



Interview with Miami Beach Commissioner Joy Malakoff

Kathy: We are doing an interview with Joy Van Wye Malakoff. Did I pronounce that correctly?

Joy: Yes. Thank you.

Kathy: A third generation Miami-Beacher. We're, today's date is December 2nd, 2014. This is being recorded by Close-Up Productions. Interviewer is Kathy Hersh. The first question I'm dying to ask is, to be in a place for as long as you have, to be the third generation, what does that feel like, being a resident of a place where you have that long family history? How does it affect your life?

Joy: Well, I started coming to Miami Beach in the winters. From the time I was a baby I started. I skipped Kindergarten but started first grade at North Beach Elementary School. When I passed North Beach Elementary School today, I have memories of being at North Beach Elementary. It looks so similar, and yet the school has expanded. There are new buildings there, but when I look at it, I can still see the old North Beach Elementary and that's true of many other places in the city.

I lived away from Miami Beach for many years. I lived in Japan for two years and in New York for thirteen years, returning permanently to Miami Beach in 1971, so I also have the distance. You know when you come back and when you go across the causeway to Miami Beach and start seeing the palm trees and it's, it's such a wonderful memories that blends with memories of the past and, and the vision of today. Of what we see today.

Kathy: Do you think the fact that your longtime connections, did that influence in any way your decision to go into local politics?

Joy: Oh I'm sure it did. I have a real genuine love of the city of Miami Beach. I loved growing up here. I loved going to school here. I had a choice of continuing at Lawrence High School in New York or continuing at Miami Beach High School here, and there was no choice at all. Miami Beach High School was much better and more interesting and fun, and I really loved being down here. I always hated cold winters besides, but it was the school itself and friends down here that made that choice easy to make.

There's been so many changes in Miami Beach, and yet it's still Miami Beach. It still seems like a small town. Our population on a

daily basis may be 200,000 people but the permanent population is only about 89,000. Of course growing up the population was much, much, less than that.

Kathy: Tell me about growing up here. What are some of your earliest memories?

Joy: Well I remember my parents and grandparents used to take my brother and I everywhere so we, we. When I was quite young I got to go to nightclubs likes Ciro's and the Latin Quarter on one of the Islands. I remember Pickin' Chicken near the Everglades Cabana Club on, I think it's 23rd street. My parents had a cabana there right next door to the old beautiful Pink Roney Plaza Hotel and right around the corner on the south of that was Pickin' Chicken, which was famous for their fried chicken and French fries. I remember going down to South Beach. There was a Boy Scout park down there, Boy Scout camp.

Kathy: Where was that?

Joy: At the very end. It's where South Point Park is today. South Point Park where, today is beautiful. We just did a wonderful renovation of it, but in the old days it wasn't nearly as pretty, but it did have a, a dog kennel for racing, racing grey hounds and it had a Boy Scout camp.

Kathy: This is the first I'm hearing about the Boy Scout camp. Did you have brothers and sisters?

Joy: I had one older brother, but he was not a Boy Scout but I did know about it and Beach High, the old Miami Beach High School was built around a courtyard with the patio in the center. We did not have air conditioning when I went to school. In fact, one of the things when my children were growing up here, I got active and president of the PTA at Beach High and before that I was active at North Beach Elementary School and one of the things we did was raise money to put air conditioning in the schools. Now of course all the schools are built with air conditioning but growing up we had courtyards. North Beach was built the same way.

Kathy: So, was it insufferable?

Joy: It was hot. [laughs] It really was very, very, warm, but we were used to it and the houses didn't have air conditioning either, until later years. Later in the 1950's of course we did have air conditioning then. The room air conditioners in the windows or in the walls.

Kathy: Did you ever do field trips? Walk over to the beach?

