Elizabeth McBroom
Interviewed by John Milner
In the home of Dr. McBroom
August 3, 1988

ABSTRACT

Elizabeth McBroom was born and reared in Spokane, Washington, graduating from the Washington State University before attending the University of Chicago to obtain an MSW degree. While in Chicago, she worked in several hospitals with child patients and their families (Bobs Roberts Hospital, Herrick House, the Orthogenic School) before returning to the West to take employment with several public agencies, working with children and performing a variety of successive roles, including licensing of foster care homes, and working with the juvenile court. She then helped to establish the West Virginia School of Social Work, where she taught classes and supervised students for four years before joining the faculty at the USC School of Social Work. She has had periods of work abroad: the Virgin Islands, Thailand, Australia, and has been engaged in a variety of research projects. During her tenure at USC, she took time out to obtain her doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley, where she developed her widely received socialization theory. At USC, she edited a number of issues of Social Work Papers, and published numerous articles.

Following her retirement from USC in the late 'Seventies, she was in great demand as a volunteer, and she was devoted almost full time to a variety of volunteer activities, including board service on the League of Women Voters, the Visiting Nurses Association, and the Pasadena Youth Agencies Consortium. Dr. McBroom died in 1997 at age 87.

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MILNER: Elizabeth, will you tell me how you first became interested in becoming a social worker?

MCBROOM: Yes. I started college not knowing there was such a thing as a social worker; I'd never seen a real live social worker.

My mother used to do a volunteer job of driving a probation officer around to make her home calls, but I didn't, certainly, identify her as a social worker or ever want to be like her. But I always fancied that I would be a journalist, and that's what I was pursuing in college, and then came the crash after my freshman year, and I began to look around and see that newspapers were laying off people and they weren't hiring anybody.

Simultaneously I became very interested in the sociology courses I was taking. One was about the family, and one was a course that I guess would be called "social pathology," that I was very much interested in learning about: the mentally ill and crime and poverty. I began to think then of going to graduate school because there certainly weren't any jobs for the graduates of our class. I corresponded with the University of Chicago--there were no schools in the West, either, at the time. I corresponded with Western Reserve. I was sort of incensed that Western Reserve asked me to go to Seattle to be interviewed. But the University of Chicago just accepted me out of hand, so I went there. I had learned how to type and take shorthand, so I had a secretarial job at the school office and became well acquainted with Miss Abbott and Miss Breckinridge and the other faculty.

I worked for the first year I was there and then I got a Commonwealth Fellowship, so I didn't have to work for the last two quarters; I could write my thesis.

MILNER: Was your undergraduate work all at Washington State College?

MCBROOM: Yes, I was at Washington State. I was an English major, and I took a great deal of interest in the school newspapers and yearbooks and spent a lot of time with them

MILNER: I've always said--the English majors make the best practitioners in social work. I believe that. You were raised in Spokane.

MCBROOM: Raised in Spokane. I went through grade school and high school in Spokane. Our family was very stable. We all went through eight years in the same grade school and four years in the same high school and most of our neighbors did, as well.

MILNER: When you went to the University of Chicago, what was the emphasis of that school at that time?

MCBROOM: They had just brought Charlotte Towle. She came out of a guidance clinic in New York. She had never taught; she was very frightened of teaching. But she sort of soldiered through and she became quite a popular and skilled teacher.

MILNER: Certainly one of the stars.

MCBROOM: One of the stars. She brought Ruth Gartland and Ruth Smalley there to assist her with what Miss Abbott always used to call "sicky-atric social work." I had a field work assignment in the Bobs Roberts Memorial Hospital for Children, and I then was asked to stay on the staff I became the first social worker at the Orthogenic School.

I stayed there and at Bobs Roberts, and then I was asked to go on the staff at the new

psychiatric unit at the Billings Memorial Hospital. I did that very reluctantly because I liked working with children and with their families. But the adult service also turned out to be a very fascinating experience. The University had just sent Roy Grinker and Margaret Gerard to Vienna for analysis, and they came back and headed that up. And our unit had a staff meeting every morning at seven o'clock on the dot and discussed all the cases and went on from there.

MILNER: Did the school at that time feel that workers in the field should all have psychoanalysis?

MCBROOM: No. That came later. But there wasn't a lot of emphasis at the University of Chicago at that time on social workers being psychoanalyzed.

MILNER: At a later time it was emphasized all over the country.

MCBROOM: Very much so, yes.

MILNER: When you left Chicago you returned to the West Coast?

MCBROOM: When I left Chicago I went to Europe for a summer. I went to an international conference and went on a bicycle trip in youth hostels in southern England and Isle of Wight. Then I came back to Washington and landed in Gray's Harbor County and the public agency there, and became the child welfare worker for Gray's Harbor County.

MILNER: Were you working directly with children?

MCBROOM: Yes. I was starting the first foster home program there had ever been in that county. Also I was supervising the workers who were untrained, who were AFDC workers.

It was a very exciting time; the Social Security Act was just starting. There was a lot of energy and enthusiasm, a kind of pride in what we were doing. It was a very depressed time in Gray's Harbor County; it's a logging community, and all the logging camps were down, and all

the mills were down. It was very depressed. Our office was the busiest place in the county.

MILNER: I imagine. I remember that scene very well. You moved then from Gray's County to King County.

MCBROOM: Well, I paused in Olympia for an assignment in the State Office and not as soon as I thought I was going to because we had a new county director; he was Brian Hankins. He asked me to stay on as supervisor for his first two months and help him This was a very startling experience for me because I came to work one day and found that Brian was the county director-and just within recent weeks I had rejected their application for a foster home license--but I guess I must have done something right because we were always very good friends, and we worked together.

MILNER: In King County, what other responsibilities did you have?

