

Interview with Rosemary Carey

RC: One day, it happened when we worked at 8 Elk Street. That was the first time. And the ladies room, it went all through the building because somebody put something in the women's toilet. So Dr. Wenzl, as I called him at that time, he called me because I was temporarily working for him and he called me in there and he said, "Rosemary, now what did they put down that toilet? Because just because they had their period..." And I said, "Well, Dr. Wenzl..." He said, "Where would it have been." And I said, "I don't know. It had to be a girl who was having her period I guess." He was a piece of work.

FV: Okay, we'll talk more about him. I want you to start by telling me your name and the position you held here and anything you can remember that you're ready to tell us, like that story and then we'll follow up with more questions.

RC: Okay.

FV: So, who are you and what did you do here?

RC: My name is Rosemary Carey and at that time Joe Rulyea was the director of public relations, it was called. I started working here though in 19 ... um... I worked for 20 years here and I retired in 1987, so...and I was temporarily working for Dr. Wenzl and I was grade 5. And then they had a grade 9 test up at the Albany Business College. And anyway, that was messed up a lot. So, because Joe Lockner told me the truth but then another woman told me not the truth so I said to his secretary, "I do not want to work in this office anymore." And she said, "Well Dr. Wenzl wants to see you about that." And he said to me, "Think of the prestige." And I said, "Dr. Wenzl, I am not working for money. I am working so that my five children can go to college." I said, "The heck with prestige." So then I went to work for Joe Rulyea and that was fine.

FV: Tell me about those days here at CSEA.

RC: Oh, it was wonderful. I think it's a great place to work for. And all the employees are friends and it's just a wonderful place.

FV: So, what was it like? Who was the...was Wenzl, he was the head of CSEA?

RC: He was the president at that time but then he left and when I retired, president McGowan, he's gone too, and anyway, they gave me a nice party over to the University Club. And Gary Fryer came over from the Governor's office. I mean, it's such a friendly, nice place. And Danny Donohue, I think, is fantastic. And he has a girl who was here a long time ago when I was here and now she's back. Kathy. And she's upstairs now. It's just a wonderful place, I think, to work for too.

FV: Who were some of the people you worked with, that you had contact with when Joe Rulyea was...when you worked with Joe? Did you have meetings with him?

RC: Oh yeah. I went to one of those convention things once and also, oh Stanley Harnack; he's a great guy upstairs. And Steve Madarasz. He was helpful to one of my grandchildren she had a job with a computer business or something. He's a nice guy too. Well, they all are. I mean, it's just fantastic.

FV: So, what do you remember about Ted Wenzl back in those days? Besides...

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RC: Oh, well, he was a piece of work. He was a nice man, but still...When I got to be the public relations secretary for Joe Rulyea, Dr. Wenzl would come over and say, "Joe, Rosemary can make out my Christmas cards so well. I know that she would want to do them again." Even though I was exited. So, anyway, Joe came over to me and said, "Rosemary, do you really want to do those?" And I said, "Not really." So he goes back to Ted and he says, "She's too busy. She can't do it now."

FV: Good.

RC: But we had a lot of fun and it was wonderful for me, I thought.

FV: So, after Wenzl was who? Was that McGowan after him?

RC: I think it was McGowan, yeah.

FV: What do you remember about him?

RC: Oh, he was wonderful too. I liked him a lot too.

FV: Any stories about these people?

RC: About McGowan? No, just that he was a good president, I guess. I mean, Kathy, WoJo we call her; she now is back in CSEA and she's the office manager assistant to the president and she is a very smart younger lady and we all get together and go out to dinner and then there's Hannifin, do you know him?

FV: No.

RC: Well, he married this girl who used to work here, Kathy. And anyway, he's a good cook and he invites us over there and we go. They live in Troy.

FV: Have you talked about the old days at CSFA when you go there?

RC: Oh, sure.

FV: Well, what do you talk about? Tell me what you talk about.

RC: Oh, I don't know. We just, uhh. Also there was that test that they gave, you know, for grade 9. Did I tell you about that before?

FV: Yeah.

RC: I did? Right here?

FV: A little bit.