Joy: Yes. We definitely went to the beach but not, not from the school, I mean from home. We, our home, my grandparents originally moved to, from Chicago in the winters. To get away from the very

cold Chicago winters they bought a home at 9th and Lenox Avenue in what's now considered South Beach and in 1940 my parents were married at that house at 9th and Lenox and then had two children.

My older brother I mentioned, Tony, and myself and then the house on Lenox was too small so my grandparents decided to buy a home up at 64th and Pinetree Drive and their friends said, "You're crazy." North Beach Elementary School on 41st Street was considered the north part of town. There were still some shops. There was the Royal Farm Food and Vegetable Market. There were bakery. There were different neighborhood shops on 41st Street then but that was the end of town. There were no stores or anything beyond that, so their friends said, "You're crazy to move so far north."

So, of course 64th Street is no longer way north. It's like the middle of the beach and Miami Beach, of course, goes up to 87th Terrace but at the time in 1940 it was almost, it was a lot of empty lots and my brother and I used to go across the street. Now there are beautiful homes there on North Bay Road, but at the time they were just empty lots with a few homes and we used to go to these empty lots with a bamboo-fishing pole and go fishing in the canal.

Kathy: Did you ever catch anything?

Joy: Oh yeah. We caught a lot of fish. We caught Grunts, we caught Snappers and some ugly blowfish that I think still are there.

Kathy: Sounds like an adventure.

Joy: I actually fell in one time,

Kathy: [Laughs]

Joy: ...because we used to take raw shrimp as our bait and we'd put it like, there's a bridge that goes across to La Gorce Island we'd put the shrimp underneath the bridge so that the we wouldn't make it to smelly and would bait the hooks and I went to get the shrimp from under the bridge and slipped and fell in the water and my brother rescued me.

Kathy: You couldn't swim?

Joy: Oh, no, no. It was shallow there. It was on the rocks. I just got skinned up.

Kathy: Oh.

Joy: Yes, I could swim.

Kathy: [laughs] I...

Joy: But at that time we didn't have — very few houses had swimming pools, so that, at that time it was very popular for families to rent cabanas at the ocean front hotels and it was, at the time, the late 1940s, 1950s, especially in the 1950s, there was a new hotel every year and it was the Sherry Frontenac, it was the Fontainebleau, the Eden Rock and the Casablanca. They were all brand new hotels and different people would take cabanas at the 'in' hotels.

Kathy: So was there sort of [crosstalk]

Joy: We'd swim there. I took swimming lessons at the Everglades Cabana Club. The one that we had a cabana at the longest, before all the other hotels were built. The one that was next door to the Roney Plaza and there was a lifeguard there. A swimming instructor named Whitey and he taught my brother and then he taught me how to swim there and I still have some photos somewhere of my mother and I on the diving board at the Everglades Cabana Club.

Kathy: So there was a whole culture around these cabanas clubs, correct?

Joy: Yes. Absolutely.

Kathy: Would you describe how your family used them and, and if you visited with other families and —

Joy: Oh, yes.

Kathy: What it was like?

Joy: It was very social. We did visit with other families. There were a lot of families there with children and children my brother's age and my age and we would play and swim together and go down to the beach. At that time the beaches had jetties. They were metal walls that went out into the ocean and sort of separated one hotel from the other and we'd go down to the beach, we'd collect shells, we'd swim and go with other kids from the Cabana Club and the parents would sit in the sun, they'd visit, they'd gossip and a lot of card playing. The guys would play, the men would play, I think Gin Rummy and Pinochle and the women would play Canasta and other games and it was, it was definitely social.

Kathy: Was there sort of a hierarchy of, you said every year there was a new hotel, did people shift in groups to stay together, or?

Joy: Sometimes. To some extent, yes. There would be some people that would definitely go from hotel to hotel, and some would go with their friends.

Kathy: Do you think that might be one reason why there was such a close community?

