Pat: Pat Robinson and Pat is what I usually go by. I grew up in a little farming community in eastern North Carolina near the Outer banks, my parents, my father was from the town is called Elizabeth City and my father is from there, met my mother in college. He was at Princeton and she was from Connecticut [inaudible 00:00:25] and they got married after the war. When she moved to North Carolina with my dad, I don’t think she’s ever been south before.

She said she, people were really nice to her but she had no idea what anybody was saying so she just nodded and said I really I’m not sure what I was agreeing to but it turned out okay. Dad came from a family business family, our family is in textiles, ladies’ hosiery and cotton yarn and was in that business all his life, when I was thinking about getting ready for this, I was thinking about the impact that had on me and got me interested in business very early in my life.

I don’t think dad intended me for it to be that way because he didn’t think of women having careers, he certainly wasn’t grooming me but he used to get my mother and me to help him pick out packaging designs for the ladies’ hosiery and I remember when pantyhose first came out dad would bring home samples and mother and I would try them on and the elastic would be too tight and we’d tell him and then the next time he’d bring some home and they’d fall off of us and it was constant, back and forth.

We were his product testers so that was, it made it fun and to walk around the mill with him and meet some of the employees and that sort of thing. I really enjoyed I went to the hosiery convention with him and saw equipment. I got manufacturing I think in my blood then I remember when he had the, he would bring home the pay checks, it was really a small business and had a signature stamp and I would stamp all the pay checks so that was I guess my first job even though I wasn’t paid for doing it.

We grew up in this little town, I have one brother, I really have a pretty small family my mother was an only child and my dad was one of the youngest of three boys and then I have a brother who is three years older than me. He is an ophthalmologist in Raleigh North Carolina. We’ve always gotten along beautifully I hear about some families that have arguments and just don’t get along. My brother and I we fought like, when kids fight a little bit, I figured I said he learnt things in big brother school like all you guys learn.

Other than picking on me periodically he’s always been an ideal brother and we have a lot of similar characteristics, he is a lot more conservative than I am. He has two wonderful children, I’ve never wanted to have kids and so I get to borrow Mitchell and Andrew, they are now in their early 20s, he is in medical school, his first year in medical school and she is going to get her PhD in English but I have over the years spent time with them and I think one of the thing I love is their friends even call me aunt Pat.

It’s much better than having your own kids, we grew up in this little town, I went to a public school for up through the 9th grade and it was difficult for me because my parents focused on working hard and doing your homework and trying to get a good education and that wasn’t the ethics of my peer group. In all honesty both my brother and I sort of grew up feeling like we were nerds because we didn’t fit in socially at all.

When my parents decided to send us off to boarding school, I was actually glad to be able to get to a different environment where I would be able to meet people that it wasn’t the social side of things that I wanted but it was more the, to meet people that had similar values to what I had. When I was 14 I went to a girls’ school a very conservative girls’ school in southern Virginia. I reflect back that before going off to Chatham I was thinking about my summers in sharing a little bit about that.

As I mentioned we lived near the outer banks and have a beach house at Nags head, actually the family has about three different ones because as it grows the aunts and uncles take one and then ours was built in the 60s. When I was growing up there it was what I called an everybody’s beach, it wasn’t fancy at all, in fact we didn’t have a telephone if my dad wanted to reach my mother when he wasn’t down there he would call the closest hotel and they would send a bell boy over.

He would say Mrs. Robinsons Mr. Robinsons wants you to call him so she would drive over to the hotel and call dad. There were no movies theatres, no television, no air conditioning which sometimes could be a little warm. In fact we only got air conditioning a few years ago. I thought it was a great way to grow up because my friends’ family had cottages down there and they are real cottages not houses.

We’d play in the oceans, it was safe, all the parents knew each other and my dad would come down for a night during the week and then on the weekends it was only an hour from Elizabeth city. It was a great way to spend the summers and then when I was eight my parents sent me off to summer camp in the mountains. I was eight and I went for a month and I think that is one of the things that built some of my independence.

My mother said she would get these, they’d get these letters for me saying only 22 more days and I can’t wait to come home and then she would get another, only 18 more days and I can’t wait to come home. My mother would say do you think this is really a good idea and dad went oh yes it builds character, she’ll love it. It took me a few summers of doing that but I look back with some appreciation because I am pretty independent and I think some of that early getting out of the nest helped make that happen.

Even though I wasn’t thrilled at the time I am really glad that they did that for me. Switching back to my education Chatham was a wonderful experience for me in so many ways, it is a small school, my class is only about 60 girls and not only did I get a great education and had teachers that really taught us how to think but I learned healthy competition. There was no worrying about how you looked. We looked pretty bad most of the time, although they did have dress requirements like we had to wear tied shoes and sweaters when it was cold.

In fact I spent six weeks in study hall one time not for my grades but because I’d worn loafers to breakfast, it was a pretty strict school. It was a great opportunity, in addition to the education, the traditional education that’s where I got my first taste of social responsibility. We were required to do so many hours of volunteer work a semester and we had a variety of things we could do, we could go to an orphanage or an old folks home, help kids learn, tutor children and stuff like that.

It was really just seeing a part of who you are as a person and got build into my fabric for which I greatly appreciate. Also that’s the first introduction I got to politics because we never really talked about politics at home and certainly my friends didn’t and it wasn’t a politically charged environment but we were aware of what was going on at the time and what different candidates stood for. The other thing at Chatham that I was made aware of is my high school.

My public high school had been integrated to a certain degree and I had black friend but my parents were more traditionally southern white people and certainly I was not allowed to bring my black friends home to play. I remember when Chatham first got integrated it was my junior year so my sophomore year they’d been all white and my junior year I when we had some African American girls come and the headmaster who is pretty much of a stiff shirt sat us down right before we were breaking up for the summer.

He told us that these girls were coming. He gave a lecture on them being totally equal to us and that he absolutely would not tolerate anything that indicated any kind of bias at all and he was the first person that really got me thinking about African Americans as being equal and doubting some of the things that I had heard growing up. When I look back at my Chatham experience that’s again one of the things I’m so grateful that Mr. Yardley did that for us.

I went there sophomore, junior and senior year, my senior year they tried a new project called the senior, a new initiative called the senior project and it was to help us start thinking about careers. We could pick anything we wanted to do. We had one girl that, my roommate went and worked for a photographer, we had one girl who went and worked for a cabinet maker and made a table that didn’t look very good. I decided that I thought I wanted to be a laboratory technologist.

