The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Program
Foreign Service Spouse Series

JUDITH A. SMITH

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INTERVIEW

Q: This is Ruth Kahn interviewing Judy Smith on July 13, 1990 about her life as a Foreign Service wife. She is about to leave for Guinea, Africa, where she will be serving her first post as an ambassador's wife.

What would you like to share with me this morning about your life in the Foreign Service?

SMITH: Well, this is a very interesting time for us and you might say the beginning of a new adventure, which is the climax of a long adventure that we began many years ago in

the Foreign Service -- getting ready to leave for Conakry, Guinea in just one week. I suppose that being ambassador and ambassador's wife is the climax to many Foreign Service Officers' career, and for career people it's really something that's looked forward to and hoped for but never completely expected. We're looking forward to a new adventure, now, to begin in another week.

Q: Perhaps you could tell us now how you got into the Foreign Service, what that was like.

SMITH: For us it was really a shared decision back in 1965. We were Peace Corps volunteers in Ethiopia. Right after we were married and I had graduated from college, Dane and I went to Ethiopia. We were teaching in Asmara, Eritrea. Dane had planned to return to seminary and have a career as a minister and I fully expected to be a minister's wife when we were married and joined the Peace Corps. But when we went to Ethiopia and were living overseas for the first time, we found that we liked that, we liked getting to know the people, and Dane decided then to take the Foreign Service exam and to make the Service his career.

It was a decision that we talked about and in which I concurred; it would be an interesting life for both of us. Since then, it has been a real adventure. For us, our commitment to working and serving in less developed countries and trying to be of help in them has been the reason all of our career has been in developing countries, most of them in Africa, Pakistan being the one exception.
They have all been hardship posts. Going to Guinea is, I think, quite appropriate for us, as being ambassador in a very hard hardship post (she laughs) ...

Q: You're smiling at that, Judy.

SMITH: ... well, we're looking forward to the challenge. We look at each assignment as a new challenge. Having left Khartoum a year ago, after serving three years in Sudan at a difficult time, I doubt that Guinea will be any more difficult. And there will be new challenges, also new opportunities. We're looking forward to going back to French-speaking West Africa because our first Foreign Service post was Dakar, Senegal.

Q: That's very interesting -- a round robin sort of career. When you started out and were thinking about going to Dakar, and today you're thinking about setting out for Guinea, how differently do you think you view those experiences?

SMITH: I have been thinking quite a bit about the differences in me after 20 years, in returning to the same part of the world. I hope that there will be a lot of changes in me. I found my first post very difficult. Perhaps because our only other experience abroad was as Peace Corps volunteers, and I had myself been a teacher and enjoyed a very important independent role, I found it difficult then to be a Foreign Service spouse. In Dakar I went through a lot of soul searching, identity crisis, and even depression.

I'm hoping that in returning after 20 years and having had 20 years of maturing and of working out my own identity and my own role, that I'll be able to return to French West Africa with a different outlook. I won't have so many of those problems of a Foreign Service wife of "what am I? Who am I? What role do I serve in this profession, other than just entertaining and being entertained?" I think finding a role is very important for a Foreign Service wife, and I think it's the most difficult thing for her.

Q: Can you tell me a little more of what you mean by how you "worked out" your role?

SMITH: When we arrived in Dakar we had three young children. Our youngest was six weeks old, our son, the middle child, was two, our eldest daughter was four. I had grown up in a very self sufficient family, we had no servants, did everything for ourselves as most Americans do. In the Peace Corps that was also the work ethic and I felt worthwhile and very useful. In the Foreign Service, for the first time I was put in an environment where I did not have what I considered any "useful role" because I had someone to clean my house, to cook my food, to take care of my children.

In a way I resented this help because it left me with a problem of what to do with the extra time. At the same time I couldn't refuse this help: serving in a developing country, in Africa, we needed that help for cleaning house and cooking food and to employ the Senegalese. So I decided then that I had to create a role of my own other than just being a hostess. I went back to graduate school later and got a Master of Arts degree in teaching, and I am an English teacher. This is a job, a profession, I've found has transferred often when we've returned overseas -- it's especially useful in the countries where we've served to teach English. But I've also felt that I wanted to teach the people in that country, not just at an American school. I wanted to be involved with them; and sometimes that's more difficult. So I've taught in both American high schools overseas, and in university or adult education classes for host country nationals.

Q: I'd like to return to something you said earlier. How did you cope with your depression? You were twenty-seven with three children?

SMITH: Yes; and a lot of time in which I kept thinking about myself and my identity. It was difficult. In that era there was no psychiatrist at post. I just lived with this for a long time. My husband was very supportive and very helpful. At the time, one thing that meant a lot to me then and now through all the years was that Dane said, "If you're finding it so difficult, if you think this is not the profession for us, I'll leave the Foreign Service. My life with you and my marriage to you is more important to me than being a Foreign Service Officer."

So I've always sort of held that in reserve. It's been very helpful to know that he wanted me (laughing) more than the Foreign Service anyway.

Q: How were the people at post in terms of support?

SMITH: This to me was a very private thing and I didn't really talk about it with anyone. Young wives, young mothers got together and we talked about some of our problems. But depression was something, for me, that was very much in the depths of the soul, something that I prayed about, talked to my husband about, lived with for a year; and I gradually came out of it. Some of it as I said concerned the role of the Foreign Service wife. It also had to do with being in a French culture for the first time, a very sophisticated one, in Dakar, and not being fluent in the language. I studied as hard as I could before I went and continued to study the language at post. But I found at all of our posts that it's really important for my own self image to be able to communicate with the people. That was one of my problems in Dakar, I didn't feel comfortable enough in the language to be myself, and didn't feel that they could really know me and appreciate me; because I couldn't express myself well enough. Now, I've learned some French since then and I hope it will be different when we're in Conakry.

Q: In connection with that experience, could we talk about your children? You were rearing them in a French-speaking culture. How was that?

SMITH: Well, our children started school in a French jardin d'enfants (kindergarten) so the two older children, age four and two, began speaking French along with English. It wasn't difficult for them, and since then Jennifer, the eldest, who had a year in French at the jardin d'enfants, went on to study French in high school and had an excellent accent because she'd learned it so young. Right now she's in Cameroon as a Peace Corps volunteer and is very fluent, having to lead her whole life in French. After her first year in the French kindergarten, which I thought was very strict (I didn't like it when she got her little knuckles rapped for coloring outside the lines of a picture) she picked up in French and started first grade in a Protestant-run missionary school.