Joy: I think so. The other part I think was that there were a lot of younger families with children and almost all the children went to the either South Beach Elementary, Central Beach Elementary or North Beach Elementary. Then they all went to Ida M. Fischer Junior High. When my brother was, was growing up, he was four years older than I was and then by the time I came along in eighth grade was when Nautilus Middle School, it was then Nautilus Junior High School, was built, and because the kids were all at the same school, all through Nautilus and Miami Beach High School, I think the school system really brought people closer.

Even then parents were involved and Parent Teacher Associates and there was a lot of connection between the parents and the school. There was Mother's Day functions and Father's Day functions, May Day functions, Valentine's Day parties where parents would come in to join their kids at the school for different, whether they were card making parties or something to honor parents, give everybody flowers or something like that.

Kathy: I'm intrigued by the May Day celebrations. The others are kind of self-explanatory, but, what-?

Joy: May Day was celebrated.

Kathy: May Day.

Joy: With the dancing, with the May Pole [crosstalk] and with the ribbons and the girls would dance around and hold the ribbons and the ribbons would twist around the pole, and we celebrated that at North Beach Elementary School.

Kathy: So it was a celebration of spring then, really?

Joy: Spring, yes.

Kathy: Not National Workers Day. [laughs]

Joy: No. Nothing international. It was strictly spring.

Kathy: So... there was that small-town atmosphere of everybody going to the same schools?

Joy: Yes.

Kathy: People meeting up on, what? Saturdays? Sundays, at the cabanas?

Joy: Yes.

Kathy: And then we hear a lot of talk about the restaurants, that there was a lot of eating out. A lot of good food available for inexpensive, an inexpensive meal.

Joy: Right. We didn't eat out a lot. We ate, we at home. The family

always had dinner together at the dinner table. It was something like, we lived with me grandparents and my parents in, in, when we were here. It was the winter semester so from January through May. School used to be out in May, so from January to May my brother and I were in Miami Beach living in the same home as my grandparents and my parents.

My father would commute to his business. He was in the furniture business in New York, so he commuted back and forth on Pan American or Eastern or National Airlines I think it was, but the family always liked eating dinner together, so we really ate dinner home a lot but for special occasions we went out.

There was a restaurant on West Avenue called Gatti's and Gatti's was a wonderful Italian restaurant. There's a story told, my brother finally got his first long pants and he had a white suit and he was very proud of it. He must've been five years old. Six maybe, and he ate at Gatti's and spilled spaghetti sauce down his white suit and started crying.

Kathy: [laughs] I thought that was coming. [laughs]

Joy: But Gatti's was one place we liked going. There was the Ember's, Piccolo's in later years. I don't remember too much. My parents weren't, I know a lot of friends would like to go to the different cafeterias, my parents were not big fans of, it was Dubrows or The Famous, but we enjoyed Wolfie's, Junior's, huge sandwiches. Both of them did, but it was a treat because we didn't go out a lot.

Kathy: Did you feel that any divisions between different cultural groups or ethnic groups here?

Joy: Well, yes. There were very few — there were no African-Americans living in Miami Beach, and for maids or cooks to come from Miami to Miami Beach they needed to have identification cards. I remember Woolworth's on Lincoln Road had separate water fountains for colored and white and, and same thing with restrooms and things like that. Same thing at the train station. I do remember that. I was young at the time. You know, I don't remember a lot about it, but I do remember some of it, and some of it I do remember very well because there were restrictions for Jewish people.

La Gorce Country Club was restricted at that time. La Gorce Island, very close to where we lived, was restricted. The way they did it was... In order to buy a home on La Gorce Island, which was a lovely island and they had a garden and all that, it was secure, you had to be a member of the La Gorce Country Club. You couldn't be a member of the La Gorce Country Club unless you were a Christian, so in that way there were restrictions, and we were exposed to it. There were signs in hotels and advertisements for hotels on Miami Beach and in Bal Harbour and other local communities saying that the hotels were for "selected clientele."

Kathy: That was code.

