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Interview with Marianna Black Habisreutinger

Marianna Black Habisreutinger
SC Mother of the Year 2011

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Winthrop University
South Carolina Mother of the Year Award Oral History Archives
Interview Transcript

Marianna Black Habisreutinger
South Carolina Mother of the Year 2011
July 13, 2015

Dr. Disney: Good Afternoon. I'm here with Marianna Habisreutinger, the South Carolina Mother of the Year from 2011. It is an honor to be here with you today and I want to thank you so much for giving us your time and participating in our oral history project.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well I am delighted to be here and share some of my experiences and that you all remember that all these mothers have existed over the many, many years and that you want to archive the history.

Dr. Disney: Absolutely.

Marianna Habisreutinger: I think its wonderful.

Dr. Disney: Thank you so much. We're very excited about this project and just so happy to be here with you today. Why don't we start by having you tell us a little bit about when and where you were born and raised?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well, I was born right here in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and I have never lived anywhere but here. People often think that, because I have such an unusual last name, I have lived in Europe. My husband is Swiss, he's from the German-speaking part of Switzerland, but we've always lived here. As I said earlier, I was born, reared here. Other than going off to college, I've always been here. I've traveled a lot, but I've always had this as home.

Dr. Disney: Tell us a little bit about your family and your early childhood experiences.

Marianna Habisreutinger: My family, those that are not with us anymore and those that are still with us, are most wonderful people and I have been so, so greatly blessed to be born and reared by those who have influenced my life. I think I am what I am because of those people. And continue to be what I am today because of those loving, caring people that are surrounding me today, such as my husband and my children and cousins and my sister, her family. So, I've just been a very, very blessed person.

Dr. Disney: That's beautiful. Tell me about your younger years, your brothers and sisters, and your family growing up.

Marianna Habisreutinger: I have one sister, she is two years younger than I, but she skipped the second grade and I love to say that I taught her everything I knew so she got to skip a grade,

but that's not true. She's a wonderful person and we live about three minutes apart. And our daughter lives about three minutes away from my husband and me. And we have two boys who live here in town too. So we all live very close to each other and are a very, very close-knit family. I do not have any brothers, so I've learned a lot having two sons and a daughter, so we feel very fortunate to have both.

Dr. Disney: That's wonderful. Tell us about your education and your young adult life, and also during that time in your life, reflecting back on what your dreams, goals, and aspirations were as a young woman.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well, what do I start with first? My education. Well, I went through church kindergarten, when I started through, public schools didn't have kindergarten. And then I started the public schools in first grade and graduated from Spartanburg High School. Then I went to a small girl's college in Washington, D.C., called Mount Vernon Jr. College. It has since been acquired by George Washington University. Then, since it was a two year college at the time, I transferred as a junior to the University of Mississippi because my roommate at Mount Vernon was from Mississippi and I visited her during those two years we were in college in DC, and loved Mississippi, even thought Ole Miss is a university, it's not a huge university. So, I feel like I had the great setting of a small girls' school with about 150 boarders and maybe fifty day students, and then I transferred to a school that, at that time, had like 3,000 students at Ole Miss, I feel like I had the smaller and then the larger situation, educationally. Then I had a few graduate courses I took from time to time during my three years of teaching school, but I never pursued a higher degree.

Dr. Disney: When you taught school, where did you teach?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Locally, here. One of the school districts. Spartanburg has seven school districts, which is rather unusual. While Greenville only has one school district, Spartanburg has seven. Thus we have seven bus departments, seven superintendents, seven everything. So it's kind of an interesting concept.