RC: Yeah. Well that was... oh, I have to tell you this. My father was a little Italian barber and he worked around where Lodge's is downtown. And he said to me, "Rosemary, ask this guy (who was a politician also in CSEA) see if I can still keep that job just cleaning in the county building." And he says, "I know that he can do something about that." So, I asked to see him and I go up to his office and he said, "Rosemary, tell your father to get his own politicians. I'm not gonna help him at all." So, anyway, I go down to the desk and I'm crying and Joe Rulyea said, "What's the matter?" And I said, "I told him." And he says,

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"Oh, forget it." So my father gets the job anyway and then he gives me a bottle of Scotch to give to this guy and I said, "Oh, okay." He thought he was the one, but it wasn't. So, my husband and I, we still have that Scotch because we don't drink that stuff. I thought that was a good story.

FV: Your father was an Italian barber? My wife is an Italian barber.

RC: Oh yeah. His name was Dan Trivison.

FV: Trivison? My wife was Ciccoretti.

RC: Oh, I bet he knew...yeah well they are both gone. My mother was a beautiful Irish lady working for Governor Lehman.

FV: Did you ever hear any stories about him?

RC: Are you kidding? Well, my mother had a bad sore throat one day and she was a chamber maid down there. Beautiful Irish lady. My sister and I don't look anything like her. But anyway, Marcelle, she called up and said, "Rosemary, the Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. Lehman are coming up to see your mother." And my sister and I were only in our teens and we went around and my father had had too much booze and he was in his chair and we covered him with the blanket and thank God, he didn't wake up. And they came in and they were fantastic with us. But he didn't wake up.

FV: We I re back on. We were talking about Governor Lehman. We don't hear too many stories about him.

RC: Oh, you know, when my husband and I, who was a Marine, we got married, she sent us a beautiful crystal dish. It's beautiful. They were wonderful to everybody.

FV: Now, in getting back to when you worked here for CSEA. What, I mean, you were here for 20 years and you saw some changes happening.

RC: Oh, sure. Definitely.

FV: Tell me about those. What happened? How did they change?

RC: I don't know. There's a lot more positions than there were when I was here, definitely.

FV: What was the communications department? Just Joe and you?

RC: Oh, no. They had...let's see. There was an assistant director, I think it was. And then there was Ralph Distin who was the artist. He was fantastic. I guess, they just told me that, when I was up there to the communications, that he still does some of the art. He's fantastic.

FV: Yes. He did a caricature of me when I was at the ad agency. I have it hanging in my office. He's very talented. Yeah.

RC: Oh, I know it.

FV: He was here then?

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RC: Oh, yeah. He just retired, I think, maybe last year.

FV: Yeah, I think so.

RC: He was fantastic. But there are so many physicians and offices here that I can't... and I'm a very good friend of WoJo, the one who worked for Danny. And my husband, who's Irish, he says, "Now they've got a good Irish president." So, anyway.

FV: So, what happened over the 20 years that you were here? What do you remember most about the organization?

RC: Well, then there were not that many employees like there is now and it's, I guess it's more efficient. It must be. I don't know.

FV: Hope so.

RC: I don't know.

FV: Well, I think computers help too. You didn't have computers, right?

RC: No, I didn't. That's when I retired. Because I was 62 and I said, "Oh, I don't want to learn that." And I retired. But, I see a lot of the people like Dave Stack and his secretary there, Denise Futia. She's beautiful, by the way. Did you see her?

FV: I don't think I know her.

RC: And WoJo and I, we're friends. And I, oh yeah, you know what they have every year. It's for the HSU, the Headquarters Staff Union, they have a dinner and then everybody is acknowledged at the dinner and we don't have to pay, the retirees. And it's nice to see everybody. And when I fell, I fell down in 1996, down somebody's steps by our house and I was out of it and I went to Sunnyview.

FV: Oh yeah. I worked out there. In their gym. Yeah.

RC: Really? Oh, wow. Yeah, because that was when Jerry Jennings's niece was there, when I was there. She passed away. She had something, brain cancer or something. But I was there for quite awhile and all the people from CSEA came to see me and they all said a lot of prayers and all. It was fantastic.

FV: It's like a big family.

RC: Yes. Yes, exactly. And Stanley Hornack, he goes to the same doctor that I do, Dr. Poy Fruiterman. He is a piece of work too.

FV: How long was Stanley...was Stanley working with you when you were here?

RC: Oh, gosh, yeah. He's been here, I couldn't tell you how long.

FV: What do you remember about those days with Stanley and Joe and all those guys worked together? What kind of things would they do?