Joy: [crosstalk] Selected cliental was the code, and I don't remember the signs. I heard there were signs saying, "No Jews No Blacks No Dogs." Whether that's true or just apocryphal I'm not sure, but I did remember the "selected cliental" being used.

Kathy: Did you question it?

Joy: No.

Kathy: Did you understand what that meant?

Joy: Oh I understood it, but it was the way things were. I didn't really question it until I was traveling with my parents. I think I was eleven years old. My parents took my brother and I to see the United States. To visit all the National Parks, to go to California, went all the way up to northwest Canada and we went to, to the usual National Parks: The Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Yosemite.

When we were in California, my father, through his furniture contacts, knew a family who lived in California and had a country club that they belonged to. They had a hotel or something connected to it and my, my father's, my name was Van Wye. It doesn't sound Jewish but my father's family were Jewish. They came from Holland. When he registered to enter the club, there was a question that he was asked: his religion. They did not allow us in.

When I applied to college — I went to Radcliff, and I applied to various colleges. On the applications when I went to high school they asked religion, and there was a quota that many of the Ivy League schools, what percentage of Jewish students were allowed, and I'm sure that's true of African-American as well. There were very, very, few people of color, and there was a very small percentage of Jewish girls at Radcliff when I was there.

Kathy: One of the interesting things about Miami Beach is, in looking at its history, it started out fairly anti-Semitic, at least above 5th Street. Then it became very much associated with the Jewish culture. How did that happen? You must've, your family must've been here long enough in that transition. [crosstalk]

Joy: I don't remember anything specific, but I do know that over the years some of the houses in the neighborhood where we lived up at 64th and Pinetree were all owned by Christians and then as they were sold and people moved to other, to other places. Jewish families.

We had a Jewish family in back of us for over thirty years, but before that, it had been owned by Christians and they moved to, some of them moved to La Gorce Island and to other, or the

Sunset Islands that were restricted and other times they just moved away and lived elsewhere. I don't think, I don't know that they moved for that reason. They could've, they may have just moved for business reasons or relocation, but, some of, there used to be large estates all along Collins Avenue before those hotels were built.

Kathy: You remember those?

Joy: I do remember them. My friends had, a couple of friends had those homes on the ocean. I remember being so impressed. I was New Year's Eve to one the, the name was Robert and Helen Gould. They owned the old Miami Beach Marina. They have passed away since then but they were from Cincinnati and they had, this was their winter home and I remember being so impressed. They had a gate that was around 55th and Collins, it was an electronically controlled gate, which I'd never seen before and we went there, my brother and I went there for New Year's Eve a couple of years with my...

Kathy: For parties.

Joy: For parties with my parents and then they invited other friends and their kids. It was, you know, it was a social place, but, a, it was sort of sad when all those houses were torn down and hotels and condos were built instead, but a...

Kathy: It must be especially sad for people who have such a long history as you have here to have witnessed a lot of that, a, destruction and, so you have memories of those going down, I presume.

Joy: Yes. I do.

Kathy: And when, you remember how you felt, how you reacted to it? Was there a big to do about it?

Joy: There was not a big to do about it, surprisingly, or if there were, if there was I don't remember it. It's possible that there was a to do, but I was probably oblivious and again, I was just here part of the year. I was here the second semester. I wasn't here the whole year until my Junior and Senior year of high school.

Kathy: So in the summers your family traveled, or,

Joy: We went back to our home in New York. I went to camp in Maine and, first a camp in Connecticut and then later a camp in Maine and then back to New York. I then I went to public school in New York for the first semester.

Kathy: You were probably one of the best swimmers at your camp.

Joy: Oh, definitely. I was a very good swimmer. I was a junior Red Cross, whatever it was, lifesaver. Yes.

Kathy: What was it like going back and forth between two very distinct places like this?

