
INTERVIEW WITH CECILIA LAUBY-RYAN, FACULTY EMERITUS

Transcribed by Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft, April 2007

Transcript edited by Karmine Beecroft/Milner Library, January 2023

ELAINE GRAYBILL: —at the Martin Health Center in Bloomington, Illinois. This is October 11th, 2006, and I just want to mention who's in the room. It's Dr. Lauby and then Kate O'Toole, who's the graduate assistant, and Gail Lamb, who's director of development for the College of Education. My name's Elaine Graybill. And then, as I mentioned, Dr. Lauby. First of all, let's get some biographical information to get started. What year were you born?

CECILIA LAUBY-RYAN: [Laughter.] I am 93.

GRAYBILL: Okay, you're 93. Your birthday was in January.

LAUBY-RYAN: So that was January the 4th, 1913.

GRAYBILL: 1913?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: Okay. And where were you born and raised?

LAUBY-RYAN: At Vincennes, in the area of Indiana.

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: Now, that's a very old town.

GRAYBILL: It is.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes. I mean, it goes back almost as far as anything else does. It's not big, but it has [unintelligible] with many kinds of people—you know, with ease.

GRAYBILL: So there's diversity there?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

GRAYBILL: What kinds?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, [unintelligible]. What else? Let's see.

GAIL LAMB: German, maybe? German?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, and let's see here. Of course, Irish.

GRAYBILL: Irish. Was your family Irish?

LAUBY-RYAN: No, my father was born in the small town in England. Not England, but in—what do you call that little town—

LAMB: Scotland?

LAUBY-RYAN: —in Europe?

LAMB: Scotland? Is it Scotland?

LAUBY-RYAN: No, in Europe.

GRAYBILL: Lichtenstein? Or Belgium?

LAMB: Wales?

LAUBY-RYAN: That little town [unintelligible] all the rest.

LAMB: Oh, man! Not London?

LAUBY-RYAN: No.

GRAYBILL: Switzerland?

LAUBY-RYAN: Let's come back to that.

GRAYBILL: We'll go on. We'll come back.

LAUBY-RYAN: Let me think about it. It'll come out.

GRAYBILL: All right. Well, what I'd like to do would be to skip ahead in your life to when you went to Illinois State University, and I believe it was Illinois State Normal University when you started there.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes. No, it—yes, that's right, because I remember when we changed it [unintelligible].

GRAYBILL: That's right. What year did you first go to ISNU?

LAUBY-RYAN: [Pause.] Let me—if I could—

GRAYBILL: We have plenty of time, so—[Laughs.]

LAUBY-RYAN: I went to the eighth grade [unintelligible]. Oh, it was in the last—the Second [World] War had just finished.

GRAYBILL: Okay. So it was in the 40s, the 1940s.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, I would say so, and I think it was the last day of the 1940s, and then that September.

GRAYBILL: Okay. So in the late 40s, right after the war.

LAUBY-RYAN: I would say the last day.

GRAYBILL: Okay. All right. Okay. In September. And what department did you work for, and what kind of work did you do?

LAUBY-RYAN: In ISU? See, that was right after the war, and everybody—I mean, there were a lot of children, and they needed a lot of people to teach those children, so the thing I was did was to set up the off-campus student teaching program.

GRAYBILL: You set that up.

LAUBY-RYAN: I set 'em up, mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: All right.

LAUBY-RYAN: There was only one other that was in existence.

GRAYBILL: In the country?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: Really?

LAUBY-RYAN: As far as I can remember, mm-hmm. And, of course, ISU has been the big—they introduced me one time. I said I was from one of the smaller places, and—see, you have to put up with this.

GRAYBILL: Oh, well, we're happy to put up with this. This is fine.

LAUBY-RYAN: I'm trying to find out how I can put this. President [Raymond] Fairchild was the person who hired me for the job. And the question was? What am I answering you, now?

GRAYBILL: What was your job when you arrived?

