

Stephanie Klopfleisch
Interviewed by
Frances Feldman
at Dr. Feldman's Home
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FELDMAN: Stephanie how does it happen that you became a social worker?

KLOPFLEISCH: I entered social work quite as an accident. After I graduated from college, I needed to get a job, and I really wasn't career focused. The first job that became available was as an eligibility social worker in the welfare department, BPA. But when I started there...

FELDMAN: It was then called BPA, Bureau of Public Assistance.

KLOPFLEISCH: Bureau of Public Assistance, right. I started in the metro south and had a good training experience. After I worked there for a few months, I became very, very interested in the work. I became interested in the clients and what they were like. I had this one client; I can still remember her to this day. Her name was blank (that's what she said) Acasta??. She was a young woman with two children and she was quite mentally ill and she had been in and out of Camarillo. She was an AFDC intake case for me. She began to describe her life and how much she wanted to be able to provide a home for her

children and how much she wanted to be able to get a job and feel better. I could see that I was the only person that she had a connection with to try to help her. It just struck me that this was very important work that welfare social workers were asked to do. We didn't really have a lot of training in how to help people and how to help them mobilize themselves.

FELDMAN: When was this?

KLOPFLEISCH: This was in 1963. Very quickly, I was really committed to being a social worker. It just happened, fortuitously, that the county had started a scholarship program where they would send select people to get their masters degree. I applied for that program and I was selected. I went to UCLA in 1964 for my MSW. That was an excellent learning experience for me. I think it really helped me get my skills and my perspective on the field together. I had good fieldwork experiences. I was at Florence Crittenton Maternity Home...

FELDMAN: In Los Angeles?

KLOPFLEISCH: In Los Angeles, with Catherine O'Neal who is a marvelous social worker...

FELDMAN: Yes, Catherine Nielson.

KLOPFLEISCH: Catharine Nielson, that's right, Catherine Nielson, she was terrific. Then my second year I had a

placement at the Kaiser Permanente Child Psychiatry Department. I enjoyed it but it helped me see that my greatest interest really was in social work, planning and program development. I went back to the welfare department in 1966.

FELDMAN: Did you have a commitment to be back there for a certain length of time?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes, I had a two-year commitment, just to work. I wasn't certain how long I was going to stay there. But I went back and I went to the Children's - it was then called the Child Welfare Bureau - and I became influenced by this wonderful woman: Mary O'Neal was her name.

FELDMAN: What? Mary O'Neal?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes, and she was an MSW and she was over the child welfare group. She was very inspirational and she was a tiger of a lady. She used to say, "Just remember, these children are depending on other people to help their lives go well. You have to be responsible and you have to be accountable." She really got us all fired up, and we worked very, very hard, often without a lot of resources and not as much training as she would have liked. (Laughter) It was somewhat scary; we had very large caseloads. I think I had 96 children in placement. Between the foster children and the needs of the foster parents, it was quite a busy time,

but I enjoyed it. Then after that, I became a supervisor and rather rapidly, I became a manager in the welfare department. I was the assistant; it was called Deputy District Director of Metro North in 1966. There I ran into my second great influence. I've often wondered, Frances, why did I stay in public social work so long?

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: It's because I had these role models that really, they really did inspire me about how you could make a difference despite the complexity and the inertia of working in bureaucracy. As the Deputy District Director, in Metro North I ran into this woman called Florence Albert.

FELDMAN: Yes, who was that?

KLOPFLEISCH: She was an MSW, and she was the training supervisor (laughter). But she was absolutely fearless, she didn't care about bureaucracy and what things could happen and go wrong. If something was good and appropriate for a client, she'd work around the clock to make it happen. I really learned from her that if you wanted to make a difference, you had to be bold. You had to keep your eye on the fact that helping clients was important and remember that sometimes you might get some knocks from administration if you try to do things differently. DPSS,

then the Bureau of Public Assistance, was like a giant army. It was very authoritarian, very structured and you did everything by the rulebooks. Florence inspired me about how to be creative and how to do things differently. She was one of the first persons who called together case conferences on welfare cases. She pulled together people from private agencies and from health and from school. They would sit together and try to work out good case plans for families. She was very inspiring to me. She helped me a lot as I became a manager then. After I had that operation where I was responsible for a field office, I went to central administration. I was the first Assistant Program Deputy of the new program called Food Stamps that was coming in. The Food Stamp Program didn't exist yet but it was on the way. I had this dubious job, and along with a few other people, we had to write the instructions for how this program would go. Oh, what an ?? task that was, because we didn't really understand what it was going to be. We didn't understand that this was going to be a huge program that many people who were not traditional welfare recipients were going to be..