Don’t ask me why I ever thought I wanted to be a laboratory technologist but I had to be in [inaudible 00:11:27] that is what I wanted to do for a career. I got a job in the lab of the nearby hospital and worked there for a month but I will tell you after about day two, I realized I had no interest whatsoever in working in a laboratory and I don’t think I even wanted to work in a hospital. It was actually that year that I was applying to colleges.

I had applied to Duke because they had a good medical school thinking I wanted to be a laboratory technologist. The other reason and the real reason that I applied to Duke is that it was co-ed and after three years at Chatham I was ready for a co-ed school, I had never had a date. I wanted to go to one that where they’d been co-ed long enough that women were treated like real people. That was in the, I graduated in 1970 from high school and at that time it was when a lot of schools were just starting to go co-ed.

My brother was in Princeton and women had only been there for a year or two and he said it’s terribly civic the classroom don’t even have women’s rooms half the time and you are just treated like this unusual thing and Duke had been co-ed since I think the 40s or something. It really was great, I loved the student body and my education but also I really felt like an equal with the men in the school and there wasn’t a difference that other people were experiencing at other schools.

It was a little bit of a challenge that first year, I mentioned that I hadn’t had a date and so second semester I got my first boyfriend and didn’t think I needed to go to class quite as much as I had been and so my grades plummeted, I never had the guts to tell my father why my grades had plummeted he to this day thinks it’s because I joined a sorority that I never went to those meetings. He paid a fortune in tutoring and I pulled it out, I was passing everything by the end of the semester.

The reason I declared econ as a major is because mid semester was when we were supposed to declare our major and that’s what I was passing at the time and also I liked econ because they always had a one paged syllabus and I am not an avid reader so the way I picked courses I do strategic of having balance and I took a lot of econ and numbers types courses but I’ve tried to have something to balance it out like art, history or whatever but I would not take any courses that had a two paged syllabus because that was entirely too much reading for me.

I made it through and after that second semester of freshman year my grades were just fine and I loved my time at Duke. I think reflecting back the only complaint that I had about Duke was that it was not, there was not a diverse student body, we had African American students but I didn’t feel a bias towards them but they weren’t enough for them to feel really a part of the community and so probably I had African American friends, they weren’t a part of the community as they are in my world today or even as it was at Chatham.

That was a disappointment but I also think it is just a reflection of the times. After Duke, it came time to graduate and they had no career counseling much at all for students but less for women. They had a few training, bank training programs and I can’t remember what else but not much at all in terms of career counseling. My father who had paid for this great education both high school and college and had pushed me to make great grades and work hard told me I could be a secretary, a nurse or a librarian.

As you have, I have explained earlier, I don’t like blood and I don’t like to read, those careers did not get me too excited but that is the only thing that he thought that women did. A friend of mine’s father told me, I think it was some time during senior year I was visiting her and her father said well you know, to get a good job you need a masters, he says it doesn’t really matter what it’s in but if you get a masters it will make you more marketable for a job.

I went well I Iike business so maybe I will get a masters’ in business, as with many things in my life I think I’ve just kind of been lucky because I had an eye on getting an MBA but before I did that I wanted to travel. My junior year in college I had gone to Europe bag packing with two friends and we had, this is really hard to believe in this day and time. We had for a $1,000 we spent I think it was two and a half months travelling around Europe.

We weren’t staying in dumps, we were staying in these hotels that had bathrooms down the hall but it wasn’t in hostels and we went all over Europe and I just couldn’t believe how the buildings and the architecture and the different cultures of the people I was meeting, it was just like my eyes were opened and I truly loved it. I decided that I wanted to work in Europe before I started a real job and a career and since I didn’t know what I was going to do anyway, it seemed like a perfect time to do it.

I remember explaining it to my parents, I had started, I was born in late November so I had started school when I was five. My father had always thought that I was too young for my class, he was always trying to get me to drop back a year when I went to Chatham he wanted to me repeat my freshman year and when I went to Duke he wanted me to repeat my senior year something like that. I kept saying I didn’t want to do that so I told him after it finished it that I was going to take that extra year after Duke.

He was not thrilled with that idea and not thrilled at all that I was going to go to Europe, on the flip side my mother was great. I remember telling her what I wanted to do and she said, honey we don’t quite understand you but you seem happy so that makes me happy. She was always supportive in that way. I started looking around to try to find a job in Europe and a woman who had been my teacher in high school at Chatham she really wasn’t that much older than me had worked in France exercising race horses for a family over there.

I wrote and she gave me the name of a family over there and I wrote to them to see if I could get a job exercising horses or doing something and the family knew a woman that had a children’s home, it is not quite an orphanage because the kids are, they had a parent but it was a unfit parent. We had a boy whose mother had committed suicide and he’d found her and the father was an alcoholic and we had three girls whose mother was a gypsy and who knows who the father was and the mother couldn’t take care of the girls.

Margarit the woman that run the children’s home was very devout catholic and had found out early in life that she couldn’t have children of her own, she determined that God’s will was for her to raise his children, it was usually a priest but somebody in the community would tell her about these kids and she was from a very wealthy family she was a countess and lived in a gorgeous chateau nearby but we were in her fathers’ hunting lodge we had about 15 kids.

I got connected with her and they usually take in one girl a year to help take care of the kids, help them with their homework, take them to the dentist do that kind of thing. It was very small, it was really kind of like a convent a friend of Margarit’s ran it, a single woman, there was the cook madam [inaudible 00:20:23] who was a peasant type of woman with a huge huge heart and then the [inaudible 00:20:31] the girl that would be there.

I had gotten this job, on job applications I always put N/A when they ask what my starting salary was because I made $50 a month but I had room and board and use of the little [inaudible 00:20:45] car when I wanted that. I had this job and all my friends were going off to be gainfully employed and somehow had found jobs in different places and so I was taking a trip, driving around the United States before I took off and I told my mother but I hadn’t told my father yet.

I remember calling them from the rim of the Grand Canyon and my father exploded and my mother said call back tomorrow dear and I did. My father said well you are an adult you can do what you want but I think it’s a crazy idea of goodbye. It was a little icy with my leaving for France but it was a wonderful experience for me over there. It really from a career standpoint was great. I had gotten into North Western business school before I left but I applied to business schools over there.