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh. I [unintelligible] —

GRAYBILL: Okay, to—

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, there was only one other one, and that was in New York.

GRAYBILL: Oh, in New York.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

LAMB: At Columbia? Was it Columbia?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: And whom did you report to at ISNU?

LAUBY-RYAN: To the president.

GRAYBILL: To the president, okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: To President Fairchild.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

GRAYBILL: Okay. When you came to ISNU, what was the ratio of male and female?

LAUBY-RYAN: Very low on female. I think that's why I got many of the breaks, because I was one of the early women to go into this kind of thing.

GRAYBILL: Really?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: And did that ratio change while you were there?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-mmh [No].

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, well, yes, by the time I was leaving—I mean, we had—well, I set up the—see, the University had a teaching area, but it wasn't big enough for the onslaught that was coming. And so I sat from the very first one who went out, and we split the year. It was seven—into two nine-week—yes, two nine-weeks in the one school year, so we had four groups in, in a whole year.

GRAYBILL: Four groups of student teachers.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes. And I set up the first one, and they had enrolled in the school. See, it was only a teacher education school, but as one of the men corrected me, it was the largest one—teaching education—in the country. And later I couldn't—they had a record of when we went from just teaching to all areas: English, French, you know, et cetera.

GRAYBILL: When it changed to ISU.

LAUBY-RYAN: That's right.

GRAYBILL: I guess I'll get to that, now, because we wanted to ask you about that. Let me skip ahead—

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes—

GRAYBILL: —because we've crafted these questions, and I want to be sure to ask them the way that we wrote them. Were you involved in the name change and in the change of focus from ISNU to ISU?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, we all were involved with that. We couldn't be uninvolved in that, but I thought it was the thing to do because that's the way the world was going.

GRAYBILL: You did. So you were in favor of that.

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, yes, I was in favor of it.

GRAYBILL: Did you testify in Springfield or anything like that?

LAUBY-RYAN: No, I went [chuckles] to schools and talked to the heads of the school or sort of [unintelligible] with the part of it where it had been controlled by the—well, of course, by the people—I mean, I would leave the school, and I went to the—how do you put it?

GRAYBILL: Was it the State Board of Education?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, it was with—well, schools were under the control of whom? I mean, the people—but then, the large ones.

GRAYBILL: The state superintendent or the school boards?

LAUBY-RYAN: It's bigger than that. Maybe it'll come back.

GRAYBILL: Okay. Sure, we can hold off on that, too.

LAUBY-RYAN: But anyway, I mean, I went after—the things that people vote for to establish schools.

GRAYBILL: Oh. Would it be like a taxing district or—

LAUBY-RYAN: Bigger than that.

GRAYBILL: A school district?

LAUBY-RYAN: But anyway, put it this way: there were eight—2,000 students when I went in on that last day, and that first day, and, I mean, we had 2,000 students, and when I left 25 years after that, we were up to 20—2,300.

LAMB: 20,000. When you left, it was 20,000.

LAUBY-RYAN: It was 12,000? Yes.

LAMB: Are you thinking of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, IBHE?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, that's it.

GRAYBILL: Okay. Great.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: Help me if—

GRAYBILL: Yes, that's great.

LAMB: If you don't want me to say anything—

LAUBY-RYAN: No, I appreciate it.

GRAYBILL: Really, if you can help. And so you talked to them, to the IBHE, about this. Or about the name change?

LAUBY-RYAN: I went to the person in charge that was voted in by the people, whatever it was. I mean, because we were all under this—you know—[pause]—can you help me?

LAMB: The Board of Regents?

LAUBY-RYAN: It wasn't the Board of Regents. The things that—the posts that were voted on by the people.

LAMB: I think that's the Board of Regents.

GRAYBILL: I think so, too. We vote on those in the elections.

LAUBY-RYAN: It may be so. Maybe the one that I was thinking about—it had another name, but I think equally the same.

LAMB: They've changed names.

GRAYBILL: Okay. Now, why do you think some people resisted changing the name?

