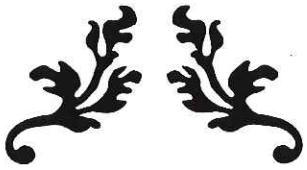

LIEBE DIAMOND, M.D.

An Oral History

CONDUCTED AND TRANSCRIBED BY VALERIE S. THALER
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Introduction and circumstances of birth

VT: I am today sitting here with Dr. Liebe Sokol Diamond. My name is Valerie Thaler. I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Studies and Community Development at Towson University. We're talking to Dr. Diamond (whom I will call Liebe) on March 14, 2013, in Cook Library at Towson University in Towson, Maryland. And we are going to be asking Dr. Diamond some questions about her remarkable life story, starting with her childhood.

VT: Can you tell us a little bit about the circumstances surrounding your birth in Baltimore?

LD: I was born at the Old Sinai Hospital downtown on Monument Street.[1] I was born by Cesarean section. My mother was very ill because in 1931 Cesarean sections were rare, and extremely dangerous. Because she was so ill, I was transferred immediately to Kernan Hospital[2] because I had multiple deformities of my hands and feet, and I required more attention than my family could have given me under the circumstances. I spent six months in Kernan Hospital, and in the course of that time, made two lifelong friends. One was the nurse who looked after me, Virginia Clark Pruitt, who became a surrogate mother, and became such a part of my family that she was even in my wedding procession. The other person was Dr. Moses Gellman,[3] who was the orthopedic surgeon who did the reconstruction of my hands and feet, and remained my friend, then my teacher, my mentor, my colleague, and dear, dear friend for the rest of his life.

2:20 Relationship with Virginia Pruitt, nurse and life-long friend

VT: Can you speak a little bit about the relationship you had with Virginia—with Gin?

LD: She became really part of our family, and my parents always included her in all the Jewish holidays and festivals. She traveled with us cross-country and to Europe. On Mother's Day, I always gave two gifts, one to my mother and the other to Virginia, who had been really the first mother that I had ever known. When my son was born, she became a surrogate grandmother, and when she died she left a beautiful collection of Steuben Crystal to me, with the understanding that I was only a temporary custodian, and that it would belong to Joshua, my son, who became her surrogate grandson.

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1. Sinai Hospital used to be located at Monument Street and Rutland Avenue in Baltimore. Today it is located at Greenspring Ave and Northern Parkway.

2. Kernan Hospital was originally founded in 1895 as the Hospital for Crippled and Deformed Children, a free orthopedic medical facility. James Lawrence Kernan donated money for a new hospital building in 1911. The hospital grew consistently throughout the 20th century and went through a series of name changes. In 1996, the University of Maryland Medical System consolidated the region's rehabilitation services. The new facility became the main center for medical rehabilitation in the state of Maryland.

3. Dr. Moses Gellman (1896-1960) was a highly regarded orthopedic surgeon who was affiliated with several area hospitals in Baltimore.

VT: How did Gin influence your decision to go into medicine?

LD: Well, she was a nurse, and she not only worked on the wards with the patients at Kernan Hospital; she worked in the operating room. She eventually became administrator of the Hospital, so that when I went into practice as a physician, she was my boss. It was a very strange relationship because when we disagreed about something, the chief surgeon would say, "Now girls, what are you arguing about?" Virginia would say, "Don't butt into family disagreements."

VT: You had mentioned to me in a previous conversation that she encouraged you to apply to medical school.

LD: Yes, she did. She didn't try to push me into nursing, because she knew I really wasn't suitable for that; it wasn't the right thing. I showed signs of wanting, and needing, to become a physician. So she and Dr. Gellman, whom I called "Uncle Mose," both directed me and guided me to apply to medical school.

4:42: Values in childhood; upbringing

VT: And what about your parents? Can you talk to me a little bit about their values and what they gave to you as a child?

LD: Well, I was an only child, and I was raised with great expectations. Both of my parents were extremely supportive of my education. My mother, who was a Hebrew teacher, saw to my religious education and my father, who was a litigator/attorney, saw to my secular education.[4] There was never really a question about what I was going to do, in the sense that they were certain I: 1) would go to college [and] 2) would go to some kind of graduate school. And as I became more and more interested in medicine, they became more and more encouraging. I think my mother got a little bit frightened when I said I was going to be a surgeon. Up until that time, she was pretty brave about it. But the idea that I would be a surgeon was a little scary for her.

VT: Why do you think she was scared? What was she scared of?

LD: Well, because it was *such* a male-dominated field. My original house staff training was in pediatrics. There were a lot of women in pediatrics. But in orthopedic surgery, there weren't really any women to speak of. I was something like the 12th woman in the United States to become board-certified in orthopedics, so it was really very much a male-dominated field.

VT: They were also very interested in your Jewish education.

LD: Yes.

6:30: Jewish identity in childhood years.

4. Liebe's parents were Anne Hirshhorn Sokol (1906-1988) and Max Sokol (1902-1995).

VT: Talk a little bit about your Jewish identity as a child.

LD: Well, my family [members] were Conservative Jews who belonged to an Orthodox congregation. I had a strong Zionist background, not only from my parents, but from Uncle Mose—from Dr. Gellman—as well. I was encouraged to be a good student in Hebrew school, and to be active when I went off to college and medical school—to be active in Hillel, which turned out to be a very good thing for me, because I was away from home for 14 years. And Hillel, first at Smith College and then at the University of Pennsylvania, became a second home for me.

VT: And, you were always involved in some form of Jewish education.

LD: Yes.

VT: From the time that you were young, even along with your secular education.

LD: Yes—always, until I went off to college. And then when I came back to Baltimore and went into practice, I once again became involved with Jewish education, because I became a member of the Board of Baltimore Hebrew University, and eventually became Chairman of the Board.[5]

VT: And, when you were young, you really were distinguished from some of the other girls in your Hebrew school class, because you seemed to know a lot more Hebrew than many of them. Can you talk a little bit about how your mom encouraged your Hebrew education?

LD: On *Shabbes*[6] mornings we would go to the synagogue and since it was Orthodox, I would sit with my mother, and she would make sure that I not only knew the page, I knew the line, and the word. She encouraged me to be able to read the *Chumash* (the Torah)[7] in Hebrew, and to understand what I was reading. She was very good at it, and she became, for the ladies who sat around us, the "keeper of the page." Years later, when I was in London on a vacation, I was at the Marble Arch Synagogue,[8] and after a few minutes, a lady came over to me and said, "What's the page?" I said, "I'm a stranger here but this is the page." Then came another, and yet another. The third one—I said, "How come you're asking me? I'm a stranger here." She said, "We can see you know what you're doing." *(Laughter)*

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5. Founded in 1919, Baltimore Hebrew College comes up later in the interview as well, when Liebe describes being Board Chair in the 1980s.

6. *Shabbes* is the Yiddish word for the Jewish Sabbath, which begins Friday night at sundown and ends Saturday at sundown.

7. The *Chumash* is the Hebrew word which refers to the Torah, or the first Five Books of Moses. Observant Jews read a portion of the Torah each Sabbath morning in synagogue services.

8. The Western Marble Arch Synagogue is located in London's West End.

VT: So, the apple doesn't fall far! (*Laughter)* When you participated in a group bat mitzvah,[9] at age 12, how did you differ from the other kids—the other young women—in the group?

9:33 Experience of Group Bat Mitzvah

LD: Well, I was the only one of the lot who was really Hebraically literate, and each one of us had to deliver a brief essay about an important woman in Jewish history. I had the extraordinary good fortune to be assigned Rebecca Gratz,[10] and reading her story, and studying her life, had a big influence on me because I saw that no matter what I could do professionally, I could have input into Jewish education for young people.

VT: That sounds like it was a really powerful experience for you.

LD: Yes, that was the best part of the bat mitzvah. The rest was really…not much.

VT: And you had a personal Hebrew tutor in the summer time, right?

LD: Yes, Mr. Leon Rivkin, who was a wonderful, wonderful teacher, who'd been my mother's classmate at the Hebrew College.[11] She selected him to teach me in the summer, so I wouldn't lose anything over the summer months.

VT: It sounds like, as a child, you were very integrated into the Jewish community and into Jewish educational programming. And, you mentioned that your parents were active Zionists, active in the synagogue. One of the things that I wanted to also ask you about was the Holocaust… the refugees that your dad helped out in the years prior to the Holocaust. Would you speak a little bit about those families?

11:40: Max Sokol's rescue of European Jewish physicians and rabbis in the 1930s

LD: Yes. As it turned out, my father was owed a favor by the Governor of the State of Maryland.[12] He offered my father a judgeship. And Pop said, No, he didn't want a judgeship. What he wanted was an opportunity to place Jewish physicians who were coming from Europe in the State Hospital System, so that they could earn the credits they required in order to sit for

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9. In the mid-1940s, it would have been quite unusual for girls to have individual ceremonies to celebrate becoming a bat mitzvah.

10. Rebecca Gratz was one of the most accomplished American Jewish educators (1781-1869).

11. Here, Liebe refers to the Baltimore Hebrew College.

12. The Governor of Maryland from 1935-1939 was Harry Nice (1877-1941), a Republican. He was succeeded in office by Herbert O'Conor (1896-1960), a Democrat, who served from 1939 to 1947. Liebe indicates that O'Conor was the one who owed her father a favor.

the Maryland State Boards.[13] So, through our household passed a stream of Jewish psychiatrists—some men, some women, married couples where both were physicians, some where the husband was a physician, the wife was a dentist. A curious mix of people. One couple arrived as single people, and my parents acted as *shadchan*,[14] to get them together [and] made the wedding. My mother held up the bride, my father held up the groom, and all this went on through our household. They were almost all from either Germany, Austria or Czechoslovakia, and all of them spoke German. Their English was a little uncertain, so they would sometimes lapse into German. As a result, I had a fair command of German by the time I enrolled in a German course at college.

VT: Did they actually live with you?

LD: No, but they came to us for many meals, especially for *Shabbes* and for the holidays, not only the Jewish holidays but for Thanksgiving and any other time that there was an occasion—[like] the Fourth of July.

VT: Do you remember which part of the 1930s this would have been? Was this the late 30s?

LD: This started about 1937 and went on until the American involvement in the war broke out in 1941. But those families that my parents helped remained our friends all the rest of their lives. I know they all came to my wedding, and [I] felt very close to them. In later years, when I became a physician, they were my colleagues.

VT: I believe you had mentioned this was approximately six or seven families?

LD: Yes.

VT: And there was also a group of rabbis your dad helped out.

LD: Well, this was a very risky business. It was about 1939, and Mr. Myer Strauss,[15] who was a wonderful, German Jewish gentleman, a great philanthropist, had the opportunity to rescue a group of seven or eight rabbis and their families from Europe. But in order to do that, he had to get them employment, whether the employment was for real, or on paper, but he had to have them employed before he could get them into the country. The Beth Jacob Board of Trustees[16]

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13. This refers to the licensing exam required for physicians.

14. *Shadchan* is the Hebrew word for matchmaker, and refers to one who introduces a man and woman to each other prior to marriage.

15. Myer Strauss was a prominent philanthropist in Baltimore and president of Strauss Brothers Dry Goods, and Standard Textile Company, Inc; his wife was Julia Strauss.