MCBROOM: I went on to King County and the Division for Children, as it was called at that time, in and for the county, was really a beautified agency. It was under the direction of Virginia Trumbell who was a very talented administrator.

Each of our staff had specific responsibilities, geographical districts, foster care, home finding and placement. We had a great many responsibilities in the court. One worker studied all the adoption cases that came through the probate court. My particular assignment was to represent the county, the Division for Children, in juvenile court. Whenever any child was committed, we took guardianship of the child; or when any child in a family receiving public assistance appeared in court on a delinquency charge.

MILNER: And you'd represent the family?

MCBROOM: We'd represent the family and the Division for Children. It was a very exciting

time to be there. Everything was really just getting started. Everybody had a great zest for the job.

MILNER: Yes. And then you decided you'd like to teach.

MCBROOM: Well, no. I really never did decide I'd like to teach. I was supervising some University of Washington students who came for the summer. I remember two very able and outstanding girls who came from Idaho on summer scholarships and did some field work in our agency. I decided to go to New York and take Fem Lowry's Institute in Supervision. On my way I paused at the University of Chicago, and Miss Breckinridge asked me what I was doing and how I liked it. I told her I was very enthusiastic about it.

She reached me in New York with word of a faculty position at West Virginia University. I think if I'd told her that I hated my job I never would have heard from her. I detoured through Morgantown on my return and did accept a position teaching there in the school that was just being organized, a one-year school. I stayed there for four years. It was just Emil Sunley and myself at the school. During that year it became accredited. Gordon Hamilton and Emil Sunley came and accredited it.

MILNER: What courses did you teach there?

MCBROOM: Well, I taught casework, and I taught a course equivalent to what we call Behavior, and I supervised fieldwork.

MILNER: Good combination.

MCBROOM: We did all the fieldwork in a little public agency, and the director of it was a very temperamental and irascible woman who would really terrorize the students and descend on them in full fury if they did anything wrong in the records or anything like that. Part of my energy

went to protect the students from Mrs. Comisa. They were really quite frightened of her.

MILNER: There were quite a few in the country like that.

MCBROOM: We were in the old house and there was a day care center. And I remember one of my students, a young man from the southern part of the state--a very good student, he later went into the federal service--children were tearing back and forth in the hall and he was trying to study something, and he said, "You may read a headline in the paper tomorrow, 'CHILD WELFARE WORKER STRANGLES CHILD.'"

MILNER: Did Dean Sunley eventually go on to become dean of the School of the University of Denver?

MCBROOM: Yes, he did. I left before he left; the war started during that time. After I had taught at Morgantown for four years--I always get a yen to get back to the West--so I went back.

MILNER: That was back to Seattle.

MCBROOM: Back to Olympia. I worked there for probably about a year. The assignment that Jess Mooney had had–do you remember her?

MILNER: Yes, very well.

MCBROOM: The licensing of child placement agencies and child caring institutions. It was a very interesting job. It was state-wide, and I traveled from east to west on the train and used a state car--of course it was war and gasoline rationing. I'd always pick up soldiers in Fort Lewis and give them a ride to the city.

I remember that we were trying very hard to get qualified social workers; they were in short supply. One very wily young priest came to be director of service for the Diocese of Spokane. He was opening one institution after another and didn't have any workers with

Spokane. He was opening one institution after another and didn't have any workers with training. And I remember saying to him, "It's difficult but not impossible to get a worker with a Master's degree in social work. Just recently they got one for the Tri-cities," Richmond and Hanford, where we later found out they had been making the atom bomb. That was a very unsettled, mushroom-growing community with many problems. The next time I went over there, Father Riley had stolen that social worker from the Tri-cities and had installed her in the Catholic Diocese. It really boomeranged; I outsmarted myself.

MILNER: Yes, you did. Was that in about 1942?

MCBROOM: It was, yes.. It was about two years before the war ended. I spent the last two years of the war in the Seattle Guidance Clinic--that was the first psychiatric agency that was organized in Seattle, I think--an outpatient clinic for adults and children.

I remember a friend, Dr. Stevens, the first director there.

MILNER: Didn't he get fired for seducing his patient?

MCBROOM: Well, he was a very troubled man. He created a lot of trouble within the staff. That was where I really began to feel that you couldn't be quite a self-respecting social worker without analysis, and that's when I left the clinic and went to Chicago and stayed there for three years.

During that time I worked at Herrick House, which was a research and treatment center for children convalescing from rheumatic heart disease. Most of them were very deprived children because other children could convalesce at home, but some of these children, because of housing and the neglect they suffered from, had very little chance to recover if they went directly home from the hospital.

MILNER: That was a famous clinic.

MCBROOM: Well, they did a lot of research, and they had many really quite famous cardiologists and pediatricians on the staff. Irene Josselyn was a consultant there. She was very down-to-earth and very practical with the staff and the young people who were care officers, you know, like the counselors and house mothers, and so on. They really helped them a lot in their understanding of the children.

MILNER: Was it based on a psychoanalytical approach to treatment.

MCBROOM: Well, she was a psychoanalyst, but she also had a great deal of common sense. I remember a couple of things that stand out.

One was that some young social worker that she worked with at another agency had told about going to a session and going through really hell and high water to get there because she didn't want her analyst to think that she was resistant. Irene scoffed at that; she thought that was the most ridiculous thing in the world. She was very well tied to reality.

I also remember a young girl--the agency also ran a summer camp on the other side of the lake--came out to the came and a worker from the Jewish Family Service came out. She had had this girl in 'treatment," so called, for several years, and yet the girl came with no equipment or no clothing or anything that wouldn't make her a laughing stock of the other kids. It seemed to me that this worker was quite blind in some of the things that were important to a teenager. She told me of having given a paper at the national conference on her work with this case and how criticized she was for the way that she dealt with the child's Oedipus complex. I thought that this was getting pretty rarified, you know.