LAUBY-RYAN: That's people, nothing else. I mean, why does somebody like red better than blue?
[Laughs.]

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, that's what it is. It's just a matter of what people like, [what they do?].

GRAYBILL: And what do you think the debate was really about, beyond that?

LAUBY-RYAN: Education, is all I can say.

GRAYBILL: Some people wanted it to remain a teacher's institution.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, we always have two sides.

GRAYBILL: Yes.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, two sides [unintelligible]. And it grew and it grew and it grew.

GRAYBILL: And after it took place, what did people think about it?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, as far as I know, it's always a grand old place. And they worked well together, just like in my old town. You know, [it received people to work with?].

GRAYBILL: They were good people? That's good.

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, they were excellent.

GRAYBILL: That's good.

LAUBY-RYAN: They sure knew what they were doing.

GRAYBILL: Really?

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, they really did.

GRAYBILL: Can you think of any names of people in particular?

LAUBY-RYAN: No, I'd have to look in the books.

GRAYBILL: Okay. Well, if anything pops into your head—

LAUBY-RYAN: My memory is—you know, at my age, it is not the easiest thing in the world.

GRAYBILL: Yes. Well, you're doing really well. You really are.

LAMB: You were very fond of President Fairchild, and you thought he did a good job, Dr. Lauby. Isn't that right? President Fairchild?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

LAMB: You thought he did a good job?

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, that was when the special education began.

GRAYBILL: And did you have student teachers in special education?

LAUBY-RYAN: I had them in everything.

GRAYBILL: In everything.

LAUBY-RYAN: Luckily and fortunately, I had a very widespread background.

GRAYBILL: What was your background before you came to ISNU?

LAUBY-RYAN: I had my—[Pause.] Now, Cecilia, come on! St. Mary of the Woods. St. Mary of the Woods is right outside of Terre Haute.

GRAYBILL: Oh, St. Mary of the Woods?

LAMB: Yes.

GRAYBILL: You went there? It's beautiful.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, I got my first degree there, my second two at Indiana.

GRAYBILL: Okay. In Bloomington?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, and they were grand people. Of course, I was one of the first women that was doing this kind of thing, and they were looking for women and wanted to—you know, because they needed them. One of my best friends was a man who ran the men's P.E.

GRAYBILL: Really!

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

LAMB: "Pop" Horton?

LAUBY-RYAN: But we had good people on that staff.

GRAYBILL: And so Pop Horton was one of your best friends.

LAUBY-RYAN: He was one of my best—yes. I had—they were all my friends. After he died, one of the men, didn't like me?, because his daughter later told me that—I mean, she wanted [unintelligible] when she went to teach, and I had talked to [Eric?], because that was too short. I mean, she needed the whole bit, and she got—that's the thing she did, stayed in all [unintelligible] the university.

GRAYBILL: Really?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes. The father gives children what they like. You know, that's natural. And I didn't know this. I didn't know she was his daughter.

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: He didn't like me for it, but it turned out to be the right thing to do.

GRAYBILL: Well, good, you were vindicated, then.

LAUBY-RYAN: I was vindicated. She waited until after he died, and then she told me the story.

GRAYBILL: Did you work for President [Robert G.] Bone?

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, yes, we were very good friends.

GRAYBILL: Were you?

LAUBY-RYAN: I was good friends with every president that were there, even some that people had trouble with. I mean, Indiana knew how to teach, and I had an awful good background.

GRAYBILL: Well, that's good. Did you always report to the president?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: Okay. And then so you worked for President Fairchild.

LAUBY-RYAN: And all the ones down till I left there, and I [unintelligible] most every one of them.

GRAYBILL: And then Bone?

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, yes, we were good friends. But all of them—

GRAYBILL: And then [Samuel] Braden.

LAUBY-RYAN: —we were good friends.

LAMB: All the "B's."

GRAYBILL: And [David] Berlo.

