, and it was much more interesting. I can do my own social things with my own close friends, and I certainly had plenty of opportunities to do them through my church and what little I did with the North Texas faculty wives kind of thing that we had (Newcomers). So this was a whole different thing that I never had the chance to do before, so I was delighted to become a part of it. Certainly, just from a personal standpoint, it was very, very beneficial. I would covet it for any particular young women. It would be tremendously beneficial. I think we need it. We need lots of that. The way our society is structured now with the working women, it's just very, very difficult.

Lohr: Was the group more for white women or for black women?

McGuire: Well, I'm sure that it was a bit difficult to avoid being patronizing, but we all learned as we went. I was learning not just through the Interracial Fellowship; I was also learning through the studies we were all having at the same time at our church. It was consciousness-raising. I began to look at my own attitudes and see how easy it was to be patronizing and not realizing you were doing it. You thought that you were being really good or whatever and that maybe we really knew better how you

should do such-and-such. Now that was me. Now there's a lot of women probably that weren't that bad (chuckle). But that's why it was so important that we have a white and a black co-chair. We worked hard at making sure the black chaired as much as the white did or that they had the leadership exposure. I believe there were some white women that were in part inadequate in that kind of thing, and the blacks hadn't had the opportunities, except in their black churches, to preside or whatever. I don't know whose idea it was, but it probably was a white person's idea. I hope that came out in some earlier interview that you had with somebody. I don't know really whose brainstorm it was at the outset.

Lohr: What was the first meeting you attended?

McGuire: It was at a white person's home, and it was a Sunday afternoon tea. I don't remember that we even had a program. It must have been some kind of icebreaker. Mostly, I think it was just introduction of the guests and socializing over tea and crumpets (laughter).

I would be hard pressed to remember what the second meeting was I ever went to, but our programs were generally designed to be either that we would learn something about racism in our community...you talked about jobs somewhere back there. We had people who knew about those things come and talk to us. I suppose some of us got on committees and things simply because we felt

more informed, and probably our influence spread in a kind of peripheral way because of our experience in the Interracial Fellowship.

Lohr: So you feel it has been beneficial in many ways?

McGuire: Both to the black and white women who were involved in it.

Lohr: Thank you.