MILNER: And Freud had been over to visit in this country and lecture by that time....

Just before you went to Chicago, though, didn't you do some licensing in the state of Washington?

MCBROOM: Well, that was when I worked for the child caring institutions and agencies, including the famous Diocese of Spokane and Children's Home Society.

MILNER: What condition did you find those programs in at the time?

MCBROOM: Some of them were quite advanced--of course, Ryther was one of the ones that we licensed-- some of them had very archaic wards, but some of them were very progressive, doing some quite nice things with children.

I think it was an easy generalization at that time that Seattle was very much more progressive than Spokane, which was really quite conservative and reactionary.

MILNER: From a community organization standpoint, it was quite an outstanding city, I thought.

MCBROOM: Seattle. I think so. The times I worked there, there was a very hospitable atmosphere to social workers, a great deal of interest in social work as an enterprise.

MILNER: After leaving your job in Illinois, did you come directly to the University of Southern California?

MCBROOM: I was working there. I had published a paper in Social Casework, jointly written with Ursel Froehlich *"Interpretation of Physical Disability to Children, " (1949),* who was a nurse there, a very attractive young person whose parents were professionals, I think, physicians who had been exterminated. They had lived in Berlin, and she had escaped, She was making a new life for herself here; she had some sponsors.

Ursel and I wrote a paper together on dealing with children with physical disabilities. I

wrote a letter to Arlien.

MILNER: This is Arlien Johnson.

MCBROOM: Yes. I had supervised, as I mentioned, some students at the University of Washington when she was dean there, and when I was in the Division of Children. She was also a neighbor of mine on Lake Union. I used to go see her and have a cup of tea in the afternoon and always she welcomed me warmly

MILNER: She lived there with her cat, I remember.

MCBROOM: I read an article in some journal about the Adoption Institute here. And, again, I was kind of getting the yen to go back West. So I wrote to Arlien to ask her about that agency and what she thought of it, about the staff, and so on. Arlien countered with an invitation for me to come and join the staff at USC. It was very simple in those days; she could make a unilateral decision about appointment and tenure and promotion.

MILNER: I think she did just that.

MCBROOM: She invited me to come, and had a certain teaching load in mind for me. In the meantime, she had hired Martha Hartwell and transferred the load she had written me about to Martha, and asked me to supervise the unit of students at Norwalk, now Metropolitan Hospital. I did do that for a couple of years.

MILNER: How did you find the hospital when you went--progressive?

MCBROOM: I thought it was rather primitive. They still had these staff meetings where a patient would be brought in to be presented to the whole staff on admission and on discharge. I think most of the psychiatrists were quite mechanistic, and the social work program was just beginning to get underway.

MILNER: That's a very large hospital, still functioning to this day. Have you visited in recent years?

MCBROOM: No, I haven't seen it for a long time, and I don't know what kinds of fluctuations it's gone through with all these changes in the mental health program and in state hospitalization.

MILNER: Your teaching at 'SC: what were the courses?

MCBROOM: Do you remember when you and I taught Practice and Behavior? All my Practice students would be in your Behavior class and visa versa....

MILNER: That's right.

MCBROOM: I always liked to teach first-year students because it was always new to them, and, I think, they learn very rapidly and were very engaged. Some of the second-year students were kind of jaundiced by the second year and a little disengaged.

MILNER: Yes. I always preferred the first-year students, their enthusiasm; it's new to them.

MCBROOM: One of the things that I look back on with interest: when I started to teach, I made a very strict point of addressing all my students as "Miss" or "Mr." or "Mrs." because I thought it accorded them their dignity as professional students. By the time I finished teaching, if there was any student who didn't call me by my first name it was because they didn't like me, I thought. There's been a real cultural change in the naming over those years.

MILNER: Yes. That's particularly true in California, in southern California.

MCBROOM: I think we do more first-naming than anybody.

MILNER: Yes. And you were supervising thesis writing at the time.

MCBROOM: Yes, I began supervising some students. Mostly they were students who had their field placements to psychiatric settings and were writing on some aspect of their work. All this

time we were up on the top of Bovard, and we had those long stairs to climb that kept us all in such robust health all these years, I do believe--and sitting in those splintered kitchen chairs, passing these telephones through from office to office.

MILNER: If there was ever a poverty school USC's school was that at the time.

MCBROOM: They even had us using both sides of the paper for scratch pads.

MILNER: And one telephone for each two offices.

MCBROOM: We really have seen those lean and Spartan days, have we not?

MILNER: Yes, we have. How long had you taught at USC when you got your sabbatical and applied for a Fulbright and went to Thailand?

MCBROOM: Well, actually, you know, I didn't get a sabbatical. We heard that a sabbatical is a privilege, not aright. But I had leave to go. I had a great deal of interest in going overseas. I had applied to the United Kingdom: you know, Arlien Johnson went on her sabbatical in England just a year before I did.

Those Fulbrights in the United Kingdom were very competitive and always spoken for far in advance. At the same time, I had no language skills in any second language. But they wrote to me and said there were opportunities in Thailand and that there was no language requirement because the students would all have had 12 years of English. So the instruction would be in English.

I filled out all those applications and it was a very exciting day. One day I got a cable that said, "You start on June so-and-so, and your round-the-world air ticket is in the mail." And it was.

MILNER: Describe some of your experiences in Bangkok.

MCBROOM: Well, my housing there was quite interesting because, kind of my mentor there, my Opposite Number, was a beautiful young woman who had gone to Ohio State and gotten a Master's degree there. She really kind of took charge of me, and she helped me with housing. The place I eventually found was a beautiful little house in a compound with lagoons in it and flowering orchids and coconut trees.