FELDMAN: Did that involve the Department of Agriculture at your level too?

KLOPFLEISCH: At that time, no. I was not at the level where I would be dealing with the Department of Agriculture.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: I was dealing with state officials on the implementation of it.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: There I had another inspirational source: one of the assistant directors in the departments, named Marvin Freedman. He was a wonderful man. He took me under his wing. He taught me all about the politics of working in public welfare programs. He really did mentor me. He told me the importance of learning how to talk to politicians and how to talk to people in the State Department and the Federal Department and try to be persuasive about the needs of the local area. He made me very committed to the role of advocating for Los Angeles County and that that really was my job: to try to describe to others what our county was like, to try to describe to others what the clients needed, to try to get out there to get the resources. Marvin was wonderful, and he'd take me to Sacramento with him and introduce me to legislators. Basically, he taught me how to lobby and be an advocate, which is really important with social work.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: That was a great learning experience. Despite having to work on food stamps, which I will never say was my cup of tea, writing all those regulations. We got through it and it was interesting. I had a very good career in DPSS. It changed its name and became the Department of Public Social Services, and that was in synchronization with the big change that was happening on the federal level. Where the former program to aid old people and aid disabled people was called OAS and ADD on a national level those programs...

FELDMAN: Called what?

KLOPFLEISCH: The Old Age Security Act and the Aid to the Totally Disabled Act. They were being folded into new programs in the Social Security Administration, a much more appropriate thing then was the Welfare Department. So, during that transition, the Bureau of Public Assistance changes its name to the Department of Public Social Services. I became a division chief and one of my first responsibilities, along with other division chiefs in the department, was to help the transfer of all these cases from the local administration to the Social Security Administration. Another less desirable part of my job was to assist with the downscaling of all the workers who had

been responsible for the old age cases and the aids to the totally disabled cases. We would have to find other jobs or go to other jobs in the county, so that was a difficult and tumultuous time. That lasted for several years, but there was a very excellent, excellent thing that ultimately happened. I think it's been a good change in this country to have these two programs run under a national program that made it very uniform.

After I worked in that I...

FELDMAN: Can we stop for a minute because...

KLOPFLEISCH: Sure.

FELDMAN: I want to ask you about that. When the change was being made, transferring these two programs to the federal agency from state/county, how was that handled? Was the county involved in that? Did the state make the decisions? Was there just a cut of date; by such date, these people would be getting their checks from the federal government?

KLOPFLEISCH: Well, there was a long-planning curve involved because it covered all the states in the nation.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: The National Association of Counties and individual large welfare departments, such as ours, worked

closely with Health and Human Services. Only then it was called Health Education and Welfare.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: That department worked closely with Health Education and Welfare and the Social Security Administration and Planning in a kind of an orderly move. There was a long, long lead-time, so nobody was caught...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: ...in arrears, and a lot of planning went forward on it. Overall, it went very smoothly in terms of clients. They were notified and told when we met. They were given a lot of information about the conversion to the other system. If there was a precipitous part of it, it was for the workers who had worked in that area. For them, the changeover was definitely traumatic. Despite all of our efforts, we were not able to find enough jobs for all the social workers who had done it. Suddenly, these huge caseloads were gone and the federal government did not take the social workers...

FELDMAN: They didn't take over the social workers?

KLOPFLEISCH: No, no, so a number of social workers were (sigh) demoted to other positions in the county. Now, during the same time, the county was...

FELDMAN: When was this? In the 60's?

KLOPFLEISCH: This was, no, this was...