I got into Stanford, UVA and pretty much every place that I applied so that it helped on the resume. It really helped me I realized later on when I was managing people that learning to see the world through somebody else’s eyes is what you’ve got to be able to do to be a good manager. When I was managing a manufacturing plant, I didn’t try to, when I applied they didn’t think like I did, I just tried to figure out how they were thinking the way that they did.

I think that is what you get from leaving in a different country. I got that, I learned the language which was extremely helpful later on in business and probably one of the most important things is that I’d never really thought about kids but I thought I was going to be like Julie Andrews in the sound of music and go over there and the kids were going to love me and I was going to love them. I decided very quickly I never wanted to have kids, it was very nice but I liked being with the adults more and my hat goes off to parents.

I don’t know how they do it because I don’t have the mentality, dogs yes but not kids and I always try to be a little careful with the way I say that because I don’t want to offend people but I am thrilled that I have had the choice and never had any pressure to have children. I learned lots of things, applied to business schools, I chose the Darden School for entirely the wrong reasons but it turned out to be the best school for me.

The reason I chose it was because I rode horses and that’s the center of fox hunting country. I thought that this would be a great place where I could go fox hunting, I didn’t want to go to Stanford because that was 3,000 miles from home and I thought that if I was 3,000 miles from home I am going to stay here in France since of course the Stanford ratings had taken off but I still when to the right school. Because I was applying when I was in France I didn’t get an opportunity to do much research on the schools.

I had no idea about the rigor at Darden, when I got there the orientation the students are talking about how many people flunk out and how you have to work unbelievable hours and what a boot camp it is and that sort of thing. I didn’t know anything about that and I felt well this is really going to interfere with my fox hunting. I was able to ride a little bit which was, getting some exercise was very helpful.

Also the good Lord was looking after me because Darden was the exact right place for me to go, it’s a case method school. I learned how to think rather than just learning a bunch of facts and it was comprehensive, general management school, not focused in one particular discipline and since I had no idea what I wanted to do, the function was, it was great to get exposure to all of those disciplines. Having grown up in a family business somebody would think that I would understand how business is operated.

I really didn’t because our business was so small that they didn’t have functional areas, dad was pretty much the only manager there after my grandfather died and my uncle was running one of the other plants. I really didn’t know what marketing was, I thought that marketing was logistics, how do you get the product to market. The whole idea of pricing theory or advertising, as I said the only marketing department my dad had was mom and me and we didn’t have titles.

It was really fantastic, they required, half of our grade was class participation so we really learned how to speak up for our opinions, that 18% of the class was women and the women, we felt that we had to work harder to prove to people that we were there that we wanted careers because some people used to say well women don’t go to business school because they are trying to shop for a husband which was not the reason, I don’t think there was anybody in our class that was like that.

We worked harder but when it came to class participation or we had study groups that we were in, the women had equal voices to the men and the funny thing is the only discrimination I felt when I was in business school was from the corporations that came and interviewed. You could definitely pick up the bias there and in terms of where they thought they want to place women and just the way they interacted with us. The school itself was pretty open minded I felt along those lines.

It was a great opportunity and the study groups were great because we learned how to work as a team or I think sometimes competition can get so strong and we had our share of competition but sometimes people work against each other and certainly in our study groups we learnt how to build on each others’ strengths and help each other out one other great thing about the Darden program, which I am not sure whether they have now or not, is analysis and communications ANC.

We were required to take that and it was writing papers and also making speeches and so it was a whole semester of public speaking which later on I found when I was out that many people in the corporations, folks coming out of business schools don’t have those kinds of skills. Between the two years of business school I worked for the Mead Corporation here in Atlanta in the packaging division.

Mead packaging makes, it’s Mead not meat packaging makes corrugated, the thing that most people know, it used to be six packs when I went there but the 12 packs for beer and soft drink actually the Atlanta paper company that was later bought by Mead invented the six pack and they hired me to come in to work in the soft drink part of the business.

When they hired me they had a bunch of little projects they wanted me to do be kind of a gofer and I requested that I have one thing that I could focus on so that at the end of the summer that I could feel that I had accomplished something. They had a new product called the cluster clip which was this plastic unfortunately you have probably never seen a cluster clip. It’s a plastic handle that holds two two liter bottles together and they were trying to figure out what to do with it.

I Spent the summer analyzing it, trying to sell them to bottlers which was quite an experience and at the end of the summer I suggested that they get rid of it, eliminate it from the product line but it really wasn’t going to have much of f future. They did not listen, they thanked me very much, listened to my presentation and I went back to business school and later you’ll find the cluster clip did reappear in my life and I was finally able to get rid of it.

I loved the time, I loved Atlanta, I’d never been to Atlanta before and I really enjoyed working at Mead. I went back to business school, finished up there, talked to several companies when I graduated but in the end decided to come with Mead packaging here in Atlanta. The first job I had when I came down was as a business planner which is essentially a business analyst. I was working for the head of strategy in new ventures but sort of had a dotted line to the president.

It was about a 200 million dollar division at the time and a pretty complex division at the time and a pretty complex division because they had the soft drink and the beer side of the business and the food side, they had a machinery business that made equipment to run the packages and then they had a big international side of the business and doubling in plastic packaging. Pretty complex and Mead had a very involved corporation, had a very involved business planning process.

Our business plan was probably about branches thick and nobody read the plan after we wrote it but it was laborious process. They would have an analysis that a big part of their job was working with all the business unit heads to pull this business plan together and then we would have quarterly reviews. It was a great opportunity again for me to learn the business at a high level. I would go with Leo the president and Charlie the head of strategy to Dayton to make the presentations of the plan.

I carried the transparencies and flipped them as they are going through the presentation and would listen to the dialogue and it was a great way to get a birds’ eye view of things except for the one time when my alarm clock didn’t go off and I had all the transparencies and missed the flight to Dayton, I really thought that was the end of my career but fortunately they gave me another chance.

Other than that it was a fairly uneventful time but one of the other things I learned is the old divisional hide the bone trick is that you can report numbers in different ways and if you have a product line that the corporation has questions about you learn how to hide it in among other products so they never see the numbers and you can do what you want, it’s interesting time just to learn the dynamics between the corporation and the division and how communications happen.

Later on when I was at the corporate level, understanding that that went on and trying to find the bones that I wanted to be able to find from a corporate perspective, so that was another side of things and I also got my first exposure to corporate politics which isn’t always nice and all corporations have them so I don’t feel like I am running Mead packaging in the ground by talking about that but the dynamics of who gets along and who doesn’t.