Q: What were your son and little daughter doing as little children in a French-speaking country?

SMITH: I think all of us Foreign Service mothers have found it's important to maintain American customs for our children and to make a special effort to have birthday parties, Halloween parties, Easter egg hunts, they would in the United States. We want them to know our culture, to grow up as American children even though they are abroad. So we did have a rather elaborate system of parties for the children. I remember a Halloween party that we had in Dakar. I thought, "Since we're in this country, we should take advantage of all the opportunities we have here." I decided that Jennifer should go as Mary had a little lamb, and that she should have a real lamb. I searched all over for a lamb to rent for the Halloween party, which was to be at our house. Jennifer wore her red and white checked pinafore, her tablier that they used in the jardin d'enfants; and when I couldn't find a lamb I figured a goat would be just as good.

So I rented a goat from a fellow in the market and brought it home. Jennifer, naturally, at age five, was scared to death of the goat. I insisted that for her costume to be complete she had to hold onto this goat. She was leading the animal around by a rope and of course

she dropped the rope. (laughing heartily) The goat ran out of the yard and down the street. I knew that I had to get the goat back or I'd have to pay for it, so I went running after the goat myself. We finally captured it a block away and brought it back to this crying little girl, who really didn't have a whole lot of interest in being Mary had a little lamb any more.

The next year at a Halloween party, I wanted Dane, who was then I guess three, to be a caveman. I thought, "I'll go down to the market again and get some kind of a skin, knowing of course I wouldn't be able to find a leopard skin." What I found was a long piece of goatskin -- goats, as you've guessed, were very common in Senegal -- and I took a magic marker and drew black spots over the goatskin, which I wrapped around Dane's waist. I put a big safety pin on it and told him he couldn't wear a shirt. I remember I had to glue some false hair under his arms and on his chest to make him look like a real caveman. (she breaks up in laughter)

Anyway, we had all kinds of opportunities, you see, in the markets of Africa for our Halloween costumes. Also, the guests were different -- you asked how we brought up the children, how things were different. The parties were the same, the holidays were the same, but the guests were always multi cultured. So the children grew up with some friends from other cultures. In some places that's more difficult than in others, but we've always made an effort for them to have friends from that country and it's worked out pretty well.

Q: You mentioned that you had made a real effort to present the American culture to your children. What was that like for them coming back from a French-speaking country -- what were your observations of them? After how many years?

SMITH: We came back to the States after Dakar, were here for a year of study, then went to Pakistan for two years, then returned to Washington for an extended period of eight years. That was their growing up years and I think it was a very good way for our family as regards timing their education and their coming to feel like they were Americans. So they had a few years overseas early, when they were young, and then they were in the States for eight years being Americans and growing up in our way of life and getting a U.S. education. So they feel like they have roots here in Washington, they're part of a neighborhood, they're part of a church family, and they have friends they return to.

When we went overseas again, the oldest child went off to college, and the two younger ones, teenagers by then, went with us to Liberia. I would say it was most difficult for our daughter Nita, who was leaving junior high school in Washington to go to Monrovia, and you know at age 13 friendships are very tight and it's very difficult to break away from that. I know it was painful for her. Long, long letters and even a few telephone calls back to friends in Washington. She was going into the 8th grade and my son Dane was going into the 11th grade. Since she was three grades younger, in the U.S. she and her brother would have belonged to separate groups, but in the American cooperative school in Monrovia they were all together and had a very close group of friends there, going to

school functions together, went out together, and so on. It turned out to be a good time and she made very close friends once more. Some of those Monrovian friends are her friends today -- one of them, Sarah Perkin, was at the same boarding school later on. They finished high school together at Andover, and are close friends now.

Q: Tell me about your decision to send Nita to boarding school.

SMITH: Her education was, I suppose, the most typically Foreign Service because it was very different and broken up and she went to school in a lot of different countries. She started when we were in Pakistan in an English nursery school; I remember she was one of the "wicked stepsisters" in Cinderella, the big cultural event of her nursery school in Islamabad. She returned to the States for kindergarten through 7th grade in Washington public schools. We went to Monrovia where she had 8th and 9th grades, and after Liberia our post was Botswana. Nita went with us and her brother went off to college. So she was the only one in this move, and again it was very difficult. Not only was she losing friends and a brother but she had to change school systems completely -- from the American system at the cooperative school in Monrovia, to a British system in Botswana.

The most difficult thing for her was not the academic part but having to wear a uniform. Most American children, I think, are very independent and don't like the idea of wearing a uniform. Her way of rebelling -- she was fifteen years old -- against the obligatory blue skirt and white blouse, was to wear her father's white T-shirt as her white blouse. This was her American teenage rebellion coming out in a British overseas school.

She went to boarding school when we left Botswana to go to Khartoum, Sudan. She was really ready for her last year high school and there was no American upper school there, so she went back to the U.S., to Andover, to finish. She was there for two years and it was a good thing for her because it gave her opportunities for extracurricular activities and breadth of subject matter, which is difficult to get in overseas schools. But I think the overseas schools have been good for our children; they've all gone on to good colleges and I think have gotten a good education overseas.

Q: What colleges have they gone on to?

SMITH: Jennifer, our first daughter, went to Mount Holyoke College. She's a Peace Corps volunteer now, in Cameroon. Dane graduated from the American Cooperative School in Monrovia and went on to Harvard. He now is a Peace Corps volunteer in Paraguay. Our youngest daughter Nita, after graduating from Andover, is now at Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

Q: It's interesting that your children had obvious academic success and you've kept them with you. How do they view life in the Foreign Service?

SMITH: I think that all three of them have really enjoyed living overseas. Maybe it's because they've had both experiences -- eight very formative years in Washington, so they

feel they have roots in the American culture, but also time spent growing up overseas. They really enjoyed the cultural experience. The youngest, Nita, perhaps because she had more living time overseas, feels that it's a very strong part of her growing up and identity. She feels that she's part African because she's spent a lot of time in Africa. When she went for interviews at colleges and wrote essays for admission, she spoke about Africa, that she feels that's an important part of her and that she's interested in the culture. She uses it to write papers and articles and always enjoys going to another place to visit us now. The older ones have gone into the Peace Corps, so they obviously enjoyed living overseas. Jennifer, the eldest, is coming back to graduate school to study for a career, not in foreign service particularly, but in development administration or management because she wants to live overseas and to work in international development.

Q: A while ago you were speaking of your life in Dakar, and then later in Monrovia: how was that experience like or different from your experience in Dakar?