FELDMAN: The 70's?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes. This was 1972 when it was ultimately completed. But it was going on beforehand.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: The Department of Public Social Services and all of the other welfare departments in California made a split between services and eligibility and how cases were handled for people on welfare. Essentially, clerical people came in to take responsibility for doing intake on cases determining eligibility and setting up budgets for people who needed financial assistance. Social workers who were more highly educated and highly paid, had a smaller responsibility for setting up special plans for adults in need of protection or adults who might need a new - it was called Homemaker Chore then...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: It is now called In-home Support. Or for adults who need referrals for special community services. But what happened when there was a dramatic staffing change in the welfare department? Instead of having primarily a college-educated work force, we had primarily a high school, clerically educated work force, with some additional social workers...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: The Children's Services continued to be handled by BA and MSW social workers. That continued for a number of years. I became the Assistant Director in DPSS in 1973 for all the social services and for Children's Services. That was a huge job, it's a huge job. I like it very much. I did that for six years. At that time, we had about 4000 total staff, and we function for adult and children services. The biggest problems then were an extreme lack of funding in the children services end. Very extreme, it was funded under the old Title 4A Program. I spent so much time marching off to Washington, trying to get favorable changes in regulations and programs to get more money, as did many other people across the country. Everybody was very concerned about it.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFKEISCH: Just about that time, funding was very tight for Children's Services and the concept of child abuse became very well articulated, and the child abuse reporting logs began to pop up all over the country. A code of ethics and practice related to child abuse began to come into the discussion and this had an enormous impact on the Children's Services caseload. Before, I think the kind of cases that came into Children's Services were either very

extreme, so that anybody who saw the child would say, "Oh my God," and they'd call an official, because the situation of harm and neglect was so obvious. However, after the child abuse reporting laws were put on the books and the mandatory reporters were identified - that is school teachers, health professionals, counselors, and ministers - and these people began to get training in it. Some knew what happened was that children began to be identified as in need of those services. There was this mushrooming of caseloads which began in the 70's and continued steadily for 20 years. It was a good thing, I think. Those children needed the assistance and needed to be identified. But, like a lot of other things, the services were not in place for them so...

FELDMAN: Were adoptions an entirely separate department?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes, adoptions were an entirely separate department. I left DPSS in 1979 and became the Chief Deputy Director of the Community and Senior Services Department.

FELDMAN: What was the name of that?

KLOPFLEISCH: Community and Senior Services. That was a department that had been recently created, and its task was to handle the federal service funds that would be contracted out. In addition, it was to operate community centers throughout the county and be the Area Agency on

Aging. When I made that move to the department, it was a relatively small department. It was a very exciting change for me. It was so exciting because it was like night and day compared to the Welfare Department. When I think of the Welfare Department and my years there, it was like being a member of an armed force. It was very structured, very regimented, and everything was reduced to paper rules and so on. There you had caring individuals and all trying to do there very best. It was extremely bureaucratic and structured. (Laughter) A

A launch of this new department community services was the absolute opposite. At first, it was a terrible culture shock to me, but I never saw such a great opportunity to accomplish things in my whole life in government, and I still had a ?? to cross anything was unusual. The department had, just by happenstance, a lot of workers who started in private agencies in the war on poverty. They came to the county when they saw similar programs coming to this new department of Community and Senior Services. These people had a real flare for relating to the community. They saw, instinctively, the need to start where clients were at, where community was at, where people were at. They had maximum participation by the larger community in the development of programs.

FELDMAN: Let me just ask you, there was no involvement here of giving money for assistance?

KLOPFLEISCH: Not at this point, that came later. The department grew a lot...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: ...hile I was there and had a lot of additional responsibilities. But at that point, no.

FELDMAN: You were free to really establish relationships..

KLOPFLEISCH: Exactly.

FELDMAN: Around troubles that were not financial troubles?

KLOPFLEISCH: Right, exactly. The other thing was the department and I and another woman, Lynn ?? (sounds like Derrick) had a lot to do with this. We empowered the staff to the maximum possible, instead of trying to restrict their job to the thing that you could most control in writing. We truly tried to give everybody a job where every skill and every talent and every interest they had could be exploited. The result was that we were considered one of the most productive departments the county had ever had.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: People loved working there. We hav, and to the day I left as director when I retired, we had almost no turnover. People would join the department and they just

absolutely loved it. They stayed and they worked hard. I was there in the department from '79 until the day I retired in 2002. I was the director then. We grew a lot...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: That was good. The vote gave us the responsibility for the adult protective services. We had the Area Agency on Aging, and then we got responsibility for the programs for refugees and immigrants. Then we got the responsibility for Domestic Violence Services and all the shelters that ???. We grew an enormous amount and, although our basic mode of service delivery in community and senior services was to contract administration, we had almost 800 people when I left. We operated a network of 30 offices that we had services entered in, and 14 senior centers and service centers.

FELDMAN: All of them in Los Angeles...

