

**Interviews of the Margaret MacVicar Memorial AMITA Oral History Project, MC 356**  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Institute Archives and Distinctive Collections

**Mary Otis Stevens** – class of 1956

Interviewed by Sharon Lin, class of 2021

July 18, 2020

## Margaret MacVicar Memorial AMITA Oral History Project

Mary Otis Stevens AIA (Bachelor in Architecture 1956) was interviewed on July 18, 2020 by Sharon Lin (SB Electrical Engineering and Computer Science 2021) via a videoconferencing app, due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Stevens was at her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Ms. Lin was at her home in New York City.

Ms. Stevens (b.1928) is an American architect known with a broad scope of work, including the Lincoln House (1965), the Milan Triennial XIV (1968) and the Wolf Trap Performing Arts Center (1980s). She attended Smith College, where she received her BA degree in philosophy in 1949 before going on to receive a BSArch from MIT in 1956. She worked briefly for The Architects' Collaborative (TAC) before starting a practice with MIT faculty member Thomas McNulty in 1957. (After receiving his Master's Degree in Architecture (1949) McNulty became an Assistant Professor (1950-1956) and later became a Fellow at the MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies.)

Married in 1958, Stevens and McNulty founded Thomas McNulty Architects (1958-1973) and *ipress*. In association with the New York Publisher George Braziller, they brought out five books (1970-1974) in the *ipress* series on the human environment including their book, *World of Variation* (1970). A visual/verbal essay, it identifies societal conflicts and environmental problems and sketches out possible sustainable and humane resolutions.

Later in her career Stevens founded Design Guild (1974), an architecture multi-disciplinary collaborative focused on reuse and sustainability. She has pursued a lifelong commitment to social and civil activism, and was called "one of the most important female architects in the Northeast during the 1960s and 1970s" by the MIT Museum.

LIN: I'd like to introduce myself before we get started. I'm Sharon Lin. I'm in my fourth year at MIT, in the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department. Through the UROP program, I've been working on MIT's Margaret MacVicar Memorial AMITA Oral History Project. I'm really honored to have the opportunity to interview you today considering the impact that you've had in architecture, particularly on the East Coast. Also, since you're one of the best-known architects to emerge from MIT's Department of Architecture—and one of the program's most renowned women graduates.

STEVENS: Well, thank you. I'm glad to be interviewed by one of the young women at MIT today. The fact that women are playing a much bigger role is very welcome. Although women were accepted at MIT when it was founded, they have not yet received the respect they deserve. In my era of the '50s, women at MIT were a small group, an anomaly, and people accepted us being an oddity. There wasn't any discrimination or anything like that, but when in 1953 I met with my faculty advisor, Lawrence Anderson, he told me, "Do you realize you're taking a place of a young man?" In other words, are you serious? [Lawrence B. Anderson was an admired American architect known for his teaching and work in the Scandinavian Style. Earning a Master's in Architecture at MIT in 1930, he became a faculty member, then head of MIT's Department of Architecture (1933-1972) and finally Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning (1965-1972).] He wanted to know, "What are your aspirations?" And I answered, "Well, they're just like anybody else's. Yes, architecture is what I've chosen to do. But I expect to have a family and all the rest." He was rather shocked, because his presumption was that if you were a woman and if you went into a profession like architecture, well then, you had to dedicate your life to it, like taking up a vocation. You couldn't have both.

I think this is the biggest change now: that women are expressing themselves in all ways. And it's good. And the more, the better. Not to be freaks, but part of the normal life of a society.

It's very similar to the problems of race and ethnicity: We have to just get used to the fact that there are people not like us, and not fear 'the other.' There's no reason to make scapegoats or discriminate against differences. We need to welcome everyone.

That's why I love Galileo, the great astronomer. He said what pleased him about the world was "the incessant variations therein." That's exactly how World of Variation got its title. [World of Variation was co-authored by Mary Otis Stevens and her former husband and collaborator Thomas F. McNulty. It discusses the city as a social realm, identifying contemporary problems and possible design solutions. And that's what I still believe and think is special about this planet.

As Buckminster Fuller said [Buckminster Fuller was an American thinker, designer, and futurist. During the post WW11 decades he taught and lectured at MIT.] "We're on spaceship earth without an instruction manual." And that is true. How we navigate on this planet and live on it in a sustainable and peaceful manner has been what I've dedicated my life to.