SMITH: Yes. That was sort of a second time of going overseas and finding a role again, because after being in the States for eight years, I had made a place for myself. I had worked as a teacher in Washington schools, I had particularly chosen to work in innercity schools, I had started a paid peer tutoring program in the schools, and become the newspaper adviser; and really felt that I had a professional identity for myself here in the States. Leaving all that and going overseas again, to Liberia, was difficult for me. In the first year, again I had feelings of worthlessness. I was working part-time, teaching in the school but I didn't feel that my role was very important.

At that time there was a psychiatrist at post and he was very helpful in bringing me out of this depression. I know, for me I've found now, it's important for me to be busy when I'm overseas and that I have to be busy in things which I feel are worthwhile. For me that means either teaching or writing, and especially investigating the culture and getting to know the people. Otherwise I don't feel happy, I feel like I'm an outsider instead of really being part of the life there. For my own self satisfaction it's important that I get to know the culture and become involved in that in some helpful way.

Q: Now you'll be going in the role of an ambassador's wife. Can you tell me what you think you're going to do that may be different because of this role that's different? Have you thought much about that?

SMITH: Well, I plan to teach part-time. I did that in Khartoum and find that I really enjoyed it; I found it very satisfying and fulfilling, and it added an element of contact which my husband wasn't able to have in the Diplomatic field -- he had one level of contacts, government officials and diplomats, and I knew the university professors and intellectuals. So, together, it made our life very rich. We enjoyed Khartoum very much. I started a monthly lecture series there on Sudan culture for the foreigners to get to know more about it and was able to make contact and get to know the people better in that way. And my university teaching helped me make those contacts.
I'm hoping it will work the same way in Guinea. I'll be teaching English part-time at the

University of Conakry. I know I'll have a lot of responsibilities as well, being ambassador's wife, but I'm hoping I can combine these two roles into one unified identity for Judy Smith, the person, as well as Judy Smith, the ambassador's wife.

Q: When you've been in your overseas posts, have you served in any official capacity with the Embassies?

SMITH: When we were in Botswana I was Community Liaison Office coordinator, in fact we opened the first CLO office there. I really enjoyed that role because I do enjoy mobilizing community. I think it's so important for Foreign Service people to enjoy their life overseas, to feel unified as an American community but also to be involved and aware of the country and the culture that they're in. So I enjoyed that role in trying to introduce Americans into the Botswana community and to organize activities for the Americans. Later on, in Khartoum, when our CLO was on extended leave for about three months, I worked as substitute CLO in her absence, and I enjoyed that again.

CLOs are paid and I found that in Gaborone I enjoyed that, I felt like I was a professional because that was my job, I was paid. Some people say that they don't want to be paid for their volunteer activities. And in fact when I made it clear that I wanted to teach in Guinea when we get there, someone I spoke to asked if I meant in a volunteer capacity. I said no, I want a job, I want to be paid, I know that it will be a small amount; in Khartoum the sum the university paid me barely covered my gasoline to cross the Nile every day to teach in Omdurman. But the principle of the thing is important. I think that in our culture, unfortunately perhaps, when you're paid that means that you're professional and it means that you take things more seriously, or at least other people think you take things more seriously than when you work as a volunteer.

So I think it's important to be paid, and the CLO role is a good one. It's a good profession too for a Foreign Service wife. One of the big problems for Foreign Service wives who want to work is the lack of continuity in profession and in roles; whereas husbands go from one post to another, they're working in a straight line -- hopefully up but anyway it's a straight line; they're building on their previous experiences. It's very difficult for wives to do that, because every post you go to you find the circumstances are different. Even though I was a teacher and often I could find a job teaching, it was a different kind of job every time -- it was teaching at a different level, it was teaching in different circumstances; and you don't build a profession in that way. I found in Botswana that although I taught for a little while, the CLO job was something more important to the community and to me than teaching part-time in adult education. So every place you go you find a different situation and you need to find a role, you have to make that role for yourself.

Q: Do you have any recommendations or have you thought that if you were in position to influence persons in power what sort of recommendations you would make about that, from your experience?

SMITH: Well, I remember that while I was a CLO, in about 1985-86, there was a new Foreign Service spouse proposal to pay spouses and there were different categories of work. If you wanted to undertake one of these categories, you could be paid and then advance on your years of experience in that job. I thought that was a good idea -- and everybody doesn't have to do it: if you don't want to take it as a job, then you just do what you want to as a wife, as a hostess or as a volunteer. But if you feel like you're putting most of your time into being a community organizer -- and I have done that in several posts -- I think it is a good idea to feel like a professional at that. It gives you a sense of satisfaction and you have some career goals and some kind of career thing.

Q: Do you foresee in the future that women in the Foreign Service will be paid? Do you see any evidence that we're moving toward that sort of a system?

SMITH: Well, I haven't seen any evidence that we are moving toward that system. I think that probably economics is the reason we won't, because it's difficult to find the money to pay these wives to do the work; and it's true that there aren't perhaps a lot of women who would like to go into that role. The whole role of the Foreign Service wife has changed so much now from the time we first entered the Service. You now have of course more tandem couples, which presents a whole new set of problems for them. But I sort of feel that I'm (she laughs) the last of an old breed at this point, and that if perhaps we had entered the Service ten or fifteen years later, I would perhaps have been part of a tandem couple. It's difficult ... I think the wives that continue now in the role of sort of community organizer and hostess, probably should be paid to make this a professional role. The others will want to pursue their own careers, as a tandem couple or in another profession which can be carried out at that post. Or other wives, I guess they just live separately and if it's a profession, such as lawyer or doctor or something that it's difficult to transplant, often then the wife stays at home in the State and pursues her own career. It's difficult.

Q: It's a dilemma.

SMITH: It is a dilemma. I don't know how the Foreign Service is going to work it out. You also find a lot more single FSOs, and a lot more women -- that's a good thing, I'm glad to see more Women Foreign Service Officers, but then it's difficult for them to combine that role with a family.

Q: You've been very kind, Judy, to share your experiences from the personal point of view of coping with your own feelings when you moved. And you've talked about your children being educated. Did you have any situations related to health care that you feel it's important to talk about?

SMITH: Well, we've been very fortunate from a health point of view. None of us has had any serious health problems. Most serious was my husband's amoebic dysentery problems; but that was taken care of. We've always been in hardship posts where you had to boil the water, you had to soak the vegetables, you have to be very careful about what

you eat, and we had to take malaria suppressants at every post we've been except Botswana. So you have to be careful, and you have to train your children to be careful. But we never really had any problems with our own family in that way.