KLOPFLEISCH: All of them in Los Angeles County, yes. We had (laughter) some very, very innovative programs during that time that were built as a community. When the new immigration laws came, the amnesty program started. We worked with 200 community agencies, and we mobilized a giant network and in less than a year, we assisted 500,000 people to become citizens. This was a great deal because the INS, in this county, was just a hopelessly confused

organization (laughter) but the advocacy was incredible and the support we got from the private agencies was what made it possible. We had private agencies that were familiar with the languages and the customs of immigrants and they would provide skill for them. We in the department knew how to advocate and push and make things happen in terms of procedures...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: We put together a very powerful program and worked with so many people in that year. That was really wonderful. When the employment training programs really mushroomed in the '90s, our department became responsible for them in the county. There had always, for years since the war on poverty, been some kind of small federal employment training program for ???. There was ?? (sounds like SETTA) and then there was ?? (sounds like JEPA) and then there was the Welfare Reform. Those programs became extremely large. Through time, they became one of the biggest activities I was involved with. They featured a large participation by private sector individuals. Unlike all of the other programs, our job training programs ??? private citizens shared responsibilities and oversight responsibilities with the Board of Supervisors. It was very interesting, and I think it made the program stronger. We

were administering and planning and developing programs and getting clients, and we were doing allowances for things like childcare and clothing and that kind of thing. The Board of Supervisors and the Private Citizens Board both had to agree on it and if both didn't agree, it couldn't go through. Each could veto the other, but neither could force the other to do anything.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: It was a fascinating way to go

FELDMAN: Did this work?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes. I think the Department of Labor was very wise. Their reason for doing it, I believe, was that they wanted the expertise of the private businessperson to come in and help with the development of these job programs. It was a marvelous idea.

While I was working in the Welfare Department, we were primarily a maintenance organization, although we did do some experimentation with childcare. In Community and Senior Services, we were constantly innovating and working on new programs and that was really rewarding.

If I had to say where the most exciting things I worked on were, it would be the development of the countywide welfare reform system that went into place in 1997. That was the result of congressional legislation that

changed welfare from an eligibility stipend system to one where people had to participate in employment training programs to get aid, in which the federal government said you have just five years to maintain this funding from the federal government and then you're on your own. This was a huge change, and I worked on a department head committee of welfare, mental health, health, our department and ??, developing integrated plans that would use the services of all five departments to the benefit of the client. That was really exciting! These were not turf issues: we were trying to make seamless client-friendly programs so that when somebody came in to get a job, it would be easy for them to get childcare and it would be easy for them to get a homemaker provider if that's what they needed.

To get the job-training programs, which we did, my department did it. If there were domestic violence issues we were able to access domestic violence programs. It was really wonderful, working together like that, and I think the program got off to a very good start here. The proof in the pudding is going to be in the next year or two, as clients begin to exceed their five years of eligibility.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: Although there is a fail safe, there is a net underneath the program, which a lot of people don't

understand. If you don't have a job after five years, if you participate in community service your children can still be aided. It's not quite as dire as it sounds.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: That was an exciting change and I think a good one. I think the clients liked it very much and started feeling like the perennial dole case.(?) I saw hundreds and hundreds of clients. I used to go to the orientation under this new workforce plan that was going forward. They were excited about it, absolutely excited. We took those old welfare buildings and instead, we got very modern office buildings. We dressed - everybody had to dress professionally. No wearing jeans or anything like that. The clients were expected to dress the same way, and we established clothing shops for them where they could get business clothes. I listened to all these different people and they all said the same thing - "I want to take care of my own family, I want to get a job, but I'm afraid. I don't know if I have the skills, but I want to try it. I don't want to live on welfare. This is not a good life." It didn't matter which language they were saying it in, it was all the same message. For all its flaws, I personally thought that the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 was on the right track. I certainly hope that it's implemented well

enough for the long haul and that it will make the difference that it was intended to. That was really exciting.

FELDMAN: Did you find that a good proportion of the people were able to get and hold jobs?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes, a good proportion was able to get jobs, but it was during a time in the economy when the economy was very strong. Now that I'm retired, I am not as familiar with what's happening now that the economy has been down for some time. The bigger issues seem to be that we were able to get everybody their first job. The model that we used was a job, a better job, a career. That was the order. Get a job and then you would have on-the-job training so you could get a better job. Then you'd have schooling, in addition, so that eventually, you could have a career. That was the theory and it seemed to be working, but a key thing was how many jobs are out there in the economy?

