

Project: "What a time we had ... women remember Drake"

Interviewee: LuVern Gray Shiffler, Drake University, class of 1936

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Interviewers: Claudia Frazer, Kathy Lincoln, Beth Saddleback

Interviewer: (...) well; first of all, tell us what brought you to Drake or how you selected Drake.

LuVern: Well, I think probably because of, of--the Depression was on and Drake was a fine school and nearly all of my close friends were gonna be going to be going to Drake. We were all in the same situation. And so, I really think that in all probability it was circumstances beyond which uh, we had really no control. And, and we all had uh, those uh, fellowships or scholarships. And so it was the thing to do and we, as I say, we were all good friends, all through high school. So, it was not uncommon for us to stay together in college.

Interviewer: You lived at home then, you didn't live on, in the dorms?

LuVern: No, I lived at home.

Interviewer: Your friends all lived at home then, too?

LuVern: Yes.

Interviewer: And how did you get back and forth to campus?

LuVern: My dad always took me in the morning on his way to the hospital. And get home any way I could--[laughter] I could take, I could take the street car and go downtown and transfer, and come back out on Ingersoll. But uh, many times I walked home---

Interviewer: ---Do you remember how much it cost?

LuVern: ---was kind of a long walk, but uh---No, I don't remember the transportation, except my dad always got me there in the morning. And uh, get home as best I could [laughter].

Interviewer: Well, how many classes did you usually have during the day?

LuVern: Usually five {ok}, um, I-I started out always-always had to have a math class and a science class, and English, and foreign language--and I can't think what---economics. And those were kind of standard for every body. And uh, some I liked better, better than

others. But that-that was the usual. Most people, that's what they took---except for the people who were in Fine Arts, and of course, they were all doing stage work and-and, and uh, did away with some of the things that the rest of us took.

Interviewer: Well we already know that you got an A+ in math, right? So, you're good to go.

LuVern: I got an A---the faculty lady was dating my brother. That's the best choice I ever made. [laughter]

Interviewer: How did you choose your major? I mean, how did you decide upon---

LuVern: ---Well, my dad said he really didn't want me to be a doctor. I thought well, biology comes the closest. I like science and so, I-I took all the sciences. I took uh, biology the first year, chemistry the second year, physics the third year. And I-I must have taken something the fourth year [laughter]---I can't remember-can't remember what it was. But um, no, I-I like math and it was relatively easy for me. And-and the sciences---I always liked all of those.

Interviewer: Did you have a favorite professor?

LuVern: What?

Interviewer: Did you have a favorite professor or favorite teacher?

LuVern: I had one or two that I didn't care for. [laughter]

Interviewer: Well let's hear about those too.

LuVern: [unclear words]---past life---[unclear words]---but um, no I-I really, I liked-I liked school and I liked studying. And um, so it was no hardship. Uh, one---another good friend of mine, Josephine Stalnaker, her dad was professor of uh, sociology, or something---so, I took his class, 'cause I thought I'll get a good grade in there because I'm such a good [laughter] [unclear word]---it worked-it worked. And uh, I'm trying to think---of course, I liked all the people in the science department, all of them. Dr. Helmick, was head of physics and uh, I don't remember who---I don't remember who was---oh, biology and physics.

Interviewer: Did you take any, like astronomy from President Morehouse?

LuVern: No, I didn't, but I went out on---now his daughter, Francis, was a very close friend of mine. And uh, she frequently---he would plan little special parties for Fran to give, and so, and the party would be out at the uh, um, I can't even think---

Interviewer: Observatory?

LuVern: Yeah. And uh, so, I really was exposed to quite a bit of that astronomy. And um, that---I-I pretended like I kind of liked it [laughter]. But that-that really wasn't my favorite, but it was fun to go to these parties. And I-I did learn a lot about astrology and all this other---and her dad would always go along and point out points of interest to us. Most of us couldn't see it, but he-he'd [laughter] tell us it was there.