16. Beth Jacob was founded in 1938 as one of the first modern Orthodox Synagogues on Park Heights Ave in Baltimore.

was very reluctant to take this on, for fear that they might actually have to come up with the money, which Mr. Strauss certainly was going to do. So they said no. My father, at that time, was Chairman of the Board of the synagogue. The synagogue was very young, and it didn't have things like a great seal, or formal stationery. So, my father said to Myer Strauss, "Never fear, we'll fix it." So he created a great seal, and had it made, got stationery printed, wrote a letter under his signature as Chairman of the Board—they were hiring these people—stamped it with the great seal of the synagogue and turned it over to Myer Strauss. If they'd been caught, they probably both would have gone to jail for at least 15 years. As it was, they rescued seven or eight families.[17]

VT: Those rabbis would then be able to be able come to the local area.

LD: Yes. They all found employment. Some taught, some did other things, one became a Fuller Brush Man,[18] but they did things.

VT: You saved their lives.

LD: Saved their lives.

16:50 Memories of public school in Baltimore

VT: I want to talk a little bit about your high school experience. You went to Western?

LD: I went to Western.[19]

VT: Let's go back a moment. You went to elementary school at School 234.

LD. Yes I did and it was a wonderful school.

VT: Can you talk a little about your recollections of your early secular education…junior high at School 49.

LD: Well, my years at the Arlington School—School 234—were wonderful years.[20] The teachers were excellent and actually several of them became my life-long friends, so that I would see them at concerts, and sometimes they would come to visit. One of them came to my wedding—

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17. This was part of a larger pattern, as Myer and Julia Strauss aided in the rescue of hundreds of Jewish families in this period.

18. Fuller Brush was a company that sold household cleaning products. In the 1940s and 1950s "Fuller Brush Men" went door-to-door selling their products, acquiring an iconic status.

19. Western High School was founded in 1844 to serve girls in the Baltimore area who intended to pursue a college education.

20. Today, School 234 is Arlington Elementary/Middle School in Baltimore, located on West Rogers Avenue.

Mrs. Elsie Baylus came to my wedding.[21] They were an extraordinary group of women—they were all women. This was the period of the Depression, and for a woman to get an education, the most likely route was to go to Towson State Teachers College, now Towson University.[22] So they all had matriculated here, and they knew each other from their school days. The students had a wonderful time with them. Then I went off to School #49,[23] which was an accelerated junior high school, where the students did the three years of junior high in two years. There again, I met wonderful faculty, very very bright competent people, who understood the kind of students that we were. It wasn't necessarily that we were the smartest kids in town. We were just the fastest learners, and we were gathered from all over the city. So I met people that later on became my colleagues in the practice of medicine. They were my classmates at School 49.

VT: Did you find that the teachers had similar expectations for young boys and young girls, or did they encourage you to do different types of professions?

LD: I don't recall that anybody prior to high school talked to us about what we were going to do in life, the only exception being that the boys who wanted to go to Poly,[24] which was then all male, had to take French, and the rest of us took Latin. I don't think they paid any attention to what we were going to do with our lives. Or if they did, we were not aware of it. But when I got to Western, teachers did pay attention to what you wanted to do with your life, and our guidance counselor—this was Jean Wheeler[25]—was very, very good at guiding the girls who had professional ambitions.

VT: So she encouraged you…

LD: Yes, very much so. In fact, she and the principal sort of rescued my career, because I was a chronic discipline problem. I had my own personal seat in the detention room. I was not a nice

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21. Elsie Baylus lived from 1910 to 2005.

22. Founded in 1866 as a normal school, Towson was known as the Maryland State Teachers College at Towson in 1935. In 1934 it started awarding the Bachelor of Science degree, because the State of Maryland began to require that credential for all public school teachers. The institution officially became Towson University in 1997.

23. School 49 was the Robert E. Lee School #49, located on Cathedral Street. It was one of two accelerated junior high schools in Baltimore that drew motivated students from all over the city. The other was the Edgar Allen Poe School #1. See http://www.baltimoremd.com/remember/firthschool.html. Liebe's father, Max, attended the Poe School; her mother, Anne, went to School 49.

24. Originally founded in 1883 as the Baltimore Manual Training School, the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute prepared high-school age boys for careers in engineering. It became coed in 1974.

25. Jean Burke Wheeler graduated from Western High School in 1916 and went on to become a guidance counselor there. Upon her retirement from Western in 1966, the graduating class considered her "an honorary member of the class of 1966." See http://www.e-yearbook.com/.

little girl all the time. I had a big mouth, and when it became time for me to apply to college, the guidance counselor and the principal—Mildred Coughlin,[26] whom we used to call St. Mildred—conspired to expunge my record, so all the "unsatisfactories" in conduct would be erased before my transcripts were sent off to Smith College, which was where I wanted to go.

VT: Wow. So you felt that they encouraged your ....

LD: Yes.

VT: ...your education. Now it seems you received a somewhat different message from the rabbi at Beth Jacob.[27]

21:26 Reflection on rabbi's advice regarding women's higher education

LD: Yes I did.

VT: What did he say? How did he encourage or discourage you?

LD: Well, I was 16, and I was accepted to go to Smith College, which was a wonderful thing, and my father was extremely proud, and he went to tell the rabbi, who said, "You can't send her there; she'll get too much education and she'll become unmanageable." My father's answer was that "she was already unmanageable." Three years later when I was accepted to medical school, Pop went to the rabbi again to tell him and he said, "Now she'll be unmarriageable!"
So, Pop came home and he told my mother, and then, when I came home for Thanksgiving Break, he told me, and we agreed that we were not going back to Beth Jacob, and so we did not. At that point, my family left Beth Jacob and moved to Beth El Congregation, where women's education was valued.[28]

VT: Sounds as though you mentioned finishing high school in three years, as well as college in three years?

LD: No, I didn't finish college in three years, it took me four. But at the beginning of my senior year—the first month of my senior year—I was accepted to medical school for the following fall, which gave me a wonderful senior year, not having to worry about what was coming next.

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26. Mildred Coughlin was first a teacher of history and economics at Western High School on Gwynns Falls Parkway, and then became principal. Today the Baltimore Community Foundation sponsors the Mildred Coughlin Scholarship, for a young woman graduating from Western and planning to attend a 4-year college or university.

27. The rabbi at Beth Jacob at this time (1947) was Uri Miller. He had become President of the Rabbinical Council of America, the professional organization for modern Orthodox rabbis, in 1946.

28. Beth El Congregation was a new Conservative synagogue at the time, having been founded in 1948. Its initial senior rabbi was Jacob Agus.

VT: A little bit of the stress was off…

LD: Off.

23:17: Experience at Smith College, 1947 to 1951

VT: Can you talk a little bit about your years at Smith?

LD: Smith College was the makings of me. I was two years behind Betty Friedan and two years ahead of Gloria Steinem.[29] We never talked about feminism. We were too busy trying to keep our heads above water, and make it into graduate school. But the college was very empowering to women, because we were all women, everything was done by women. And, we saw that we could do everything. The faculty was really dedicated to giving us the best that they could give us, and encouraging us to be empowered to go on to whatever career choice we had. It was an extraordinary kind of place to study. My classmates, and my dormitory mates, were very nice people indeed. The last two years, I lived in the German language dormitory, where no English was spoken, and honed my German skills, along with a very, very interesting group of girls. We were 30 girls; seven of us went to medical school.

VT: It sounds as though you had a number of different factors in your life which contributed to your ability to pursue your career. Did you feel that that was unusual in terms of what you were able to do, and what other women, perhaps that you grew up with, with different parents, with different people, different role models…do you know if you were considered unusual? Or were you not cognizant of that difference?

LD: Well, the word [feminism] hadn't come into usage when I was in school. But I was a nerd! I was different from the others. I had a couple of friends who also had ambitions. One was a gal who went on to get a Ph.D. in Chemistry, and she was the first woman to get a Ph.D. in chemistry from Hopkins. Another gal went on to go to medical school, and she became an A-#1 dermatologist.[30] There were a handful of us who had professional ambitions. But we were different, we were different from the other girls, which sometimes became a bit socially awkward. By the time I got to college, I was so happy to be with people who were like me!

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29. Betty Friedan actually graduated from Smith College in 1942 (five years before Liebe matriculated). Gloria Steinem graduated from Smith in 1956 (five years after Liebe graduated).

30. Either the institution or the discipline is incorrect here. Hopkins first awarded the Ph.D. in chemistry to women in 1911, though it took until 1970 for women were admitted as undergraduates. One notable Smith graduate in the sciences in 1951 (the year of Liebe's graduation) was Judy Clapp, who majored in physics and went on to become a computer scientist. The dermatologist Liebe refers to is Joan Raskin. Liebe also graduated a year ahead of Rhoda Dorsey (1928-2014), who would go on to become the first female president of Goucher College.

26:00 Surgery in teenage years.

Of course, I had other things going on in my life. I had all the reconstructive surgery on my hands and feet, most of which was done when I was very small. But when I was in the summer between my sophomore and junior year of high school, I had major surgery to revise a stump of my right foot. And, that was an extraordinary summer for me because I was only 14, and I suddenly came to the realization that I was going to have the problems that I had mechanically with my extremities for the rest of my life! And I could either moan and groan about it, and make myself and everybody around me wretched, or I could accept reality and get on with my life. And it seemed better to me to get on with my life, so I did.

VT: Is that when you decided you wanted to become a pediatric orthopedist? Or…

27:42 Choosing a field of specialization in medicine

LD: No, actually when I went off to medical school, I didn't know what specialty I wanted. I really, honestly had no idea what specialty I would choose. I got halfway through medical school, and I realized I wanted to work with children. So, I went to the dean and asked him where I should spend my summer as a rising senior.[31] And he suggested that since I was from Baltimore, that I come back here and spend the summer studying with Dr. Harry Gordon at Sinai.[32] And so I did. The following fall, when I was a senior, I took an elective in orthopedic surgery. And that really set me on fire, and I said, "I think this is what I want to do." So I went back to see the dean, who was a wonderful man, himself a pediatrician. And he said, "Well, if you want to be a pediatric orthopedic surgeon, you have to be a pediatrician first." So he said, "I would send you back to Harry Gordon, and to Dr. Harold Harrison[33] (who was then at what was called City Hospitals then, now Bayview)[34] and study with them, and when you've done that, then come back here to the University of Pennsylvania and train as an orthopedic surgeon." So that's what I did.

VT: So this was actually before…no this was right after medical school.

LD: Yes.

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31. The Dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania at this time was Dr. John McK. Mitchell (1897-1968).

32. Dr. Harry Gordon (1907-1988) was a major figure in the fields of neonatology and child development, and would later become Dean of the Einstein School of Medicine in New York.

33. Dr. Harold Harrison (1908-1989) became Chairman of Pediatrics at Baltimore City Hospitals.

34. Baltimore City Hospitals was acquired by Johns Hopkins in 1984, and became the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center.

VT: So before you did the residency in Orthopedics, you trained in pediatrics first. And the dean that you mentioned at Penn Medical School—University of Pennsylvania Medical School—was very encouraging …

LD: He was tremendously encouraging.

VT: To other women as well?