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: Of course right now, with the dot com buzz and technology trouble, I suspect that created some difficulty.

FELDMAN: Did you have any, did you inherit any problem with childcare working parents?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes, yes. Childcare was not readily available and not as quickly available. Sometimes, somebody would have a job, and yet the scarcity of quality childcare was a problem, and so the childcare wouldn't be ready soon enough for them. Although there are a fair number of licensed day-care homes in communities, there aren't as many percentage wide as there used to be. A lot of women have entered the workforce; double what it was 30 years ago. Childcare has been a definite problem.

FELDMAN: There was an article in this morning's Times that speaks about the large number of welfare recipients who can't stay with a job or can't find one because of the shortage.

KLOPFLEISCH: I have to say that's one of the two big problems with the welfare reform. The second one is transportation, especially in a County like Los Angeles. It wouldn't be such a problem in New York City, because they have a good transportation system, but ours is limited. Sometimes you have a woman who lived in Compton who had succeeded in securing a job in downtown Los Angeles, but her child was in a school that was two miles from her house. Somehow, getting up in the morning without a car and without access to public transportation, she had to get

her child safely out to school some distance from her home and then get to her job and so on (laughter)...

FELDMAN: Then reverse the procedure at the end of the day.

KLOPFLEISCH: Exactly, exactly and those, I think, were two big practical problems. They are trying to develop a program whereby clients could buy cars at no cost and ultimately repay when you reach some income level, repay back. I think that's still an important obstacle. Then there's another one, Frances. In the long term, the support of families before they reach their welfare level is critical. Kids have to be helped to stay in school. Everybody has such a disadvantage. If you don't finish high school it's almost economic doom our day and age. There needs to be a lot of effort to help kids in school and, when possible, help kids either go into vocational training after school or into college programs.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: Unfortunately, our LA Unified School District seems to be having a lot of problems in succeeding in that area, so that's part of it. I feel hopeful about possibilities for some success in future years where the fact that you have training programs still going strong.

FELDMAN: So that due to the fact that the economy is moderately good and childcare facilities are available and transportation arrangements can be worked out, there's every chance that these people can be working?

KLOPFLEISCH: Absolutely, absolutely. I think that it's the responsibility of government to try to make sure that all these variables are okay. Even in a down economy there has to be a, some kind of...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: ...safety net. Now, interestingly in Los Angeles, one of the programs we had in the department when I was the director - I became the Director of Community and Senior Services ultimately, and that was my favorite job in the world. I loved the people and I loved the mandate of our responsibilities. I enjoyed working in the community so much. It was a very rewarding experience. One of the programs we had was called "Refugees."

FELDMAN: Was what?

KLOPFLEISCH: Refugees, a simple name but the initiative of that program was to receive refugees who had been brought to this country through the State Department. Make sure that they received acculturation services, help getting food and housing in this new community and ultimately, job training, so that they could be supportive.

Los Angeles was the recipient, over the years, of floods of all kinds of refugees from different countries. First, there were Cuban refugees and then there were Vietnam refugees, then Cambodian refugees and Mong refugees. Then there were refugees from Jewish persons that were being persecuted in the Soviet Union, and then there were Haitian, Afghanistan refugees numbers...

FELDMAN: These are all programs that the federal government sponsored?

KLOPFLEISCH: No. The Federal Government had one program called Refugees. The State Department would determine who was a refugee. Suddenly you'd get a notice from the County that we're going to be getting, in the next six months, 5000 refugees from Vietnam. Or we are going to be getting 600 from Haiti or whatever the numbers were. The State Department determined where people would go, based on size of existing population. Those programs we would gear up for and would have to get the language sensitive surveys, the culturally sensitive staff. Those were very successful programs; we had the highest rate of employment in people leaving welfare on the refugee programs...

FELDMAN: Were you subsidized by the federal agency?

KLOPFLEISCH: No, yes, yes, excuse me: it was federal funds administered by the County.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: Refugees had five years to receive that, unqualified support. Then, after that, the same rules applied to them as any other person that came to apply for welfare. That was a very fun program. Once a year, refugees themselves would put together what they called the "refugees' luncheon." It was kind of like a cultural potpourri. They would invite all of the administrators they liked to come and have lunch with them. They'd do dancing and native singing and music, and it was there own celebration of being in this country.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: Their feeling that things were going well for themselves...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: It was lovely, a lovely thing. While I was working all this time, this job always felt natural to me, because I came from a background where my parents were religious and somehow, it kind of got drummed into me that part of what you did was try to make things better for other people. It was a natural kind of job for me.