This little house had been built by a Thai architect who had studied in Paris. We didn't have air conditioning, but it was all screened and it had very wide eaves. It didn't have to be shut up in a tropical storm. It was always comfortable.

The big house across the lagoon was General Smosyodhama and his wife, their four daughters, and a young son I never met. He was in school in Australia.

I settled in and stayed the year and lived very happily there. The teaching I did was at the University of Thammasat. That was the first year. We designed some courses for students in the junior year. In the following year, Norma Mayfield followed me there. For the second year they had courses for juniors and courses for seniors. I tried to give them some introductory understanding of social problems in Thailand.

I think, probably, we didn't do too good a job of adapting to their culture and understanding their culture. We tried, but I don't know that we really did as well as we should have done.

MILNER: What were their social agencies like?

MCBROOM: They were very proud of their institutions. They would take every tourist to see their institutions. I was rather horrified at their infant care institution because I could see the babies being neglected and being perfect examples of what we always studied about what happens

to institutional children. At the same time, I suppose it was better than infanticide, babies drifting down the river.

They had a great deal of distrust of any kind of foster family scheme or adoption and were very much afraid that these children would be exploited and be made slaves. I suppose that that really would have happened. They saw their institutions as being protection for children who were abandoned.

MILNER: These children are actually raised in the institution. Any other kinds of programs there?

MCBROOM: Yes. They had something like the government social security programs so that they took care of elderly people and blind people, and they took care of handicapped, disabled people.

I worked about half of my time at the Ministry of the Interior in which the Department of Public Welfare was. My Fulbright colleagues thought that I had the best experience of anybody who was there that year. I know Jack Holden, who had come down from Dartmouth to teach political science, put on his final evaluation that every lecturer should have a ministry assignment as I had had; he thought that I had had so many more opportunities and got so much more out of being there that year than just teaching at the University.

MILNER: That's where policies were essentially made, in the Ministry.

You came home from there with an award from some high-ranking officer, a beautiful silver bowl.

MCBROOM: It's right there. And that bowl has little animals engraved around it that represent the years in the Thai cycle--year of the rat, the year of the monkey, etc. All Oriental countries do

their own a little differently; this is the Thai cycle.

MILNER: Who gave that to you?

MCBROOM: The department.

MILNER: But there was some high-ranking official.

MCBROOM: Well, he was Kum Chat. He was the director of public welfare programs for the country.

MILNER: That was a great experience to have been over there.

MCBROOM: It was a wonderful experience. Then I had the opportunity to come home through other Asian countries and Middle Eastern countries and European countries. It was really a great opportunity.

MILNER: Wonderful experience. You returned to Los Angeles and USC and taught how long before you went away again?

MCBROOM: Well, I came back in '55. In '61 I took off and went to Cal.

I had become very interested in cultural differences in child rearing. I proposed to Malcolm Stinson, who was by that time our dean (I think he had been there a couple of years), that I would like to go possibly to the Middle East and make a study of child rearing. Malcolm, in his typical growl as you may remember, said to me, "You can go if you go and learn something." I knew that meant, "Go and get a Doctorate."

I had considered this earlier but never very seriously or very favorably. I said, "Malcolm, I don't want to go learn something because all the roads are littered with the blood and bones of people who've gone to learn something."

Doctorates used to be very much an obstacle course, and the whole idea was to keep

people from successful completion. He said, "Well, don't go to one of those places like Chicago; go to a new program where they've got new ideas, like Cal."

That was the first year of Cal's program Of course, they were trying to prove something to all the other schools on the Cal campus and all the other schools of social work about how tough they could be. And they were tough.

I thought at the time I went there that it as a very good program, and I enjoyed it. I thought it was a very marvelous opportunity. I did have an NIMH Fellowship for the two years, so I was able to have the luxury of two years and nothing asked of me but to learn as much as I could. I really enjoyed it.

MILNER: Dean Milton Chernin was there.

MCBROOM: I had been on Dean Chernin's state-wide committee on professional education. He enjoyed pulling his rank on me now and then when I came in in the role of a student.

MILNER: He was making up for his lack of rank in the military when he was there. He was a private clear through to the end of World War II.

MCBROOM: He told me once or twice I wasn't humble enough.

MILNER: I liked him

MCBROOM: Oh, he's a rare fellow.

MILNER: And it was at Berkeley that you met Bob Roberts.

MCBROOM: It was at Berkeley--and I got on to a dissertation topic which grew out of some interesting sociology seminars I took. The concept of adult socialization was very interesting to me, and I believed that it could be applied in public assistance practice because public assistance had always been a very great interest of mine.

Kermit Wiltse had a grant for a Research Projects Office in Richmond, north of Berkeley. He was interested in my project. The whole purpose of this Research Projects Office was for Cal to do research that would improve the practice in the public agencies in the state, so my dissertation fit right in.

MILNER: What was the exact title of your dissertation?

MCBROOM: The title of my dissertation was, "A Comparative Analysis of Social Work Practice in Two Types of AFDC Families."

I had thought that social workers with a kind of socialization orientation, that is, those who took a great deal of interest and were very helpful on immediate problems and dilemmas of these families--would help them more than the ones who went in with a kind of psychoanalytic orientation and were seeing them in terms of psychological problems. Most of these wouldn't have been capable to help people if they were not on the right track with that.

Kermit Wiltse was looking for his most promising student of recent years to be his assistant, and he lighted on Bob Roberts. Bob came there. We occupied a kind of funny little storefront office in Richmond. Our secretary sat right up in the storefront, right up in the show window. We had one student in the Master's program, a young man, working there that summer, so it was just the five of us.