29:56: Reflections on University of Pennsylvania Medical School in the 1950s

LD. Oh yes, he encouraged all the women. Penn was unusual in those days, we're talking about the early '50s. We were eight girls to a class. My class had 135 men, and eight women, with eight Phi Beta Kappa keys amongst us. To make it into medical school, you had to have something. And the dean, who had one child—a girl—whom I later got to know—was very interested in the female students. He wouldn't put up with any *stuff*. We were not harassed, we weren't badgered, we weren't made miserable in any way. We got teased—but we didn't care about that. We were all of us looking for husbands, and if they didn't tease you, they didn't notice you were there! So Penn was exceptional in that regard. When I became a resident in orthopedic surgery, there were 200 house staff in the University Hospital.

VT: By house staff, you mean…

LD: Residents and interns.

VT: Okay.

LD: There were only five women in that lot, and a couple of women who were doing fellowships, so maybe 10 women all together in the whole hospital. I was the only woman surgeon there had ever been. It was such an anomaly that when one fella asked another one, just within my ear shot—but they couldn't see me (as I was around the corner)—one asked the other, "Who's on call tonight?" The other one said, "The girl." It wasn't any problem identifying who the girl was. [I] was the only girl there was!

VT: What types of physicians did the other women that you went to school with become? You mentioned you were the only surgeon.

LD: Well, one became an ophthalmologist, so she did some surgery, but not a lot. The others—two became psychiatrists, two became internists, one became a pediatrician, so we were pretty scattered around.

VT: Was there a sense of solidarity? Or, how did you relate to the other women knowing that there were so few amongst so many men?

LD: We were friends. We were friends. Some of us were better friends than others, but we were friends. And our classmates treated us very well. This was a unique situation in a way, because

we went to medical school with the vets from the Second World War. Some of these guys were old enough to be my father, and they weren't about to harass us, because they had been on the front lines with nurses, and they were not of a mood to harass the girls.

VT: They knew that those nurses were just as capable as anyone else.

LD: Yes.

33:30 Getting surgical gloves made for medical school

VT: Can you talk a little bit about how you prepared yourself to be accepted to medical school knowing your physical struggles?

LD: Strangely enough, I was always sort of oblivious to what other people saw as maybe obvious. I never felt that I had any particular limitations. And I was able to do everything that was required of me in my college years, laboratory work, of all sorts. When I got ready to go to medical school, I knew that one of the critical issues would be surgical gloves—rubber gloves—because I have partial amputations. I couldn't wear the standard gloves. So, my family arranged for the Seamless Rubber Glove Company[35] to make special gloves for me based on porcelain molds that were made by the Colonial Insulator Corporation.[36] And when the issue came up in my interview for medical school, I was able to say I have the equipment, and it's not a problem. From that point forward, it was never a problem. I have always been amazed that I got the surgical residency. After all, I was only five feet tall, female, Jewish, with very strange hands. And they hired me.

VT: Why did they hire you?

LD: I'm not sure I know. I did very well in my course in orthopedics at medical school, won the prize in orthopedic surgery. But, still…I did well when I took the elective, and I got hired!

VT: There was a famous story that you tell about when you knew more things than the boys.

LD: Oh yes. When I was interviewed for my residency, the chief asked me if I knew the difference between a crosscut [saw] and a rip saw. Well I did know! So I answered the question. And he said, "I've interviewed six men for this job, and you're the only one who answered the question. You're hired." I knew the answer to the question for a quirky reason. My father, who

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35. The full name of the company was the Seamless Rubber Surgical Glove Manufacturers. This type of work is now done overseas.

36. Founded in 1922, this Akron, Ohio-based company produced porcelain parts for the electrical industry. Electrical linesmen often lost fingers due to accidents on the job, and needed new gloves to be manufactured which would fit their hands following an injury. A local medical supply company (in Baltimore) referred Liebe's parents to the Colonial Insulator Corporation. Liebe fondly recalls Rudolph ("Rudy") Ganz, who assisted her with the making of the gloves and actually pioneered in the methodology.

was an excellent attorney, was a motor moron. We were lucky he could tie his shoes and cut his meat. My mother, when I was in junior high, suggested that I sign up not for cooking and sewing, but for mechanical drawing and woodworking. She said, "Your father can't fix anything, not even a cellar step. We need help!" So I took a course in carpentry. And in that course, I learned the difference between a crosscut and a rip saw.

VT: Were you the only girl in that course? (*Laughter*)

LD: I think there were four of us.

VT: You never knew what the benefits of that would be later on.

LD: You never knew. Years later, I ran into a high school classmate, whose father had actually been the teacher in that course. I asked her if her father was still alive, and he was, and I said, "You must thank him for my career," and I explained to her what had ensued.

37:31 Reflections on medical school and residency at the University of Pennsylvania

VT: Let's talk a little bit more about medical school, and your residency. You mentioned that you were with a group of students that seemed to realize that women could do just what men were doing if they were capable of it. There were four female physicians at Penn when you became the chief surgical resident in orthopedics in 1960, but there were no surgeons. So there were four female doctors, but no surgeons. And, what was your relationship like…how would you describe your relationship with the obstetricians?

LD: Well, I had a rather pleasant relationship with the obstetricians. I had been during the summer between my freshman and sophomore years [in medical school], an operating room technician, which I did at Sinai, and was extremely well-taught—so I had a lot of skill. My junior year in medical school, the very first week, when most of us knew nothing about obstetrics, I was assigned to [the] labor floor and given the duty of watching a woman in labor, and taking her vital signs, and listening to the baby's heart rate. I knew something about obstetrics because having been an operating room technician, I had seen quite a number of Cesarean sections. Well, I was listening to the fetal heart rate, and suddenly it began to drop. And in those days, we didn't have electronic monitors. We had a strange stethoscope that fit on our head so we had bone conduction to amplify the sound of the fetal heart. And as I listened, the heart rate continued to drop. The first thing that came into my to mind was that this lady might have a "prolapsed umbilical cord," in which case the baby's head would compress the cord against the edge of the birth canal, and cut off the circulation to the baby. So, I looked down in the bed, and there in fact was a loop of cord. I didn't stop to put a glove on or anything. I scooped up that loop of cord, inserted it back in the vagina and up into the cervix, and blocked the exit of the cervix with my hand. And the heart rate come up. So I said to the patient, "Mother, you start making some noise and hit that bell as hard as you can, and I'm gonna do a little yelling. We need some help in here."

Well, the chief resident, John Mikuta,[37] came in, and said, "What's going on in here?" And I told him, and he said, "Ease your hand back." I don't think he believed me. But as I moved my hand back, of course, the cord started to slide down, and the heart rate began to drop. "Put your hand back. We're going to the O.R. to do a Cesarean section." We got into the O.R. and he said, "You stay under the drapes with your hand in place." I said, "Given my partial amputation, if you don't mind, be careful because my hand is right there!" And he was careful of course, and we got a good baby. Less than a week later, he came to me and said that the professor said that if I wanted to apply for a residency in obstetrics and gynecology, he would be happy to entertain my application.

VT: What a wonderful story. So, this was really—you had to really think on your feet and this sort of gave you—some respect.

LD: Yes.

VT: You also mentioned that you were frequently called to the delivery rooms.

LD: Well, when I was an orthopedic resident, the attendings [physicians] in obstetrics quickly caught on to the fact that I was also a pediatrician, and that I knew more about babies than most orthopedic surgeons. So when they delivered a baby with a deformity, they would call me instead of the resident normally on call, because I knew my way around the delivery room and I knew about newborns. My colleagues in orthopedics didn't always take kindly to that because I got some of the best cases.

42:36 Favorite medical cases

VT: Can you talk about some of your cases that stand out to you for their unusual character?

LD: Well, some of them came when I was a resident: children who presented with one thing, rather obviously, but turned out to have other things as well. My favorite story about looking for other things, and the way in which pediatric training had altered my view, came when I was in practice for a few years. And one of my orthopedic colleagues sent me a patient who had a clubfoot.[38]

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37. Dr. John Mikuta (1925-2013) served as a resident in obstetrics and gynecology at the Hospital of the University Pennsylvania between 1951 to 1954. Liebe's timing is perfectly accurate, as she would have started her third year of medical school in 1953, when Dr. Mikuta became chief resident. He went on to become chairman of Penn's department of Gynecologic Oncology. He retired in 1993, and received numerous awards for his achievements in the field of obstetrics.

38. Clubfoot refers to a range of foot abnormalities in which one foot, or both, is twisted out of shape from birth.

Now it was what we would have considered an easy clubfoot—very pliable, you could easily correct it with a cast. And this physician had done that, three times, and it came back each time! He said that he thought that there had to be something that was not apparent to him. So he asked me if I would look at the baby. Because I was a pediatrician, I examined babies like a pediatrician, which meant the baby was stripped naked. He was about 4 months old at that point. Stripped naked—and I started from the top of the baby's head. Before I got beyond the top of the baby's head, I had the answer, because there were some strange ridges on the baby's head which suggested that the suture lines of the plates of the skull were not growing—that they were fused together, and not expanding to allow the brain to grow. And they were on the opposite side from the clubfoot, which was—red light, bells clanging. So we got some x-rays, and the baby did indeed have a thing called craniosynostosis.[39] So I called one of my colleagues, who was a pediatric neurosurgeon, shipped the baby downtown to him, he fixed the problem in the skull, then shipped the baby back to me. I fixed the clubfoot, and it stayed fixed. So, I think I would never have thought to look at the baby's head if I wasn't a pediatrician to begin with.

VT: It changed your approach to the children altogether.

LD: Yes, very radically.

VT: And when parents of newborns would discover [something unusual] (because obviously they didn't have the technology that we have today to know about things before birth), then you would often be the person that they would call in when parents had to confront the fact that their children had some kind of abnormalities.

LD: Yes.

46:00 Reflections on being a female surgeon

VT: Did you ever find that parents responded differently to a female surgeon, or to a female physician, than they might have if they were…There was an assumption that their physicians were mostly men. Did you find that you had to earn their confidence in a way that perhaps…

LD: Well, I think they all knew when they came to me, or at least most of them knew, that they were going to see a female. When I started out in practice, I was the only real pediatric orthopedic surgeon in the state of Maryland. Everybody else did general orthopedics, some with a lot of children, but there weren't any pediatric orthopedists who didn't do adult work, which helped. But I did have some funny encounters. One was the family that came in, and I examined the baby, told them what the problem was, and how it should be treated. And then the father said, "But when do we see the doctor?" To which I said, "Sir, you have bought the farm. I'm the doctor." And that was the only time I really …He just didn't know! I never had any problems

39. Craniosynostosis is a condition in which one or more of the fibrous sutures in an infant's skull prematurely fuses.

related to doing surgery with respect to my hands. Parents—by the time they got to me—they knew about me. But one family said to me—and they were very embarrassed by this—they said, could they take the baby to their family surgeon, who was a general surgeon, a very good general surgeon, but a general surgeon, for another opinion. And I said, "Sure." Gave them a copy of the x-rays, and a copy of my notes—my initial examinations—and I said, "You go see him." Well, a few days went by, and the mother called for another appointment. She said, "Dr. Hoffman says we should come back here and let you do this. He doesn't know how."[40]

48:37 Experiences at Kernan Hospital in 1960s (first job)

VT: Can you talk a little bit about your role when you went back to Kernan Hospital, which was your first job, essentially, and you would stay there for several decades?