Dr. Disney: So as a young adult woman, when you reflect back, what do you remember were your dreams, goals, and aspirations?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well, just to be the best person I could be and carry on the values and traditions that I had been so fortunate to be influenced by all through my life. My parents were both from this area and both my mother's family and my father's family immigrated from Ireland and Scotland in the early, early 1700s, so we are long term Spartanburg, we'd say Upstate families, or Upcountry families, whatever you want to call it. And they were very strong, giving people, and they were predominantly, of course in the early years, farmers, and physicians. My grandfather Black graduated from the University of Maryland in 1880, and he came to Welford, South Carolina because he heard there was not a doctor in that part of Spartanburg County. And there, he met my grandmother Black and her maiden name was

Snoddy, S-N-O-D-D-Y. So she was Mary Snoddy and married Hugh Black and my mother's family was all from here, so anyways, there were agricultural and physician careers in both families and that meant caring for people and giving to people and I think like, when you're a doctor, you have to listen to people, so I was taught very early, "Listen, Marianna, listen. You can learn a lot by listening." So, all those values I've try to convey to my children and any group in which I've worked, like teaching school or many of the volunteer jobs that I've had over the years have been with young people and I have tried to convey those, too.

Dr. Disney: And your family has given quite a bit back to the community, that's my understanding, right? There's a hospital named after...?

Marianna Habisreutinger: My grandmother. And my grandfather started that hospital in 1925, but he had a couple of smaller hospitals before that, and my father was the only boy in his family that was not a doctor, and he was an orchardist. He brought the first national convention to the state of South Carolina, which was a national peach council in 1953. Our memorial auditorium had just been built by then, so people, 400 people came from all over the country, because peaches are grown in many, many states.

Dr. Disney: That's great. Tell us about how you met your husband.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Do you really want to know? His story or my story? I'm teasing. There's a real story and his story is a joke story. I was quite fond of a young man who worked for one of the big textile companies here and he was sent to meet a Swiss man at the Spartanburg-Greenville Airport. And it was a Sunday night. He said, "Marianna, I've got to meet this Swiss fellow who is coming to Spartanburg to work for six months at one of the textile mills here and then go to Danville, Virginia and work at Dan River Mills there and then return to Switzerland and run his family's textile mills." Well, I met him at the airport and we took him out for dinner and set him up for the night and then the next day, he went to work, went to meet the people with whom he was going to work. And it seemed like everybody he met knew me and introduced him to a lovely family here in Spartanburg who have a beautiful colonial home and the original kitchen was detached from the house and it was then an apartment, which it still is today. He had the opportunity to live there and all of these people were friends of my family, so everybody Roger met basically knew me and he absolutely loved the American way of life, he said, "I'm going to be in the USA a short time, so I don't want to make my days in Spartanburg or Danville, Virginia like Switzerland, I want to experience America." He loved it so much and then relaxing manner of business and the friendliness and informality of meeting and greeting people and he just stayed here. Other than going back to Switzerland and doing his military duty before we got married, because the Swiss have a whole different military system, he's been living here. He is and has been for a long, long time now a US citizen and I tell him so often that if everybody was as good as a citizen to this country as he is, this country would have no problems.

Dr. Disney: So talk to us a little bit about the early years of your marriage and the birth of your children.

Marianna Habisreutinger: We were married almost five years before we had any children. At that time, I was working with my father. I had quit teaching school and I was working in my father's office, which was less agriculture in those days, but more into the real estate development business, which is what my husband does today, and one of my sons. So that's carrying on family tradition. Roger and I were free to come and go and do a lot of traveling and that was a delightful time to kind of be able to shut the door and walk out, we didn't have a cat or a dog or a fish or anything, so we were free to come and go kind of see the USA and we went back and forth to Switzerland quite a bit because he remained on his family's board of directors so I got to spend a lot of time in Switzerland. We had the opportunity to take a week extra and go somewhere in Europe. I think travel is a great part of one's education. My family, when my sister and I were growing up, had the opportunity to travel a lot because my father had two sisters, one who never married and the other who's husband passed away when I was like nine years old, so those two aunts took my sister and me somewhere in the world every summer for about fifteen years. So, I equate travel and seeing the world and observing people in action and places as equally important as the books.

Dr. Disney: That's a great form of education. I absolutely agree. It's wonderful that you and your husband had that time.