I tried out my research instrument on this little group; they came to my house one night, and we got into nearly a knock-down, drag-out battle over the meaning of this instrument and what they had done. Bob was always tangling with this very good secretary. They were kind of a match for each other.

MILNER: Then you left Berkeley and returned to USC.

MCBROOM: I returned to USC. About four years after that I got my very, very first sabbatical. I was always in awe of Norris Class and how many sabbaticals he would take. Of course, I'd been away, but I'd been on other kinds of leave.

I went to the Virgin Islands and had a project for working with nurses in the U. S. Public Health Service there. And I wanted to see how they taught their patients care of newborns and how they taught the handicapped or sick people self care. And I thought they had something that social workers could learn from them. I also thought we had something that we could teach them It was a kind of interaction. That's the way I spent my months in St. Thomas.

We think of it as kind of a vacation paradise, but actually the people there were living in degrees of extreme poverty: cardboard boxes and corrugated huts. The people would come form the other islands; they couldn't get any benefits, but the would still be better than on the British Virgins or the Dutch or French Antilles. Really, a scene of incredible poverty with those people.

MILNER: Yes. Those conditions have not changed much.

MCBROOM: The man in charge of the public health department was Dr. Smith. When I first presented myself to him, he said, "You can do anything you want and go anywhere you want, but you can't write anything," because someone had written a book about interpretation of dreams. Everyone was reading everyone else's dreams and everyone knew whose dream it was.

By that year Bob (Roberts) was a doctoral student at Columbia. Bob and Helen came down to visit me in the spring. I'd been telling him this, and he had a very longing look in his eye and said, "Oh, for the security of the full professor: to promise so blithely not to write anything.

MILNER: Then you returned from there to USC.

MCBROOM: I always came back to the West, and then in the last half of my life, I always came

back to USC.

MILNER. And you taught how long before you went to Australia?

MCBROOM: 'Til my next sabbatical.

MILNER: Yes, which was seven years.

MCBROOM: That was '74. In the meantime I had been involved in a research project at Rancho Los Amigos, the county's rehabilitation hospital out in Downey. Over several summers there was a project at Rancho. Medical students who were ready for their final year, therapy students, hospital administration students .... the plan was to get together a team of these students on each of several services so that they worked together as a team with patients and families. It was very interesting. The staff were mentors for these students, so there were also mentor teams. It really was a big step ahead for Rancho in the way all disciplines worked together and formed a team around the patient, and really understood and appreciated the contribution that each could make, and the necessity for each one to help in this long haul of these disabled people who were going through rehabilitation.

MILNER: Rancho is a Los Angeles County public institution, isn't it?

MCBROOM: Yes. It's part of the county hospital system. Dr. John Beeston, a public health physician, had got a Commonwealth Grant for this research. Betty Yerxa , who later became chair of Occupational Therapy, had a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, and they just put their grants together: what one couldn't do, the other could. It made it remarkably flexible.

MILNER: I've had a long interest in that rehabilitation center.

MCBROOM: One of the things that I think was introduced was having the patient be very much

a part of all the planning and all the staff meetings; really no secrets hidden from the patient.

We had one young man who had become quadriplegic in a swimming pool in a diving accident, about the time the group was starting. This young man had worked with him through the summer, very intensively; they were age peers. He came to the final presentation--his wife was with him--and he took part in it, and he presented his part in what he'd done in his rehabilitation. He said, "I couldn't have done it without you guys."

MILNER: Wonderful. That's a great compliment and "thank you."

What caused your decision to take your sabbatical in Australia?

MCBROOM: Well, that was an outgrowth of the Rancho experience. We had worked a lot with an orthopedic surgeon out there whose name was Vernon Nickel. We all called him, "Big Nick." He came striding into my office one day and said, "Now, I'm just back from Royal Perth Hospital, and they really need social workers. Have you got any students you can send me?" I said, "Well, I'll look around," which I did. I came upon one couple, who might have gone, but they had very strict dog quarantine laws; they couldn't part with their dog.

I said, "Meanwhile, I'll go myself because I have a sabbatical coming up, and I'd be very interested in doing that." I got a letter of invitation from Royal Perth Hospital to come and be visiting professor in social work that semester, and live in the guest suite in the hospital. That was a very interesting experience.

MILNER: Tell me more about that.

MCBROOM: What I tried to do was help workers who were beginning to organize groups of certain patients. The other thing I tried to do was help them get started with some research projects in the hospital. I think the social service department had not done any research, and they

needed to do something, I think, to be respectable, to show that they were evaluating what they were doing and could account for some of the results. So that was my role in that.

MILNER: Yes. Did you have the opportunity to learn about some of the other social service programs in Perth?

MCBROOM: I really didn't get out of the hospital a great deal or in the community. It was quite intensive. I lived there.

One of the things I did was to go into the emergency receiving room on weekends whenever I was free. Really, it started as a social service in the emergency department. A student took it over from then on.

Especially the families who'd come in with a badly injured person were just left sitting in the waiting room Or people who came in to identify someone who'd been dead on arrival. There was no provision for them at all. I think there would just be someone there who would really communicate an understanding of what they were going through without making demands.

MILNER: Do they have a variety of ethnic groups as patients?

MCBROOM: Not only as patients. Australia used to have very high barriers to anyone except Caucasians, but that has changed. They have had enormous waves of immigration from Italy and from Greece. There are more Greeks in Melbourne, I heard, than in Athens. Just before I went, it opened up really to all the Orient. There were a great many Malaysians. And I think they had a very good nursing school at Royal Perth. That year there were more students in the graduating class form Malaysia than from anywhere else.

MILNER: That's very interesting. Was any work done with the Aboriginals?