I felt some bias not because I was a woman but because I had come in as an MBA and Mead is not the kind of company that hires a bunch of MBAs, the staff was not used to someone coming in at that level and getting opportunities that not everybody got. Later on you have to prove yourself but at the same time it was a different kind of thing. There was some jealousy and issues that I had to deal with there. It was all part of a gradual learning process I would say.

People often ask me if I have had a mentor or a sponsor in my career and Leo Benetar who was president of the division at the time, I think I would call him maybe a little bit in between but probably more of a sponsor because he didn’t spend that much time with me coaching me about how to deal with issues or that sort of thing but he definitely gave me confidence and some opportunities.

One of the ways that I felt that he built confidence is that he had a wonderful knack of asking me a question that he knew I didn’t know the answer to but that he would make me feel good that I would even think that he thought that I knew the answer to that question and then I’d go get the darn answer because I didn’t want to disappoint him. He elevated my self esteem in dealing with me and I really appreciated that so early in my career.

Then he gave me the opportunity, a lot of the opportunities in going to Dayton and then also later on the next job that I had, I was in the business planning job for about a year and then I was Mead packaging’s first product manager and they sent me over to the soft drink division to work there. I felt that one of the reasons that he was giving me the opportunities is that he is Jewish and had felt biases in his career.

In fact this is really hard to believe but the Mead Corporation used to be selective on where they went for divisions’ president meetings or leadership meetings because some of the resorts at that time wouldn’t allow Jews and so Leo wasn’t able to go. When he saw this woman come along the first sort of potential executive woman and saw some of the politics because I said, it wasn’t because I was female there was some of that in there too.

I think he really wanted to try to help level out the playing field and he wasn’t going to save me if I messed up but he was going to give me the opportunity to mess up or helpfully succeed. I was thankful for that as well and periodically I get a little note from him saying I hear you just got such and such a sale or what up congratulations. The product manager job I got was for the plastic bottle packaging of which the cluster clip was in the product assortment.

I did a little updated analysis, the product had not done any better and so we killed it much to my joy. There were several other good products in there, over a two year period grew that business from a couple of $100,000 in sales to four million in sales and part of that was trying to educate our sales force on how to sell the product. It was great to be able to run a little business because I was responsible for obviously the product offering for new product development for managing the inventory.

Testing out the new products to make sure that they were physically viable, market tests, all the promotional materials, there was a big soft drink convention every year and I would go do the convention and be the product’s expert. Then about a third of my time was spent out in the field with the sales force and let me tell you the bottling industry is a very conservative old boy industry, just old time in a business.

Of course now it is not because most of it is company owned but at the time they were independent bottlers and the sales force that we had calling on him was a bunch of little boys as well. One, just giving you a little example, so I was a product specialist and my job was to make these calls with the sales people. One of the regional managers [Mj Jaber 00:38:10] a self described catholic [inaudible 00:38:14] Jew down in New Orleans called my boss and said what’s this cocktail waitress doing bugging my men.

Maurice my boss at the time said, she is no cocktail waitress she is very well educated and she knows a heck of a lot more about that product line than you do and if you want to make your quota I would encourage you to have her come travel with your sales force because she can teach them a lot. So he gave me a try and MJ and I ended up being great friends for the rest of my career at Mead and even after I left packaging I would periodically get a call from him.

It was a little rocky, it was not always easy with the customers, I remember calling on the big red bottler, not exactly one of the biggest customers that we had in Louisville Kentucky and I go in and this is the time when women were trying to look like men so I am in my little grey suit with that little tie that women used to wear I can’t believe I did that. Anyway I was trying to look the part and I go in and I am making this call on this guy trying to make him buy our packaging.

Before he lets me get into the sales pitch and then this one, the sales rep wasn’t even with me I can’t remember why but I was on my own. He starts tearing into me about how, telling me personally that I was responsible for the demise of the American family because I was taking a job away from a man. I remember sitting there thinking, do I have to take this and I probably shouldn’t but I did so I just let him get it out of his system and then I tried to sell him the product line, I don’t think that he bought any of our packaging.

At least I gave it a good try but I think back on the time thinking, I cannot believe I put up with that but at that time I just, I guess always I have just tired to stick to business and not get into a lot of debate about being a woman. It was a very interesting time in my career, I moved on from that, I was in that job for about two years and then I got the opportunity to go back and be vice president of strategy and new ventures which was the job I reported to when I was a business planner.

The man that was in that job had been moved over into another job and the people used to tease me and said well you know what your job really is, it’s strategy and no ventures because at the time what we were doing mainly in that department was getting rid of some bad acquisitions that we had done. A lot of it was analyzing businesses that we were in and trying to do these little product lines and deciding whether we wanted to stay in them or not and there was a plan in there that we got rid of.

In that job probably the, well one of the big things that happened is I had not been in that job very long and I was working for Leo Benetar the man that I mentioned earlier as president and Leo left and I had only been in the job about a month and I went, this is not good. It wasn’t good because the vultures came out and I say it wasn’t good I really think in the end it was because I was given the opportunity to prove that I could do things on my own and that it wasn’t the sponsor that was looking out for me.

As much as I hated to see him go, I think for my own career development it was a good thing. The new person that came in was not used to having someone in that kind of job that I had but was very supportive of it, in fact that was the first opportunity that I had to manage people. I had about five people reporting to me that the company librarian who wrote the newsletter and did all these research for people and stuff like that and then Dr. Brody a PhD in plastic technology or something like that.

He was the one that was developing this new packaging line that we had been working, plastic packaging line that we had been working on for quite some time and in fact I was talking a while back about hiding the bone, that was the bone that we were trying to hide because the corporation really didn’t want us getting the plastic packaging so we always put the numbers in with everything else.

Anyway I got Dr. Brody, he didn’t want to work for me and he tried all kinds of little shenanigans and dumb stuff and finally went to the new president after a few months and said that it was him or me that he just couldn’t work for me and wouldn’t stay at packaging if he had to work for me and to his credit the new president Carter Smith said well Aaron I am sorry to hear that but we will accept your resignation.

That was the vote of confidence that I certainly appreciated. The job itself, I think I was in it for about a year and a half, it was a big title, a huge office and I was bored out of my mind it was, there just wasn’t much to do other than down vesting in some little business. One day Carter called me into the office and said he had a job that he wanted me to consider and he started on a sales pitch of why I would want to go down to West End Atlanta and run the machinery plant.