Joy: Well, I learned half of New York history and half of Florida history as far as the state history. It was good. Socially, it was difficult because I wasn't with the same children each year. I'd be placed in different homerooms, especially in Miami Beach in Florida. In New York there just was one class. There was one, it was a smaller school, but in North Beach there were two first grades, two second grades and so forth, and I wasn't always placed with the same children. I know people have asked me that, didn't it bother you? I never even thought of it. It was just something we did.

Kathy: You're a kid, you just get used to it.

Joy: Yeah, and we got used to it and it was nice. I avoided the real cold winters. I still don't like cold winters, so Miami Beach is a wonderful place to live.

Kathy: I understand there were children who came down for a limited part of the winter with their families.

Joy: Yes.

Kathy: Some wealthy families and their children would show up in the schools just for a little while.

Joy: Right, and they had a special out-of-town tuition for those children. A lot of them went to the Lear school, which was a private school and you could just go for a couple of weeks or months and you'd just bring your lesson plans down from your homes and wherever you came from and the student teachers there would follow the lesson plans so the when you went back up north after the month or vacation or two months, you would be caught up with your classmates.

At North Beach and Central Beach and South Beach you, they would have tuition for out-of-town students but you would follow whatever the lesson plan that the school was, was using. They didn't have, they didn't take your school from up north to follow those plans.

Kathy: And were you regular students given special instructions about how to treat these students? Did...

Joy: No. Not really.

Kathy: They weren't bullied for being new kids? [Crosstalk]

Joy: No. I don't think they were bullied. Some of them were accepted and some of them weren't. Some of them were friendly, you know, it just depended on the students. I don't remember any particular bullying. It wasn't called bullying then.

Kathy: What about Miami Beach High? People that who went there feel very loyal to Miami Beach High.

Joy: Oh yes. Definitely. I just had the honor as a Miami Beach Commissioner of presenting proclamations to seven or eight outstanding graduates. To be, these people, these men and women were being placed in the Alumni Association Hall of Fame. Each one had a wonderful story.

One worked on the Mercury and Gemini astronaut programs. Other one, I mean, was one of the prime, the primary epidemiologists. He almost, not invented, but helped develop medical ethics during the period of AIDS in this country. There were just outstanding, outstanding graduates. Miami Beach High School had terrific faculty and they still do and there was a spirit at Miami Beach High School.

We never had the greatest sports teams, but we had wonderful debate teams and thespians and drama and there was a special English teacher, Miss Irene Roberts that all of us who had her still talk about her that she was the best teacher that we ever had and all of the English teachers were excellent. I ended up in college majoring in English because of the influence they had. We had play writes and music writers who got their influence, I think, a lot from Miami Beach High School.

Kathy: That's very interesting. At one time, I remember reading that at one time they had some of the highest test scores in the country. Was that just a fluke or do you think there was a tradition attached to.

Joy: I think it was a tradition attached to it. I think a lot of it had to do with the faculty. The faculty stayed years and years. They were very loyal to the school and they were excellent teachers. I mean there were very few that were weak. There were a few first-time teachers, but a lot of the teachers were there for years. Whether it was the debate coach, Margaret Roberge I mean, can you, so many years later.

We just celebrated our 60th high Miami Beach school reunion that I chaired, so if you can believe after 60 years I can remember, and so can my classmates, the names of their favorite teachers and many teachers, which I don't think it usual. If you ask me the names of the teachers I had the first semester in New York, maybe I'll name one or two, but Miami Beach High School had very special feeling. Camaraderie, and student council service clubs.

I was first exposed to classical music and opera as an usher for one of the service clubs I belonged to. There was a National Honor Society. There were, there were different clubs for extracurricular for the Beachcomber Newspaper, the yearbook, Embryo, which was a poetry magazine, which I'm interested in. Of course there was

basketball and football, etcetera, etcetera in the way of sports, but even though the football team kept losing, everybody would go to Memorial Field and, you know, wish that they would win and the basketball teams did better. Football - we were never great champions.