MCBROOM: Aboriginal patients who would come into emergency were caught up in fights. I

think they had many of the problems that our American Indians had, having a culture superimposed on them, and being exposed to alcohol. There were severe problems of alcoholism and violence when those people would come into the cities. They were homeless, they had no shelter.

I saw that when I went back. In the children's hospital most of the patients were aboriginal and they would get exquisite care and go out healthy, go home and come back again sick from neglect and so on. One of the doctors was very sympathetic; he said he'd gone through exactly that when he was in the army, and the only place he could be well was in the hospital. He'd go out to the front lines and be so exposed and so neglected that he would always get sick again. Aboriginal children are like soldiers on the front line.

MILNER: You returned to USC then again?

MCBROOM: This is getting monotonous, huh? All this returning to USC.

MILNER: Sounds like an educational yo-yo.

MCBROOM: The old refrain, return to USC.

MILNER: But once you returned, your adventures didn't end. I remember that you and Frances Feldman had an assignment in Alaska. Would you tell us about that?

MCBROOM: Well, that was really before that sabbatical.

MILNER: Was it before?

MCBROOM: I think so. You know, Frances has done a million things and done a lot of grant research, and so on.

This time she had a contract to evaluate a training program for native workers in the villages and the valleys of the Yukon and the Kuskakwim Rivers. So she came to get one of the

for a student and went up and assisted Frances.

We did have very adventurous times up there, including staying overnight in the welfare office and sneaking through the court room to take a shower in the prison. Our quarters on the floor were more comfortable really than if we'd had a room at the Tiltin' Hilton: a local boardinghouse with sloping floors and bedsprings that would stab you in the back.

Our headquarters when we went up there were really kind of primitive. We always went back to Bethel.

MILNER: That's where the headquarters were?

MCBROOM: That was the headquarters for these river villages, kind of the state government major offices were in Juneau and Anchorage. Our headquarters was certainly Bethel. That was a town where the leading cause of death was said to be drunken motorboat driving. And you could see, if you got out on that river all bundled up and were so unfortunate as to run into something, you'd really sink with your clothes on; you wouldn't have a chance with the temperature and the heavy clothes. There was a great deal of alcoholism there.

MILNER: Your purpose in that research was to make recommendations.

MCBROOM: Yes. It was really to evaluate the training program. Here again we found that training programs for more sophisticated communities had been really transplanted, as I would think, quite thoughtlessly and without reference to the limited resources in some of those villages. Even in the evaluation process, we were able to help some of those village workers who were quite capable young people, (and they had a lot of initiative themselves) to do things like having the boats rerouted so they could get people better services and bring in better supplies, and so on.

MILNER: Were these Eskimos?

quite capable young people, (and they had a lot of initiative themselves) to do things like having the boats rerouted so they could get people better services and bring in better supplies, and so on.

MILNER: Were these Eskimos?

MCBROOM: Natives, yes.

MILNER: Were there any natives who had a graduate school education in social work?

MCBROOM: There might have been one or two. I think there were some that had gone to school and gone back to Juneau or Anchorage. It seems to me there was possibly one worker out there who had had some education in the lower 48 somewhere.

MILNER: I see.

MCBROOM: When I went to ask Maurie Hamovitch for my second and last sabbatical--we've really gone through a whole lot of deans, haven't we? He was dean by this time. By the time I went to Royal Perth for this sabbatical my second and last sabbatical I pointed out to him that I would have to go that year--that was '74--because I understood everyone had to work a year after sabbatical and in two years I would be retiring, and that did give him a kind of a jolt. So I did come back and work another year and then I taught some classes.

They had asked me to come back and teach research. By this time Bob Roberts had come to USC, and he had a sabbatical and went to WAIT. So Bob nudged them, I guess, to ask me back again. That's when I went a second time after I had retired and taught there for two years at the WAIT--that's a nice acronym: it's the Western Australian Institute of Technology. It has now become CUT: the Curtain University of Technology.

MILNER: What all did you do there?

MCBROOM: Well, I taught practice. They have a kind of a block fieldwork plan there. It's an

undergraduate program There are always some students in the class and some out in their block placements in the field.

I really came to know the community and the social agencies in the community much better at WAIT than I ever had at Royal Perth. I was, I guess, looking pretty much inward during that time I was at Perth. Really, I lived in the hospital and worked in the hospital I didn't have a car.

When I taught at WAIT, I was more far-ranging and got to know the agencies where students were doing their fieldwork.

MILNER: Your retirement was what year?

MCBROOM: Well, I last taught full time in '75, and I taught part time for a couple of years until I went to Australia in '77.

MILNER: You've done quite a lot of work with the counseling center at the University of Southern California. Will you explain what that is?

MCBROOM: This was organized by Frances. She started it. I became one of the counselors and a consultant in the counseling service. The occupational Social Work concentration was getting started in the school.

The counseling center was conceived as part of the plan which was research and education and practice, service, really, to the university. It was funded as one of the staff benefits. I really like that. I liked working with people who came there as a matter of right; they didn't have to establish any eligibility except the fact that they were on the university payroll. That gave a certain psychological assurance to people to come in there to ask for help.

Though some of the people had very grave problems, they were organized enough to get themselves to work every day and hold on to a job. Some of them had very serious problems in the family. Some in the second generation had gotten into drugs. We saw a great many young people that had that kind of problem.

MILNER: This served the entire staff of the University.

MCBROOM: Faculty and staff, maintenance people. There was an enormous range of people. I was seeing a visiting scholar from Oxford once, and I was seeing a gardener who had very little English language facility (I really should have been able to talk Spanish to see him). I think we did transfer him to a Spanish-speaking worker.

I think you saw some of the members of the administration there.