I've been through ups and down, and I don't say there's been a great deal of progress. But life, like the sine curve, oscillates from peaks to troughs. I think one of the impressive things about MIT is its long-term orientation. Is that what you've experienced?

LIN: I think so. There is definitely a focus at MIT on dedicating your life to making a positive impact in the world. And since you mentioned Buckminster Fuller, I understand that he was a mentor of yours, both when you were an architecture student at MIT and then during your career.

STEVENS: He and his wife Ann Hewlett were family friends, so I sort of inherited him. Somehow, we hit it off. I guess I was a fellow searcher. He didn't come into this world saying, "Ah-ha, this is what I'm going to do" either. That was something we shared. If you're going to live in this troubled world, make it significant. One is not just living for oneself; you're living for everyone. It's what I think you're doing, and this is what I admired about MIT women at the time I was there, and continue to do so.

LIN: Can you talk a little bit about how you came to aspire to become an architect? Were you always interested, or was it something that developed during your undergraduate studies at Smith [College]? Were you encouraged in some way?

STEVENS: Well, there wasn't an "ah-ha" moment to become an architect, or to be anything else! I was just born in 1928, I was female, and came into a family. Of course, I didn't know what I was coming into and had the usual issues growing up. I used to build treehouses to try to get a clearer view of the world. Fruitless off course, but I couldn't give up trying.

It was in Paris the summer of 1948 after my junior year at Smith that I beheld a World of Order that I'd long been seeking. My undergraduate major at Smith College was Philosophy, so philosophy, in a certain way was my intellectual umbrella—and still is. My father thought it was a waste of time and money as a major but it has been the keystone in my arch.

Bucky, as I said, was a family friend, and when I went to MIT in this roundabout way, he happened to be there in the spring terms. He took me under his wing. We had wonderful lunchtimes together, frequently visiting the Naval architecture exhibit in a building nearby. He loved the displays, pointing out how rafts offered his famous “360 Degrees of Freedom” while a submarine had only one purpose. He taught me always to keep my options open, not to jump to conclusions.

And, of course, that was also true in both the elective and required courses that I took without regard to grades or quotas. I just wanted to keep exploring as much as possible because we humans are all so limited. The notion that, somehow, we're competing with today's computers, or with such devices, is fear mongering. Basically, our brains don't function like the binary computer systems that we're using so there's an intrinsic incompatibility.

I enjoyed Chomsky. [Noam Chomsky is an American linguist and Institute Professor Emeritus at MIT.] I took his first course in Linguistics, where we tried deriving equations to simulate a verbal language. That hypothesis failed, and it's going to keep on failing I think, because trying to make the human brain function like a computer, or a computer like the human brain, is really an impossible quest. I very much like Linguistics and have continued following its development into a vital discipline. Languages of all kinds interest me.

That's why I consider architecture to be a building language, just as music and the visual arts communicate through their respective languages. Learning any languages is very enjoyable and significant, though they're not all alike, of course. The amazing thing about the human is we can learn so many of them.

LIN:

I'd like to go back a little bit, since you mentioned that during your time at MIT there were few women. Can you talk about your relationship with the other women students—in the architecture program and in other courses? What were your experiences with other women students, or women professors, if there were any then?

STEVENS: After graduating from Smith College, I was in a quandary about what to do. As I said, my family certainly was not supportive of my taking up architecture. I came from a very traditional background, old world New York. The objective for young women was to marry and have a family. That was it. Your family brought you up to be a good hostess, mother and wife. That was your destiny. Well, that was not my idea. I was accepted at MIT's Architectural Program in 1950, but my family wouldn't go along and not having money of my own, I had to defer. I did defer. Then, depression-- I finally caved in and married, and it was a terrible mistake because I knew it wasn't going to work. I have felt very badly all my life for having caved in. Because I was not meant to be this wife, and it was not the young man's fault. He was a fine person, and did not deserve that disaster. And it was one of the things I shared with Bucky; he understood what I was going through.