LD: Well, it was a very curious thing. The first morning that I was on staff and walked into the hospital at 7:30 in the morning to operate, the head night nurse greeted me at the door. "Good morning, Doctor!" "Good Morning, Ms. Delcher."[41] She said, "Now Liebe, that's the last time I'm going to call you doctor. They're waiting for you in the O.R." Because she had changed my diaper, she just could never bring herself after that to call me anything but my first name. And I never objected at all, because …

VT: Was that Gin?

LD: No, this was one of the other nurses who worked nights. And…she was sort of a grumpy character but the children all loved her because as grumpy as she was, that's how good she was at what she did.

VT: What was it like going back to a hospital as a physician that had had such an important role in your life as a patient?

LD: Well, it was almost surrealistic because first of all, I had arrived on the scene to become Director of the Residency Training Program, so I was in charge of teaching the young residents who were—I was just out of my residency, they were two years behind me. And, some of them, because they had been in the military, were older than I was. The nurses treated me with considerable respect, and I treated them in the same way. First of all, they didn't have a separate locker room for women physicians, because I was the only woman physician in the hospital, so I shared the locker room with the operating room nurses. They became my friends, and we worked together for 40-some years. Very close relationship. The administrator of the hospital was Virginia Pruitt, who was my dear friend, but I never played on that to gain authority, or to twist people's arms. I did my job, and functioned as a proper member of the staff. I remember when I

40. This doctor was Dr. Elmer Hoffman (1922-2014), a general surgeon in the Baltimore area who specialized in reconstructive procedures following breast cancer treatment.

41. This was Mary Delcher.

became President of the Medical Staff, and Chairman of the Medical Executive Committee, that I kept in mind the blessing we say in the morning service in the synagogue for wisdom and insight, because it was a balancing act that one had to do to be respectful of one's colleagues, and still be a figure of authority.

52:17 Treating patients with congenital abnormalities

VT: What was it like to be treating people with some of the same types of issues that you had confronted as a child?

LD: Well, I saw a lot of those patients—they were funneled to me. And…there was very little written in the medical literature. Much of what I was able to do for them and with them I had to design for myself, because there really was very little information. I learned things from other colleagues; I learned from the plastic surgeons some of their techniques, I learned from the hand surgeons some of their techniques, and I learned a lot about what people thought. There were people who came to see me from all over the country who didn't really want me to treat their child; they just wanted to *see* me. And I understood this! I told parents, always, when they had a child with especially anomalous hands, that the most invisible hand is one that functions well. It's startling to look at at first glimpse, but then the personality of the patient emerges, and one becomes more interested in the person and their personality, than in their physical differences. This is sometimes very hard for parents to accept, but it became actually a principle that was taught in the Curtis Hand Surgery Center at Union Memorial,[42] a very fine hand center where I joined the staff some years ago, specifically to deal with congenital issues of the hands and feet.

VT: You're referring to sort of a psychological standpoint that you would encourage on the part of parents.

LD: Yes.

VT: …who needed to learn how to deal with abnormalities in their children.

LD: I told them, sometimes, funny things. I remember a lady with a baby with club feet and she said, in the supermarket, she would constantly be badgered by other women asking her questions about this baby with the cast. I said, "I'll tell you how you fix it. The next one asks you, tell them you caught the kid's feet in the car door." She came back the next week for a cast change and she said, "I did it! I did it! And nobody's bothered me since!" So, it was a matter of telling people that they could *live* with the problems that they had, if they would just relax and accept the situation. It wasn't easy for these parents. Most of them had no experience with congenital anomalies. They were frightened. They didn't know what would become of their child. They didn't know if their child would be marriageable. They didn't know whether they

42. The Curtis National Hand Center at the Medstar Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore is the largest institution of its kind in the United States.

would have an occupation, could they play sports, would they be able to write? There were so many questions, and I felt always that if they would just relax and watch me, that they would be able to come to terms, slowly, albeit, with their problems.

Now, you might say, why didn't we have counselors who could help them? In the early years, there were no such people. The psychiatrists and pediatric psychiatrists were interested in emotional problems, but they had no grasp of reality-based problems, so it was really up to me. Many times I'd get called in the middle of the night when a baby was delivered with major deformities, and the obstetrician would say, "Please come down here to the hospital before these people jump out of the nearest window. We need you to come and talk to them." And I would get up, go down and talk to the family, spend time with them, give them my home phone number, tell them what we could do, and how long it was going to take—that it wasn't something we could do overnight—that it was going to take a carefully planned program of management, that I was always available, they could call me at home. If they wanted a consultation I would be happy to arrange it. I only asked that if they wanted a consultation they would get it from somebody who was truly knowledgeable, not just anybody they happened to know, but somebody who really knew something about the disorder. And, just being offered a consultation, without their having to ask for it, often diffused the situation—made them feel that I understood their emotional response to this catastrophic problem.

VT: When you mention that there were families that visited you with kids who had had problems, just to meet you and just to learn about your background, that you had succeeded and what not—how old were their kids, were they always babies? Were they older kids?

LD: Some of them were older kids; some of them were 10, 11 years old, but it was mostly children 6 and under.

VT: Did you have a lasting relationship with those families?

LD: With some of those families, yes.

VT: Beyond just the initial [meeting]…

LD: I remember one mother who brought her child to me with a very difficult problem; we did well with it, but it was a difficult problem. And she came in one day, and she said, "My psychiatrist said I have something I need to tell you." I said, "So tell me!" "She said, "I hate you!" Well, you know I'm sort of a wag, and I looked at her and I said, "I don't like you too well, either!" At which point we both started to laugh, and from that point on she became my great friend! She had a real change in her attitude.

VT: Why did she feel the need to say that to you? Where did that come from?

LD: Because she couldn't say that she was so angry and unhappy with her handicapped child. So she focused it on me. And I knew that the parents did that.

VT: She projected…

LD: Yes.

1:00:32 On meeting Earl Diamond

VT: Can you talk a little bit about meeting your husband, and how he encouraged your career.

LD: He had a great deal to do with the success of my career. I met Earl when I was chief resident at the University of Pennsylvania.[43] He had been in the United States Public Health Service, and had been the chief statistician on the field trials of the polio vaccine. He had a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina and he had been on the faculty there. His chief at North Carolina told him that he really needed to leave Chapel Hill, because in that small community he would never find a Jewish girl to marry. Abe Lilienfeld, who was at Hopkins, was looking for a statistician, and [his chief] was sending Earl up to Hopkins, to be interviewed by Abe Lilienfeld.[44] Fortunately Dr. Lilienfeld hired him, and he was here about three weeks when Dr. Lilienfeld went to my cousin, who was the postdoctoral fellow in the department, and said, "We've got our statistician, but I promised I'd find him a wife. Do you know anybody?" She said, "Well, I've got this cousin." So she called me on the phone and read me his CV over the phone, and said, "Would you like to meet him?" I said, "Yes. I'm gonna' be home the weekend to visit my parents." She said, "I'll fix up a dinner." Well, we went out to dinner; we had a wonderful evening. And I had to catch a train to go back to Philadelphia. So, Earl took me to the train, and I got on, sat down in my seat, and said to myself, "I just had dinner with the man I'm gonna marry!" And I knew it. And he knew it too. We just…We were a good match. We had so many interests in common. He was very medically-oriented, because he was a biostatistician. He was interested in trains, in mountains, he was a superb outdoorsman with a lot of skills. There were so many things. He was a fine musician. He was a professional musician; he put himself through graduate school as a musician. So, we shared many things. We had a long-distance romance. The weekends that I was completely off-duty I would come down to Baltimore; the weekends that I was on second-call and could leave the hospital he would come up to Philadelphia. If I was on first-call I couldn't leave the hospital so that was a lost weekend. But we had this long-distance romance and finally I knew him from the fall of 1959 until late spring –actually fourth of July of 1960, when we became engaged. We got married in December in a blizzard. And we had a wonderful marriage. He was very supportive of my work. He said he knew when he met me that I was a surgeon, and we started out our marriage by looking for a

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43. Earl Diamond died in 2002.

44. Dr. Abraham Lilienfeld (1920-1984) was a major leader in the field of chronic disease epidemiology. He worked at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

house in town where I could have my office on the first floor and we could live above, which was a wonderful thing, because when our son was born, he was like the flower pot on the secretary's desk. He was always in the waiting room. When he went off to school he was amazed, because he thought he was the only child in the world that didn't have crutches and a wheelchair.

VT: How did Earl differ from other men that you had met?

LD: Well, there was one who was very serious about me, and fortunately I wasn't too serious about him, because his idea was that I should chuck my career and become a housewife. That wasn't gonna fly. I told him I would never marry such a man and that was the end of him.

VT: He kind of came to your house one day and surprised you with almost an ultimatum?

LD: Yes.

VT: Can you share that story?

LD: Yes. I had told him that there was going to be a period of two weeks when I wouldn't be able to go out at all, because I had to study for mid-year exams. He said, "Why are you studying so hard, when all you're going to do is get married and have babies?" I told him that I didn't see what one thing had to do with the other, that I knew other women who practiced medicine full-time, had children and good marriages. "Oh," he said, "But you wouldn't work after marriage if your husband really didn't want you to." That's when I told him that I would never marry such a man.

I had a number of opportunities to get married but none of them really were anything like Earl. He turned out to be exactly the right guy for me. We had, first of all, the opportunity to do things that most people don't have available to them. Because my practice was highly elective in the sense that I didn't do a lot of trauma—if one of my regular patients broke a leg, or something, then I took care of it. But I was really a reconstructive orthopedic surgeon, so I could schedule surgery the way I wanted to, and the way I felt in which it was in the best interests of the children. I believe strongly that summer belongs to children. So, I didn't want to have kids tied up a whole summer in casts and in surgery. I also knew that in most schools, by the first of May, promotion and class placement is pretty well-determined. So I could start pulling kids out of school the first week in May, and from the first week in May until the last week in June, I could do a lot of surgery. By the first week of July, when I wanted to go away, most of them were out of their casts, and in their rehab programs, that they could swim, they could go to the shore, they could do whatever their families wanted to do for vacation. So that's how we worked it. Earl was at the School of Hygiene,[45] and he was allowed a month. So we usually took the month of July

45. Originally founded in 1916 by William Welch and John D. Rockefeller, the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health was first named the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health. The name was changed in 2001 due to the contributions of Michael Bloomberg.

off, and we went west. We hiked, we climbed, we rode horses, we had a canoe, we camped out. Earl taught me how to cook a meal over a Coleman Gasoline Stove without blowing all of us into the next world. The only thing outdoors that I ever taught him was how to ride a horse. He was a superb hiker, but he had no experience with horses. I introduced him to horses.

VT: Did you own horses at some point?

LD: No, no, but I had ridden at summer camp as a child, and I liked horses, so I was able to encourage him.

VT: You had a very interesting relationship with pets. There was one pet that made it into the ER or something *(laughter)*.

1:09:25 On caring for dogs in need

LD: Well, we found a Labrador Retriever on the grounds of Kernan Hospital. Had no collar, no tags, and she had a number of lacerations, and had obviously been hit by a car. So, we brought her into the hospital, down in the Outpatient Department, and I called [Virginia] Pruitt, and said, "We've got this dog"—and she loved dogs—"and it's badly hurt it. Can we fix it?" She said, "Sure, fix it!" So, one of our nurse anesthetists came over to the Outpatient Department, we put the dog to sleep, we sewed up all the lacerations, and got one of our nurses to adopt the dog. A week later, when she went home from work, she found that the dog had delivered a litter of puppies on her living room sofa. Not very good for the sofa, but they were wonderful puppies!