He thought that this was going to be the hardest sale that he’d ever have to do because here I was going from this gold plaited office with this super secretary and just fantastic to this terrible part of Atlanta, it’s cleaned up now but it really was a, you could get any kind of drug you wanted within a few blocks of the plant. I jumped out of my chair. I was so excited because he didn’t know that is what I’d always wanted to do.

In fact about six months earlier I had gone to the vice president of operations for the division and told him that I wanted to work in a plant, I didn’t say I wanted to be a plant manager but that I wanted to get manufacturing experience and wanted to know what courses should I try to go to Georgia tech and take some engineering courses, Charlie had been to Georgia tech and he laughed and he said you don’t need an engineering courses.

He said if you want to get into manufacturing and take some courses, take psychology because that’s what manufacturing management is all about. Before I had time, I had one psychology course at Duke but before I had time to do that Carter has this opportunity for me so I was thrilled and I was 29 years old at that time, went down to West End Atlanta and got a little bit of a hostile welcome from the staff there.

It wasn’t because I was a woman it was because I wasn’t an engineer and I was the first person that they had that wasn’t an engineer and didn’t, they felt didn’t understand the business but they really didn’t need somebody that knew how to manufacture or design equipment, they could do that perfectly, really just highly, highly talented but they didn’t understand how to integrate it into the business of the company.

For example how set priorities, they would want to focus on the most interesting projects rather than the customers that were most important to the company. What they really did need was just probably somebody that didn’t understand the detail of the business very well. The reason I had wanted to go there is I am firm believer, that I knew I wanted general management after Darden that my goal was to be a general manager.

I felt to be a good general manager a person needs multiple types of experiences, rather than come up through one avenue like finance or marketing or operations I wanted to get a breadth of experiences and that is really one of the reasons that I went to Mead because the other companies that I talked with when I was interviewing tended to put people more in a functional track and because Mead didn’t take many MBAs they were pretty open to partnering with me to figure out what I wanted to do.

I was thrilled with that but I hadn’t been there very long and we had a customer coca cola Chevy chase Maryland called in on Friday afternoon and they had the spare parts order they wanted and it was the last thing we had, I can’t remember what the lead time was for spare parts but it was a decent amount of time and they wanted it like in 24 hours and we were going to have to keep people over night.

It was a free to shift operation but over night making these parts and all these stuff and it was clear it was just for an overhaul, they didn’t, it wasn’t like the machine was going to be down and they would be in trouble. I said no way, no how we are not going to do that and Roy Johnson who was the engineer there said young lady don’t you remember it was only about a year and a half ago you told me that the entire machinery division was unresponsive and insensitive to the needs of the market place.

Of course that’s when I was in marketing and I had a whole different perspective now but good old Roy had a very good memory and reminded me of that, I laughed, I can’t remember whether we got the order together for them that weekend, we probably did. It was great to be able to see the other side of the fence as they say.

It was really sad actually though the plant had been the orphan of the division and because it was, the idea of the equivalent is it’s kind of like the razor and razor blade concept where Mead designed the equipment to run the packaging that they sold and we had so many patents that they only our packaging would run on that equipment, it’ll be little things in the equipment or little things in the packaging that would make them run together and so we would put the machines out at cost and the cost.

It really didn’t matter that much what it was because the packaging was so much more lucrative. It had kind of just been neglected and bad habits had built up there, the people were talented but there was just very little discipline. It was so much low hanging fruit when I got there, one thing is we didn’t have any standards in the machine shop so people, you look at some of the records and how many hours people would take making a part and all we had to do was put in some standards and start posting the performance standard.

The employees improved themselves because they didn’t want to be the low person on the totem pole as far as how they were performing. Just in doing that, putting in standards and posting we increased the productivity of the machine shop by 30%, no equipment purchases no nothing just having a little bit of a measurement system in there.

Something else we did was started employee teams, I remember when I got there, when I was walking around the machine shop one day and this employee Bradley told me how he had some ideas of how we could improve things in the machine shop but he said he’d recommended it to my predecessor and my predecessor said it is not your job to think about that thing, those things, you just need to make parts.

He probably got it put in his tool chest and he was the one when I got there that the first line supervisors told me it was, I learned a new term, Georgia term sorry that he was just sorry he wasn’t any good. We got Bradley on one of those employee teams and I can’t remember what they were working on but it was something to improve the machine shop quality or efficiency or something like that and I remember the day that they were making a presentation to management.

He came in on off time, non working time in a coat and tie to make the presentation and he told me he was rehearsing the night before to his wife. You talk about is that somebody that is sorry and so it was just amazing to be able to get, listen to people and give them some opportunities to see the things that could happen.

Another thing that we had to do was get people in the right jobs because we had first line supervisors that were much better individual contributors than supervisors and made a couple of moves like that that actually worked but the one thing that we couldn’t do is we had people in the union shop in jobs, in some of the high paying jobs that didn’t have the skills to do them and we tried to work with the union to be able to declassify them and put them in a job more that they could do.

We couldn’t get the union to get along with that and it was hurting the business enough and we tried for a long time and I got the opportunity to do the hardest thing I have ever done in my career and that was to shut that plant down, it was extremely difficult because a lot of the people that worked there, it’s the only place they’d ever worked.

Some of them probably didn’t have a high school education and a lot of them really were, did know their jobs and did know them well but we had to do that and I will tell you about that in a minute but one other thing I wanted to tell you and it is hard to believe that this was going on and maybe it still goes on in some companies but it flies in the face of I believe the managers have to set the right example, managers and leaders.

I heard when I got there about government jobs and people, senior managers vice presidents from the division not the corporation were sending over to machinery their lawn mower blade sharpened or get a part made for something in their house, it really didn’t take us long to do it but then we wondered why the employees might be doing that to their own lawn mowers and their own parts or taking something they needed.

I remember sending a memo across town to tell them we weren’t going to do that anymore and getting some push back about that and I then issuing a memo to the employees that if they wanted any kind of materials like steel or, we had different kinds of basic parts that they needed that they could have them but we out in place a process that they would have to get an employee pass so if they were taken out of the plant they needed to have a pass signed by their supervisor to say that it was okay.

We did that and someone told me that the head of the steel room was still stealing and so we sent out another notice and said we understand that there might be people taking things out and we are serious that we will fire you if you are caught stealing but here is the process and how it works. Darned if we didn’t, we did an employee check, the people leaving work that afternoon, a couple of afternoons later and this guy had a box of screws and that he’d clearly stolen and admitted to it.