Q: Did you come to anybody's rescue at any time? Did you observe any particularly traumatic events either political or personal at any of your posts that you'd like to talk about?

SMITH: Well, our last post, Khartoum, was the most difficult from a security point of view -- there was a threat of terrorism. My husband had to have a bodyguard and we had armed bodyguards at our gate and Dane had one with him in the car when he drove. Personally we didn't have any instances of threats on our own lives but there was a terrorist incident while we were there in which Americans were involved in a hotel that terrorists exploded bombs in. No Americans were hurt at that time but we were involved in the rescue effort and the Americans were of great help to the British who did lose three of their people in that incident. So it was traumatic for the whole community. And after that of course everyone had to be very careful and cautious.

Just before we left Khartoum there was a coup, so this was another time when things were very tense. It was a bloody, drawn out coup and we were not ourselves in any physical danger, but it still was very tense. I remember sitting by the radio all day and everyone had to stay indoors by their radio. The only way we could communicate in Khartoum was by our radios, telephones didn't work, and we had a whole communication network via radio. Even when I was teaching over in Omdurman could radio the Embassy and find out what was happening. So during the coup, things were very tense.

From time to time there were demonstrations in Khartoum because of the rise in prices and because of conditions -- when there was no bread or no transportation. While I was teaching at one of these difficult times for the Sudanese, when there was a demonstration because bus and taxi fares went up because gasoline was scarce. Every day I would drive my trusty Landcruiser across the Nile to the university and one day on returning I got caught in a rock throwing demonstration. I guess that was the scariest thing that happened to me. I didn't really know what to do -- I thought if I just explained to them that I just wanted to get by, of course they would let me by. I was ready to get out of the car and try to explain, but the teacher who was with me said “NO, GUN IT, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE”. The windshield was broken and there were holes in the Landcruiser from rocks but I was safe and everything worked out okay.

It's difficult, though, to be in a country where the people are suffering and you feel that your life is eased -- not to say that you physically are always safe but we didn't suffer from the shortages the way the Sudanese did.

Q: How long did it take you before you recrossed the Nile?

SMITH: Oh, I was back the next day. (both laugh) We also -- during the flood, we were

also lucky, because I had a Landcruiser and a lot of the public transportation wasn't running. People who had "regular" cars couldn't go through the flood, but my Landcruiser could, so I was able to continue going to the university as long as it was open and to pick up people along the way and ferry them across the Nile and back into Khartoum from Omdurman, public transportation so often lacking during flood time.

Q: Which sort of fulfills the idea that come hell or high water you'll be there? (both laugh)

SMITH: Right -- and especially high water.

Continuation of interview: August 18, 1992

Q: This is Ruth Kahn and today I am recording Judy Smith. This is the second time I have recorded Judy. Judy went off to Guinea, in West Africa and we talked about when she returned we would get back to the recording and specifically look at a couple of things. One of the things we wanted to look at was what it was like to make a major role change. Judy went over for her first time in a new role as an ambassador's wife. So if it's all right with you, Judy, I think it would be interesting to start asking you something like what was it like for you suddenly to become the ambassador' wife.

SMITH: Well, I don't know if I mentioned, in the last recording, before I went, which was two years ago, but I had a number of reservations about being an ambassador's wife. I'd always wanted my husband to become an ambassador but I never really wanted to be an ambassador's wife. And I guess the reason I felt that way was I didn't want to fit into a role, didn't want to feel I had to play a special part not of my choosing. I didn't want to have to give a lot of teas, coffees, or cocktail parties which I felt were a waste of time. I didn't want to have to attend them either. And the image that some, many people have of an ambassador's wife as someone who really is only there for entertaining purposes - I was not sure I wanted to play this role. I have to say, though, after being there a few months actually, in Conakry, I found it a lot of fun. I enjoyed riding around in the official car, with the flag waving, and representing the United States of America. And I did feel like I had an important role in that.

For me, it's important to do something I feel is useful, and I was able to find that in Conakry. I did start teaching American Studies at the University, and English ... and then the second year, started a course in Journalism which I found very interesting and quite challenging. I enjoyed my teaching a lot. The students were responsive, enthusiastic, never having had an American teacher.

Q: Do you still do teas?

SMITH: Teach? oh, teas...(laughter) I do a tea if I feel there is a certain reason... if I want to get together a certain group of women whether they be Guinean or American, to introduce them to one another.

Q: So you find some utility in that? Perhaps more than you thought you might?

SMITH: That's right. I think one reason I don't feel that the role is onorous in Conakry is that there are not that many official obligations in the way of women's activities as there might be in a large European post. So I can pretty much be in control of my own time.

Q: So you went there with a kind of mindset that you were not going to enter into what you perceived as a traditional role? Do you get any feedback from the Guinean women on how you're doing in that role?

SMITH: I do a lot of things that might be considered traditional in the way of entertaining for my husband and representing the U.S. at any affairs that do come along for women. There aren't very many. I like women, I like women's affairs when there is a purpose to them. I like getting involved in charity work, women's study groups, things like that. As it turns out, I've been very active. The only women's club in Conakry is called the English Speaking Women's Association, and I've been the president for a year now and will be for the next year also. I have tried to make this more of an international group and to draw into it more Guinean women and more who might not be native English speaking but want to learn English or are interested in getting to know more people in the community. And I find that very rewarding. I have also started a women's book club. We enjoy getting together once a month to discuss...

Q: So where do you get your books?

SMITH: We order them pretty much.

Q: Do you decide on a particular book?

SMITH: We all read the same book, try to order in advance, but like this summer I'm bringing back eight copies of the same book.

Q: So what sort of books are you bringing back?

SMITH: One that we read last year was Deborah Tannen's book, <u>You Just Don't Understand</u>. That was a very interesting one to discuss. The women in the group are different nationalities so it's interesting to get different points of view.

Q: So this one has not been read yet? So what different points of view did you get?

SMITH: Well, we of course discussed whether our husbands fit the role of the male thought pattern which the author discussed and I think we pretty much agreed that she had a good point.

Q: That's interesting because if you're talking about cultural differences and how men

are perceived, you didn't feel they were there?

SMITH: Yes, definitely there were some. And we didn't go into great detail because we were focusing on the book. But there were some differences according to ethnic background or national background. We read books almost exclusively in English, we've read a couple of French books, but the women are pretty much from European and American backgrounds.

Q: So what do you think, what impression are you getting from these women that they see you as? Are you given any feel for that?