Then, I did some work for the local veterinarians because I had an interest in veterinary medicine. I think if girls had been admitted to veterinary school when I was preparing to go to medical school, I might well have become a veterinarian.[46] The local vets here in town did not have a veterinary orthopedist amongst them, at that time, so if they had a badly injured dog that would have to be put down unless somebody really fixed it, they would call me. And, I never refused. I never charged a fee. I got a lick on the cheek, sometimes a wag of a tail, but I was always pleased to help with the dogs. I had a friend who was a nurse anesthetist who would come along and help with the anesthesia. We did many dogs. I always thought that was one of my best things.

But the highlight of my residency was actually involving a Bassett Hound, a huge Bassett Hound, weighed 90 pounds. "Gigi" belonged to one of the associate chiefs of the Department of

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46. Women made up only 5 percent of practicing veterinarians in the 1960s, but the numbers of women in the field started to pick up in the 1970s and 1980s. By 2007, almost 80 percent of students in veterinary schools were women. See Sarah Schweitzer, "Veterinary Schools Turn Increasingly Female," *Boston Globe*, August 22, 2007, www.boston.com.

Orthopedic Surgery. And, Dr. Roy Peck[47] was known as the father of the residents, because if you got into trouble with the "Big Cheese," it was to Dr. Peck you went with your troubles. He was in the hospital with emphysema; and his wife [Clara Peck] called me, and I was chief resident and because I was a girl, I stuck out. I mean, there wasn't anything I could do. If I coughed, the whole hospital knew. She called me and said, "Gigi, the dog, will not eat. And Roy is pining away for the dog. You've got to smuggle her into the hospital."

Now, in 1959 we didn't have pet visits, and there was no way I could figure out to get that dog past the nursing service.[48] Well, Mrs. Peck was absolutely insistent, and I did owe him something, because Dr. Peck had been very good to me. So I said, "Well, alright, meet me in the back parking lot tonight at 10:00 and bring a pile of Roy's dirty clothes. Not clean clothes, but dirty clothes that smelled like him." So we put a layer of those dirty clothes on the bottom of a canvas laundry basket on wheels. It took two of us to lift up 90-pound Gigi and put her in that laundry basket. Now she had a voice like a fog horn. She was a huge Bassett. We covered her over with a sheet, and I said, "Dog, one woof out of you, they're gonna get me and I'm gonna get you." And up we went. We got off the elevator right by the nurse's station and the head nurse said, "Doctor—Where are you going at 10:00 at night—with Mrs. Peck and that laundry basket?" I said, "Well, we have Dr. Peck's things, you know Mrs. Peck works, and I'm his resident, so we've got his things." "Well, don't stay in the room too long." So we got into the room and closed the door. And in those days, we didn't have nasal oxygen, we had oxygen tents. It was a big celluloid thing that covered the whole bed. We picked that dog up and put her in the oxygen tent with him. You never saw such a sight. He was kissing her nose and her ears, she was licking his face and his hands, it would have made you cry it was so tender. When we finally got her back outside, and I must say, Gigi was smarter than I thought 'cause she didn't let out one chirp!

Years went by and I never told anyone, except my husband, what I had done. First of all, if I had been caught, I would have been fired on the spot. Well, fifteen years went by and I was at a cocktail party with a group of fellas, some of whom were faculty when we were training, and others were my fellow residents, and I must have had one drink too many, because I told what I had done! And the man who was now Chairman of the Department said, "You know, that if you

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47. Dr. Roy Irving Peck (1906-1975) was an orthopedic surgeon at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital.

48. Hospitals have not allowed family pets to visit patients until quite recently. (Certified pet therapy programs, on the other hand, in which a therapy animal visits a number of patients in a hospital, hospice, or assisted living facility, have been in existence since the 1970s). One example of a long-standing program is the Family Pet Visitation Program at the University of Iowa Hospital, which started in 2003. The *New York Times* reports that as of April 2013, there are about 20 hospitals across the United States which have instituted a policy allowing pet visits. The numbers are slowly growing. See Judith Graham, "When Best Friends Can Visit," April 10, 2013, nytimes.com.

had been caught, you would been out of the hospital before midnight, and you would never have gotten your certificate of completion of your residency." At which I said that I thought that God was watching over me and the dog that night.

VT: So you operated on a number of dogs as well.

LD: Yes.

1:16:15 Most interesting cases in professional career

VT: Can you talk a little bit about some of the types of cases that you had? You mentioned that there were certain types of cases that you especially liked working on.

LD: Well, I think most people know about the athlete—the Olympic athlete who had double amputation to his legs because of a thing called Fibular Hemimelia.[49] I had a lot of those patients because I had a particular interest in that deformity. Most of them required amputation because if you wanted to lengthen their legs, you ended up with an unstable knee or an unstable hip. There was no ankle joint, and the feet were also seriously deformed. One of the things that I did in my research was to demonstrate that the deformity of the feet in these patients was a bony deformity that required a very drastic kind of surgery to correct, and would not give a satisfactory foot. So amputation was preferable. And I must say, I was very pleased to see the Olympic athlete, because one of my bilateral amputee patients is now a phys. ed. teacher.

VT: You worked a lot on clubfoot…

LD: Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, congenital dislocated hips, and then all of the bizarre and really unclassified anomalies of the lower and upper extremities.

VT: And did you publish on those as well?

LD: Yes, I did publish quite a bit of material. One of the things that I did at the request of the Pediatric Orthopedic Society[50] was to collect a large number of patients with the Ring

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49. Fibular Hemimelia refers to the absence of the calf bone at birth. Liebe refers here to the South African 2012 Olympic athlete, Oscar Pistorius, who became the first double-leg amputee to participate in the Olympic Games.

50. The Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America (POSNA) emerged from the Pediatric Orthopedic Society, which originated in 1971. In the 1950s-60s, orthopedic surgery limited to children was an unusual specialty among surgeons. See Hugh Watts, MD, "A History of the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America, 1971 to 1996," www.posna.org.

Constriction Syndrome, which is my syndrome, that I have.[51] In the course of that, I came across my own record. So it's included in that study.

VT: 1930 to 1968.

LD: Yes.

VT: Can you discuss what you saw in your own record [concerning]… one person's diagnosis at that point, when you were just an infant?

LD: One of the people who saw me as an infant—he was actually an intern at that point—wrote in the record that since I had severe anomalies, and was also jaundiced, that I was most likely retarded, and should be immediately transferred to the State Hospital for the retarded.[52] Fortunately, Virginia Pruitt and Dr. Gellman recognized that I was intact mentally, and I escaped from that rather dire prediction. Years later, when I became a pediatric house officer, I came in contact with this gentleman and he was an obstetrician then. And I was the intern in the newborn nursery. He was so polite to me that he made me uncomfortable. I mean, nobody was ever polite to interns, you didn't do that! But he was absolutely unctuous. And over the years that went by, I finished my pediatric training, I trained in orthopedics, I went into practice. Every time I met this man he gave me creepy feelings. When I saw the record, I understood. So, I said, I've got to settle this, for him, if not for me. So, the next time I ran into him in the hospital, I asked him if he would come and have a cup of coffee with me. He said yes. We sat down and I said, "You know, I know exactly what you wrote in the record when I was born. I don't hold it against you. That was the prevailing idea in 1931. And so, I'm not angry with you." I saw this man visibly relax as if I had lifted a weight off of his shoulders.

VT: Did he thank you?

LD: Yes.

1:21:30 Jewishness in the work place

VT: Can you talk a little bit about your role as a Jewish leader—your role as the Jewish representative or spokesperson—at Kernan?

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51. Ring Constriction Syndrome occurs when fibrous bands of the amniotic sac wrap around a fetus's limbs, fingers or toes.

52. Liebe confirms that severe congenital abnormalities were frequently associated with mental limitations in this early period. In this context, the reference to the "state hospital" appears to refer to the Rosewood State Training School, a state-run institution in Maryland intended to provide care for people with developmental disabilities. Renamed the Rosewood State Hospital in 1961, it became the Rosewood Center in 1968, and was finally closed down in 2009.

LD: Well, we had quite a number of Jewish members of the attending staff. But one year, we had three resident surgeons, all of whom were Jewish. One came from Baltimore and had a place for the High Holidays, the other two fellas didn't so I got them tickets to Beth Tfiloh.[53] And then the chief, who was Jewish, said to me, "How are we going to run the O.R. on the holidays if they're not available?" And I said, "Look, the hospital closes its O.R. on Christmas, and on New Year's Day and on Good Friday, so we can close for the three days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur." And I said, "These boys are observant, I've got tickets for them, and that stands." Well, he was very upset. He thought that the non-Jewish members of the staff would resent this. As it turned out, they didn't. And the next time the Jewish holidays came around, he called me and said, "How are you setting up for the holidays with the boys?" So, I was always, even as a resident surgeon—which in those days was a strangely powerless position, because you served at the pleasure of your department, the hospital and the university—you didn't have a contract. Nobody had a contract. So, but I was always very forthright and plainspoken about my observance. And I found that that was actually accepted very well, because I think at least the non-Jewish community in the hospital really expected you to respect yourself.

VT: Did anyone ever encourage you to hide your Jewish identity, or somehow obscure it?

LD: Never.

VT: No… I know from my own research at the University of Pennsylvania that [that campus] was very unusual in the extent to which the [Jewish] students felt very free to express themselves. You didn't have the discrimination that some professional schools did such as Temple [University].

LD: Well, Penn did have a problem in the 1940s. But when Dr. Mitchell became the Dean, all of that disappeared. He didn't have a prejudiced bone in his body.[54]

1:24:48 Birth of son, Joshua

VT: Can you speak a little about the birth of Josh, and how that…you mentioned a little bit that he was like a flower pot [in the doctor's office].

LD: Well, we were married five years when I became pregnant and I of course was in those days what was called an "elderly primipara" because I was 35 years old, and that was considered very old to be having a first child.[55] There were worries because although my anomalies were not

53. Beth Tfiloh is a large, modern Orthodox synagogue in Baltimore.

54. The University of Pennsylvania briefly had restrictive policies (as did other Ivy League schools) in 1941-1943 following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. On Dr. Mitchell, see n.k 31.

55. "Elderly primipara" is the medical term for a woman who had her first pregnancy after age 34.

inherited, the thing that you had to worry about for an elderly primipara—and still do—is Down's Syndrome, which increases rather importantly with the increasing age of the mother. So that was a bit of a worry. I worked until the day I delivered. I was actually in my office. I had taken a paper day to catch up on all the paper work that I had. And while I was in the office, my membranes ruptured, and off we went to the hospital. The baby was born but he was two weeks late. So, in two weeks time, I called the obstetrician and I said, "I'm going back to work tomorrow!" He said, "You're doing what?" I said, "I have to because I've got surgery scheduled. And I can't...These patients' families are expecting me to do my thing!" So I went back to work and we were fortunate enough to have found a house on Park Avenue downtown where I could have my office on the first floor, and we lived above. So when I came in from the hospital each day to have office hours, I was really at home. It worked very well. When Josh got to be school-age, we couldn't find a school for him in the city so I asked the principal of Grace and St. Peter's School,[56] which was just a block down the street from us, whether she would take him. And she said, "Yes, but if he's a Jewish child, this is a very Christian school, and we are going to confuse him." I thanked her for her honesty, and I said, "What would you do if you were in my position?" She said, "I'd figure out a way to haul him out to the Beth Tfiloh School."[57] So we did. My father had just retired, so the three of us managed to transport Josh back and forth, because there was no school bus coming down to Park Avenue. After a year, I said, "We have to do something because I'm either going to shoot the kid or I'm going to shoot me. I can't keep up this juggling act."