RC: Well, they, let's see, there was an assistant director too. Or deputy director. That's what Stanley is now. And, anyway, Roger Cole. Yeah, he was

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there when Joe passed away and we all went to the funeral and everything. That was sad. And I remember his wife, Nancy, I think it was, and they had a big picture of them in the living room and he was a very nice man and I remember her saying, "Why did you die now when I have to raise those children?" But she passed away just, I think last year I saw her name in the paper. She lived in Florida. Yup. Those were the days.

FV: Now, did you guys put out the newspaper?

RC: They did. Yeah, it was called the... let's see, now what is it called?

FV: Now it's The Workforce.

RC: Yeah, I know it, they change the name all the time. Oh, you know, what broke my heart and everybody else's here when Dan Campbell dropped dead.

FV: Oh, wasn't that awful?

RC: Oh, he was the nicest man.

FV: I worked with him a lot.

RC: And I remember-this is off the beat but it's something about somebody from CSEA. My sister and I, we gave my mother and father their 50th anniversary party. This was a long time ago. And Dan had just started with CSEA. And he says, "Is anybody taking pictures?" And I said, "'I don't know, Dan." So, didn't he show up and he took a whole slew of pictures and all. And at his wake there were more people than you would imagine. Nice guy.

FV: A real hardworking guy. He loved working for this union.

RC: Oh, I know he did.

FV: It sounds like you did too.

RC: Oh, I did. I loved it. And then Jeanie Abrams, I don't know. She should have been contacted too.

FV: Maybe she was. I don't know.

RC: She would give you a lot of stories. She was the one that started the union HSU. Oh, I remember her one day when we were on strike. Well, she was, um, what was her father's name? He was some politician. Yeah, Abrams, over in the state. Well, he passed away too, but ... Jeanie, I remember one day when we were on strike and we were going around. She is only a little person and she laid down on the ground right by the door so nobody could get in. It was something.

FV: When was that? When did you go on strike?

RC: Well, I was working here then and my daughter, Nancy, my youngest one, was 12. And she was up to my mother's because I was on the strike. Let's see. She was 12 and now she's 42 so that was quite a while ago.

FV: 30 years ago. Yeah. So what was the strike about?

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RC: Oh, I think wages. I'm not positive, but they got what they wanted at the time, I think.

FV: You were part of the picket line, right?

RC: Oh. sure. Then the next day was when I went down to the convention.

FV: So, all was forgiven.

RC: Oh sure. Oh yeah. But all the people who came to see me that day when I fell. They were, well they are, fantastic.

FV: What are some of the big events you remember when you were working here? What is the most important event? In CSEA, I mean. What are some of the big things that happened that you were a part of or you saw?

RC: Well, I thought it was a big deal when Governor Cuomo came over and we saw him a lot. And he was a nice guy too. Is yet. Let's see, who else was there then? And then also, I can't remember much, but I remember when he came. Oh, that's when he persuaded Gary Fryer to go to be his spokesperson. And, but I just loved my retirement party. That was fantastic. All the people were there.

FV: Yeah. Good people.

RC: They gave me a beautiful gold necklace.

FV: Now, if you had to describe to somebody what CSEA is. They've never heard of CSEA. How would you describe CSEA from your point of view from when you worked there?

RC: Well, I think they haven't especially, the State workers. I mean, they do a lot to get their raises for them and they're treated properly. I know that. And also, well, I don't know if the Medicare, they don't have to pay for that because they work for the State, I guess. And I think that's fantastic.

FV: Yeah. Good benefits.

RC: And they're always there to help the people. I know that, definitely. Especially Dan Campbell.

FV: The spirit of it.

RC: Oh, I know it, yup. And I think I told you what my husband said because Danny Donohue was Irish and so was he.

FV: Yeah.

RC: I remember seeing them, oh, in parades and everything. Definitely. Wonderful. And I don't know much about the ... well, I do know that they wanted McCall to win and so did I.

FV: Can't always get what you want.

RC: No. But, do you know Polly Noonan?

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FV: No.

RC: Oh, well. Never mind then. Because I saw her up at the Schuyler Inn on Wednesday and I asked her, I said, "What did you think about Michael Connors and Jerry Jennings?" Well she said words that I wouldn't. And Father Young, he burst out laughing. That is a great place to go on Wednesday. But anyway, I remember that. Oh, no. I voted for McCall. I thought he would have been a good, he is a good man. And that's why CSEA backed him.

FV: And that's another thing that CSEA has gotten into since you worked here is the political arena.

RC: Oh yeah.