We had to fire him and it certainly, it ended the theft problem that we had nobody took anything else out again and it shows you have to set an example but it was really tragic to be able to have to do that but it was just that kind of discipline that they needed and once you had it in it was no problem but it was pretty sad but it was those kinds of things that had led us shutting it down. Also I think the president actually was tired of the bickering between machinery and the marketing people and stuff like that.

It got converted into an RnD shop so I was then responsible for the development of the prototype equipment so we had a small RnD shop, the product development for the packaging side, the paper board side and quality and of course sourcing of the equipment. I did that for about a year and a half, I think one of the things I learned in the shut down process is that in shutting a facility down it’s really important to communicate with the people and to treat them fairly.

Not only because it’s the right thing to do but also it helps the survivors because the survivor syndrome is a very real thing. We had out placement counseling for the people that were leaving. We did something that. We felt that it was important to have something to call that piece of that life of the company to a close. We had a lunch where we brought in the employees and by all the employees those that were staying and most of them were leaving.

To invite them in and to bring their families and we had the union president and the employees called it the last supper which thank goodness, it was really a jovial time and the employees actually got together and made me a gift. I was big into white water kayaking. They made this paddle that said don’t get caught up creek without a paddle and then thanks from the guys in the machine shop.

They gave it to me and then they gave me an employee pass so I was legal taking it out of the plant. To shut a plant down and have people feel that way about it is in my book the only way to do it but people say I am a Pollyanna and I am sure that I am. I had my new job of sourcing and we moved on from that but I think we were all feeling the grief of that. I’ll pause for a minute, I’ve been talking about my career and before I talk more about that.

I’ll pause a little bit and talk about the personal side of what was going on then that people often ask about work life balance. I was able to be involved in the community at the time I was very interested in the ballet and did a lot of work. I had a young professionals group called the ballet associates. We had meeting, things to get together and learn about the ballet but our big event every year was putting on a fund raiser an auction that, I think I worked on it about four years.

The last year we cleared $50,000 which is a pretty good thing considering we had to do all the work ourselves in terms of getting the donations and that sort of thing. It was a great group and I met a lot of people that are still my friends today working on that. I was big into running. I ran the Peachtree, well jogging not running, in the pitch tree roadways.

Then I discovered white water kayaking. After I took my first course it was at Georgia tech actually, in their athletics department. When I took my first course in kayaking I paddled every weekend for a year except Christmas. That means like New Years in the ice but I was very, very much addicted to kayaking. It was a great sport mainly went up in North Georgia the Oconee River and I was out there a lot.

There is the Atlanta white water club and also went out west, paddled the main fork of the Salmon and then Colorado River which was the biggest one that I have done. I flipped in lava which is the biggest rapid on the biggest river but fortunately again luck will have it I rolled up. It was an exhilarating experience. One of the things I learned in kayaking actually helped me in management and I used to try to share it with employees.

That is in paddling if you really want to have control over where you are going in a river you have to go faster than the waters so you can actually steer where you are going to go. Because otherwise the water is going to take you where it wants to take you and often it is not where you want to go. It's really the same in business that if you sit back and wait to see what's going to happen it may not be what you want to have happen.

The whole idea of planning and contingency planning and looking out around you for the rocks that are coming up is a very, very wise thing to do. Also the exhilarating feeling you have at the end of a nasty rapid is just like at the end of a nasty meeting with an unhappy customer or something like that is that it's not fun when you are going through it. Once you get through it that sense of accomplishment really is pretty darn great.

Even my paddling experiences helped in business and the other thing it did is that is where I met the man that I ended up marrying. I never really intended to get married, my parents in all honesty, they loved each other a lot but they fought a lot and my mother had to take a subservient position in that relationship. I didn't want to have the life that she had so I had just had it in my mind that I would never get married.

I met this man who is a great paddler and so I said I perfected his rescue skills and he was totally the kind of person no one, certainly not my parents and not I would expect me to end up with because he was a blue color guy. He was a truck driver for railway express. It wasn't a professional relationship, it started the fun of paddling and he is one of the most brilliant people I have ever met.

He knows a lot about astronomy and politics and science and all kinds of things. poor guy just was not blessed like I was in terms of what family he was born into and his parents kept telling him he would amount to nothing and he was living up to that. Falsely I believed that I could save him by believing in him and helping him get an education and that sort of thing. My friends did say that I became much more interesting after I started dating him because I was kind of boring up until then.

We dated for five years and had just decided to get married when circling back to my career I got the opportunity to move to Wisconsin to be president of Gilbert Paper which was a division of the mid corporation. They are smallest division but extremely profitable. I'll also pause to explain a little bit to you about Meads, high potential program that they have because people often ask do you think there is a glass ceiling for women at Mead.

I really didn't feel a glass ceiling in terms of opportunity. I felt it in terms of environment, some of the things that I was telling you about, some of the biases that I felt from customers or employees. In terms of opportunity I was certainly given the opportunity to have challenges. I think the reason for that is Mead has a program called high potential.

Where the mangers pick out, the division presidents pick out people that they think have the potential to really rise up through the ranks. It's really managed quite well, I say is, was and looking at giving people different experiences and at this time I didn't even know they hypo-system, I didn't find out about it until I was president. I think that is the reason I was sort of being watched by Dayton and being looked at for other opportunities.

This one to run Gilbert came up and it was in, I started November 1st and in Wisconsin. I had never lived further north in Charlottesville Virginia. I didn't know where Wisconsin was I'm embarrassed to say and I remember calling my parents and my mother saying "oh that's wonderful dear, where is Wisconsin anyway?" We all got out a map to figure out where I was going.

I had spent the weekend with some friends down in Florida and they put me on the plane to fly up to Wisconsin to start my job but I still had on shorts but I had this long raincoat over it. I get up there and I think they had their first snow, I was freezing to death. This woman sitting next to me on the plane had been snowed out so I had to take the bus from Milwaukee up to Menasha where the plant was.

This woman sitting next to me on the bus, I'll never forget she said, I'm trying to hide my shorts and I told her I was going up to work at Gilbert Paper and she said "Oh I hear they have a new president. I wonder what he is like." I said well I hear he's really a great person. I continued on my way and went in the next morning to my job at Gilbert. What Gilbert does is make writing tech, un-coded writing text in cover papers. Letter head papers, business cards, the non-shiny paper used in annual reports, brochures those sorts of things, highly profitable.