Marianna Habisreutinger: It's just like going from China, and this is say fifteen years ago, into India, and you saw the grayness of the clothing the Chinese were wearing in that time, I think since then things have brightened up, and then going to India and you see all the gorgeous saris that the women wear of beautiful colors, and it's just a happiness that radiates, even though there is so much poverty. Anyways, Roger and I have felt it very important that expose our children to as much travel as possible. And they appreciate that.

Dr. Disney: That's wonderful. So tell us a little bit about your children.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well, our daughter is the eldest and then we have a son and then another son. They all are – Anna and Paul are almost two years to the day apart, and then Charles came three and a half years after our son and they're all each other's best friends and my sister has two sons who are two years apart and they are like eight and ten years older than my children. But, they're all like best buddies. So these five grandchildren of my parents are really like siblings and best friends.

Dr. Disney: That's beautiful. And do they all live close?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Yes. We all live right around here. And our office today, when I say our, I mean my husband, I have an office there and my three children have offices in the house in which I grew up in because I love that old house and it's just a USA Main Street, red brick

house. It's somewhat fun to go in the office sometimes, and we made our dining room our conference room and I'll see the three children, I'm so much older even though they're old, sitting because they do some projects together. Our daughter has her own design business, Habis Designs, but she only does healthcare, like nursing homes. She just did a hospice house up in Landrum. She's done several churches, she renovated the foundation building at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind, so she's into that kind of decorating. Which is totally different from making a beautiful sofa and lamps and curtains and all in a lady's home. You know, you've got the visual and the handicap doings and have to meet all the federal rules and regulations for public buildings. My older son has his own construction company, and that's called H. Construction, H. General Construction. Then the younger boy works with us in our champion investment company.

Dr. Disney: Wow, you must be very proud.

Marianna Habisreutinger: I am very proud, we are so happy. Everybody loves everybody and everybody gets along. And my father used to say, "Marianna, let me tell you something. Family members have to kind of love each other, but they don't necessarily have to like each other. And when you can love each other and you like each other, that's perfect." And it's true. Think about loving and liking.

Dr. Disney: That's right. That's wonderful. That's good, summed up very nicely. You talked about some of these activities, but I want to give you a chance. Is there anything you'd like to share, activities that you were involved in that could be before, could be after you were married, in terms of family, community, employment, education, anything else you want to share about activities you were involved in, maybe that helped you in terms of your selection of being named Mother of the Year?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well, I told you about all my education, about my family...

Dr. Disney: Community, employment, volunteerism.

Marianna Habisreutinger: ...I told you about my employment.

Dr. Disney: Anything else you'd like to share...

Marianna Habisreutinger: So basically, it'd be my volunteerism, because I really haven't spoken about that. The reason I was nominated for Mother of the Year was because I founded the foundation at the Charles Lea Center, which is a facility for special needs people. Through life and care for people with all sorts of disabilities. From those who are nonverbal children and adults, those who live in group homes, we have well over fifty homes that are group homes. There are few homes where the constituents, we call them constituents, can live independently. But most of the homes have a house mother or a house father to them. And then the Charles Lea Center has a wonderful workability program where people who are educable to a degree can go

and work or be trained to work, in this workability building, or they can go to work sites, like say your company or say a restaurant here. I saw a young lady cleaning tables the other day and she's a constituent at the Charles Lea Center and so anyways, the Charles Lea Center Foundation nominated me, because a not-for-profit has to nominate the candidates for the Mother of the Year. I was very honored and flabbergasted when I got a phone call that the Charles Lea Center Foundation was hoping to nominate me and I was so thrilled and flattered and said yes, yes, yes! But I had to work, work, work because I had to go back through my life. It made me organize my life and made me look and see what I had done over the many, many years. But it falls down to basically healthcare, or access to health, higher education, or the arts. I've done a lot with the ballet, the Little Theater, the Artists' Guild, the art organizations, but also with healthcare, like I've been on the board here for the Cancer Association, Spartanburg and Cherokee Counties for years and years and years, as well as St. Luke's Free Medical Clinic, I was on the Board of Trustees at Mary Black Hospital for twenty years, and the Mary Black Foundation, which had to leave the hospital when the hospital was sold in 1996. It was no longer an eleemosynary institution; it was sold to a public corporation, so the foundation had to leave the hospital, and reconfigure it's mission for Wellness and Active Living, so that's how the funds are involved in initiatives around Spartanburg and those two arenas of life.