SMITH: Yes, I think they see me as a very active person and I guess I'm probably the most active ambassador's wife in Conakry. We don't have as large a diplomatic corps as European countries have or larger African countries or Asian countries but they see me as someone who wants to be involved, doing something which I consider worthwhile.

Q: You sound to me, as I listen to you, that you're determining that you were sort of finding a purpose there. You can say I want to do something and I want it to mean something, to have some purpose to it.

What's the book you're looking at now?

SMITH: One that I bought last summer we'll discuss when I go back in the fall was City of Hope, Demian is another that I'm supposed to buy by Herman Hesse. So we have a real variety. We also read Not Without My Daughter, a book about the American married to the Iranian. We have to decide together, vote on which books we are going to read for the next year.

Q: Nice democratic process... What sort of stresses have you experienced in the way of being an ambassador's wife that you maybe didn't expect or that surprised you or have there been any surprises?

SMITH: Well, I don't know. I haven't felt a lot of stress playing the role of someone that wasn't really me, and that was what I was afraid of. I do find times when we have a very busy entertaining schedule that it is stressful to be responsible for entertaining, for doing a lot of lunches and dinners in a short period of time But we have a very good household staff and one big change between my first assignment as a diplomatic wife in Dakar which, as you remember, was traumatic for me -- it was difficult to have servants, didn't like having servants and I didn't really get along well with them. Finally after twenty-two years, I find I enjoy having servants, (laughter) and I get along fine with them. That has certainly been a big relief.

Q: A relief that you can enjoy it? What do you think has made the difference?

SMITH: I think it's experience. Learning to let go, not be so demanding, and not

worrying so much about having to do everything for yourself, which is what I felt when I was younger. There are things that I can do that they cannot do, and they are there to allow me to spend my time doing the things which my gifts, my talent and my background can allow me to do in their culture. So it makes sense.

Q: So you've been there two years now, your children have been a continent away. How has that been for you?

SMITH: That's stressful. That's the hardest thing about being in a developing country. All of our tours have been hardship posts, and the hardest part of a hardship post is the lack of communication. We felt that in Khartoum and we feel it in Conakry. It's very difficult to get through on the telephone -- sometimes you can, sometimes you can't. If it's someone's birthday or Mother's Day or Father's Day, and you can't get through on the telephone, you feel bad.

Q: So have any of your children been able to visit you?

SMITH: Yes, all of them have visited us. They enjoyed it, they all like Africa. We've taken a long trip through the interior of the country when they were with us at Christmas and we enjoyed that. We've always done that in our posts overseas; we've enjoyed traveling together in the car. so even though the roads are very bad and the overnight accommodations are not what you would prefer, or not what you would expect, it's an adventure and we've enjoyed it.

Q: This isn't really a topic you've brought up, but it is one that those of us who talk to people who are from Africa and read the newspaper think about. What about the devastation, the lack of food, and diseases such as AIDS, for which Africa has a reputation, and the enormous problems. Have you observed any of those kinds of problems? Have they touched you or any of your staff?

SMITH: Fortunately, Guinea is not a country which has a huge problem with AIDS; there are some cases of AIDS there but it doesn't have nearly the problem that Zaire, Zambia or some other countries in Africa have.

Q: And why would that be so?

SMITH: Well, one reason probably is because it's been cut off from the modern world for a long time, the twenty-six years that Sekou Toure was in control of the government, the country was pretty much closed off to the outside which may be good in relation to not having so much AIDS there. The people haven't had as much contact with outsiders, but it was not good for Guinea from an economic point of view because the country is one of the poorest in Africa; it has a very low standard of living and although it's very rich in natural resources it's very underdeveloped. And also the question you asked about starvation and drought: Guinea is not in a drought-stricken area.

Q: I guess you said 150 inches of rain at one point...(laughter)

SMITH: We get a lot of rain in Conakry on the coast and actually there's a lot of rain throughout the country and there are rivers, so the country is rich in natural resources. It also has bauxite...

Q: What is bauxite?

SMITH: Bauxite is the mineral that is used to make aluminum. But it is sad to see the poverty of the people, the way they live in Conakry -- the hovels, especially in the rain. When you drive through town and see shacks with very little in the way of roofing on the top of them, you know that people get sick living through the rainy season with very little shelter. And Conakry is a big crowded city and it's very dirty.

Q: When you say big and crowded, how big and how crowded?

SMITH: Well, there are more than one million people.

Q: More than a million, that's a lot of people.

SMITH: Yes, it 's a lot, and the traffic is very bad, the streets weren't designed for a lot of cars. Also, you see a lot of unemployment. People coming to the city from rural areas to make their fortune, to try to support themselves and their families. Consequently, not finding anything, lounging around in the streets, some of them turning to thievery.

Q: The same sort of problem you saw when you came home?

SMITH: Yes, I guess some of it is the same.

Q: You came back in a year?

SMITH: We'd been in Conakry for two years; we came back in the summer on R&R.

Q: While you were gone, had major changes occurred in American society that you could see?

SMITH: Well, everybody talks about the economy and feels they're in a depressed economic state here. Coming from Conakry, it looks pretty good to me! (laughter) People say that prices are so high in the stores, but again, the prices look good to me because the things we'd buy in the grocery store in Conakry were imported from Europe and the prices were higher than here. Then, of course, there we'd buy other things in the marché, the outdoor market -- fresh fruit and vegetables, for instance, were plentiful and inexpensive.

Q: How would you advise an American woman who came to you for advice about your

post, what would you tell her?

SMITH: Well, it depends a lot on the person. Some people like to stay to themselves and prefer to try to continue living an American-style life. As I see it, that's not the point of living overseas, and if I am there, I want to learn as much as I can about the country and I want to be busy, to feel like I'm involved in the life of the country, I don't want to feel like I'm an outsider. I think that's one thing that made me unhappy at times in the past when I felt that I was just an observer in the country, that it wasn't really home, I was there temporarily and wasn't really involved in the life. For me, I know it's important to be involved in what's going on and to feel like I'm doing something worthwhile.

I started a project with the market boys. I found that there was a problem in Conakry with security in the marché, part of which was outdoors, part under cover. Teenage boys would lounge around the marché A missionary introduced me to some of them, I let them help me, carrying my basket and guarding the car. When I first arrived there the DCM's wife told me she never shopped there because the windshield had been stolen from her car!