Interviewer: So did you know him pretty well, then?

LuVern: Oh yes, very well. And we were sorority sisters, and uh, I'll never forget the very first party of the sorority. I---there were two that I was interested in, that I knew the girls in---the-the Thetas and the Delta Gammas. And when I got invitations to both of those, oh my, I was so pleased. And the first party was going to be on a Monday night. And the first party of the Thetas was that Monday night, so I thought I certainly want to go and make a swell impression here, you know. I had a new wine-colored velvet dress, ankle---calf length. And uh, I put that on and I was going to just wow them, you know. I got to the party and found out that the theme of the party was exercise time, or something. [laughter] Some of the girls were there with tennis outfits on, some of them had swim suits on, and here I am in-in---this velvet, velvet---I don't know why the Thetas ever asked me to join---I mean, I've never been so embarrassed. I-I just had mis---hadn't paid any attention to the invitation I was so pleased it was the Thetas, you see. I was-I was going to look so swell.

Interviewer: Oh my. Well, may be they thought you had a sense of humor. [laughter]

LuVern: Maybe. I don't know. But uh, I was pleased then when they asked me eventually to, to join them. And the Morehouse girl was a member and uh, Alice Jordon---I don't know whether you---

Interviewer: That sounds familiar---that name does---

LuVern: Yeah. Alice was one of---and of course, Jane Alexander. It really was a very nice group. Jane was uh, two years ahead of me, I

think. But uh, I've always known her for---I always have liked her. She's handicapped now, pretty much with walking, but uh---

Interviewer: We enjoyed talking to her.

LuVern: Yeah. Oh, she's fun.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

LuVern: She's lot of fun.

Interviewer: And both of you have such impeccable memories, you know---to be able to remember what you were wearing!

LuVern: Well, I would never forget that. [laughter] I mean uh, I don't know what I--- but you know those were the days before slacks. The girls always had skirts and, and hose, sweaters or, or jackets, or something. Occasionally, once in a while, on a terribly cold winter day, you would see a girl---and she'd peel 'em off after she got to---slacks over a skirt, or under a skirt, or something. But that, and every body wore hats.

Interviewer: Really?

LuVern: Uhuh. Uh, and nowadays course you don't see a hat, any place. Uh, uh no---slacks came in after my day, from there---

Interviewer: Do you remember going to um, athletic events or football games, or---

LuVern: Yeah, I do. Um, well I did that---more of that after I was teaching there. The fella who's the head of uh, um---Emory Ruby---and he was head of the publications. He put out the yearbook and the monthly paper, or something. And he in-invited me to go to everything that was athletic and I didn't care anything about him, but I was interested in going to the---whatever the programs were. So, I always got to the Drake Relays and, and to uh, some other athletic events, and basketball games. And uh, it was due to him that I---that I got to most of those. And his sister, or his uh, his sister was a good friend of mine, and I've know her for a long time---so he was harmless. [laughter]

Interviewer: Well, what do you remember about like, dances or doing uh, going to some place to have burgers or uh---do you remember the place you used to go?

LuVern: You know, I never had, had a Coke to drink until I started to Drake. And we finally---I---there was a beaten path down to--- what was that eatery---

Interviewer: Oh. You see, some one else has mention this eatery, too and we can't think of what the name---

LuVern: I can't think of what the name of that place was, but that's where--- when you had free time between classes, that's where you went. And so, of course, I went along and every body ordered Cokes and I had never had a Coke. And it was there that I learned to---wild drinking of Coca-Cola. [laughter]

Interviewer: So, that wasn't something that you had at home at all?

LuVern: No. We had milk and, and uh, I don't remember having really drinks, except for dinner hour.