MILNER: I saw one of the vice presidents. That's been a successful program

You also worked some with the health unit at USC Student Health.

MCBROOM: No. I didn't ever work with student health. I spent some time in Women's Hospital; one semester. I was interested in really a patient's-eye view, if this vast apparatus had helped them in any way that really came through to them, with meaning, if it mattered and made a difference.

I interviewed a great many patients on the oncology service and on the therapeutic abortion service because it seemed to me that these were extremes of conditions over which patients had some control themselves.

Oncology service was a great place for staff to get burnout. It was very demanding, it was very harsh for people to work there, to see the steady procession of patients having radical surgery, having other radical kinds of treatment. Devout Catholics seemed to hold up the best on

the staff. They turned to their faith to draw sustenance, draw encouragement in a way that people without that faith had nowhere comparable to turn to. Part of the testimony I got from patients was that nurses made a great deal of difference to them.

One young mother told me that the days were fairly busy and fairly full of people coming and going, and some distraction. But at night, you're really frightened and all alone. There would be a nurse who was always there you could talk to, share your fears and anxieties with.

MILNER: Yes. Very important. You have an excellent reputation as both a writer and as an editor of other people's writing. I know that you've been the editor of the Social Work Papers for the School of Social Work at USC. Would you comment on that?

MCBROOM: All right. This was a gleam in Arlien Johnson's eye. I was editor of the first five volumes, starting in 1953. We really had to find out everything for the first time about how to go about doing this, getting the articles and getting the journal produced.

Then Frances took over the editing for a number of years. Then Bob edited one volume on adoptions (I know you did a paper for that). Then I picked it u again. I edited, I guess, about five or six since I had come back from Australia, one on family treatment, and one of our alumnus up in Saskatchewan wanted to do something with the school. I think Bob suggested that that child welfare agency up there might finance one issue of Social Work Papers. - So we brought out an issue on child welfare in Canada, and all the authors were Canadians.

MILNER: That's a quarterly journal, isn't it?

MCBROOM: It's an annual--it comes out once a year. The last four issues have been devoted to industrial social work. That was about the time that the industrial social work was getting under way, and it seemed appropriate that our school's journal should also be devoted to the subject.

MILNER: You've written a great many papers over the years that have been published in journals. I wonder why you've never written a book.

MCBROOM: Well, I think John Moor, editor of the Columbia University Press, would have liked me to write a book on socialization, and he invited me to submit a chapter. And I hate to say it, but I guess the real reason is that I was too lazy.

MILNER: I don't believe that.

MCBROOM: I didn't get myself well enough organized to really come out with a book. A book is terribly hard work. People who write books, I think, give their all to them ... really get submerged in it.

MILNER: That's true.

MCBROOM: I guess I was never quite able to do that. Sorry about that.

MILNER: Your career's still going, as a volunteer in community activities in Pasadena, Los Angeles area. Would you like to tell what you're doing in 1988?

MCBROOM: Yes. When I came back from Australia, I'd been a kind of a sometime member of the league of Women Voters for awhile. I decided that I should become more active and try to make more of a contribution to the organization. So I filled out a form that they ask every member to fill out for what they call their "skills bank," to tell what your experience and interests are. A friend, Bonnie Armstrong, got hold of that and kind of recruited me; I've never been quite the same since.

I became the social policy chair simultaneously for the League in Los Angeles County and in the Pasadena area, which is a mistake because the two posts are incompatible if only from a standpoint of time conflict in the meeting schedules, and so on.

So I dropped out of the county and continued in the Pasadena area League, although 1 have continued to monitor the GAIN program and report on it for the County Voter--that's the Greater Avenues to Independence, the workfare program, that is supposed to replace AFDC. It's cited from all over the country as a model program but from where we are, we can see a lot of warts on it.

League has been quite vocal in this and has really taken exception to three things. One is the mandatory nature of the program; it would be much more successful if it were voluntary and especially center on people just coming on to the program. Instead, it's really making it mandatory for people who have been on it for many years.

Then, they really had no idea of how to have input in the planning from people in the community. They have what they call "community meetings" but these are always just sessions in which a report of what has been done is given, and it's all set in concrete.

The other serious problem is the fact that there's a very heavy dependence on unlicensed day care. There's really no provisions for when this program gets going in a big way; it will flood the child care system (children to be cared for). I think this is not being dealt with very realistically.

As a representative from the League I have attended quite regularly is a group in Pasadena that is called the Youth Agencies Consortium It's representatives from all the youth serving agencies in the area. They have a monthly meeting--many of these are really front-line workers--and they discuss some of their problems, and especially look at how they can coordinate on some of the problems they're all facing.

Of course, one of the serious problems in any southern Califon3ia community is always

transportation, getting children to programs and transportation for parents. Working parents would be sending their kids in cabs (which they couldn't afford) to go to the child care and after-school programs. The Youth Agencies Consortium is really working on trying to make use of school buses and adjust schedules and routes so that children can go to after-school programs on their school buses rather than just go home where there's no care for them

Another thing they've been very concerned about this year is the growing amount of forms and things to be filled out. It's very frustrating for them, to feel that they spend such a large proportion of their time with this and so little really helping the children or doing what they've been trained to do. I have been asked to go onto the board of that Youth Agencies Consortiun3I was appointed to the Pasadena Child Care Coalition and have worked quite consistently in that during this year. We wrote a child care policy for the city of Pasadena which calls for the city to be a model employer and have a progressive family economic policy.

I really have to talk quite hard--and sometimes to unsympathetic ears--for parental leave policies. It seems to me that this is a much more suitable way of dealing, especially with infant care, than having the infants cared for away from home in these centers, and so forth.

And just this summer I have gone on the board of the Visiting Nurse Association.