I thought, "This is terrible, how can I live in this country and not go to the marché? To me, that's one of the big attractions of living in an African country -- the color and the life of the marketplace. So I did go, hired one of these teenage boys to guard the car, took another one with me into the market for security. I found a few I felt were trustworthy and formed a group -- it started out as ten boys whom I called "the Guardian Angels of Conakry" and they were to help women who wanted to shop in the marché, and guard our cars. This would help them earn some money and build their self-image and encourage them to be honest.

Well, the project has really grown. We added literacy classes within the first month. With that happening, we were overcome with requests to join, to become a Guardian Angel. So we started two classes, in French, that being the language spoken in Conakry and the one they need to know in order to work. I myself wasn't teaching except now and then; I found university students to do that. Although I enjoy teaching, I'm a bit uncertain about my French grammar and spelling. I supervised.

We started out with two classes. In January we added a class of girls, calling them "the Angeliques." Then we added three more classes of boys, so we have more than 130 Guardian Angels and Angeliques now.

Q: You must have had some sort of resources for this.

SMITH: Well, it's a matter of scrounging around and finding the funds. I went to UNICEF and got some money from them, the International Women's Club has given us a grant, I've gotten contributions from my family and friends in the States, also from Embassy people and from some Guinean businesses. We're "making it" that way. The next step for the Guardian Angels now is to find jobs for them, because they don't want to continue just carrying market baskets, they want to do something more meaningful. So

I'm trying to start a bicycle courier service in the city. Postal delivery is very poor and traffic is so bad that when you send a driver to deliver your mail it takes a long time and costs money and gasoline. So I'm hoping that we can get the courier service started.

We've had a lot of support from Guineans. We got some publicity for the project on television when we had a cleanup campaign and it was televised on the news. A Guinean woman doctor who is assistant director for one of the two large hospitals in Conakry said that she would like to give free medical service to all the Guardian Angels and the Angeliques. She's been very supportive, and it makes me feel very good that there are Guineans who want to be involved in this.

When I started the Angeliques, there were some Guinean women who said, "Oh that's a great idea, we want to be part of this, can we serve on the board?" So I've got a little committee together to work out projects for the girls. That makes me feel good because I feel like I'm involved with the life of the people, I feel like I'm doing something worthwhile, and it gives me contact with the Guineans. For me that's important.

Q: The courier idea is quite a good one, isn't it. How did you come upon that idea?

SMITH: Well, there's a courier service here in Washington and a lot of other cities. It sounds like a good idea but in Conakry there are so many frustrations, so many problems to overcome. I hope it will get going but everything is very slow.

Q: But that's quite a lot to have accomplished in that amount of time.

SMITH: Yes. The thing that's the most rewarding I think is that the boys are continuing to come to the classes.-- the boys and the girls but they're mostly boys. They really like to learn to read and write, and they're very proud that they can read and write. They've written to me now their first letters. While I was in the States they sent me letters. It was exciting for them to write their first letters and receive a reply and be able to read it; to be able just to write their own name for the first time gives a sense of pride.

Q: How old are these people?

SMITH: The boys range in age from about 13 to 24.

Q: Ordinarily, what would the opportunity be for them in their own society to be literate?

SMITH: Well, they pretty much missed out on the chance when they were young to go to school - either because the parents didn't send them or some of them did attend for a year or two, then dropped out because of economic pressures, having to earn a living. Some of them are the support for their families and now they're too old to go to regular school.

Q: So it's clear, in this country we're seeing "mixed marketing." There's no organized way for them to meet it through their own facilities.

SMITH: That's right.

Q: At this point, there is no continuing education plan for adolescents. So whom from the United States or the State Department have you had a chance to show your project to? Have you had visitors with names we would recognize or not?

SMITH: Well, Herman Cohen but I didn't have a chance to show him the Guardian Angels project, he was busy with my husband and the Guinean officials. But I did take the wives who come -- we had an admiral and several military couples who came to visit and I took the wife to the market and showed them the Guardian Angels. I've gotten some support from the British ambassador stationed in Dakar -- he's also accredited in Guinea and he wanted to support the project. Of course I've gotten a lot of support from the American ambassador: he's very supportive and I appreciate that, because it makes me feel like it's a give-and-take -- I support him in his job by entertaining and taking an interest in what he's doing, actually making a lot of contacts for him; and then he supports me in this project because he knows it means a lot to me and he thinks that it's a useful project.

Q: So, you'll be spending another year there. What are you going to do in your last year there?

SMITH: Well, I moved to get the Guardian Angels ready for independence or at least to do without me, and so many people have said well, this is fine while you're there but what's going to happen when you leave. I feel, actually, pretty good about the project being on its own without me. I have a very good Guinean coordinator who really believes in the project and he works hard and he's honest. Sometimes it's hard to find honest workers and helpers in a place like this.

Q: Is it part of a culture that honesty isn't viewed in the same way we would?

SMITH: Well, I don't know. I'm told that everyone else helps his friends or family by giving them a cut of something, "so why shouldn't I do it?" That's what I'm told -- "everybody else does it," so in order to make it in the economy you also have to take a little bribe here and there.

Q: So the bribe is essential to the economic stability.

SMITH: That's what I hear. With my university students, that's one thing I really try to impress upon them the importance of -- of honesty in their lives and in their government. At this point they're all very idealistic and they're against a corrupt government. I said, "Well, you remember that when you go to vote, because you're going to vote for the first time. Democracy has come to Guinea and that's a pretty exciting thing." My university students are all excited about voting for the first time in this election.

Q: Are the university students men or women?

SMITH: Both. I would say they range in age from about 21 to 25.

Q: Are these from the higher-level social classes? Can anybody go to the university?

SMITH: You go there by a test. The government actually pays them a scholarship while they're there. Which is good for those who couldn't afford it but the government can't afford to pay for the college expenses of those who could afford to pay. There are a lot of problems in Guinea but it's an interesting country and we enjoy it.

Q: I remember that when we interviewed you before you went, you had some concern re whether you'd be depressed. Have you experienced any of that?

SMITH: No, I haven't. I know from (overlapping voices)

Q: It hasn't anything to do with how much light there is there?

SMITH: (laughing) There's a lot of light there, except during the rainy season.

Q: That might be very important, you know?

SMITH: It might, but I like the rainy season too. There are lots of opportunities to do things, to start things, in a place like Conakry, and you feel like you're needed, you're useful. I started a water aerobics group through the Women's Club -- we have the water ...

Q: (laughing) "What are we going to do with it?"

SMITH: Right.. And it's not a very pleasant climate to do any other kind of exercise, so the water aerobics, and an international cooking group that meets monthly. And people need that kind of outlet there. There aren't many forms of entertainment or recreation in Conakry, so you feel like anything you can add ...