Interviewer: Well, your parents were---your father was a doctor and he probably knew better than, than to have sugar-filled stuff around. [laughter]

LuVern: I don't know that he was that, that astute. [laughter] But uh, no I don't um, I honestly---my mother was a terrible cook, just couldn't cook and, and so my dad was very happy to pay for a cook. We had a Norwegian gal that came and lived with us for probably ten, twelve years. And she really was a good cook. And uh, the house was big---had three, four stories and she had the fourth upstairs---uh, bedroom and bath, and so on. And so, uh, I really never learned anything about cooking, because she didn't want me in the kitchen. I'd be---I was in the way. And she certainly didn't want my mother in the kitchen, because she didn't---she couldn't do anything. [laughs] So, I really didn't know any---I had to learn from scratch. And, but I-I always have enjoyed cooking. And Kirby thought he could cook, and he got---who, who's the lady that uh, puts out a big book?

Interviewer: Was it Julia Child?

LuVern: Julia Child. He bought that, and of course every menu is about eleven pages, you know. And when we were going to have guests, he always wanted to prepare one thing out of Julia Child. And during the---before and during dinner---all the comments were about---he explained to all the guests exactly how difficult it was to do, follow Julia---you'd do something for 2 seconds on this, and 3 ½ minutes on something---the fact that I had cleaned the house---

Interviewer: ---didn't matter. [laughter]

LuVern: That was-that was nothing compared to the one thing that he had fixed. Oh dear---

Interviewer: I would have thought it'd be hard to find some of those ingredients, too, that she has---because there's some unusual, you know with a lot of the French cooking there's some unusual ingredients.

LuVern: Well, he-he really-he really mastered quite a few things. Bread was his specialty. He'd make French bread---that---that---and he always made that in addition to whatever other dish he was preparing. And uh, but---and then of course, usually, or frequently he'd get called away just at the crucial minute---have to go deliver a baby and so, I'm left to finish up---and to entertain the guests that'd come. [laughter]

Interviewer: What foreign language did you take?

LuVern: mmm?

Interviewer: What foreign language?

LuVern: French---and then I took some German when I was in Iowa City. Uh, I really---I really studied the French, because uh, uh—we made me some French contacts, and I thought it behooves me to learn something about it. And uh, I can write it or I used to---I don't know if I could anymore uh, I could write it pretty well---at least to get the idea across. I don't hear it---when it's spoken to me, I just don't get it. But let me read it, I can read it well and I could write well enough to get by---but I just---uh, when it's spoken to me. I used to say, they speak too fast and they said, well you English-speak---speaking people speak too fast, too---so, I-I-I just never did get to the place that I could handle that easily. Now my daughter-in-law, she's---her grandmother was head of the Youth [unclear words] Program and, it's where they sent students to foreign countries---and so she sent st-st-started sending Lynn when she was eleven, all---each to a different country every summer. Now she---while she doesn't speak any language fluently, she understands and can get by in---I think, about eleven different languages.

Interviewer: Wow.

LuVern: And it was very helpful when she took all these students, 'cause she---every other year, she took forty students to Europe for three weeks.

Interviewer: Wow---that's a job---whooh.

LuVern: But I---I just---I don't hear it. I---reading it and writing it, I could get along, but---and---and I was scared to death to speak it, you know, I just---I wanted to say it correctly, but by the time I thought it through---conversation was--- [laughs] way past---

Interviewer: ---gone onto something else [laughter]--- Well, we noticed in the yearbook you were vice-president of the YMCA?

LuVern: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: Uh, tell us about that.

LuVern: Well [laughs], uh---there was a friend of mine, Betty Moore and lived near f---lived near me, and uh, so we would go down to the Y, every Saturday and um---started out we went down to take ukulele---ukulele lessons [laughter]. Oh, if you can imagine---neither of us [unclear word] very good, and neither of us could sing worth a hoot, you know you're supposed to be able to sing if you're going to play a ukulele. But um, the---the Y, really had a number of, of good things that they did. Uh, we organized um, uh, volleyball teams from the various schools---Lincoln would send six girls down for the volleyball team, and---and uh, Lincoln and---and Roosevelt. Uh, volleyball's the main thing---we did try baseball, but that was a little hard on the girls, harder to find girls that really wanted the baseball, but volleyball seemed to be---and archery.