LAUBY-RYAN: One of them told me one day—he said, "I guess you and I are the only people that have [unintelligible]." So we had a visit. And we really got along very well.

GRAYBILL: And that was Berlo, you said?

LAUBY-RYAN: Hmm?

GRAYBILL: Are you talking about President Berlo?

LAUBY-RYAN: President Berlo, yes.

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: He and I were—I got letters back from him after he left there. There wasn't one of them I didn't get along with.

GRAYBILL: Which president do you think was the best president?

LAUBY-RYAN: I wouldn't answer that.

GRAYBILL: Okay. That's fair. [Laughs.]

LAUBY-RYAN: To me, they were all there at the right time.

GRAYBILL: Well, let me ask you about being a woman on the faculty at ISNU.

LAUBY-RYAN: I couldn't have been better—I mentioned that one man, because of his daughter, but, I mean, I got along with everybody.

GRAYBILL: And so it was a good environment? Or do you think it was you? Do you think it was what you brought to it, or do you think it was a good environment for women?

LAUBY-RYAN: That question just doesn't fit. I mean, it was a good place to work, [unintelligible] anybody. I mean, it seemed like any time you wanted help, there was somebody there to get it or come and ask you for it. One time, when they [unintelligible] had to [unintelligible] me up [chuckles] to get [unintelligible]. But don't put that in there. [Laughter.] It was a jealous person who didn't bring me in. Today does that happen, they came in and got me? Actually, that's not difficult. I said, "You should go and tell him, [unintelligible]."

GRAYBILL: You [unintelligible] over here for a minute.

GRAYBILL: The fact that your job changed over the years because you had so many more students. Did it change in other significant ways while you were at the University?

LAUBY-RYAN: No, I don't think so. It was always one and the same.

GRAYBILL: You were always in charge of the student teaching program.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

GRAYBILL: Okay. And then you had—when it became—

LAUBY-RYAN: They named part of the University after me.

GRAYBILL: They—?

LAUBY-RYAN: My name is on the University.

GRAYBILL: I know, there's a—it's the—

LAMB: Dr. Cecilia J. Lauby Teacher Education Center.

LAUBY-RYAN: Thank you. Thank you.

GRAYBILL: Yes, I've heard that. Yes, that's wonderful. That's a real honor, isn't it? Were you there? Was there a ceremony for naming that, and you were there?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm, oh yeah.

GRAYBILL: Good. That must have been a fine moment for you.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes. That happened just—I mean, I have—I'm [unintelligible].

GRAYBILL: —student teachers, and did that change over the years?

LAUBY-RYAN: It didn't change. I said to the students, "If you want to learn, then you must go someplace other than the school that you went through." I wanted to get them away from people because [chuckles] in the two cases, it was very interesting. I mean, the one man that wanted—it was a good school, and I told him, "There's nothing wrong with the school," but he went through it, and he would still be, in their mind, this boy that went through it, and he came back and said, "You were right."

GRAYBILL: Really?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

LAMB: She's talking about the lab schools. Are you talking about [Thomas] Metcalf [School] and U High [University High School]? Are you talking about Metcalf and U High?

LAUBY-RYAN: [No audible response.]

LAMB: No, you're not. Okay. Excuse me.

GRAYBILL: Did your responsibilities change in how closely you supervised them? Did you have to delegate more in later years?

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, there were 200 people that were going out doing the supervision.

GRAYBILL: Okay, and that was in later years?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, yeah, that was—

GRAYBILL: And how about at the beginning?

LAUBY-RYAN: I did that. I went out. Really, I almost—I mean, I went out—I don't know, we had students all over the country.

GRAYBILL: So you were on the road quite a bit, then,—

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes,—

GRAYBILL: —supervising the student teachers.

LAUBY-RYAN: —I was in the early years. But I sent the president an itinerary every week.

GRAYBILL: Did you?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, because, I mean, when I'd go, I'd let him know. I mean, my theory was, if you want to know what they're doing, then let them do the best that they can, not the worst and not tell them. So I always told them when I was coming.