FV: Did they do that in those days? Did they endorse candidates?

RC: I think so. Yes, definitely. I thought I was very fortunate to work here. I mean, it was fantastic.

FV: Sounded like a great time.

RC: Oh yeah. Definitely. And then there's Jack Carey. And he passed away too. He was a nice guy. And held always say to me, "Good morning, Mother!" Because of the same name. He was a great guy. And, well, that's all I can say, is that I loved working here and I'm sure the people, they should love working here.

FV: I'm sure they do.

RC: Oh, one day, I've got to just tell you this. It's in Gary Fryer's time. I took a personal day off because I wanted to go to the Cohoes Manufacturing thing, you know, and it started like 5:00 in the morning. And this woman, she interviewed me and I said, "I hope you don't put this in the paper." "Oh no." So I said, to her, "Wow." I said, "Gary Fryer would be happy if he knew I was here this early." She put it in the paper!

FV: Oh, she did?

RC: But I had taken a personal day, so he came up to me the next day and said, 'Aha! So he said, "I saw that in the paper." And I said, "Yeah, but it was a personal day." He said, "Yeah, but how come you're on time?" I said, "Sure to get the pocketbook.."

FV: He sounds like he was a good guy to work for.

RC: Oh, God, he was. Yeah. Very bright. Oh, and then too, I remember this about all the guys on the staff. He was a pin man that he got the, what is it called for being so smart? It was a pin or something. And so they all, all the directors and everybody, they put one on their jackets too. I mean, it was just a lot of fun plus. I mean, they work hard, though, everybody too. Definitely.

FV: No reason they can't have fun while they're working. Well, it sounds like you had a nice career here.

RC: Oh, definitely. And then I came back a couple of years ago or something to just do something with papers, you know. Just from nine to three or something.

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Yeah, that leads me to Rita Fabrail. She was the head of the housekeeping at night and this was when Bill McGowan was the president. And she said to me one day, she says, "Rosemary, don't tell anybody this." I said, "No." There was a plant outside of his office and she said she kept watering it and she said it wasn't growing and she finally found out that it was plastic. Oh my! I thought that was a riot. She's a lovely lady.

FV: She didn't tell us that when we interviewed her.

RC: Oh, Rita? Oh, no. She wouldn't. But her son is not too well now. He's a nice guy.

FV: That's a good story. If there're any more stories like that, we want to hear them.

RC: Well, the one about Dr. Wenzl ...

FV: With the toilets, yeah. You got any questions? We don't have any more questions. If you have any more memories we'll be glad to...

RC: Oh, gosh. I just ...

FV: You'll probably go home and think of all sorts of things that we didn't ask you that you'll remember.

RC: I don't think so, I mean. Oh, I remember my sister. She didn't work at all. And she would call me when I was busy and then I'd slip a note to Stanley or somebody and say, "Say that I'm needed." And I'd say, "Okay, Kay, I've got to go now."

FV: Nice memories.

RC: And Aaron Shepherd. Is that his name?

FV: Sounds familiar.

RC: Yeah. I don't know where he is now. He was director for awhile.

FV: Yeah. I remember the name. Shepherd. Yeah.

RC: And each one of them would give me a nice birthday present all the time. He gave me pearls. I still have them at home. And, I mean, I think everybody here is very, as you say, like a big family.

FV: You worked for several people. Who was your favorite and why? Was it Joe, was it Aaron, was it Stanley?

RC: Well, Stanley was never the director, but...

FV: Well, that's true. Who was your favorite?

RC: Well, Mike Moran is still alive. But, no. Gary Fryer.

FV: Gary Friar?

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RC: Yeah.

FV: He was a very smart man.

RC: Oh yeah. He was very good too. He was excellent. And I remember ... oh I know. This is what I did one time. Because Roger Cole was always doing his own letters and he would sign it and then he would put PAC which were my initials and his were Roger Cole. So we had a meeting and, "Any complaints?" And so I said, "Well, I'm really not a secretary. I open the mail." And I went on and on. And that's when Gary came. Then I worked.

FV: Good. That's good. I think. If there's anything else you want to tell us, this is the time to do it. This is very good.

RC: Yeah, I just can't remember. I'm glad that WoJo's back. She lived in Buffalo for a while. We remained friends anyway. But she's a very smart lady. And I told you what my husband said about Danny Donohue because he's Irish.

FV: Very good. Very good. All right. All right. Stop the tape.