Interviewer: Archery?

LuVern: Now, Betty and I were no good at archery either---about as [unclear word] as on the ukulele [laughter]---but just um, it, it was a matter of organizing places for girls to come to---to do something and Saturdays was always the, the day that all these people---the girls would come. And we had inter-c---inter-high school contests and uh, and it wasn't a very exciting job, but I mean, somebody needed to do it. And so I was asked to be part of it, so I did.

Interviewer: So this is what you did for Drake students then? You would---you would get Drake students involved with the Y---

LuVern: No. This---we only did high school---

Interviewer: ---only high school

LuVern: ---high school students. Uh, Drake had their own program, I mean, uh, I-when I, you---when you started to Drake, Nelli---Dr. Nelli Noble was the doctor. And she checked you all out. And uh, when she got to me, she said, oh my dear---you have such flat feet. You can't---you can't take gym. She said, I want you to take a rest. Now off the gymnasium, there was a room that had five cots. And so, I was to go---I had an 8:00 class and then at 9:00, I was to go over to the gym and stretch out on one of these cots and rest, for that hour---dumbest thing I'd ever [laughter]---well, I had-I did that---wh-what---I-I didn't see what fl-flat feet, I said I was born with them---I know---I didn't see why that made any difference. Well, she seemed to think it wouldn't in my physical education career she seemed to think that flat feet were going to be a great detriment [laugh]. So, after about two weeks, she---they called me into the office of the gym, said Dr. Ne-No---Dr. Noble wants to speak to you. And so, she was there and she said, "I've just found out that your father is Dr. Howard Gray---now, let me look at those feet again. [gasp] Oh, I don't believe they're as bad as I thought [laughter]. So, I think---yes, I believe you can go ahead and be in the gym class." [laugh] Did you ever? [laughter]

Interviewers: Oh, my. Isn't that funny? I've never heard that before---

LuVern: I mean---I was going out with the Thetas and playing volleyball and baseball and everything else, with my flat feet, you know. Well anyway, she withdrew [laughter] her---her complaints about my condition.

Interviewer: Were there other people lying on cots?

LuVern: Oh, yeah--- [laugh]

Interviewer: ---with-with other problems?

LuVern: Yeah ---

Interviewers: That's the craziest thing I've ever heard.

LuVern: Yeah, it is.

Interviewer: What were their issues?

LuVern: Huh?

Interviewers What was wrong with them that they had to lay on cots?
Did they all have flat feet?

LuVern: Oh no, I was the only one with flat feet that I know of. I don't know, somebody would have uh, I'm trying to think, it seemed to me there was one girl that had had a broken arm, or something---and---and they didn't want her to do something that would ruin her arm. But, I don't remember why any body else was there---but, I was---you know, had to get up and go to 8:00 class and went over there and rest---for that hour. [laugh]

Interviewer: You'd get an extra nap in. [laughter]

LuVern: Well, anyway---I---following directions, but I suddenly improved as soon as she found out that my dad was a doctor. [laugh]

Interviewer: Do you remember much about the graduation ceremony---when you graduated from Drake?

LuVern: No. No, I really don't---I really don't remember anything special about that. At that time, they put those of us that had been in the National Honor Society---we-we sat together, rather---most of them were arranged alphabetically. But we were---we were grouped in---and we sat over in one---but that's---that's the only thing I remember.

Interviewer: Did you wear caps and gowns?

LuVern: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: Were they black?

LuVern: uhuh.

Interviewer: Ok.
See, I-I looked at the annual---the yearbook this morning and I just happened to notice that uh, former President, Herbert Hoover spoke at your commencement.

LuVern: That's right.