Gilbert makes un-coded writing text in cover paper, so stationery, business cards; the non-shiny paper used in annual reports, brochures, and those sorts of things is the type of paper they make. They also make, at one time made currency paper, US currency, Crane dominates that now, social security paper, lottery paper, they call it security paper because we put little fibers and they call them planet chips, dots in them so it can't be counterfeited so a wide variety.

Quite profitable, it was the cash cow of the corporation. I would say it was the cash cow that had been milked because the corporation had not invested in new equipment. We had parts from every Mead mill, they would get something new and we would scavenge it and have it up at Gilbert. We sold, most paper sells by the time that is the pricing.

We sold by the pound and actually had some paper we sold by the sheet. It was considerably more profitable and when you look on return on investment it was really profitable. It was getting to the point several things were going on. One is that people were, there was more competition coming in and we had gotten to the point where we did really need to invest in the business. Some of the margins were starting to come down.

It was about 70 million dollar business, 400 employees all located up there in Wisconsin which I knew how to find after I finally got up there. They had just come off a very difficult labor negotiation. Actually they had had a strike. It was a difficult time to come in because the employees were pretty angry but we were able to get over that. We worked on several things while I was there.

One was taking the plant recycled and that was the very difficult thing to do because this is paper again, very premium. The competitor that most people know is Crane, so it's Crane and Strathmore type quality. We just didn't spend as much money on advertising and had more commercial customers. We didn't have regular consumer market.

That kind of premium paper folks thought the recycle as being dirty but at the same time there was a big recycling push and a lot of the corporations, McDonalds, people like that wanted to have a recycled paper. We had to work very hard on how to make a good recycle sheet which we were able to do in the end.

It took us about a year to be able to do it but you wouldn't be able to tell the difference in the virgin sheet and a recycled sheet by the time we were finished. The other thing we did is create a new product line. Paper is a fashion business just like the fashion industry. Graphic designers are always looking for something new and different. We decided to take a new approach to how we were going to go about coming up with the new kind of paper.

We hired three graphic designers to help us design the paper because we figured who else would know what graphic designers want then, graphic designers. We told them on the front end that we would not hire any of them to do any of the promotional materials. That they would help us pick the graphic designer that would do the promotional materials but we would pay them for their work and helping us do that.

We had people from, one from Florida and one from Oregon and one from I think Chicago help us, very different styles help us design the new sheet. In doing that it was really a fascinated process. We got samples of all the competitive sheets and we got the manufacturing people to give us samples of all the mistakes that they had made because some of the best products had come from mistakes.

Then we got a bunch of handmade papers from Japan and had that for them to look at. They came up with a design. I don't want to go into much detail about it. In the paper manufacturing process the wire is a piece of it and the wire can actually put an imprint in the paper and that's how watermarks are made. Hopefully you know what a watermark is, it is sort of a dyeing thing but we've made a lot of private watermarks too.

We started experimenting with different kinds of wires to be able to put a pattern in the paper and came up with one. It involved system of different, they kind of looked like very natural squares of grid pattern and then we had a smooth sheet that went with it. We had a whole color system that went with it but the greatest story of the whole manufacturing process is we are sitting in the conference room with the three designers and the head of the plant out there.

One of the designers is describing the paper and he says it needs to be more sensual. The head paper makers said, he said I know about porosity, I know about stiffness, I know about color but I don’t know about sensuality and paper. We had to work back and forth a lot to be able to get some specifics around what was going to make that sheet more sensual.

We came up with a great product line; they helped us pick a cutting edge graphic designer to do the promotional work for the sheet. I figured out that it must be a great promotion because I couldn’t understand it and that's usually how it goes with graphic designers. I ended up having a great relationship with him. He worked for us for many years helping promote the sheet. He had a great introduction of it and it really is one of the classic new product line introductions in that side of the business.

That was another accomplishment that we had when we were there. One of the learning's that I had when I was there however is more on the unfortunate side and that is that it's very important for mangers to know when to pull the plug on certain employees. They just really aren't cutting the mustard. Gilbert had kind of had been a graveyard for managers that were nice people but not that good when the corporation didn't want to fire and they set him up to Gilbert.

I had a couple of people working for me that were not keeping up. I kept postponing doing something about it and certainly I had the prerogative, I wasn't forced to keep them but they had been around so long and I felt we can limb along without them, I mean with them. What really was the learning for me was when we, the one person I'm thinking about was the VP of marketing and sales. We had promoted a woman from the sales force to be a sales manager who really had the potential to do that.

He couldn't give her any leadership and guidance and so she failed in that job. She went back to being a sales person but I always regretted trying to save one person, I really risked, well I damaged the career of one person and risked the career of other people. I've heard her say many times that was my learning experience, a first learning experience I learned at other times it's to go ahead and make the change when you need to make the change with people.

While I was at Gilbert, I had been there for several years, the corporation, the current chairman had announced his retirement and the person that was the president was going to rise to be the chairman. He wanted to really think about how he wanted the corporation to be in this tenure and brought in several leaders from around the corporation, some division presidents and some corporate staff people and put together a relatively small, I think it was about six or eight of us, task force.

To study other corporations, what their learning experiences, what we can learn from them, what they have done right, what they have done wrong and look at different organizational staff. Whether it be centralized or decentralized. It was really a fascinating process to go out and look at other companies and learn from them.

One of the things which goes back to what I was just talking to you about is the number one answer we would get whenever we asked a corporate CEO or chairman, what is your advice, what's the one thing that you wish you would have done differently and they said pulling the plug on somebody that wasn't a fit. That was a little bit of a consolation but not a whole heck of a lot but I think it is a problem that all managers have, I always think I can save people.

That was an interesting thing to hear from them but after quite a bit of study we decided to have a decentralized operating company, which was pretty much what we'd had but to clarify some roles and responsibilities more. Mead had 10 divisions at the time and what we wanted to do was have the corporate center only take care of those things where there was a lumpy demand like the engineering for the new paper mill.

It is something that not every division needs. It really needs to be a centralized skill where their scale economies are things like IT where you can really have the benefit or specialized skills that are needed. Skill, scale and lumpy demands and everything else we wanted to push out to the divisions or get rid of. The next phase of this process was to go through a right sizing which I think that is sort of an old term now but it was in vogue then.

Steve picked two people to run the right sizing initiative, myself because he wanted the division president or something so it would be division pushed and then the head of IT and the corporation to have that staff balance. I was still president of Gilbert at the time so I spent about three times a week in Dayton and two days a week in Menasha. That was a little bit of a challenge but the division was running pretty well by then and now I had a good team.