GRAYBILL: Okay. No surprise visits.

LAUBY-RYAN: No surprises. And when I was there, I mean, I always had both a teacher and a student in any mutual discussion.

GRAYBILL: And then did you train your supervisors in later years, the people who went out?

LAUBY-RYAN: No. I mean, there were other people in the University who were doing that.

GRAYBILL: Okay. And then at the end, did you do any personal supervision at all of the student teachers?

LAUBY-RYAN: No. Oh, no, because, I mean, they were in the hundreds by that time.

GRAYBILL: Yes. So it was all delegated to other people.

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm. But I met with them. I always met with them at the beginning of the semesters.

GRAYBILL: With the student teachers.

LAUBY-RYAN: And the teachers.

GRAYBILL: And the teachers, yes.

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: In groups?

LAUBY-RYAN: No. I mean, separate groups.

GRAYBILL: Separate? Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes. But if I was ever out, we put everybody together so everybody heard what went on, not just somebody one thing and somebody another. And I think that was the things that made it work so well.

GRAYBILL: And so you have a philosophy about this.

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, yes.

GRAYBILL: And one thing was to let them do their best, so no surprise visits, and another thing was to communicate with them, with everyone.

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: And what else was part of your philosophy?

LAUBY-RYAN: That was the point. I mean, they all had to work together and they all had to know what was going on.

GRAYBILL: So communication.

LAUBY-RYAN: [Laughs.]

GRAYBILL: And then what else was part of your philosophy?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, I always met with them before they went out, every year, and told them that if they wanted success, push the person ahead of them, not try and knock him down.

GRAYBILL: Really?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm. And it works. It works.

GRAYBILL: That's a very humane kind of philosophy, isn't it?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes. Well, it works. I can tell you that.

GRAYBILL: Do you think those standards or that idea is still prevalent?

LAUBY-RYAN: Any student who comes to me and says, "What should I do?" I tell him, "Push the person ahead of you."

GRAYBILL: Don't knock him down, huh? Well, that's good. We need more of that, I think, in the world.

LAMB: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: Well, here's a question: How do you think teaching standards have changed over the years?

LAUBY-RYAN: They've gotten better.

GRAYBILL: Do you think so?

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, I do.

GRAYBILL: Can you elaborate on that a little?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, the world has increased. I mean, you know, has succeeded. See, I go back to the days when everything was down, and now everything is up. And that's what the result was.

GRAYBILL: Are you talking about everything was down after the war, is that—?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, men were all [out?]. And they was the nicest people to have in the class because anything you suggested, they'd try.

GRAYBILL: Really?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

GRAYBILL: The men, huh? Yes.

LAUBY-RYAN: I say “men” because there were more men than anything at the beginning, of course. I mean, we had women, and I’d say the major—what it was, the major part of success, or doing, was with the upper—I mean, not the elementary, because, I mean, that was controlled where [unintelligible] — one of the students came and said, “Can’t we go off campus?” And then I’d talk with those people, and they said, yes, they would—this sounds interesting. The woman who was in charge of that group said, “Can we go out and choose?” [Laughs.]. I thought that was interesting.

GRAYBILL: Go out and choose their own schools?

LAUBY-RYAN: Elementary. Because most of them were women, you see.

GRAYBILL: Mm-hmm, and you didn’t think that was a very good idea?

LAUBY-RYAN: I thought that was all right, didn’t make any difference to me. But [unintelligible].

GRAYBILL: Well, you know,—

LAUBY-RYAN: See, the University was building all the time.

GRAYBILL: Yes.

LAUBY-RYAN: And you had to have more.

GRAYBILL: And, now, you said that teaching standards have improved, and what was your role in helping to change those standards?

LAUBY-RYAN: I’m not very good at pushing myself. I tried to push the other person. I practice what I preach.

GRAYBILL: You could be matter of fact about it and just tell us the facts, and we won’t take it as bragging or anything.