There are a lot of things that happened during the time I was working that were very negative. Some I thought were sad but ???. One of the hardest things, I think, to

this day, was when the change in the mental health laws came and just arbitrarily closed off hospital mental health services. It sent a flood of mentally ill people to communities where there are no services. That's what caused all the homeless people to...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: ...during the '80s, when you suddenly began to see all these homeless people everywhere. They were people who formerly received services from mental hospitals. I still don't think there's been a good resolution to that problem. We have acutely mentally ill people on the streets, who, I believe, are a danger to themselves, persistently neglected and unable to take care of themselves. They will never generate enough revenue to provide any adequate mental health service for the homeless and I think it's very tragic. You just have to go down to San Julian and Wall Street downtown and see the thousands of people down there. It's kind of like a scene out of ??

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: Very mentally ill. Hallucinating right on the street, hundreds and hundreds of people wondering around. No solution or planning, the Los Angeles homeless service authority was started and has done a good job of

getting homeless resources available and used as much as possible within the law, so that...

FELDMAN: Now do the City and County jointly run this agency?

KLOPFLEISCH: Correct, so they have made some inroads on that.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: The other thing that was too bad ?? and I - hold on. There's something I wanted to mention. Oh, Proposition 13.

FELDMAN: I didn't hear that?

KLOPFLEISCH: When Howard Jarvis sold the State of California on the need for tax reform, he took the underpinnings of local social services funding away and other funding too. We never recovered from that - absolutely never recovered from it, and I don't think we ever will. State administration of the programs I worked with was generally unhelpful. They tended to be over-controlling bureaucratic, never focused on service issues. That's primarily on County-controlled audit issues. It's a very aggravating thing to deal with. Now, there are certainly some exceptions: there are always some administrators who are good and help the people. Most of the time, that was the level of program intervention that I

didn't care for. The other difficult thing during my experience here, all social services programs and all people need health services. There has been one crisis after another in health. In part, due to the complexity of such a large system, helping as many as 27,000 employees, 7 hospitals, dozens and dozens of clinics; it's hard to administer to begin with. There is a chronic funding crunch, and then that fact that we have this large illegal immigrant population and undocumented population, they must serve people for whom there is no federal or state reimbursement. It's been an impossible situation and it was always hard in our causes. The one loop, when you're trying to help a family in a comprehensive way, you'd often have difficulty trying to get health care for them. It's not better and, in fact, it may get worse with the problems with the federal medical waiver that's coming out. A lot of important work at the county level still can be done.

On the bright side though, the County has done a wonderful job with senior programming. Taking very seriously - my department took very seriously the fact that the huge number of seniors, and the fact that 85 plus was the biggest cohort of population growth in the country, we set ourselves a 15-year course to be geared up to provide the service level we think we will need by the year 2010.

There has to be a great expansion in nursing homes and in respite-care facilities for Alzheimer's patients and there...

FELDMAN: Does this serve the County as a whole or do the cities...

KLOPFLEISCH: The City of Los Angeles...

FELDMAN: City standard care?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes. There were two Area Agencies on Aging in the County: one was City of Los Angeles and one was the County of Los Angeles.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: That was interesting. That was a political decision many years ago. When the Area Agencies came into being, it was intended they would be whole counties, but the City Council really wanted to have their own senior programs...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: So there was kind of a negotiating settlement, and it's worked actually very well. I think having the two entities - they've played off each other, they've learned from each other's success and failures. Right now there is an extreme push, and a very long advocacy effort, to get more funding because we want the seniors to be able to be served that are coming upon us.

FELDMAN: Do the two agencies work together?

KLOPFLEISCH: We work very cooperatively, very cooperatively a - I was just saying that the senior departments are working very hard to be ready for the fast expansion of the senior programs. They put together a major plan that will, by then, carry the Board of Supervisors and City Council. That will feature, I think, just a really quality program.