In the fall of 1949 when I applied to MIT, my father didn't think I'd ever get in because my head was in the clouds and all that. Fortunately, I asked him, "But if I do get in, will you pay for my tuition? He said yes. So, belatedly, in 1953 my father accepted that wish of mine to go to MIT. He paid for my tuition. I was a bit older than most of incoming students, including those in architecture, because it was a bachelor program, necessary if you wanted to practice. But a lot of my fellow male students had served in the Korean War and had also graduated from liberal arts colleges, mainly the male colleges: Amherst and Williams and Dartmouth. Age therefore was not an issue.

At MIT in the 1950s there were very interesting international post-WWII students. I found a great deal of fellowship with these young women and young men from European and Asian societies here on fellowships. So that was really my social life.

There was one American girl in my class. For her, architectural school was acquiring a skill set. She was nice, but we didn't have much in common. I was kind of what you'd call an oddball—and have been more or less an oddball most of my life.

LIN: Apart from Buckminster Fuller, were there any other professors that stood out as particularly influential on both your career or for you personally? Mentors, or others who supported you?

STEVENS: I am grateful for a number of wise counselors in my life but none as consequential as Bucky. When he came to MIT as a distinguished guest lecturer in the spring terms of '53, '54 and '55, he was very parental in guiding me through a pivotal transitional period. We used to have many synergistic conversations. I'd say, "basically buildings want to stay grounded, they don't want to fly. Making lightweight structures for orbiting objects is essential, but here on earth we want to root down what we build." He was not interested in that line of thought and would shift the conversation to spell

out another version of his cosmic vision. I loved math and physics, too, so I took some additional very interesting courses. Conceptual mathematics and geometry have been lifelong interests of mine.

As far as mentors in architecture, there was Andy, Lawrence Anderson, my faculty advisor who eventually became a close personal friend when Tom McNulty and I moved to Lincoln [an affluent Boston suburb with large tracts of protected land]. As a student, I met Tom McNulty. He was a young, very talented architect and idea person on the architectural faculty. I had him as a critic just for one studio course, but he was very, very popular with graduate and foreign students whom I hung out with, and, in that way, he became another mentor.

I only really got to know Tom the summer after graduation, when I was working at TAC and he with some of his friends and colleagues were trying to establish an architectural practice different from the standard office. Along with many young architects and engineers working in the many Cambridge firms, we'd casually meet at lunch time on the banks of the Charles River to gossip and crit the projects we were working on.

And boy, was I working hard! I got the job at TAC, supposed to be a very good one. It was an honor to work for Walter Gropius. [Walter Gropius (1883-1969) was a German architect and founder of the Bauhaus School. His work on the Gropius House (1938) inspired the Lincoln House (1965), designed by Mary Otis Stevens and Thomas McNulty. He was the former Dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design (1936-1953) and founder of the Bauhaus School (1919-1928) and The Architects Collaborative (1946-1995).]

He was an amazing person, a great teacher and leader of the Modern Movement. I was a peon, making models. Fortunately, he liked the way I made models. They were not showcases, but quick studies of basic architectural issues—massing, relating forms to functions, and very abstract. I was pleased that he liked them.

There was another young woman working with me; she was the renderer. So, between the two of us—with me making models and she rendering the rough models to make them look like finished buildings, clothing them, so to speak—we would meet twice a day with Gropius and his design team. At each session they would comment and direct us to make his changes for the next review. Though demanding, I found Walter Gropius to be a very elegant, thoughtful and deep person.

Later on, he served a very much appreciated purpose when Tom and I built our experimental house in Lincoln. The affluent residential Boston suburb zoned for large tracts of land ownership provided an ideal setting for many other contemporary architects to build their modernist houses, beginning with Walter Gropius in 1937.

Completed in 1965, ours was a curvilinear poured concrete structure and the first exposed-concrete and glass house in the United States. The townspeople in general hated it. [The Lincoln House was demolished in 1999.] A new owner demolished it in 1999 during a period when modernist buildings were being torn down due to a cultural rejection of modernism. Because its design did not conform to the town's traditional lifestyles many people were bothered. At a social event where I wasn't present one of my few friends asked, "Why are you so upset? You can't even see it from the road." And someone replied, "Just because it's there."

The Town selectmen were getting so barraged by townspeople that they called Mr. Gropius and asked him if he wouldn't mind giving his opinion. So, one Sunday afternoon, while a group of Selectmen sat in our living space, he drove down the driveway, came in and greeted us. We greeted him, and then left Walter Gropius to tour the premises. On pronouncing his approval, the Selectmen fled. They had done their job, it was stupid—and they knew it.