Kathy: [background whispers] ...okay...The debate team. I hear that was, Oh, yes thank you for the queue. World War II, Miami Beach was, as everybody knows, a hub. Was a, what are your memories of that time?

Joy: I do remember my mother working at the USO and my grandmother also got involved in helping in some way, but what I personally remember was at North Beach Elementary School seeing and listening. I had my classroom on 41st street, and I remember sitting in class. We were at that time we were on the second floor. I think I was in second grade or third grade and the Army Air Corps soldiers would march by 41st, down 41st Street heading west to Polo Fields, which is where Nautilus was later built and they would do their training there.

When they marched down 41st Street, they were singing and in cadence, and I remember hearing them do that, and that that's probably my most vivid memory at that time. In New York I remember more about the war effort as far as saving silver foil and you'd roll it up in tin cans and ration books, although we had ration books in Miami Beach also. That's my main, and then we had a Victory Garden, not down here but in New York, where we would grow our own vegetables.

Kathy: How did the war consciousness...? You noted a difference between New York and Miami Beach.

Joy: I think there was more about, I felt there was more through the schools in training the children to save your tin cans and you have to help the soldiers and you have to buy the stamps. There were these stamps I think to help buy war bonds.

I think there was little more patriotism in the New York schools than in the Miami Beach schools. I'm not sure why, but I think, I remember it more vividly from the north and my father was a Civilian Air Warden and he'd go out at night with like, a uniform and we all thought he looked funny. [laughs]

Kathy: Did he do any of that here?

Joy: No.

Kathy: Or was that up in New York?

Joy: That was up in New York. He commuted. He wasn't here as much as my mother and my grandparents. He would go to his business in New York and then fly down for a couple of weeks and then fly

back to New York for business, but he was in New York almost all the time.

Kathy: What other, do you have any stories that you've, you tell at family gatherings that you've handed down of experiences here in Miami Beach? Anything particular, like an incident or anything that your family talks about when they get together?

Joy: Other than my brother spilling,

Kathy: Yes [laughs]

Joy: The spaghetti sauce on his white suite? Alright, my grandmother was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She was a cute short blond with blue eyes, and she was a little prudish. I remember my parents took us once. I told you they took us to nightclubs, and they took us to see, I think it was, Sophie Tucker. Sophie Tucker spoke very crudely, and she told some jokes, and my grandmother started blushing. We, you know, my brother and I, were probably, I was maybe eleven, and my brother was fifteen. We were not nearly as shocked as my grandmother, so we all teased her for, for weeks after that. She didn't get over Sophie Tucker.

Kathy: Let's talk now about your experience getting involved with Miami Beach Politics and, so tell me about your, when your interest, what motivated you to decide to get involved?

Joy: We moved back here permanently in 1971, and I started first to get involved in the children's school. I have three children and they all went through to, through the public schools here and I was president of the gifted program at North Beach first when my youngest child was at North Beach, and that was a new program that was just developed then.

Then later I was president of the PTA at Miami Beach High School, and I had never taken debate in high school and I — I was valedictorian of my graduating class from Miami Beach High School. It was held at the Miami Beach auditorium, which is now, I guess, The Fillmore. I was so scared when I had to speak because the debate teacher didn't allow us to have notes. We had to do it all by memory and the debate students knew what to do but after that experience I didn't want to speak in public anymore.

Getting involved with the PTA and speaking to other parents got me over that, and I remember speaking to the graduating class when my older son graduated in 1978 and handing out the diplomas, and I finally felt I can speak in public, so it started with the PTA. After that I was asked to serve on a couple of Dade County boards, the Community Relations Board and the Parks and Recreation Board. The Community Relations Board was especially interesting and got me involved with various sections of the community.

Kathy: What period of time was this?

Joy: It was in the late 1970s, early 1980s and it was a period of a lot of upheaval.

Kathy: Absolutely.