So, then I've been on the Spartanburg Community Foundation, which we call the Spartanburg County Foundation, and that work is more limited in what the trustees can do with the resources, because there are trustee funds that the trustees can distribute to various requests for funds, but there are also advised ones from individuals, or organizations house their funds there and all the funds are invested together so they reap more benefit. I've had a great education through my community, I've had education that the books could never have taught me. The beautiful thing about volunteering in different arenas is that I have so many good friends that I would have never have known otherwise, and that's a treasure, because I am a person who loves people. The leaves on those trees and the flowers are gorgeous and the furniture and our surroundings are beautiful, but people are the ones with personalities.

Dr. Disney: That's right, that's well said. Let me ask you this. What does motherhood mean to you?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Motherhood means a tremendous blessing that I've had that opportunity and it means that I have a huge responsibility in carrying on and conveying the values in which I've been blessed to have growing up. And that's motherhood to me.

Dr. Disney: That's beautiful. You mentioned this earlier, but I'm going to ask this again. What did it mean to you to be named South Carolina Mother of the Year in 2011?

Marianna Habisreutinger: It meant that I was absolutely thrilled and overwhelmed and flabbergasted, but it also validated that obviously the lovely committee that picked me out thought highly of what I had been involved in through the years. It just validated my life.

Dr. Disney: That's beautiful. Tell us about that year as Mother of the Year, the activities you were involved in.

Marianna Habisreutinger: It was marvelous and I cannot tell you one specific incident other than the entire year was beautiful. I think maybe they could have used me more to maybe advocate for some female issues or children's issues more, but anyways, I loved it, it was just great. I felt very, very, very proud to stand up there in Salt Lake City, Utah and say I represent the state of smiling faces and beautiful places. You know, that's our license plate, on the back of our license plate.

Dr. Disney: That's when you went to the National Mother of the Year Award Ceremonies.

Marianna Habisreutinger: That's actually in my speech.

Dr. Disney: We'd like to hear you give that speech. Would you like to give it now?

Marianna Habisreutinger: I'll give it any time you wish.

Dr. Disney: Let's hear it now because I'm thinking about your winning year as Mother of the Year and you gave this speech when you were there in Utah?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Every mother was required to give a speech and I took my speech and the theme of speeches that year was to elevate yourself and your community. And so, I inherited, my sister and I did, a huge collection of quilts that had been made by my grandmother Black's family members over a period of seventy-five to eighty years. And my sister and I framed sixteen of these quilts and now all of them are in this booklet here and they're hanging in the Mary Black Foundation because I mean, they're as big as this wall, you know how big this quilt is. And each quilt has a little note on it about who's shirt tail or skirt tail or what kind of fabric it came from and who, maybe Aunt Meg stitched with the help of Gran Maw or something like that. So I interwove the idea of quilting into my speech. So, I will read my speech and I will put on these glasses since I haven't read this speech in a while.

After being selected the South Carolina Mother of the Year, the state of smiling faces and beautiful places, I learned that years ago, for the Mother of the Year, state mothers were asked a quilt a quilt or to provide a quilt. And how many of you here today are glad that you did not have to quilt a quilt? I certainly am because I do not quilt. Still, I am blessed by the legacy of quilting. My grandmother, Mary Snyder Black, preserved quilts that she had been given and those that she and other relatives made over a period of seventy-five years or more. Sixteen of those quilts now hang framed in the Mary Black Foundation.

In considering today's talk, I realized that a quilt is a marvelous metaphor made lovingly by hand from scraps material, fashioned as gifts, preserved as markers of special occasions. Quilts represent a womanly art that is as warm and nurturing as it is

beautiful and useful. The feminine art of quilting symbolizes the many ways mothers celebrate and elevate our children and our families. By marking the milestones that matter most – a wedding, a birth of a child – quilts, like mothers, memorialize the importance of family life. By handing them down, our mothers and grandmothers connect us to the past and remind us to do the same fine handy work with our children and with our families. What we give to our children, we give families everywhere.