LAUBY-RYAN: I always say to them—I mean, I’m one of these people who say, you know, “Try to do the best that you can.” I don’t know what else to tell you.

GRAYBILL: And that was how you influenced students.

LAUBY-RYAN: There was a student, yes. I mean, I tried to get them to want to do whatever it was. It was interesting. I can remember asking one gentleman why he was repeating. This was a student. His supervisor said, “Don’t blame him.” He [unintelligible] right there. He said, “I do it all the time and I never realized it before.”

GRAYBILL: Really?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

GRAYBILL: He picked up a habit from—

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

GRAYBILL: That's interesting.

LAUBY-RYAN: And, see, he wasn't aware of it.

GRAYBILL: And then he became aware of it.

LAUBY-RYAN: So everybody did better.

GRAYBILL: Yes.

LAUBY-RYAN: I mean, I always tried to go for the positive view. I think it's the positive thing that does the thing.

GRAYBILL: That's good. Well, how do you think that ISU's teacher education program is similar and different from other teacher education programs?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, frankly, I just don't know other programs very well. Of course, I took biology for seven years. I have both science and—I had very full background, because I went to schools that you had to have things that I wasn't taking, so I had a broad background. One of the men said, "Why don't you try to [unintelligible] so-and-so?" I said, "[unintelligible] all the men?" And I thought he was going to [unintelligible].

[Laughter.]

GRAYBILL: Do you think ISU was unique in how they trained teachers?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, really, I didn't train them anyplace else.

GRAYBILL: Yes. I didn't know if it had the reputation back in those days.

LAUBY-RYAN: It always had a reputation. Of course, when I said I came from a smaller school, the man who was conducting that group said, "Don't you know that that's the [largest?] teacher education place in the county?" And it is today.

GRAYBILL: Yes. Yes.

LAUBY-RYAN: It hasn't always been. It goes up and down. They all do. But it was tops when I went there, and it was tops when I left.

GRAYBILL: Yes. Well, that's really something.

LAUBY-RYAN: And the other day they told me it was tops again.

GRAYBILL: Yes, it is. It certainly is.

LAMB: It's tops, right.

GRAYBILL: Yes. Well, this is another topic here. We saw that you used to give public speeches on topics like—

LAUBY-RYAN: Public what?

GRAYBILL: —“Understanding Girls Seven to Seventeen” and “How Do I Rate As a Teacher?” Do you remember giving speeches that people attended?

LAUBY-RYAN: What I remember was [chuckles] my secretary said something about what would I get paid for that, and I laughed so hard—[Laughter.] She almost [unintelligible]. It was fun. It was fun, and they learned. Just this last year, some [unintelligible] never thought that they’d be a teacher, and they thought they’d be a secretary or something. I said, “Secretaries are fine. I mean, you need them. There are some very good ones.” But it just was good, that’s all.

GRAYBILL: So you gave the talks because it was fun to do, and it helped them?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes. The positive is nearly always right. Frankly, I can’t think what’s wrong with that, but then that’s another story.

GRAYBILL: Do you have a lot of your former students who come back and talk to you?

LAUBY-RYAN: I have had, mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: Are there any who have gone on to become famous?

LAUBY-RYAN: Take this off.

GRAYBILL: And so the students obviously liked those speeches, too. Is that right? Did they have a lot of students attend those speeches that you gave?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mostly it was people—yes, I never—wouldn’t you say so?

LAMB: Mm-hmm.

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: Did you ever go to any of those?

LAMB: No, I met Dr. Lauby seven years ago, so I missed that part of her life.

LAUBY-RYAN: [Laughs.]

LAMB: Just she’s told me a lot.

GRAYBILL: You talked about “Girls Seven to Seventeen” in one of your topics. How have they changed over the years, girls seven to seventeen, is that a—

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, you have one, you would know.

GRAYBILL: I have a daughter. [Laughter.]

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, and [unintelligible] question. I mean, you can't keep track of [unintelligible]. Everybody doesn't do the same thing.