Joy: In Miami. [crosstalk] I was like the token blonde.

Kathy: The Overtown riots.

Joy: Yes.

Kathy: That was a heavy time to be on that board.

Joy: Yes, yes. It was very interesting, a little frightening, but very interesting. I started in 1979 in a banking career. I completed my education at the University of Miami. I had gone to Radcliff and then married and had lived in Japan for two years after finishing only two years at Radcliff College, where the classes were all at Harvard. After bearing and raising three children I moved back to Miami Beach and went back to the University of Miami to complete my degree. After completing my degree, I went to work, and I started a career in banking as a management trainee.

Became a manager first at American Savings & Loan and then at different banks. During my banking career, especially when I worked at Jefferson National Bank, they very much believed in, in being active in the community, and I had started already in being at active at the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce. I became chairman at the Chamber of Commerce for three years, and then for three more years as chairman of the Pillar Trustees, which is like a higher membership level of the Chamber.

At the same time, I started working as a volunteer at the city of Miami Beach on the Historic Preservation Board. It was the very first Historic Preservation Board in the city. Working on preserving the buildings in South Beach, on Ocean Drive. The first buildings that we actually preserved were the old City Hall, which is there on Washington Avenue, and Carl Fischer's Club House near the Collins Canal. After the Historic Preservation Board, I was appointed to the Planning Board, and I served on the Planning Board seven years as chair rewriting the zoning code for the city of Miami Beach.

Because there was so little development in the city after the initial development of all these hotels, there was like nothing. There were like no more new hotels. South Beach was, had become rather derelict, so the zoning code was made like you could almost build everything. You would get additional Floor Area Ratio, F-A-R, just by putting in landscaping in your building or just by putting a porte-cochère entry to a hotel. Anybody who wanted to sell their condo units would want landscaping, would want an awning or porte-cochère for their residence, so we worked on a new zoning

code doing some down-zoning of the city for several years. It was an ongoing battle with developers.

Kathy: Down-zoning...

Joy: Yeah.

Kathy: ...and developers automatically spells trouble. [laughs]

Joy: Yeah, I chaired a Development Regulations Working Committee with the then planning director, Dean Grandon, for three years, and it was so slow getting everything through, but the reason was a lot of it was being fought, at the time, by developers who wanted the ability to build anything they wanted as high as they wanted. So anyway, a new code was developed, and that code is continuing to be worked on. I did that for a total of eleven years, and then I served on the City's Board of Adjustments, which is more variances of the zoning code.

At the meantime, I was a banker, a fulltime banker, and I really enjoyed the service to the city. I do, and as I said, I really do love the city, and I felt it needed help. So, in whatever way I could, I tried through my chairmanship of a couple of the boards, those two boards, the Planning Board and the Board of Adjustment, to try to help try to steer this city.

Kathy: And how long have you been a commissioner?

Joy: I just started. I was elected. I never ran for public office before, but I ran last November. I just completed my first year of a four-year term as commissioner.

Kathy: And what do you see at the challenges now? You said it's an ongoing...

Joy: It's an ongoing challenge, and right now parts of Miami Beach are at sea level, or at some places even below, a little below sea level. Other places are higher, and during high tides with the rising sea level we need to do a lot in the city to raise streets, to raise sidewalks. That's the meeting I was at before meeting with you, and we were talking about how we can develop it. It's a built city. All of Miami Beach is built.

We need to try and devise a plan where the sidewalks will meet the existing doorways because we can't go and raise all these buildings. You know eventually the buildings will be torn down and rebuilt at a higher level. We see that with new homes being built now are being built at a base flood level, base flood elevation rather than at grade, so they're starting higher up. The sea level, the sea walls are being raised. As they have to be replaced or reconstructed, they're going to be higher, so we're protecting the island and I'm very busy working on that through flooding mitigation and —

Kathy: It's kind of a race against time. [crosstalk]

Joy: It is. It is, and I chair the Land Use Committee for the city this year. It's a committee of all commissioners. There's a Flooding Mitigation Committee, there's Finance and Budget Committee, a Neighborhood Committee and the Land Use Committee, Land Use and Development, and Land Use and Development continues to work on changes of the zoning ordinance, changes in single-family homes and commercial districts. Part of it has to do with the higher sea-levels and how we can deal with that, and yet the houses that are new being built are next to older houses that are lower and we don't want the water running off into the older houses. So it's —

Kathy: What a problem.