The precious and sacred beings that are our children, and all children, magnify every investment we make in them as they step forward in their public lives. I taught my children what my family taught me, to be servants for their families, and by extension, to their communities. As I've fulfilled community commitments, including my work to support children and adults with disabilities and special needs through the Charles Lea Center Foundation, I often took my children with me. They spent hours watching, doing, learning. I wanted them to understand one important thing – that they and my family were more important to me than I.

So fellow mothers, perhaps we have crafted a quilt after all. Because wouldn't you agree that the threads of our love and values stitch together families, schools, churches, communities, and ultimately our world? Our children and our families are the quilts that we patch and the beautiful homespun legacy that we pass along. Congratulations to you, fellow quilters.

Dr. Disney: Wow, that is beautiful.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well thank you, thank you. I was real proud of it. I don't mean to be tooting my own horn.

Dr. Disney: You should!

Marianna Habisreutinger: I heard many mothers from all over the country give their talks and most of them revolved around particular situations just in their own lives, maybe with a disabled child, which you have great empathy for, but I felt like this included the community, it included my family, it included the past, it included the future hopes, so anyway, I didn't win, but I do think it was one of the top three speeches.

Dr. Disney: It's a beautiful summary of everything you've just said kind of that Mother of the Year is about and what this project is about, having this intergenerational conversation around women, looking to our past, looking to our future, thinking exactly what you said, take the values of the family and then expand them into the community and to think about what the world might look like or should look like when we do that. The speech that you read is actually a beautiful segue from the first half of the interview, we wanted to hear about you personally, and the second part of the interview where we want to ask you about some larger societal issues. So that's a beautiful segue, I think, to link the two. So let me ask you a few more questions that kind of go that larger level. What do you think are the most issues facing women today?

Habisreutinger: Oh gracious. One, I think very much of, one question is the feminist movement in this country. Well, I think what feminism really means is equal quality for men and for women in every way. In so many countries, that is not true, not true at all. And that, I think, women need to speak up for their rights. If you look at the big national companies, so many of the corporations have a very small percentage of female CEOs and so many of the women up in higher ranks still make less money than the men and can be just as well educated. Now I think the IT world out in California and all, that's kind of the IT world I guess in today's time, that maybe more equalized but I think that and I think domestic violence, which involves not only adults and children, and I've been very involved here with the children's advocacy center, and that is domestic violence or just violence and sexual or physical or mental abuse for children, and one of my sons, my youngest, is Chairman of the Board of the Children's Advocacy Center now, which I'm very proud of that. We don't need domestic violence in the world and you look around the world, in so many countries, the male is the king, the woman is just, you know, kind of the bottom rail on the ladder.

Dr. Disney: That's so important, equal pay for equal work, equal opportunities, trying to fight violence against women and children, I think you've hit some of the most important issues that women globally are dealing with. Do you think women's work and women's roles as mothers have been adequately recognized by society?

Marianna Habisreutinger: In our society, it has more than in other societies. Now we have many societies within our society, so I think in the world in which you live and I live, that's more recognized and equalized, but I'm not sure about, we have so many nationalities that have come here over the last twenty years and more, I don't think that's equally recognized. They have a lot of traditions that will still take a couple of generations, I don't know if you say lose what they brought with them from whatever country from which they came, but a lot of the communities stick really together of the different ethnic groups.

Dr. Disney: And sometimes, I think what I hear you saying, is sometimes those nationalities or ethnicities may bring a traditional view of women that may not adequately recognize women's work and women's role as mothers.

Marianna Habisreutinger: That's right, exactly. That's what I was trying to say, but not very well.

Dr. Disney: I think there are probably a lot of variables that can impact whether or not one values motherhood and a lot of that has to do with your upbringing, how you were raised, within different families, different regions of the country.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Exactly.

Dr. Disney: There could be lots of variables that could impact that.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Absolutely.