VT: Was it the distance to and from...

LD: And the time! We had to pick him up smack in the middle of the day. So, I told Earl what I thought, and he said, "Let's build a house out in the county."[58] So we found a piece of land and built a house about a mile from Beth Tfiloh. And we moved. I kept my office downtown for a another two years, and then I moved it to Pikesville, too.

VT: Did you ever travel to do surgery in other cities, or did people always come to you?

LD: People came to me. I never wanted to operate outside [the local area], because every cook bakes pie best in her own oven. The staff is used to you, you've got the instruments that you like. There were three hospitals where I did all of my surgery—most of it at Kernan, some of it at

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56. Grace and St. Peter's School was associated with the church of the same name on 707 Park Avenue, Baltimore; it served ages 3 to 10.

57. The Beth Tfiloh Day School was located on Old Court Road in Pikesville, MD and by the early 1970s had about 300 students in grades K-8.

58. Liebe refers to Baltimore County. Liebe and Earl would relocate to Pikesville, just northwest of the city.

Sinai, and quite a lot at Union Memorial because I was attached to the Curtis Hand Center. Their situation was unusual because the fellas who did hand surgery did not do feet, but many children with hand anomalies have foot anomalies too. The foot staff at Union Memorial didn't do children. So they brought me on to the staff because I had expertise at both ends of the anatomy as it were. And they often would be doing a hand while I was at the other end of the table doing a foot, which meant we saved the child an anesthesia.

[Part II of interview] 1:30:11 Liebe's Jewish identity as an adult

VT: So I wanted to continue our conversation today with Liebe Diamond. It's now May 17, 2013 at Towson University. We are continuing the conversation that we started a few weeks ago. And today I wanted to focus on your Jewish identity as an adult. You spoke a little bit about your very impressive parents who encouraged your Jewish education and your Hebrew literacy through childhood and into your teenage years. And we know that in the '60s when you moved back here with your husband Earl, that you belonged to Beth El, but that in '72 you joined Beth Tfiloh. Can you talk just a little about why you decided to join Beth Tfiloh at that point?

LD: Well, we had been happy at Beth El.[59] My husband and I both were Conservative Jews, and had a pleasant experience at Beth El. We knew a lot of the people of course. We sat together as a family with my mother and father, it was really very nice and our son enjoyed it. But when he started day school at Beth Tfiloh, he wanted to go to services on Saturday morning with his friends. So Earl and I took him on a Saturday morning to Beth Tfiloh. As it turned out, it was *Shabbes Rosh Chodesh*.[60] The cantor at Beth Tfiloh at that time was Abe Denburg, who was a wonderful, wonderful *chazan* with a taste for really classical *Chazanut*.[61] He had a choir, and going to shul, especially when there was *Hallel*, was like going to a concert.[62] And he was really good, and the congregation really loved it. We were very impressed. And so the next week we came back, and the next week after that we came back. In the meantime, the congregation was very welcoming to us. Again, we knew a lot of the people, especially I did, because many of them had been my classmates in public school, and many of them had children who were my patients. Earl had taught some of them, so we felt comfortable with the people. And the leadership of the congregation, each time we appeared on the scene, gave Earl an *aliyah*, called

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59. By the early 1970s, Beth El was a rapidly growing Conservative congregation on Park Heights Avenue in Baltimore.

60. *Shabbes Rosh Chodesh* refers to the first Sabbath of the new lunar month, which is celebrated in traditional Jewish worship services with special liturgy.

61. The cantor's full name was Abraham J. Denburg. Cantor Denburg served at Beth Tfiloh for three decades. *Chazan* is the Hebrew word for cantor. *Chazanut* refers to cantorial music or style.

62. *Hallel* refers to particular psalms of praise which are chanted on the first Sabbath of the new month and other holidays in the Jewish calendar.

him up to the Torah, three weeks running.[63] So we figured, "They're very welcoming! They really want us here!" And we decided to join the congregation even though we considered ourselves Conservative Jews, and I continue to consider myself a Conservative Jew. But I'm comfortable and happy at Beth Tfiloh.

VT: So when you …went to Beth Tfiloh, there was no *mechitzah.*[64]

LD: No *mechitzah.*

VT: So men and women were sitting on separate sides…

LD: Of the center aisle.

VT: Of the center aisle. How did that differ for you as a woman from Beth El when you were able to sit with your parents and your family?

LD: Well, I missed that. Of course I could sit with my mother. But Earl camped out on a seat right across the center aisle from me. We were early risers, so we'd get to shul early, and those seats were not bespoken! In fact we wondered why these prime seats were not taken until the first rain. (*Laughter)* And then we discovered that we were on…what euphemistically might be called the "drip line."

VT: You continued sitting there?

LD: We continued…We learned to sit sideways and avoid the drip!

VT: You brought a rain coat and an umbrella…

1:34:57 On women's roles in the modern Orthodox synagogue

LD: I think giving up *aliyot* for women was not as difficult as it could have been because Beth El had just begun giving *aliyot* for women.

VT: This was not something you had been accustomed to for many years.

LD: No. But when Beth Tfiloh put in the *mechitzah*…

VT: In 2000.[65]

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63. *Aliyah* is the Hebrew word used to refer to the honor of being called up to the Torah on Sabbath services. The plural is *aliyot.*

64. The *mechitzah* is the Hebrew word for the partition used to separate men and women in traditional synagogues.

65. This actually occurred in 2004. Plans to construct the *mechitzah* were first reported in the *Baltimore Sun* in November 2003. See Frank Langfitt, "Synagogue to Unblend Genders," November 5,

LD: Yes, I was infuriated. I mean, I was really angry. And I told Rabbi Wohlberg,[66] and these are my exact words, "The *mechitzah* is somewhere between cholera and the bubonic plague."

VT: And how high a *mechitzah* is it? Is it a…

LD: Well, I'm short, but it comes up to my shoulder.

VT: Okay.

LD: So it's not terribly high and it's glass.

VT: Okay, so it's glass so you can see.

LD: It's not really…It's the *concept* that's troublesome.

VT: Why was it that they decided to put in a *mechitzah* at that point? Was it a change in board structure, a change in rabbi?

LD: Well, Rabbi Wohlberg insisted on it because he said he was having trouble acquiring assistant rabbis because they wouldn't come because there was no *mechitzah*.[67] And this was the mildest thing he could offer that would be acceptable. Those of us who opposed it, you know, really got kind of steamrolled, and when it came to the final vote in the Religious Services Committee, there was the rest of the committee that buckled under, and me. I was the only "no" vote, and I have stuck to my guns.

VT: Now, did any congregants at that time decide to leave as a result?

LD: There were several families that left.

VT: Ok. Because they were unhappy with it.

LD: I think, if I had been in my fifties instead of my seventies, I might have left. But I really—when I thought about it very carefully, I didn't have any place to go. I didn't really like any of the other congregations. I liked the service at Beth Tfiloh, I liked the people, I liked the rabbi in spite of his decision. And I really—I really didn't have any place that I wanted to go!

2003, www.baltimoresun.com. Beth Tfiloh had been one of the only modern Orthodox synagogues in the country which did not have a physical *mechitzah.*

When Beth Tfiloh acquired its current property on Old Court Road in 1962, the Epstein family, which contributed heavily to the mortgage (and for whom the chapel is named), stipulated that there be no *mechitzah* in the sanctuary. Once the congregation paid off the mortgage, Beth Tfiloh's leaders felt free to build one. Some of the family's descendants were unhappy with the decision.

66. Rabbi Mitchell Wohlberg has served at Beth Tfiloh since 1978.

67. *The Sun* reported as well that the synagogue was trying to satisfy a more traditional contingent of younger Orthodox Jews within the congregation. See n. 65.

VT: Your community was there.

LD: Yes.

VT: Did the service change at all as a result of this decision? Along with the *mechitzah*, were there other changes?

LD: Yes it did. Some little things. For example, now that we have a *mechitzah,* when we read the Torah and are ready to put it away, a woman gets to carry it around through the women's side, which we didn't do before. We had for some years before that, had *Hakafot* for women on *Simchat Torah,* but there'd been only one *Hakafah* at the end.[68] Now they have several *Sifrei Torah* that we can use and women march around all the time during the *Hakafot.*[69] So…

VT: On both sides?

LD: No. Just on the women's side.

VT: Okay. What about women reading from the Torah? Or…I imagine no women's *aliyot.*[70]

LD: No.

VT: No women reading from the Torah.

LD: But women do come up on the *bimah*[71] to lead the prayer for the government, and when there's a bar or bat mitzvah, the mother gets to come up with the father to bless the child, which I think is a great advance, because when my son was bar mitzvah, I may as well have been in China. You know, I was irrelevant!

VT: What do they do for women bat mitzvahs, or women *b'not mitzvah?*[72]

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68. *Hakafah* (plural *Hakafot*) refers to the march around the perimeter of the sanctuary during the Jewish holiday of *Simchat Torah,* which celebrates the annual completion of the reading of the Torah.

69. *Sifrei Torah* is the plural for Torah scrolls. On the holiday of *Simchat Torah*, it is customary to march with all the *Sifrei Torah* that a congregation owns.

70. *Aliyot* is the plural of *aliyah,* and refers to the honor of being called up to the Torah. Orthodox synagogues allow men, only, to have *aliyot.* Conservative and Reform synagogues allow women as well.

71. *Bimah* is the Hebrew word for the elevated platform from which the Torah, or liturgy, is read in the synagogue.

72. *B'not Mitzvah* is the Hebrew plural of *bat mitzvah.*

LD: Well, the girl is called up after the reading of the Torah—and she does a *Haftorah*—not the *Haftorah* of the day, even if the Sephardic *haftorah* is different from the Ashkenaz—she has to pick something else, but she can pick her own *Haftorah,* and she reads that.[73]

VT: Okay. So she doesn't do a *maftir*[74] or anything like that.

LD: No.

VT: Let's see what else…

LD: When I really feel the need of an *aliyah*, I go to see my son, because his shul is Conservative and egalitarian, and they *always* call me up to the Torah.

VT: How did he…Did he have any issues about …well it sounds like by the time he would have joined a synagogue, this was well before the *mechitzah* would have been there.

LD: The *mechitzah* wasn't there when we joined. He was a just a little fella. Every Saturday morning he sat with his father and it became part of what the family did. This was our *minhag.*[75] Now, he belongs to a Conservative congregation in West Chester County, New York. And, every *Shabbes* morning he takes his boys to shul. My daughter-in-law is not a shul-goer. But Josh takes the boys every *Shabbes* morning, and the kids participate, often leading the *Ashrei,*[76] and now that Max is older, he's counted in the *minyan.*[77]

1:41:07: Decision to wear tallis and tefillin

VT: Okay. So, when you…In 2000, was that also the year you began to wear tallis and *tefillin*, or was that more recent?[78]

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73. The *Haftorah* is the portion from one of the books of Prophets that thematically accompanies the Torah reading. Sephardic and Ashkenazic congregations have different traditions regarding which *Haftorah,* or portion, is read on some Sabbaths.