When I look back it seems to me that I have had quite a lot of co-working relationships with nurses, beginning with Herrick House, at Women's Hospital in the Rancho program, and in the Virgin Islands.

The visiting nurse program here has some interesting innovations, including a hospice program and a respite program. I'm very interested in what they're doing and would like to try to be useful to it, and to be more active. I guess there is no retirement. Well, you know,

guess we get to the point where we feel guilty if we're just lazing around week after week.

MILNER: We were raised in the wrong generation.

MCBROOM: Yes. We've got too much of that work ethics.

MILNER: In looking back on your career, have you ever regretted that you became a social worker?

MCBROOM: Well, I'll tell you. I can remember a terrible pang of regret in Aberdeen in Grays Harbor County where I was just starting to develop foster homes and a foster home program, and had made what seemed to be a good placement for a rather troubled lad. It blew up and there was just no place for him to go. I can remember walking down the street and feeling really desperate and thinking, "I really should have a job peeling potatoes or something–I wouldn't be subject to this kind of stress and anxiety."

In all the years since, I can't remember a feeling of being overwhelmed like that and inadequate to the emergency.

MILNER: That's a part of the reaming experience.

MCBROOM: Grays harbor was a very primitive community; there wasn't much to fall back on in the way of resources or referrals.

MILNER: We've all had instances in our lives when that happens.

MCBROOM: I'm glad that there's some social work in our family. My nephew, Bill is a social worker in Vermont. I think young Kelly is sort of headed in that direction. She's now been part of a demonstration for the homeless that landed her in jail and she's figuring on spending her junior year with Mother Theresa in Calcutta.

MILNER: That's your niece, Kelly.

MCBROOM: That's Doug's daughter, my great niece, yes.

MILNER: Is there anything you'd like to add to what we've talked about?

MCBROOM: Well, we didn't talk about the cancer study. Actually, again, Frances published three studies--all on work careers after treatment from cancer. You did some interviews on that as well.

The first one was managerial and professional people because that formed a kind of base line; they were seen as those who would have the best opportunity to return to work The second study was on blue collar workers. The third study was on Work in the Lives of Young People recovering from cancer, efforts to return to work or obtain a first job, and how the cancer diagnosis affected part time work, vacation, and so on.

I interviewed a great many people in each of those three studies and helped with the writing of some of the reports. The studies were really fascinating; the people we interviewed were fascinating. Most of them had enormous courage. And some of them were meeting with very medieval kinds of prejudice in the work place: people being afraid they'd catch cancer and avoiding them, and so on.

One of the things brought out of that was a tremendous conviction about the importance of work in the lives of people. I remember a woman in the blue collar study; she had a kind of nothing job. I think she was in some chain store, working in one of the departments. Her children were grown, her husband was away at work all day, every day. She said, "What would become of me if I didn't have my job? You know the people you work with, you spend more of your waking hours with them than you do with your family." She'd gone back to work successfully but hadn't always been sure that she could or that she would be accepted back. The

fear of not going back had been very devastating to her. It was very reassuring that she could go back. I really became impressed with how important people's work is to them and how really lucky we are to have had work that we like doing, and how much frustration and monotony there is in many people's work; they're really deprived in the workplace.

MILNER: Dr. Freud's remedies: love and work.

MCBROOM: And half of that message has been overlooked for many years. We had an awful lot of interest and investigation in the love part, but the work part hasn't fascinated people all that much.

MILNER: No, it hasn't. The cancer study was sponsored by the American Cancer Society as a joint project with our school or was it separate from the school?

MCBROOM: I'm not sure of what the role of the School was, but I think it was pretty much a Frances enterprise.

And you know, in the beginning it was Al Feldman who was going to do that, and Frances was going to assist him It was going to be his retirement project. But, of course, Al died and Frances carried on with it.

But the very first meeting we had with a group of people who'd had cancer was out in the San Fernando Valley. Frances, Al and I went out there and had this group meeting, testing our instruments and getting their input and criticisms.

MILNER: Is there another particular memory you'd like to share?

MCBROOM: When I was in Thailand, I worked with Soonan Synodyodhoraks. Very early, she said, "You know, Elizabeth is a very heathen, unpronounceable name. Is it all right if I call you Lisa?" I wrote this to people at USC, and they began addressing me as Lisa, referring to me as

Lisa. Ever since I came back, I was always Lisa, mostly at USC, not other places.

MILNER: Isn't that interesting? Because I thought you probably had that at school.

MCBROOM: No. Someone once said to me, "Are only people at USC allowed to call you Lisa?"

MILNER: In ending, Lisa, you said there are two persons you'd like to mention.

MCBROOM: That's right. The first one is Henry Maas. When I was going to go to Cal, Arlien Johnson said to me, "Don't let just anyone be your advisor; demand to have Henry Maas. " This amused me because I thought how Arlien would have reacted if she could have heard anyone advising a prospective doctoral candidate to our School in that way.

But as it happened, I went to Cal and Henry Maas was indeed my advisor. I can't say too much for him, what he did as a friend and intellectually and the shear pleasure of his company. He was very stimulating. He was with me every step of the way. When I sent the draft of my dissertation to him, he phoned me and addressed me as "Dr."--I didn't even know who was calling me. He is a great man, and I appreciate him very much.

The other person is Rino Patti, who has just arrived as the fifth dean of the School of Social Work at USC. Rino Patti came into the Master's program, he and Nadine were in my casework class. They came and told me they planned to be married at the end of that year. I told them to run and not walk and announce this to Arlien Johnson because if she heard it from them directly, she would forgive them, but if she heard it at second hand, she would not. They did announce it to her, and she did forgive them.

Rino was subsequently in my doctoral seminar and has now, in August, '88, returned as the fifth dean of the School of Social Work.