Interestingly, one of our models has been Japan. Japan experienced a growth in seniors before our country did. We have been getting information from them about how they did get mobilized and which things were most important now that the crunch of seniors is upon them. That's been very helpful. My department wasn't very good at planning things. When we took over Adult Protective Services from the Welfare Department, we expanded enormously and lowered caseloads. We have a less than 24-hour response time on all our cases. We've established a number of model programs under it and, as a result, we were asked by Israel too. They paid us to come and assist them in developing an adult protective service program. They had previously gone for five years running, to assist in the establishment of domestic violence protocols and domestic violence shelters and to do the first survey on what the domestic violence needs were in Israel. That was very exciting work, to send

our head of the Domestic Violence Council and four workers. We did that for five years riding, and that did so well that two years ago, we started with Adult Protective Services. Unfortunately, the turmoil in the Middle East has made it such that this year, we've determined it's just too dangerous to send any workers anyplace.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: I think that was one tribute to our own programs, and the fact that we have gotten them operating so well, and we understand so well how they work...

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: We're kind of considered an expert on that. Also, we do have a willingness to help other areas develop a program, and that's been very interesting for us. I think that just about covers it. I can't imagine, as a career, having done anything that was more gratifying. I feel like, for myself, personally, it was a privilege to be able to work in a creative field. The social workers I worked with were wonderful, exciting, kind, and caring people. The programs that we developed were good at their heart.

FELDMAN: Yes.

KLOPFLEISCH: There was never anything to be ashamed of. Not everything worked as long as you might have liked it. I think it a marvelous place to have spent your life.

FELDMAN: Now, besides working for the agency, you also have been doing volunteer things?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes I have.

FELDMAN: Why don't you tell us about those?

KLOPFLEISCH: I volunteered for many years at Pomona College. I've been on a number of their boards and..

FELDMAN: Is that where you went to school?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes.

FELDMAN: For your undergraduate work?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes, I did my undergraduate work there at Pomona College. I'm a member of the boards there. Let's see. I was on all there was. At UCLA School of Social Work, I was on the governing board for about five years. Then, I'm very active in ?? of Los Angeles, which is a service organization. We sponsor two domestic violence shelters, which is a nice kind of hands-on work. I play in the ?? symphony: I play in two string quartets.

FELDMAN: Oh, you do!

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes I do..

FELDMAN: What instruments do you play?

KLOPFLEISCH: I play the boyar (??) and I also play the piano and am the accompanist for the Apollo Men's Glee Club, my only paid musical job at this time. Of course,

when my children were growing up, I was very active in their schools. It's been a busy, full life.

FELDMAN: How many children?

KLOPFLEISCH: I have three children.

FELDMAN: Where are they now?

KLOPFLEISCH: My oldest daughter is married and has three children, and she's a hospital administrator in the memorial care system in Orange County. She's at Saddleback Memorial Hospital. My daughter Jennifer is in graduate school in New York City. My son, regretfully, died when he was 19. He was a very bright, handsome, musical boy.

FELDMAN: What is the one in New York studying?

KLOPFLEISCH: She is studying design.

FELDMAN: What kind...

KLOPFLEISCH: She's getting her MFA. I think she has had an active career after she got out of college. She worked for AOL and a movie production company. I think what she plans to do, actually, is get a college teaching job. An MFA is the degree for that in art, then do her painting on the side. I think that's where she's headed.

FELDMAN: Is she in New York City?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes.

FELDMAN: Evidently, there are lots of opportunities there...

KLOPFLEISCH: There are a lot of opportunities there. She always had good opportunities out here too. I think she taking a - she's 29 now.

I'm thinking what I'm going to do with the rest of this time.

FELDMAN: There's another volunteer activity and that's a California social worker.

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes indeed. I'm a volunteer on the California Social Welfare Archives, which is very interesting and important work, preserving those documents.

FELDMAN: You've done a very fine job for us here.

KLOPFLEISCH: Thank you. I'm very interested in that.

FELDMAN: Are there any thoughts that you have that you would like to leave with whom ever reads this?

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes, yes there is. For who ever reads this, a lot of people in government get discouraged about the prospect of effecting positive change. I want to say to them, never give up heart. You have more power than you realize, your energy and your ability to find, to empower other people who join you in the things you think are right, are far greater than you can imagine. I know that from my own career, and my own experiences.

FELDMAN: I would echo it, for mine.

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes, too many people easily say. "Oh, this is a bad place," etc.

FELDMAN: Yes, and I think a great many really don't understand how effective a public organization really can be.

KLOPFLEISCH: Yes, right. That is true.

FELDMAN: This has been very helpful. I think we'll do better on this recording.

KLOPFLEISCH: (laughter)