GRAYBILL: Yes.

LAUBY-RYAN: So you're not going to get me. Try again.

GRAYBILL: Okay. [Laughter.] Well, let me ask you a different question, then: How involved were you with the community over the years, the Bloomington-Normal—

LAUBY-RYAN: I was too busy.

GRAYBILL: At the University?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: There's one thing we wondered about, and that is that when you were offered the position at ISNU, what influenced your decision to accept the job?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, it was good pay, for one thing, but, I mean, nothing compared to what it is today, even then. But I really don't know what [unintelligible].

GRAYBILL: Now, there were some all-women's teacher colleges.

LAUBY-RYAN: There are some women teachers that are no good at all, just like there are some men.

GRAYBILL: Did you ever think about going to an all-women's teacher college?

LAUBY-RYAN: No, I wouldn't have. I mean, my first college was an all-woman college.

GRAYBILL: That's right.

LAUBY-RYAN: Then after that, they were all the other kind.

GRAYBILL: So you did that by choice.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

GRAYBILL: Not to return to the all-women's environment.

LAUBY-RYAN: They didn't have what I needed.

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: I mean, Indiana had a few as good.

GRAYBILL: Okay. Well, early in your time at ISU, were there people of color on the faculty?

LAUBY-RYAN: I imagine there have been people on the faculty from every place I've been, even in—Vincennes, Indiana. My sister was the music supervisor there. She said something about the others.

GRAYBILL: —ISNU and ISU, that you had more people of color on the faculty?

LAUBY-RYAN: I don't know, I enjoy people of color. I always have. I knew them from the beginning when I was little. We respected them in my hometown, and I have respected them all my life.

GRAYBILL: So that was part of the diversity in Vincennes?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: That's right.

GRAYBILL: And then another question is, were there students of color?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, there were.

GRAYBILL: In the 40s and—?

LAUBY-RYAN: The schools—we had one in Vincennes for a while.

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: My sister taught the music. [Laughs.]

GRAYBILL: At a school with non-white students.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, at the public school.

GRAYBILL: I know you've talked about this a little bit, but let me just ask you this one, too: What was the racial climate on campus then, when you arrived? Were there any problems?

LAUBY-RYAN: They will have problems with racial. I mean, I don't care where they were from, whether they were from the South or from the North or from Egypt. I mean, they're people just like everybody else. I don't know why people make such a to-do about it.

GRAYBILL: And what about your student teachers? What was the composition of that group?

LAUBY-RYAN: Of course, highly white.

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

GRAYBILL: And did you place any student teachers in inner-city schools?

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, yes. We had a lot of them in Chicago.

GRAYBILL: Did you?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

GRAYBILL: And what can you say about that? Was that a different—

LAUBY-RYAN: When I talk about [unintelligible] today, and, I don't know, I just never had trouble with anybody.

GRAYBILL: Did your students—

LAUBY-RYAN: I made it a point.

GRAYBILL: That's really good. Did your students fear going into the inner-city schools?

LAUBY-RYAN: No.

GRAYBILL: There wasn't an issue—

LAUBY-RYAN: That's where—that was a place where you could put students in other places, if you know what I mean, in Chicago, [unintelligible]. That's just another city. I mean, that's a different situation than the regular ones.

GRAYBILL: Okay. Yes, it would be, wouldn't it?

LAUBY-RYAN: [Laughs.]

GRAYBILL: Did you have to convince students to take placements in the inner city, or were the students eager to do that?

LAUBY-RYAN: Really, it just wasn't a problem.

GRAYBILL: It wasn't. Okay. We're just trying to get at things here. We're curious to know, you know: Was it a problem, wasn't it a problem? It seems to me that students have changed a lot, even since I was in college.

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, everybody's changed.

GRAYBILL: Yeah, and I wonder—

LAUBY-RYAN: Look at what you're wearing. It's beautiful.

GRAYBILL: Thank you.

LAUBY-RYAN: I mean—

GRAYBILL: We're both purple, aren't we?