Dr. Disney: That there are many societies within our society. One of the things that women struggle with is this idea of balance, balancing work outside the home with work inside the home, and that could be paid work for a job, if husbands and wives both have to work for a living, it could be volunteerism, community service. How are you able to balance, you raised three children, you've been very active in your community, how were you able to balance work inside and outside the home and how do you think women today are able to balance those things?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well, when I had my children, I was free to come in and out of my office as it suited me, or as I needed. So I didn't have to be there all the time and that allowed me a lot of opportunity to be a chauffeur for my children and attend ball games and plays and all that. And, it also allowed me the opportunity to volunteer a lot. It also allowed me the opportunity to travel with my husband because we were blessed with some help. I mean, even my parents, I can remember going to Switzerland when my daughter was six months old and I felt perfectly happy about it. She was six weeks old. But she was with my mother, my father, an aunt and some other help that came in to help. She was better off with them than she was with me. But when I called home and she didn't make a sound, I said, "Well pinch her, I want to hear her!" They had to pinch her to make her give a little squeak, a cry. But I've been allowed the opportunity to be involved in the community a lot more because I think I did not have just a full time job, and my husband was proud of the things I did, and I felt like it was a strong way of exposing my children to my beliefs in caring for others, doing for others, sharing your talents, all the thing that I had been reared to believe.

Dr. Disney: Right, that's so important. And you also spoke to that support network of family that enables women to be able to balance all these things when you have that support network. I think about how single parents, the difficulties when you don't have a strong family support network that can help. It's much harder.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Exactly. And unfortunately today, there's more of that I think than when I was in my young motherhood years. And I think that's difficult, going back to the problems of women today, particularly in this country, we have a lot of single households and I just think it's a very healthy situation for children if they can have a father and a mother.

Dr. Disney: And of course poverty, you know, poverty is another limitation of the income earner versus two that also can lead to class inequality in terms of what women and men are able to balance and achieve in their families and their communities.

Marianna Habisreutinger: And today, I think we have a lot more daycare situations that are offered to these single parents, because there are a lot of men single parents then when my children came along. You know, there was kindergarten, but for the most part, they dismissed at noon. You know the full day kindergarten programs didn't exist at all.

Dr. Disney: Right, the shift to the full day. You mentioned this earlier like you predicted my question. What does feminism mean to you?

Marianna Habisreutinger: It means equal opportunities for men and for women.

Dr. Disney: Do you consider yourself a feminist?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well yeah, because I believe in equal opportunities for women and for men.

Dr. Disney: It seems so obvious, doesn't it? Is there anything else you would like to share with us, any questions you have with us, or anything you'd like to share about your experience, your amazing experience as a volunteer over the years.

Marianna Habisreutinger: You know, opportunities equally for men and women ought to include rights, everything that you, voting rights, whatever, just everything equal for men and women that some countries, women aren't even allowed to have a car driver's license, over in the Arab world.

Dr. Disney: You feel a strong commitment to equality in all spheres for women and men.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Yes, absolutely.

Dr. Disney: I imagine that parents, people who may not consider themselves feminists, if you have a daughter, it seems that you want the same opportunities for your daughter as you do for your son.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Absolutely.

Dr. Disney: That helps bring women and men towards feminism, having a daughter and wanting them to have a world of opportunity.

Marianna Habisreutinger: I think the word feminism hasn't always been understood.

Dr. Disney: I agree.

Marianna Habisreutinger: But I hope that it's being more understood as being equal for men and women.

Dr. Disney: I agree, equal opportunities for men and for women.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Mhmm, for men and for women. Well I've had a wonderful time being interviewed.

Dr. Disney: Well we've had a wonderful time interviewing you.

Marianna Habisreutinger: And I hope to see all of this in a final form.

Dr. Disney: We look forward to sharing that with you and I just want to congratulate you again on your 2011 Mother of the Year award.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well it was certainly an honor and a privilege and I feel like I have the most beautiful and wonderful state to have represented and very thankful for the opportunity.