74. The *maftir,* or literally "concluding section," is Hebrew for the last portion of the weekly Torah reading that is typically read by the bar mitzvah.

75. *Minhag* is the Hebrew word for "custom" or "tradition."

76. The *Ashrei* (which is Hebrew for praiseworthy) is a song of praise to God within the Sabbath and daily liturgy, and is often sung by children of pre-bar/bat mitzvah age in the synagogue.

77. The *minyan* is the Hebrew word for the quorum of 10 required to have a prayer service. At Orthodox synagogues, only Jewish men 13 and over are counted in the *minyan*, but at more liberal synagogues, Jewish women are counted as well.

78. The tallis, or *tallit* in Hebrew, is the prayer shawl typically worn by men during morning services. The *tefillin* are the phylacteries worn during morning services, also traditionally by men.

LD: Actually, late in 1999 I began.

VT: And how did that decision come up?

LD: Well, I was a daily *davener.*[79] I had begun in 1988 when I was saying *kaddish*[80] for my mother, And I found going to shul every day was very meaningful for me, so when the eleven months had expired, I continued. And, every day, I read about putting on tallis and *tefillin*, but I didn't do it. I knew the *Halakhah* that it was a Torah *mitzvah*, so the rabbis couldn't refuse you permission.[81] They could excuse you from the obligation because it was a time-bound requirement, but they couldn't forbid you. So I began. The very first time I put on a tallis was when we had the women's *tefillah* group,[82] and I was going to read the Torah for the women. And, my husband took me to a gift shop and said, "I'm going to buy you a tallis." And he bought one for me.

When I decided I would begin to wear a tallis regularly, I didn't want to blindside Rabbi Adler, who was then presiding over the daily *minyan.*[83] I didn't feel I needed anybody's permission, but I didn't want to be rude, either. So I went to him and didn't ask him; I told him what I was going to do. And he said that was fine with him. So, I began and I know some of the men kind of, were—a bit out of joint, until Rabbi Wohlberg, on the third or fourth morning walked into the chapel, looked at me, grinned and said in a very loud voice that everyone could hear, "Looks good on you!" And walked away. And that was the end of the discussion.

Now when the Beth Jacob people joined up with Beth Tfiloh, they were astonished to find me there.

VT: And what year was that?

LD: That was 2009 or thereabouts.[84]

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79. *Daven* is Yiddish for "recite prayers;" those who pray are referred to as *daveners*.

80. According to Jewish tradition, *Kaddish* is the prayer that mourners say for 11 months following the death of a first-degree relative or spouse.

81. *Halahkah*, the Hebrew term for Jewish law, refers to Torah *mitzvoth* (plural of mitzvah, or commandments), as those which are explicitly prescribed within the Torah. There is a separate category of *mitzvoth* which were defined by the rabbis.

82. *A Tefillah* group is a prayer group.

83. Elan Adler served at Beth Tfiloh Congregation for 17 years as Associate Rabbi until 2010; he now lives in Israel.

84. Beth Jacob actually merged with Beth Tfiloh in 2007, not 2009.

VT: Okay so that was more recent.

LD: The first morning one of them called their former president, Bob Klein, whom I've known since he was a tiny child—our families were friends—and he said, "Oh, that's Dr. Diamond. Don't worry about her."

VT: Meaning, why would they…

LD: Well, it wasn't their custom.

VT: Okay.

LD: It wasn't their *minhag,* and they weren't used to me, and many of them didn't know me.

VT: Okay.

LD: So, but now, interestingly enough, we have a couple more women, one who's actually a student here at the BHI, who comes often in the morning, and she puts on tallis and *tefillin*, and we have another lady who's saying *kaddish*, who wears a tallis.[85] And occasionally, visitors come on Saturday, and they will ask the head usher is it permissible, and the response has been generally, "Yeah, we already have one of those." (*Laughter*)[86]

VT: So you're a trendsetter!

LD: Yeah! Well, you know, it's my thing! You know…I just…

VT: You didn't think about it.

LD: Once again it was me doing my thing without—I didn't want to astonish anybody; I didn't want to make anybody unhappy.

VT: When you added *tefillin*, did that generate any more response? I'm sure the tallis was in and of itself different…

LD: And a month later I added the *tefillin.*

VT: Oh, that's not a very long time!

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85. BHI refers to "Baltimore Hebrew Institute" at Towson University. When Baltimore Hebrew University closed in the summer of 2009, it merged with Towson University. The entity created at Towson to support the Jewish Studies graduate programs is called the Baltimore Hebrew Institute.

86. It is extremely common today in Reform and Conservative synagogues for women to wear prayer shawls on the Sabbath. The practice first became popular in the 1980s with the emergence of Jewish feminism.

LD: No.

VT: Very recent.

LD: No, that was a month after I started with the tallis, I started with the *tefillin.*

VT: And Rabbi Wohlberg still said, let's do it?

LD: That was about the time that we…when I had the whole business.

VT: Good for him.

LD: Now, one of our assistant rabbis is [Rabbi] Posner, and he has on several occasions remarked from the pulpit that he doesn't object to women with tallis and *tefillin.* So, and I know that Rabbi Lerner doesn't object.[87]

VT: Well, it's becoming a lot more common I think, especially in the Conservative movement.

LD: In my son's shul, I would say 80 percent of the women wear *tallisim.* Now, I went to midweek morning services at his shul this year, *erev Pesach*, for the *siyyum* of the firstborn, and I was the only woman there who had *tefillin* and they immediately gave me an *aliyah.*[88]

VT: Maybe they just love you!

LD: I'm so accustomed now, I'm comfortable. My funniest story about the tallis and *tefillin* came when I was standing on the brink of the canyon of the Yellowstone River, and there were two women standing near me, wearing Tauck Tour tags. Finally, one of them said to me, "You look knowledgeable, can we ask you a question?"

VT: You said Tauck Tour?

LD: Tauck – T – a – u – c – k. That's a very popular tour company that leads…

VT: Oh – okay.

LD: So, I said, "Yes, ask me. I'll try to answer your question." So I answered their question, and then I showed them something else that they hadn't noticed. And, suddenly one of them said to me, "Are you Jewish?" And I said, "Yes I am." And she said, "Well, I'll bet my husband was the

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87. At the time of this interview, Rabbi Chai Posner and Rabbi Daniel Lerner were both assistant rabbis at Beth Tfiloh Congregation.

88. There is a Jewish custom for the first-born males to fast on the day before Passover begins (*erev Pesach*), the 14th of the month of Nissan. It is meant to commemorate the 10th plague against the Egyptians: the death of the firstborn, which spared the Israelites. The "*siyyum*" is the festive meal that ends the fast.

only person in this park who put on tallis and *tefillin* this morning." And of course, I couldn't resist. I said, "My dear lady, you are absolutely wrong! Because I did." (*Laughter*)

VT: And what did she say?

LD: I got invited to dinner!

VT: Oh! Did they give you an *aliyah*? (*Laughter*) Wow, those are great stories. So, fastfoward I guess about 12 or 13 years. Today, have any more people at Beth Tfiloh …started wearing tallises?

LD: A few.

VT: But it's not widespread.

LD: No, not at all. Not at all.

VT: What about covering your hair on *Shabbat*? I know that…

LD: I wear a *kippah*.[89]

VT: You wear a *kippah*. Are there women who wear hats?

LD: We have some women who wear hats, some of whom wear hats which are big, bigger and biggest. We have some women who wear what I like to call doilies. Some women who wear *kippot*, and the vast majority go bareheaded.

VT: Okay, so it's very modern in that sense.

LD: At Beth Tfiloh, we have quite a number of women who wear pant suits on *Shabbes*, with I think [for] good reason, because when you go into a shop today, you can buy skirts that are down to the floor, or you can buy skirts that are up to your hips, but it's hard to find anything that's modest at all without being excessive. And…so a lot of women have taken to pant suits.

VT: Yes, and I notice some of the teenagers have trouble getting those skirts that go down to their knees.

LD: Well, the Bat mitzvah girls have a terrible time. Some of the mothers have to have dresses made for them because you can't buy things in that size that are not unacceptable.

89. Hebrew for head covering (yarmulke); the plural of *kippah* is *kippot*.

1:50:11 Connections between Jewish identity and professional path

VT: Right. Do you connect your Jewish identity—your decisions about—deciding what you wanted to do, what felt right for you, to your decisions professionally (to, this is what I want to do, this is my path)?

LD: Well, in a way yes. My Judaism has always had an impact on my professional life. When I was a house officer at the University of Pennsylvania, where there were only a handful of Jews, I was very unabashed. I had to be myself. That worked out very well. I found I was respected for what I did. In my office, I had a *mezuzah* on the door.[90] We were closed on the Jewish holidays and on *Shabbes*. We didn't have office hours. And my office staff knew that during *Pesach*, nobody could bring any food into the office.[91] The x-ray tech—who was a nice Jewish gal—and I cleaned out the refrigerator, and that was it for the holiday. And we… I think my office staff really loved working for me because they not only got their holidays off, they got mine too, because the office was closed.

VT: Did you ever get any pushback in the community from anyone who said, "Oh well, you need to be open …"

LD: I did! Interestingly, not from non-Jews.

VT: Isn't that interesting.

LD: But occasionally from Jewish people, who said, "Why don't you have Saturday office hours?" To which I always said, "It's *Shabbes*! I don't have office hours."

VT: And what if somebody in synagogue asked you a question during [or] after services.

LD: Never … never minded …

VT: Never minded that.

LD: In fact, I used to have a parade coming by my seat, of kids, getting their casts checked, because I sat on the aisle and this stream of kids would come by so I could check their casts.

VT: Now were they also getting rained on? (*Laughter*). You're all wet!

LD: They finally fixed the roof.

VT: I was going to say, you would need to set up a hairdryer! Okay. It sounds very much like your decision to live in a certain Jewish framework was similar in a sense to your decision to

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90. A *mezuzah* is the encased scroll that Jews traditionally put on the doorposts of their houses. It's also customary to put *mezuzot* on doorposts of individual rooms of the house.

91. *Pesach* is Hebrew for Passover.

pursue your degree and to pursue your career. It didn't really match with the general trends of the time in both areas.

LD: That's true, I always marched to my own drummer.

VT: It sounds as though your parents enabled that, in many ways, encouraged you to take your own path.

LD: Oh yes, very much so, especially my father. My mother was a bit more reticent about it, she worried I wasn't the nice little girl that everybody expected. My father really egged me on; he pushed me to do the best I could at whatever I was doing.

VT: And Earl as well.

LD: Yes. Oh, Earl was wonderful about my professional life. First of all, he was a statistician, so anything I wrote he went through with a fine-toothed comb. And, he encouraged me, he was always helpful and interested, and so proud and pleased when I gave a paper at a big meeting.

1:54:30 Reflections on forming a Jewish identity as a married couple

VT: Did you find that when you met Earl you were both of similar Jewish backgrounds, or did one of you sort of compromise in some way to match the other? How did the Jewish identity of you as a couple work out?