Interviewer: Was that a big deal for people---

LuVern: Well, it-it was uh, and I-I think---I think most of us were just 'hurry up let's get this over with' [laugh] ---rather than we---we had great difference to the President. But I do remember that he was the speaker.

Interviewer: He probably wasn't that popular of a President, anyway, was he?

LuVern: Well, I---you know, I honestly don't remember. I-I just---it doesn't occur to me.

Interviewer: Do you remember where the graduation was located? Was it on Drake's campus, or was it downtown?

LuVern: Seems to me, down---used to have what they called The Coliseum---a building, a great big building, open building, down about second and, Grand or something. It seems to me that that's where it was held. Probably wasn't there at all, I don't---I really don't remember.

Interviewer: Did you go to the Library much, when you were at Drake?

LuVern: Th-the Drake Library?

Interviewer: uhuh.

LuVern: Um, [laughter]---the lady in charge, she was a sorority sister of my mother's, and uh, she was kind of firm in her beliefs. And I got to talking too much in the Library. [laughter] And I-I remember that she called me and said that if I---she hated to have to call my mother and speak to her about what that she said that I-I just, uh, you---well I-I said, I'm talking about things that are important. [laughter] You know, some other classmate, we'd be discussing something and---and of course the Library was supposed to be 'hush-hush-hush'. And uh, they---our---both of us, our voices kind of carried and---and so, I said, well, you won't need to call my mother, I can soften up and [laughter]---but uh, she wasn't my favorite---but she ran the Library.

Interviewer: Was her name Carpenter?

LuVern: No.

Interviewer: 'Cause I'm trying to think, there was a daughter of one of the Presidents that was one of the first Librarians at Drake---

LuVern: Oh really?

Interviewer: This would have been a little---

LuVern: I'd know the name, if I'd hear, but that-that wasn't it.

Interviewer: Ok.

LuVern: Uh---but she uh, she ran a strict Library. I mean, you-you closed up and spoke nothing after you got in that---

Interviewers: Well, it's changed since then.
Yeah, we've loosened up a lot.
You can come in and bring your [unclear words] [laughter]---
There's actually places where you can group study and talk out loud, so---
You can bring in a cup of coffee.
Uhuh.

LuVern: Oh really? Oh, my---no---nothing like that [laughter].

Interviewer: Well, something we always ask---is if you have any advice for the current graduates---if you would leave anything that you would like to tell them.

LuVern: I don't know---my own---as far as I'm personally concerned, my-my life---except for my delayed marriage, has been absolutely perfect. I really, I have enjoyed perfect health until 3---just 2 years ago, when I got this pinched nerve. And uh, my life with my husband was just---we got along without any friction. The kids have turned out just great. And uh, I've seen so much of the world---I---you know, I-I don't know, I don't know what you'd tell people today. Um, it's much more casual living than we had, certainly. But that's---that's not bad. I mean, that's---that's ok. Uh, I think it's too casual. I mean, I-I-I went on the theory that the children---they acted the way they were dressed. When they had on ratty old clothes and were standing on their heads, that was fine. And when they had on a nice dress or shirt, neck tie, they acted that way. And uh, I-I hate to see children today that are just--[whew]---I---to me it reflects on the parents. I think the parents need to speak up, which I think some are afraid of their kids almost. I don't know. But, I-I can't think of anything that I did or didn't do that would've improved my situation---wish my husband had lived longer, but you take what you get. And uh, and you can't---something's you can't change. But um, no I think we crammed an awful lot [laughter] into the years that we had.

Interviewer: Sounds like it.
Yeah.

LuVern: And uh, I-I came from a home where I never, never saw unhappiness or disruption or cruelty or cross words. I just---I didn't know what it was to have somebody be cross and so, it was very easy for me to go right on the same way. And I---my policy in my marriage was, as we talked about something, we were going to do or not do, if it really didn't matter to me, I just said 'yes'. I let Kirby go ahead and make the decisions---and I---if it was something I felt was all wrong, then I spoke up. But otherwise I was a 'yes' person, and my, that's an easy way to live.