Afterwards, when he was walking around with us, I turned to him and I said, "Well, between the two or three of us—and others in Lincoln—oh, we're going to put the town on the map." Gropius patted me on the shoulder and said, "I don't think so, they called my house a chicken coop." But he had saved the day, in the sense that we weren't bothered anymore by the townspeople. We allowed the house to be viewed to earn money for the church and the De Cordova Museum—that was the hypocrisy of it all.

I feel the same about architecture today: it has sold its soul. Instead of adhering to the basic tenets and traditions of the profession going all the way back to the Roman Vesuvius, architects here and in other societies like ours over the last half-century or perhaps even longer, have abdicated their independence. They have become servitors of the corporate state catering to the tastes of its very rich elites. Often for this clientele, the top priority is making a profitable financial investment, with the societal result of privatizing the public domain.



An exception was Jose Lluís Sert. [Jose Lluís Sert (1902-1983) was an internationally respected Spanish architect and leader in the Modern Movement. Sert was noted for his projects in Europe, South America and the United States.] Succeeding Walter Gropius as Dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design, he was another mentor whom Tom and I enjoyed engaging with. Sert had a great sense of humor and was very insightful about human nature. This comes out in his work. He and his wife, used to come out to our Lincoln house for Sunday luncheons. Not affiliated formally with any schools or factions, we turned these occasions into festive gatherings of colleagues and fellow free spirits.

Not just at MIT, but all through my life I've been fortunate to have wonderful counselors and mentors. That's why I've followed their example over the years with young people who have contacted me. I'm very pleased that so many young women architects have gone on and distinguished themselves, among them Martha Lambkin Welborne. [Martha Lambkin Welborne is an urban planner and civic change-maker. She graduated from MIT with a Master's in Architecture and City Planning in 1981.] Starting out in this locality, Martha became the first woman principal in Sasaki Associates, an internationally acclaimed landscape and urban design firm. Moving later to Los Angeles, Martha played a notable role in the successful Grand Avenue Avenue project. It increased the density of that city's urban core and established a metro system linking the centralized governmental agencies and major cultural institutions to the sprawling peripheries. Martha is just one of a number of contemporary professional women who have made a big dent in their fields and in society at large.

LIN: I looked at photos of the Lincoln House online, and read about how groundbreaking it came to be seen as being. That made me curious: Did you feel that there was any discrimination, or was there competition between you and the other architects, especially if there were other women architects working on similar projects at the time? Or was it more of a supportive environment?

STEVENS: From time to time, some students would copy my designs and I would not like it. However, a faculty member wisely counseled me: "Don't worry. You should be pleased." So I learned not to fear being copied. Everybody has a distinct style, a voice that expresses itself in many different ways. No one can steal that identity, as if it were gold or something material like that.

Everything we say or do has a context. I'm a big context person. Even something very personal—writing a novel, creating a painting, composing a music score, or making a scientific experiment—happens in the context of all that surrounds it. Today in America I think we are far too competitive and single-minded in our values and how we practice them, to the point that we are tearing apart the collegial fabric of our democracy.

Again, I come back to Buckminster Fuller's 360 Degrees of Freedom. Don't needlessly limit oneself. Keep your options open in every way possible. No one is fated to sign on any dotted lines. I think that tunnel-vision is very hurtful. Like so many, I've been hurt by it, so I say keep and protect your freedoms. I felt the collegial imperative much more strongly when I was a student than I do now in the MIT environment, maybe because MIT has expanded into such a prominent national and global presence on the world stage in recent years.

LIN: Do you think you would have developed these perspectives had you gone to a different university? Or do you think this is a core feature of having gone through MIT's architecture program—these ideas about freedom and being able to chart your own course?

STEVENS: I think as humans, we depend on multiple sources in acquiring knowledge. Einstein reportedly said "Imagination is greater than truth." We need the science mode of thinking and we need the humanistic wisdom of the liberal arts. Until the Industrial Revolution, intellectual life was not so fragmented. Then came specialization—factory jobs, production schedules, divisiveness of ownership & decision-making—control by capitalist constructs like corporations. "You're going to be a scientist" or "This is a scientific thing and that belongs to the liberal arts." There was no real basis to do that kind of sorting.