LD: Well, Earl came from a family that observed nothing. They lived in a small town in Ohio, when he was a boy, and he really had no early Jewish education. When he went to college, he discovered Hillel, and there, in the course of his college and post-graduate studies, he got a Jewish education. I think one of the things that may have attracted him to me was that when he sat at my parents' table, there was always a *motzei*.[92] We observed the holidays and *Shabbes* and he liked that. He wanted that in his life, so the more observant we became, the more happy he was with what we were doing.

VT: Okay. Did his relationship with his parents change as a result, or were they…

LD: No, no, no. He continued to have a very good relationship with his parents. His father died when we were married 10 years. But his mother was just a little comical. She couldn't figure out how her child became the pillar of an Orthodox synagogue. She simply could not grasp that at all.

VT: Did he become president of the synagogue?

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92. A *"motzei"* refers to the Hebrew blessing over bread, heard very frequently before traditional Jewish families eat meals on the Sabbath and other occasions.

LD: No, but he became very, very involved in the Jewish community. As I moved about in the world of Jewish education, he moved into the world of Jewish social service, and eventually became president of the Jewish Family Agency, and on the national board of Jewish Family Agencies.[93]

1:56:53 Involvement in Baltimore Hebrew College[94]

VT: Now you were primarily involved in Baltimore Hebrew University…Baltimore Hebrew College?

LD: First the college, and I was actually chairman of the board the year it became a university.

VT: In the mid-90s.[95]

LD: Yes. I went down to Annapolis for our ability to give the Ph.D. and had a wonderful, wonderful relationship with the faculty and the administration.

VT: Can you discuss a little bit about your experience at BHC, at that point, and then at BHU, in terms of your involvement with the school?

LD: Well, my mother had graduated from the Baltimore Hebrew College in the late 1920s. My father was a member of the board, and then when he retired from the board, I was asked to take his place. I had a brief time in the Hebrew High School, there, because I went off to college a bit early, so I only had one year. But as I served on the board, I learned more and more. It stimulated me to read and to come to lectures. I grew with being on the board, and eventually served as chairman of the board. And then when I retired from the board, they asked Earl to come on, and he stayed on long enough, that he also served as chairman of the board. It was a kind of dynasty if you will.

VT: Right. And what about your involvement…I know that you're a very frequent *minyan* goer at Beth Tfiloh, every day. Can you talk a little bit about your involvement at Beth Tfiloh maybe voluntarily and beyond the [prayer] service.

LD: Well, again, I have been specifically interested in Jewish education. We have a family scholarship…an endowed scholarship fund, which is growing nicely. I have an understanding with the wheelers and dealers that any money I give to the congregation is going to be given to

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93. Liebe refers here to Jewish Family Services, which has since become part of Jewish Community Services in Baltimore.

94. Baltimore Hebrew College, founded in 1919, was one of the five original colleges of Jewish Studies in the U.S.

95. This was a misstatement on the part of the interviewer. The college became a university in 1987, when Middle States changed its status from a college to a university.

the scholarship fund or something to do with the school. I'm not interested in bricks and mortar. There are plenty of people to support what goes on in the sanctuary. But the school is the heart of the congregation. If you took the school away we wouldn't have the congregation. And, for this Baltimore Jewish community the school is very, very important because on one hand we have the very *frum* schools,[96] and there's now nothing on the other end, because of the closure of Baltimore Hebrew.[97]

VT: And also of Cardin.

LD: Cardin has also closed.[98] So Beth Tfiloh fills a very important niche. Some years ago I served on the board of the school, by the way. [The] fact [is] that we have a school that welcomes everybody. And Zippy Schorr,[99] who is the headmaster, if you will, has created an atmosphere in which students who come in with less than adequate Hebraic background are provided with tutors and assistance and stimulation to help to bring them up to grade.

VT: And it's one of the largest of its kind.

LD: I think there are now 1,200 kids in the school.[100]

VT: Right. Why do you feel that the other schools have not been able to survive? I know that many cities have schools like Cardin, pluralistic day schools, where not only is the student population coming from many different backgrounds, but also the teacher population, and that sort of diversity is built into the teaching. But [Cardin] has been struggling to find more than a minimum number of students and is now closing. The other thing—that Rambam closed a few years ago, which was the Modern Orthodox, Zionist…[101]

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96. *Frum* refers to strictly observant, or appealing largely to Orthodox Jews.

97. A major Reform congregation in Baltimore, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation ran a K-8 day school from 1991 to 2013, but the school closed due to low enrollment. Krieger Schechter Day School, which serves students in K-8, is another thriving non-Orthodox institution in the community founded in 1981. But BT is the only school that attracts non-Orthodox Jewish children in the Baltimore area at the high school level.

98. The Shoshana S. Cardin School, an independent, pluralistic Jewish high school in Baltimore, closed at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. It originally opened in 2003 but was unable to sustain high enough enrollment to ensure the school's longevity. Schools similar to Cardin have been successfully established in cities throughout the United States since the mid- to late-1990s.

99. Mrs. Zipora Schorr is the Director of Education for the Beth Tfiloh School.

100. Today, there are approximately 1,000 students at Beth Tfiloh School.

101. A Modern Orthodox day school in Baltimore, Yeshivat Rambam opened in 1991 with 50 students, but closed in 2011 when it had about 350 students in K-12. Enrollment dropped in the years leading up to its closure.

LD: Actually it was an offspring of Beth Tfiloh School, because those parents didn't like the idea that we had mixed gender dancing for the kids.

VT: Okay…so….

LD: And that's how it actually started.

VT: And that started in the early 1990s.

2:02:19 On the continued success of the Beth Tfiloh School

LD: Yes. Well, I think Beth Tfiloh has succeeded for two reasons. Because, on the one had you have quite a number of *frum* students and then we have youngsters from the other end of the spectrum, and they learn to appreciate and respect each other, and have really a good influence on each other. The less observant tend to become more observant, and the more observant become more comfortable in the presence of others who are not so observant, and to respect them for their point of view. And then there is the economy of size. When the school gets big enough, there is room for diversity. For example, in the Talmud classes, they have mixed gender; then there is a small group of just boys, but most of the kids are in mixed gender [classes]. Services in the day school are Orthodox, that is to say, they're separated by gender, except there is also a *minyan* for Conservative kids.[102]

VT: Oh, I didn't know that. Is that a newer development?

LD: Yes, the girls particularly have a service in which they use the *Gates of Prayer*.[103] So, there has been a real effort to make this a community school, where everyone is welcome, where the norm is modern Orthodox, but that's…it's an expanding kind of position.

VT: I wonder if that will continue to develop as the students who used to be at Cardin—or perhaps their parents wanted them to be at Cardin—maybe some of them are moving to Beth Tfiloh.

LD: Yes, quite a number are. And when Rambam closed, we got quite a number of youngsters from Rambam. I know two of those children well and they absolutely adore Beth Tfiloh because one of them is involved in theatre and the other is quite an athlete and there's room, there's room to do those things. Because of the economy of size, we can offer a wide variety of things.

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102. This is not correct. What Liebe may be thinking of is Beth Tfiloh's policy of allowing Krieger Schechter Day School alumni to return to KSDS one morning a week to help lead the morning minyan there (KSDS is affiliated with the Conservative movement).

103. *Gates of Prayer* is a prayer book associated with the Reform Movement. *Gates of Prayer* has not actually been used at Beth Tfiloh, though it is likely that students learned about the Reform movement and its ideology in one of their Jewish Studies classes.

VT: That certainly a smaller school…

LD: Can't do that.

VT: Did you think that when Cardin started that it would have a chance?

LD: No, I didn't think it had a chance.

VT: I know for a while it was a little bigger and then it got smaller.

LD: It was too small. It wasn't drawing on a large enough group. And parents are very college-conscious. They want their children to go to an established school, with an established record for college admission, and with a sufficient variety to take in each child's particular facility.

2:06:12 ***Reflections on recent honors***

VT: I think I'm actually pretty much done. (*Laughter)* Do you have any other topics? Oh! I do have one other thing that I need to ask you about. I mentioned before we started that you are going to be inducted into the Jewish Hall of Fame in Maryland, on June 12 [2013]. And, I just wanted to ask you a little about that … receiving that honor. I noticed you're the only woman on the list of eight or nine people.

LD: I think there is one other woman.

VT: Is there another woman?

LD: Suzanne Cohen.[104]

VT: Oh, okay. I know that there was a very extensive selection process. How does that impact you?

LD: Well, first of all, I was surprised. I've lived very quietly. I've done my thing professionally, and had a wonderful, wonderful professional life doing exactly what I wanted to do. I became an active part of our Jewish community, again enjoying the things that I did. To have this come to me as an honor was a very big surprise. I wasn't really expecting it.

VT: How does it compare to perhaps the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame?[105] Was that a similar surprise?

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104. Suzanne Cohen was recognized for her extensive volunteer work for both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations in the Baltimore area, including the ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, and the Baltimore Museum of Art.

105. Liebe was inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame in 2006.

LD: Yes it was.

VT: I guess nobody really expects…you don't think "Tomorrow I'm going to be inducted into the Hall of Fame!" But it's such a wonderful tribute to you and well-deserved. Mazal tov.

LD: Thank you.

VT: Is your family coming down?

LD: Josh is coming and I hope Zhanna and the boys will be able to come but it's still during their school year.[106] When I was inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame, Josh and Zhanna and the boys came down, and I hired a stretch Humvee—huge thing—we met at our house, Gail and Norris Horwitz, and my friends the Turners, and Marc and Elaine Lowen. We had champagne and some hors d'oeuvres. And then we got into this thing and went off to Annapolis to the event.

VT: Are you anticipating something as exciting this time?

LD: No. I don't think so! I have to tell you in 1996 I received the Smith College Medal.[107] And that was an incredibly exciting experience. After all, I went to Smith…entered at age 16, so I really grew up in the four years I spent on campus, and then to have the faculty turn around and select me as one of the people who best exemplified what a liberal arts education can do…I was profoundly touched by that. I only wish that my parents had lived to see that.

VT: I will be there on the 12th. I'll come in a limousine…I'll hire the limousine. *(Laughter)*

LD: You know, I'm really…I almost don't know what to make of all of this, I'm just such a plain person, I can't…I don't think of myself in these terms.

VT: I think that's a testament to your character. You're not in this for the wrong reasons.

LD: I've done all this because I love doing it!

VT: Right. And others have noticed.

LD: I had a letter last week from an old patient, a young woman who was a newborn in January of 1961. She was born paraplegic. And, at first no one knew why she was paraplegic. We finally uncovered the fact that she had a malignant tumor—an embryonal sarcoma of the spinal cord. She was treated as a newborn, and then had a recurrence at age 2 and was treated again. I followed her all those years, looked after her bracing and some surgery that she required and her

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106. Liebe refers to her son Joshua, and her daughter-in-law, Zhanna Glazenburg, and her grandsons Max and Ben.

107. The Smith College Medal was established in 1962 and is annually awarded to alumni who best "exemplify in their lives and work the true purpose of a liberal arts education."

habilitation. The letter I got from her had an announcement that she is this year receiving from Notre Dame a Master of Education. So it was very exciting to me that 53 years after our first encounter, she still remembers me and wanted me to know what she has done. I get a big thrill out of seeing old patients and knowing what they've done.

VT: And you can say you knew them when…

LD: And that sometimes, I had something to do with their success.