Interviewer: Uhuh.

LuVern: Why fight it out? It wasn't worth it to me. I mean, I just---and, one rule we had---whatever happened with the children, as far as being disobedient or doing something wrong, I was to have it settled before he got home for dinner. He said, I will not walk into the house and have kids say, 'mom said to wait until you got home'.

Interviewer: Oh. [laughs] Ok.

LuVern: And so I---whatever it was, I had to have it settled so that dinner hour could be pleasant. 'Course many times he didn't never get home for the dinner hour [laughter], but that was---that was a hard and fast rule. He said, I don't want to hear any complaints, any criticism. I want nothing but pleasant thinking at the dinner table. And it worked. The kids knew they'd better get it settled by 5:30---[laughter]

Interviewer: Or else.

LuVern: ---or else [laughter]. Oh. No, I---I don't know anybody that fared better than I did. I---ever-everything seem [unclear words] was in my favor.

Interviewer: I would say you lived a pretty charmed life.

LuVern: Really. I think maybe that's true. And um, my grandmother, my mother's mother, had a two-day old baby left on her door step. And she went out when heard the baby crying--- went out, picked up, took him in the house. 'Course she screamed all night long, 'cause she---she didn't have any food or bottles, or anything. And during that time of the child, she decided that Des Moines needed a

uh, an orphanage. So, she got two of her lady friends together and they started the Des Moines Children's Home, 118 years ago. And um, for many years they would---people would just drop their children off---they just ran out of money, they couldn't provide for 'em, or they were ill or something. And they were usually about, oh, eh---granddad was in the real estate business, so he gave them a little house on the East side and they hired a girl for \$6 a week to-to take care of these children that were brought in. And when they got to six children, that---then the house was too small, so granddad gave them another house---bigger one. And finally, they outgrew that, and then three ladies decided that they really needed to build a house. So they went out, and everybody they could find or meet or call, asked for money. Some people would give them 50 cents, some would give them \$5. And they finally got \$5,000 together and built the house, which was at the corner of um, High and uh, whatever that---the name's been changed now---

Interviewer: Mart---no

LuVern: It wasn't the one that goes from Ingersoll, North---well, anyway---

Interviewer: Was it Pleasant?

LuVern: Yep.

Interviewer: Pleasant---Pleasant and High---

LuVern: So, they built this house---four stories, for \$5000. Well, then they decided that they needed [unclear words]---form a board of membership and so, they were gonna take on only ladies---daughters or daughters-in-law. So my mother was asked to go on the board and my grandmother appointed herself, of course, as Chairman of the Board, and that job she held for 40 years.

Interviewer: Now, is this on the Gray side of the family?

LuVern: No, the Mann---M-a-n-n [spelled out].

Interviewer: M-a-n-[spelled out]---so, what was her first name?

LuVern: Your grandmother?

Interviewer: Yeah.

LuVern: Elizabeth.

Interviewer: Elizabeth Mann.