Charles Darwin in his era was not under such constraints. Very well rounded in his education, at an early age he considered going into the ministry but the Voyage on the Beagle radically changed his course in life—and through his masterwork *The Origin of the Species* everyone else's ever since.

So yes, I do think that we've got to go back. Not go back literally, but we have to come together again and look at things holistically. Specialization and segregation are only good when serving very specific functions. As a general outlook, they are counterproductive to invention, they stifle creativity, obstruct explorative experimentation and, societally, I think, are largely responsible for current class, race and caste conflicts.

LIN: I'm also curious about your perspective on sustainable design, since it seems that that was a central tenet of your work. I know you've talked about this in the past, but I was curious about how it's affected your perspective on architecture and also your personal philosophy, this idea of sustainability.

STEVENS: From earliest times, long before architects became a category, sustainability was a priority in all cultures in uses of materials and methods of construction. Architecture, site planning, interior design, structural engineering, building technology. They're all bounded together in sustainable developments.

LIN: Right. It's very interdisciplinary.

STEVENS: Just as in past, we need to coordinate all these skills today. After the collapse of the Modern Movement in the early 1970s shut down Tom's and my practice I went back to my roots. Revisiting the rural county in New York State where I grew up, I found that in these farm communities, folks just followed vernacular traditions in building new and repairing existing structures. On further investigations, I realized that all were based on sustainable practices.

Receiving two successive National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships in 1975 and 1976 to continue my research on "Vernacular Traditions in American Architecture," I formed Design Guild. [The Design Guild (1973-1992) was a collaborative architectural practice focused on non-profit clients, historic preservation and adaptive re-use. It was a multi-disciplinary collaborative focused on the public domain and directed to non-profit clients, historic preservation and adaptive re-use. Its mission statement was: "To preserve the past while building new, and to build new what will be worth preserving in the future."]

DG operated by forming interdisciplinary teams of professionals capable of addressing each client's particular program. Accordingly, clients were paying for exactly the services their project required. We could take on jobs that other offices couldn't or wouldn't, because we not only provided the appropriate technology but benefits to the public realm.

So while a great advocate of technology and its services, I wouldn't put it in a category by itself. It's a methodology, it's a vital means to a societal end.

Architecture was not always a top priority in DG undertakings. That's another failing I find in architectural practitioners today: self-promoting star architects. Like fashion designers, they are hired just for the "Look!" Make a sketch on the back of an envelope, then call in the engineers, and say: "Build it." Look at the Stata Center on the MIT campus. That's an ongoing disaster.

However, I don't want to get in a blame game, because that's stupid, too. The good thing about being a student in any discipline is not yet being embroiled, having no skin in the game. While a student and being free from such external pressures. I just urge you and all your classmates to treasure that freedom, keep that freedom from getting snared into assuming that career paths and the way we do things today will be the same in the post-COVID-19 era we're now entering.

I admire what the Black Lives Matter and movements like it are doing to make people rethink and reopen traditional ideas and practices. Although their protests can at times turn destructive, that is part of the process, and will continue to be because anything that's disruptive has invites this downside. From past history, we should focus on handling such incidents with suitable humane and democratic responses.

I think 2020, including the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, is going to be looked upon as a catalyst for significant societal changes. The same thing happened with the bubonic plague in the 14th century. It also transformed the human world.

With the coronavirus and post pandemic era introducing a whole series of new adventures into the 21st century, I envy you and your generation. It may look like a terrible time, but you're poised to enter a turning point that you can use to your personal advantage and I hope for the benefit of societies the world over.

LIN: You mentioned a bit of your activism. How did you develop your personal philosophy around activism, and how did you act on it when you were an undergrad? Going to MIT, did you experience any sort of culture shock? Because I know nowadays, while MIT is still shifting its culture a bit, it tends not be involved politically—at least the student body—as other colleges and universities, such as Smith.

STEVENS: In my opinion, there's no such thing as not being involved. Even avoidance is a political act, though one of negation. Once born we are “involved with mankind” as the poet John Donne phrased it. When we enter the world, we become participants. Choosing to opt out, one joins the living dead.