LAUBY-RYAN: It changes. This changes just the same way.

GRAYBILL: And so did you see a change in the students over your time?

LAUBY-RYAN: You see change in everybody. Look how different I am than when I was doing this.

LAMB: [Laughs.]

GRAYBILL: Do you think their values have changed, or their work ethic?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-mmh [no].

GRAYBILL: No. Okay. Okay, here's a good one for you. You can dig into this one: What makes a good teacher?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, first she has to have something up here.

LAMB: [Laughs heartily.] That's good.

GRAYBILL: That's good. And she pointed to her head.

LAUBY-RYAN: That's the most important.

GRAYBILL: She has to have something upstairs there, okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes. A person who can see more than down one street and who can eat more than one kind of food, who can dress properly. What else would you say?

LAMB: How about how they feel about their students?

LAUBY-RYAN: Mm-hmm.

LAMB: How a teacher feels about students? Would that be a part of it?

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, maybe, I imagine that's it. Yes, I wouldn't be a bit surprised. Of course, I liked them, and when you get somebody who's got something up here, they enjoy using it, too. [Chuckles.] I was thinking about something that happened in a situation, and give students credit: They use their heads, particularly when you get to the high school age. They think twice before they speak a lot of times.

GRAYBILL: It sounds like they must have liked you a lot. You have a positive attitude and giving them the benefit of the doubt.

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, yes. Why not?

GRAYBILL: Not everybody's like that, you know.

LAUBY-RYAN: [Laughs.]

GRAYBILL: As we all know.

LAMB: As we all know.

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes, there's [cross-talk; unintelligible],

LAMB: Cecilia is a jewel.

GRAYBILL: Why did you stay at Illinois State as long as you did?

LAUBY-RYAN: Because everything was going the way I wanted it to go.

GRAYBILL: That's good. That's a good reason to stay, isn't it? We've made such good progress. Do we have a few more minutes?

LAMB: I think we have about five, max.

GRAYBILL: Okay. Well, I hope you don't mind if I ask you some questions about your family growing up.

LAUBY-RYAN: Oh, okay.

GRAYBILL: Is that all right? How far did your parents go in school?

LAUBY-RYAN: About as far as you could go at the time that they were living.

GRAYBILL: Through high school?

LAUBY-RYAN: Yes.

GRAYBILL: Any college?

LAUBY-RYAN: No. Of course, my sister did. She had the same as I did. My mother and my grandmother both had as much as women did in those days, and my dad was a builder, so he knew.

GRAYBILL: And did you have one sister?

LAUBY-RYAN: One sister, and that's all. There were two of us. My husband said he never knew two people who [were so different?].

LAMB: [Laughs.]

LAUBY-RYAN: We all got along real well.

GRAYBILL: What did your sister do for a living?

LAUBY-RYAN: She was the supervisor at our hometown, in music.

GRAYBILL: Okay.

LAUBY-RYAN: And very successful. There was standing room only when she died.

GRAYBILL: Did she go to Indiana as well?

LAUBY-RYAN: Did she what?

GRAYBILL: Go to University of Indiana?

LAUBY-RYAN: No. [Voices in background can be heard.]

LAMB: We probably need to wrap it up. [To others]: We're about done.

LAUBY-RYAN: She went to St. Mary in the Woods. That's as far as she went.

GRAYBILL: Okay. Well, you know, it sounds like we need to wrap it up, with people needing the room. I really—we really appreciate all of your answers and information.

LAUBY-RYAN: Well, I hope I gave you what you want.

GRAYBILL: You certainly did, and thank you so much.

LAUBY-RYAN: But it's all a happy world to me in that area in my life.

GRAYBILL: That's really a good story to hear. It's great. So thank you, and we'll [cross-talk; unintelligible].

LAUBY-RYAN: I've enjoyed visiting with you. With you two, we were [unintelligible].

GRAYBILL: We'll tell Kate she can turn off the recorder now.