LuVern: mmhuh. But anyway, they uh, the ladies---my-my mother then was asked to go on, 'cause she was a daughter and there was some--two other ladies that were daughters-in-law. So my mother was--my grandmother was on for 40 years, my mother was on 35, then I came along and they asked me to be on the board. So, I was on the board 25 years, and I'm still on the honorary board. And now my son is in his seventeenth year on the board. So I've had that long connection. And I went to my first board meeting when I was 2 months old. It was before the days of help at home, so my mother just packed me up and took me down to the Children's Home---had a wonderful time. And as I got older, and could play with all those kids, you see. Then uh, after 77 years of running that, we found that we were getting so few children, we decided there's something wrong. So we called a consultant to come in from Ohio and said, look---look us over and find out what we're doing wrong, or what else we need to do. And after 5 days---it was---I'll never forget, it was the year I was president of the Board. And I had all the Board members come to my house, and this man came with his report. He said, you don't need an orphanage; you need a treatment center for emotionally disturbed children. When---that scared us to death. We had no idea what he was even talking about. And he said, you need to get out of that location. He said---he talked to us for all morning, then we had lunch---he talked till afternoon and finally, he said, I know the perfect person to have come and be your director. And uh, here we are, a bunch of people that know nothing---a bunch of women had no idea what he's talking about. And so we closed the doors; we hired the man that he suggested---Mr. Merlin Pearl came. And Merlin went out, he said, I'll find a location. He went out and he found this 5-acre orchard out in south Des Moines, and he said, let's give it a-a pretty name---so, he said, let's call it Orchard Place. He said, kids would rather say they lived at some place like that, rather than they lived in a children's home. And um, so it's gone on---I've been going out there ever since---I---the last 41 years, I go every Friday. And um, but I feel so rewarded in the children, because I-I see some of them just pull out of all the problems. And it makes me feel real good---'course you work hard at it. But um, it's been---it's been a rewarding experience for me. Then I go to Greenwood two mornings a week, in the third grade---'cause I like kids. So, I guess that kind of [laughs] complicates my life as much as I can---

Interviewer(s): That's great.
Wonderful.
You've got a good attitude.

Yeah.

LuVern: Well---and then you know, I look around me and I see some the people and what horrible shape they're in, and I used to think to myself, you've got a bum leg but forget it---just go ahead and don't pay attention to yourself. And it works. 'Course the pain gets to me once in awhile, but uh, I can take that---that's---

Interviewer: You can just go lay down on a cot for awhile, can't ya---[laughter]

LuVern: When I'm sitting or when I'm in bed, I'm just fine.

Interviewer: Fine, yeah.

LuVern: But, it's---it's uh, walking that's---but, as I say, I've seen what's happened so many, but I think, boy, I've got nothing to complain about. I had eighty-seven years of perfect health. I've got these last three of---up to ninety, I've---not bad. I hit ninety-one in a couple of months.

Interviewer(s): Good for you.
Wonderful.
Yeah.

LuVern: Well. Well, what other exciting questions do you have?

Interviewer: Should we ask her the question that we love to ask---and that is, did you ever do anything wrong?

LuVern: [laughs]

Interviewer: When you were at Drake, did you ever sneak out and do anything that was against the rules?

LuVern: No, but I did---I did uh, when the Thetas were gonna have---you know for uh, when the Relays were on---uh, you had to decorate your house. And the Thetas were on 31st street and there was an overhang---roof over the front porch. And you could only get on that roof by coming through a window. And there were three of us in charge of the decorations, and the other two said that they just couldn't go through that window and get out on that roof. I didn't know any better, so I said, hey I'll-I'll-I'll do it [laughter]. And uh, I'm up there trying to stream---put streamers pa---pack up here then bring out like this and make 'em look like a circus tent thing. And my parents---my dad had had a patient over on University and he'd been over to see [unclear word]---he'd make a house-call and

my mother said, I'll just ride along. Coming home, they came back on 31st street and saw---[laughs] saw me up on that roof, and my mother almost had a heart attack.

Interviewer: Ohhhh, God. [laughter]

LuVern: But I didn't fall.

Interviewer: That's right.

LuVern: And we won first prize.

Interviewer(s): Well {multiple voices}... it was all worth it. [laughter]
That's funny.
Did they stop the car and---
--And get out and yell at ya?

LuVern: Thank heavens, they went on. [laughter] Oh, but I-I can imagine how that would be frightening [unclear words]--see me climbing on the roof. [laughter]

Interviewer: I'm sure if you were up in Texas, and saw your granddaughter up on a roof, you'd probably be scared, huh?

LuVern: Oh, yeah. [laughter]

[...]