What I'm trying to say to you about MIT is that from the very beginning the Institute played an activist role in society. Founded as a commuter institution offering degrees to students who could not afford Ivy League and similar institutions, it was known even in my day as a trade school. World War II put MIT on the world map. Shortly afterward, with its highly secretive work, the mentality shifted, abetted by security clearances required for clandestine projects and research. [Research, engineering and other scientific work that MIT performs as a contractor to the federal government, including the Department of Defense, e.g., at the MIT Lincoln Laboratory.] Maybe MIT needs to engage in more civilian undertakings.

LIN: Can you talk a little bit about how you became involved with the MIT Museum, how they've come to include your work in its archives? Also, do you also have an ongoing relationship with MIT's architecture program?

STEVENS: Well, in 2004, I thought, "What am I going to do with all that I have accumulated over a long lifetime?" Some of it, including projects that were not just my work but documentation worth preserving of other professional groups and distinguished leaders, scholars and activists in the public realm. As an example, Architects for Social Responsibility (ASR) a sub-committee of the Boston Society of Architects (BSA) developed a national reputation from the early '70s to the late '90s for its activities promoting sustainable development.

Searching for an archival repository, I contacted MIT. When Tom McNulty died in 1984, I had donated a lot of his work to the MIT Museum's archives. My material blended in, so since 2004 I've worked with Gary Van Zante, curator of art and architecture, on further transfers.

Then there's my personal papers. As you know, I crossed many borders, so have accrued quite a diversity of material. That challenge led me to the Massachusetts Historical Society, where I've been donating my experiments in music and writings, along with personal documents. Again, I have to abide by this separation, segregation—whatever you want to call it—of the arts and sciences. Part of me is here and part of me is there. One's in Boston and one's in Cambridge. At least they're very close geographically. It's another instance of trying to overcome obstructions in living life whole.

LIN: For sure. I think it's very difficult sometimes to separate your personal life, what you know as you, compared to your outward persona—what people perceive as the professional version of yourself. How did you go about keeping a balance between the two? To put it another way, did you feel that you had to compensate in your personal life in order to achieve what you wanted to do professionally? Or did you feel that you were able to strike a balance during your career?

STEVENS: I think my personal life has endured a lot of upheavals, which are a part of my nature perhaps, because I'm always searching. That's the problem. I'd say my personal life as a wife and mother was often compromised by the professional demands of my career involvements. My three sons didn't get the nurturing mother they would have preferred. They would have liked a mother making cookies, like the mothers of their friends. Obviously, why wouldn't they? Children want moms. I was not a typical mom. And husbands want wives, and I was not an ideal wife.

Putting those deficiencies together, I can point to periods of turmoil at times and at others that ran smoothly. Right now, a widow for 23 years and my children pursuing their respective goals, the path is very smooth. A grandmother of six who are entering adulthood, I was involved through after-school pick-ups and baby sitting during their growing up and continue to enjoy their company. I kind of jazz them up, asking provoking questions that teach them how to think. But I'm not a proselytizer. If someone seeks me out, I respond.

LIN: Did you keep in touch with your peers, either at Smith or MIT? And if so, do you feel like you pursued a life that was quite different than theirs, or were there other women who pursued similarly career-driven lives?

STEVENS: Although taking a different road than most of my Smith classmates, who generally adhered to women's traditional career of homemaking, I remained very close to those in my dorm and attended most 1949 class reunions. I continue to treasure these friendships because I've associated with men for most of my life.

From hindsight, I don't think that whatever I ended up doing would have mattered much, because I would have done other things the same way. What one is, what one does and will do unfolds from the inside out, not the outside in.

LIN: Looking back at your career, do you think the mindset that you have now about your success is any different than the mindset that you had when you were in the midst of your career? What was important to you, and what you thought you ought to do? I'm also wondering whether there are lessons for other women that you'd like to note?

STEVENS: I would just say the same to everyone at every phase of life: Be the best you can be. In a creative environment it does not matter how old or young you are. Age is just a statistic.

Don't be afraid to change. Don't get stuck in a groove if it doesn't work. There's always another way.

Keep your options open. If you don't burn bridges, they are there for a later crossing.

LIN: Thank you for that really inspirational conclusion. I also want to thank you so much for your time, and for contributing to this project.

STEVENS: Sharon, it's been a pleasure to have this conversation with you, and I wish you and your AMITA [Association of MIT Alumnae, the sponsor of this oral history project] associates all the best.