Dr. Disney: I also want to thank you for all of the advocacy work that you have done on behalf of access to healthcare and people with disabilities and special needs children and adults. You've been a great advocate for very many causes in our state and in our nation and we just want to thank you for all that you've done while raising three very successful children.

Marianna Habisreutinger: And they're taking a very great interest in their community. Like I said, one of my sons is chair of the Children's Advocacy Center, another is on the board of the free medical clinic. I don't want to say "my" because my husband always says, "Well she's mine too, or he's mine too." Our daughter is Chairman of the Board of the South Carolina School of the Deaf and Blind Walker Foundation and she's a trustee at Converse College and she's a trustee at the Mary Black Foundation. So I do think I have instilled in them, and my husband's been a great community volunteer since he's been here, and that's a not a European trait because just the way the government situation is in many European countries. But I think they're taking their community seriously and wanting to do what they can for it.

Dr. Disney: I think you've taught them how to take it seriously. I can't wait to tell my sister, my sister is a quilter, she loves kind of the history of quilting and the metaphor you just described, I want to bring her down to the Mary Black Foundation so she can see the quilts

Marianna Habisreutinger: Please, yes. Where is your sister?

Dr. Disney: I'm from Maryland originally, so she's in Maryland, but the next time they come to visit, we visit each other a lot, I'm the youngest of three and my family is very close, so the next time they visit, we're going to come to the Mary Black Foundation and look at those quilts.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well call me and you all can have lunch with me.

Dr. Disney: Thank you very much, thank you so much.

Marianna Habisreutinger: I'll tell you what, I have more of these at home, I will...

Dr. Disney: We definitely want you to share any and all of your documents, binders, paperwork that you have that the Louise Pettus Archives as well.

Marianna Habisreutinger: This is stuff right here. I can put another one of mine in here.

Dr. Disney: Well you're so kind, thank you so much. Thank you.

Marianna Habisreutinger: That one has a little thing on it that I had put on there to give out at the thing. I'm sorry I only have that one.

Dr. Disney: The national association told you you couldn't give it out because not every state mother was giving something out?

Marianna Habisreutinger: No other mother had anything to give out. But I thought I was supposed to take a paper, I don't know how I got that notion in my head. But somebody must have given me that notion.

Dr. Disney: I think you reflected South Carolina culture well by coming with something to give out to everybody.

Marianna Habisreutinger: I mailed it to everybody that was there, including the board and all the people that were there.

Dr. Disney: That's wonderful. Any final questions for us or thoughts or is there anything else you'd like to share?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Well, no. I'm sure you've learned all about the South Carolina Mothers through Anne, and she certainly knows all about it.

Dr. Disney: Martha Cranford and Shirley Fishburne have taught me, when they first brought me into this project, they taught me a lot about the Mothers Association and then the committee and the committee members have formed such a strong bond reading applications for women like you and making those tough decisions and making selections, they've really formed a bond with each other so it's a wonderful, wonderful thing.

Marianna Habisreutinger: And I've made so many friends, like I've known Anne all my life.

Dr. Disney: What was it like going to the Governor's Mansion, did you have tea in the Governor's Mansion?

Marianna Habisreutinger: Yes, and it was gorgeous. And they allowed me invited all I wanted.

Dr. Disney: That's great, that's such a wonderful tradition.

Marianna Habisreutinger: So they're open for 200 hundred people that came to the tea. And that was lovely and they presented me with wonderful proclamations in the state house. And we can pull it up on the internet.

Dr. Disney: I think that's something South Carolina has done uniquely, I don't think the other states have done that uniquely for their state mothers, so that's something else we're very proud of.

Marianna Habisreutinger: Yes. In fact, I know the states haven't. Did not do anything for their mothers. But one mother, I can't remember if she was from Oregon, she was from one of those northwestern states, she said she was in every parade in every town in the state. She felt like every Christmas parade, every Veterans' Day parade they put her in. Well, they never put me in a parade.

Dr. Disney: So it's interesting. States have different ways that they recognize their state mothers. Thank you so much for your time.