Q: That is a real contribution. What's been the general state of your health and your family's while you've been there? Have you been all right?

SMITH: Yes, we're fortunate, we've been very lucky. We've never had malaria, and we've been in malarial areas for, oh I don't know, I guess 14 years in Africa. Of course we have to boil our water and treat our vegetables and take our malaria suppressants every week. I've never had dysentery either. We're lucky, we haven't been sick.

Q: So you're very careful in terms of your food handling. How did you become so careful?

SMITH: Oh, we just follow directions. Some people are tempted to slack off, or when

they go out some place not to worry about eating salad or drinking the water, but you do have to be careful. You can't drink water unless you know it's been boiled or it's bottled water. And you can't eat salads unless you're eating at the home of someone who you know treats their lettuce with iodine.

Q: So you're thinking ahead to the coming year and you're going to put the Guardian Angels into independence. Then you'll be returning to the States -- what kind of problems do you think you're going to be facing then? You're here now in sort of a holding pattern should we say? What are some of the concerns you have in, at the end, being again a member of the at-home group?

SMITH: Well, I think it's kind of scarey to come back to the States after being in a small post and also after serving in a rather high position, because it's the old story of being a big fish in a small pond, feeling important, feeling like you have a role, that you're doing something important and worthwhile, and then coming back to the United States where there are so many people doing so many things that are much more important than whatever you're doing.

The big question for me, and for most wives, I think, is what am I going to do when I come back here? I'm a teacher and I've thought about going back to teaching; I think I'll explore that when I come back, but it seems like so many people are doing so many high-powered things, and you've been out of the job market for a long time. As a Foreign Service spouse, you've had no direct career track. I have done a number of things in a number of different countries. I think I've done a good job, I've done a variety of things, I think I've done them well. But it's not something that really looks like anything very impressive if you are trying to get a high-powered job in the United States.

Q: One that you would say would be of Grade Four rank or equal importance.

SMITH: Right.

Q: Is there something that you think the State Department should do or could do that would make a difference in your transition on your return?

SMITH: Well, I know that the State Department does have a career counseling office, and I plan to visit that through the FLO office -- they have one especially for wives -- and they do have some transition courses; courses in interviewing, doing resumes and that sort of thing. I plan to take advantage of all the opportunities the State Department offers.

Q: But you have not, at this point, felt like they've contacted you or they've said let's set something up -- there hasn't been any proactive ...

SMITH: I don't think that they do that, they wait for you to come to them, but they're there. I plan to go when I come back next year.

Q: And whether that turns out that there is a case is a question for you then, you think. What sort of questions do you ask yourself when you return to the States in terms of helping yourself get adjusted? What sort of questions did you have even when you're coming just for R&R?

SMITH: Well, I don't have any problems in adjusting to R&R. I enjoy being in the States. Of course, just the material comforts -- being able to call your parents or your children on the telephone, being able to run down to the grocery store and get what you want without having to haggle about the price, having a nice climate, having good roads, being able to go to the movies, the theater, concerts; just being able to listen to radio and see the news on television every night -- wonderful!. (laughing) That's why they call it "R&R."

Q: One of the things we talked about earlier was the idea that you have some spiritual commitment in your life. Would you be willing to talk about that?

SMITH: Of course. I feel that my spiritual life is very important, my commitment to Christianity, to God. And I feel that God is my companion in all of the trials that I have gone through. In those problems of adjustment which have been hard for me when I've been overseas, those periods of depression, God has always been there to see me through. And that's very important for me, and fortunately my husband and I both share the same commitment.

We make it a point to try and find a Christian community in whatever country we're in, to worship with, because we feel it is important for Christians to be supportive of one another. It's been a different kind of community in every country that we've been in -- sometimes a small group, a house-church type thing. The denominations have varied from Episcopal to Baptist to Mennonite but we've found committed Christians in every country we've been in. We feel it's important to participate in Christian groups.

Q: So you say you feel that's probably been an important support in your life.

SMITH: Yes.

Q: What do you see as you look at yourself and say, "Well, I am getting older?" What concerns do you have as it relates to your life in the Foreign Service? Or haven't you thought about this?

SMITH: Oh yes, we have thought about it and I just turned 50 this year, so that's a big milestone. In a few more years my husband will be eligible for retirement. So, yes, we're both looking towards the future and I think we both feel that we want to do something that is worthwhile. If possible we'd like to find something we can work together in, because overseas we've worked together in the Foreign Service and we feel that we make a pretty good team. It's harder in the States to find something like that. We're not really interested in going into business or anything, so I don't know, I'm not sure what it will be. My husband of course says, "Well, Judy, when I retire then you can have your career."

Well, that sounds very good but it didn't take me long to figure out that (laughing) at age 52 until 55 it's a little late to be starting a career. So I have resigned myself to the fact that I'm never going to have a great career. I've enjoyed doing what I've done overseas, being part of a Foreign Service working couple. It's been stimulating, interesting, and I've found it fulfilling, and I hope that I will be able to find something back here in the States that is also fulfilling and interesting even though it may not be a high-powered career.

Q: You've described yourself as part of a working couple. How do you think that you and your husband are viewed by the State Department in terms of that concept?

SMITH: Well, you know, officially they don't view us as "couples" at all, they only look at the employee. So as far as the State Department is concerned, I don't exist.

Q: Would you like to change that? And if you could change it, how would you change it?

SMITH: They made that change back in 1972. The first change was when the wife was not going to be considered on the husband's efficiency report and I remember thinking "oh that's a good thing, I don't want to feel I'm being watched and my husband's going to be judged on what I do or don't do." I still feel that way on the one hand. On the other hand, I worked very hard for the U.S. Government and I've given them many, many hours of unpaid labor and you know (she laughs) I would like to be recognized for some of that and some of my accomplishments.

Q: If you had your druthers, how would you like them to recognize you? "This is what I would like them to do" -- what would that be?

SMITH: Well, I did mention on the first tape something about that I think that one of the plans that they came up with back about 1984 was to pay wives who chose to take a role entertaining for their husbands and being active in the community. *(End of tape)*

SMITH: (mid-sentence) drive myself around, which a lot of women don't do at all. I like to drive my own car.

Q: It's quite a challenge to get organized to do it, I think.

SMITH: Well, I think a lot of women are afraid to do it, but I drive all over by myself and it's important to me. It makes me feel independent and I don't have to wait for my husband to send a driver, or I don't want to hire my own driver to drive me around. I like to drive myself around.