Joy: It is a problem. It's very interesting, and I'm sure we'll find solutions. I'm very busy with that now, and I really enjoy my new job. My husband says I work harder, he thinks, as a commissioner than I did as a banker. I'm spending so many hours here but it's fascinating and it's, it's work that needs to be done and, and I feel very good about it.

Kathy: Do you think Miami Beach will continue to grow or will, at some point, growth will have to be limited?

Joy: I think Miami Beach will continue to grow, but I don't think the population is going to expand — if that's what you mean — because it's seven miles long and like a mile-and-a-half wide. There's just not more land, so to some extent where smaller houses, or say, two-story homes or say two-story commercial buildings, like garden apartments are being, have been there since the 1950's and 1960's, some of those may go higher. People may tear them down and build something higher.

It's important to protect the basic fabric of the city, and I think the historic districts have been very effective. Right now we're looking at some historic districts up at the northern end. I don't think anyone wants to tear down North Beach and build everything higher, but I think we need to protect certain areas and in other areas like along the commercial city, the commercial street of 71st Street, or Collins Avenue where the commercial stores they certainly could be improved and perhaps more height make sense there. As far as more people living here, I don't think that the population, that there's room for the population to expand greatly because it's an island.

Kathy: So I think we're, unless you can think of something Carl, I think we're going to wrap up. Is there anything that occurs to you considering the historic nature of this archive? A message to the future?

Joy: A message to the future. Well, I can say we're all trying to do our

best to keep the city a viable — to keep the city livable, to improve the traffic patterns, which right now the traffic is difficult, especially during the winter season when we have so many wonderful visitors coming from all over the world. There's Art Basel and Maison & Objet and the boat show, and the auto show and, and all of these bring a lot of visitors to the city. That exacerbates traffic.

We're looking at water taxis as one way to help, going back and forth. We're looking at shuttles. Right now the city has some free shuttles all around North Beach, all around South Beach, helping people get around without using their cars. I think in the future...I hope in the future generations will find transportation to be improved.

I'm sure the city will be safe and resilient because of the steps that we're taking now to raise streets, to raise sidewalks and change some of the building patterns, but I hope that it always remains green. We're planting lots of trees, and we are expanding all of the park space within the city. As we speak, we just leveled what was a par-3 golf course into a beautiful neighborhood park. It's going to be all planted and a wonderful place for families to go and have a picnic. [crosstalk]

Kathy: Where is that?

Joy: It's just north of City Hall. It's surrounded by a Bay Shore family neighborhood and with a lot of homes right on the, right on the golf course. So, instead of being on a golf course, it will be right on the park, and it will be wonderful for the neighborhood and for the whole cities, especially for families looking for a place to picnic or a place for kids to throw a Frisbee. We're putting a park in where there is an asphalt parking lot right now in back of the Convention Center. It's going to be a park as well with a Veteran's Memorial.

We're putting in more and more — as much as we can. Improving the parks and expanding the beaches. Bringing in more sand because that also acts to protect the city. The more amount of green that we plant, the less problems we'll have with flooding. The more sand that we can keep with our beaches, not only is it beautiful for all our residents and tourists, but it also helps protect the city, so we're doing all we can so I hope future generations will say, "you did good."

Kathy: Well thank you very much.

Joy: It was a pleasure.

Kathy: It's been really fun talking with you.

Joy: Thank you, thank you so much, Kathy.