Q: It's part of the American way. I want to return to what we were talking about just before the end of the preceding tape You were saying you feel you've contributed a lot to the government in terms of your work and I asked if you had your druthers and could decide what you'd do, what would that be? You reminded me there had been a directive that dropped you from the review process and that the government no longer "knew" you

existed.

SMITH: Well, I don't think there's really any fair way that a Foreign Service Officer [tape glitch] for having a wife who works for the U.S. Government unofficially, in a spouse role; that wouldn't be fair. And it wouldn't be fair to the wife if she didn't want to do it, either. So I'm not sure what the answer is. But one of the proposals in 1984 as I recall or so was that wives who did want to work in the role of either entertaining for their husbands or doing community work could be recognized by the government as working and paid for the number of hours they put in. I put in a lot of hours of community work in the developing countries as well as a lot of hours in planning meals and entertaining for the American and foreign communities. It would be nice to feel that that work was recognized.

Q: We're on the threshold of a political campaign in which one politician's wife is very convinced of the importance of somebody in a supportive role, another one who feels she is part of the team in a collaborative role. Can you relate to either one of them?

SMITH: Yes, I relate to both of them, I sort of feel like I'm caught in the middle. I feel very much that my life has been one of support for my husband's career, but at the same time I've tried to find something of my own to do which I felt was worthwhile. For me it has been teaching, and I taught in the States for eight years in public high schools, I was a teacher in the Peace Corps and in the universities in two countries overseas.

So that, for me, has been an outlet and it has made me feel like I had something to offer of my own. So, I don't know. And I've also been asked, "Do you think there are very many more wives like you who are willing to suppress their own career plans to support their husband's career?" And now I don't think there are very many more today, that young women don't think along those terms. But I think there are a lot of good tandem couples out there and I think that can work.

Another alternative: I've seen a Foreign Service couple, both Officers, who started out as tandem, then when they had children one of them went on leave for one tour, then on the next tour the other one took leave. So both were able to continue their careers but took turns at it. I did take the Foreign Service exam and passed it but I never pursued becoming an FSO because it was fairly far along in my husband's career and I knew it would mean our living in different countries, since it would be very unlikely we could be assigned to the same country when he was already at the DCM level.

Q: Did you see yourself actively pursuing this concern when you moved back to the U.S., or do you think it would be up to someone else?

SMITH: I think it will be up to someone else. I certainly would be willing to work with other women in, say, the Association of Foreign Service Women if there were people working on this project.

Q: So you see it as an important one to solve although you don't have the interest to ...

SMITH: Yes.

Q: If you were to advise a young woman entering the Service today in the role of wife of an FSO, not a tandem couple, do you have any special word?

SMITH: Well, I would just say that it's important to find something that you can do on your own, and it may be that you'll find at a certain point that you want to join AID and you want to join the Foreign Service as an Officer. It may be that you can develop a career alongside your husband in teaching or in writing or something else. But I think its very important to enter it with the idea that you're going to have to find something to do for yourself, because I think that the days are over when women could feel that they were fulfilled simply by being a supportive wife.

Q: On another topic we've touched on, what would you like to say about language?

SMITH: Thinking back on my first tour as a Foreign Service wife, in Dakar, and the fact that I had such a problem with depression and feeling unhappy, I know that part of the reason was because I couldn't speak French very well. I was just learning and couldn't learn it fast enough to feel competent to relate to people in that language.

I guess it taught me that I wanted to learn the language wherever we went. That certainly hasn't been easy considering the countries we've been sent to! Pakistan, where I studied Urdu, Senegal, where it was Wolof and French, before that in the Peace Corps studying Amharic in Ethiopia, in Botswana studying Setswana, and in Khartoum, studying Arabic for three years. Now we're back in a French-speaking country and I've continued to study French and have reached the point where I feel I can communicate with people in the language without feeling self-conscious -- now I can speak French on television in an interview or to a group of people, and I'm able finally to write in French, which I have to do for my project for the Guardian Angels -- "les Anges Guardiens," en Francais. (laughter) It's important to be able to communicate with the people in the country you're in even if on a very limited scale. I didn't learn a whole lot of Arabic even in three years. I don't think I have a real gift for languages as my husband has, but it helps my own self-esteem to be able to greet people in the language, to be able to do the marketing and at least to exchange greetings and some small talk at cocktail parties and receptions. So for me it's important to be able to communicate in the language.

Q: So maybe you would say to the young woman starting out that even the State Department should play a more vigorous role in that, since you've found it so important.

SMITH: And I have learned that the Department is cutting funds for language study -- in the Embassy our money for language lessons was cut, so if State isn't going to pay for it -- speaking especially about spouses -- I think that's a big mistake. It makes a big difference in how happy and well adjusted a wife or husband, a dependent spouse, is going to be if

that person can communicate with the people around him or her.

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BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Spouse: Dane E Smith, Jr.

Spouse's Position: Ambassador

Spouse Entered Service: 1967 Left Service: active duty
You Entered Service: 1967 Left Service:

Status: Spouse of FSO

Posts:

1967-69	Washington, DC
1969-71	Dakar, Senegal
1971-72	Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Massachusetts
1972-74	Islamabad, Pakistan
1974-82	Washington, DC
1982-84	Monrovia, Liberia
1984-86	Gaborone, Botswana
1986-89	Khartoum, Sudan
1989-90	Washington, DC
1990-	Conakry, Guinea

Place/Date of birth: Miami, Florida; November 20, 1941

Maiden Name: Judith Rose Armayor

Parents (Name, Profession):
Oliver Armayor, civil service;
Juanita Armayor, housekeeper, and artist

Schools (Prep, University):
Miami Edison High School
Wellesley College, Massachusetts (BA)
Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts (MAT)

Profession: Teacher

Date/Place of Marriage: June 5, 1963; Cambridge, Massachusetts

Children:

Jennifer Lee (1965)
Dane F. III (1967)
Juanita Candace (1969)

Positions held:
A. At Post: Dakar-started English class for Senegalese women; Islamabad-teacher at American School (part time); editor of women's club newsletter; Monrovia-teacher at American School; Gaborone-adult education teacher; CLO; President, women's club; Khartoum-university teacher, editor of international women's club newsletter; Conakry-university teacher; founder of literacy project with street kids; president of international women's club

B. In Washington, DC: high school teacher in DC public schools (8 years); founder of paid peer tutoring program in two high schools.

Honors (Scholastic, FS): Meritorious Honor Award for CLO position in Botswana, 1986

End of interview