We looked at it, it was a right sizing initiative and we looked at each function. It sounds like it couldn't be done, Mackenzie was helping us with it but we got each department to attach the time that they devoted to all the different initiatives that they did because a lot of them were, something is crossed across departments and we were able to put taking their budget put of value on the time of each of these activities.

It was really like an activity based analysis and then we would have representatives from the divisions come in and decided they were willing to pay for that activity. It used to be, we would just get charged a corporate fee and we didn't have any say about it. The new CEO was tired of people complaining and so he said you really have to be able to buy the service. It was a real sales process that went on, it was also a lot of discovery because even the IT, the head of IT for the corporation didn’t know what some of these departments did.

I didn't even know a bunch of them existed being out in the division so it was a great educational time for all of us because these division representatives had to come in and learn what these people did and decide whether they wanted to pay for them. There were few things that the corporation said that they would pay for but not many and so as a result of that we cut out about 20% of the corporate overhead, we pushed a lot of activities out into the divisions.

There were a few things, activities that we actually brought up from the divisions into corporate but it got things cleaned up a lot and got us leaner. Through that, that took about a little under a year and after we had that done was when Steve the new chairman decided that he wanted to re-engineer some of the leadership of the company. He gave me the opportunity to run the consumer products business for me, Meads going off as products.

It is about a 550 million, I fit the job. Let's see, let's go back to, I forgot about the strategy job. Let's stop, what was the last part of the right sizing that was about a year. Okay, Steve decided to do some re-organizing in the corporation and offered me the job of moving to Dayton and becoming vice president of corporate strategy reporting to him. I wasn't sure I wanted to go into a staff role again because that's where I had been so bored.

Clearly it was going to be a totally different kind of experience and it was. I packed my bags and moved to Dayton. Along the way, just a quick snippet on the personal side, I got married going into Wisconsin and divorced going out of Wisconsin and that had nothing to do with the move. The move was really more of the catalyst. I said it was a one third my fault, one third his fault and one third and probably even more than that our differences.

That was sort of the quick marriage that I had. I packed up the dog and moved to Dayton Ohio which before, quite a lot earlier in my career when I was running the machinery division I had been offered a job in Dayton that I really didn't think I was a fit for it. I had turned it down and said that I would never, it wasn't because of Dayton but the idea of living in Dayton was not something I looked forward to.

Let me tell you after Wisconsin I was so excited to get halfway home and see a Kruger store that it didn't look so bad after all and it was a great place to live, the people are very, well the people are wonderful in Wisconsin as well and the work ethic up there is amazing. I moved to Dayton and there were several major initiatives we were working on at the time. The first was to try and figure out what the future of the paper industry was going to look like.

We hired Mackenzie and I had worked with Mackenzie when I was at Mead packaging, they had done a lot of work with the corporation. It's like getting a second MBA, I'm a big supporter of theirs. They just cost too much but it’s really an amazing strategy team. They helped us look at the future of the paper industry and whether you had to be big to really succeed in the profitable which meant that we would have to merge with somebody if we were going to do that.

What we determined after quite a lot of work is that you have to be number one or number two in your segment of the industry but you don't have to be in a bunch of different segments which I think a lot of people in the industry thought that you had to do. We actually also learned in looking at return on investment and decided that paper makers don't like to make money because corporations just when the segment starts to be profitable somebody in the segment invests in a new paper machine.

There is almost always over capacity in the industry. You have got to be a low cost provider and really number one or number two in the segment. The other thing we determined is that … We're having the pause because there is something, oh the other thing that we learned is that paper is not going away. My good old Gilbert has been impacted and we saw that coming because people do fax so much now that probably watermarks, who cares and so much is done digitally.

It is amazing that print button that everybody hits. Now I would imagine the paper industry is being impacted but w did not see that at the time as being a big threat to the industry. It is sort of like when cell phones came on people kept their landlines of course now they are getting rid of their landlines. At least in the near term horizon it looks pretty good for paper. We did work on deciding which segments of the industry we wanted to be in rather than merging with another company.

Mead has since merged with Westvaco but at the time we decided that that's not what we needed to do. The other thing that was fascinating that we worked on was the information retrieval business. I guess a lot of people don’t know that Mead used to own LexisNexis and the way we got it is kind of an interesting story. The person that invented or created LexisNexis lived in Dayton Ohio and was the back door neighbor of the chairman of the corporation many years before I was in the corporation.

Was looking for investment capital for this new little technology business he developed and so Mead helped invest in, I had no idea how they justified it to the board of directors. Mead invested in it and it grew and it turned out to be very successful. By the time I was in charge of strategy and Steve was chair, we were beginning to question whether we were the right parent for the business.

I think the example that I use that helped convince me that we were not the right parent is at the time LexisNexis, their growth strategy was to acquire a lot of small businesses that had access to information, so data ownership was very important. There was a little company out of San Francisco, I think it was like a 10 million dollar company, it was very small. I have had a corporate strategy, had to make the preliminary recommendations on it.

I flew out there with the LexisNexis people to look at this business. We get all the information and I bring it back to Dayton and we are all sitting around trying to figure out business sense and not totally trusting the management of the division, what boner they had and what's going on there. We were struggling to reap out this whole 10 million dollar business. At the same time one paper came along which is, was the largest coded paper producer in the United States, maybe the world, I can't quite remember but very, very large.

They were coming on the market so we decided in this thrust to focus on certain segments, coded papers was one of the ones we wanted to focus on. We all piled in the corporate jet, the head of CFO and the chairman and the head of operations for the corporation and myself and somebody else, the chief legal guy and we fly up to Maine to look at their main mill.

On the flight up we are clearing all the questions that we want to ask them, we spent half a day touring the plants and breaking in these groups. We are on the plane back from Maine. By the time the plane landed in Dayton we knew how we were going to consolidate product lines, what machines we were going to shut down, how we were going to do it and back in the envelope how much we would be willing to pay for it.

To think about okay it was 1.3 billion dollars that what it went for, we offered 1.1, so we could decide on a 1.1 billion dollars paper business but we couldn't set on the 10 million dollars technology business and that convinced me. We had no business being in the technology business unless we had an entirely different corporate center and that we needed that business to have the parent that really knew how to manage it.

To pick the people that were going to be in it, to pick the acquisitions and that kind of thing. Steve was a little more hesitant on that decision so it took him a little while but not too long. One morning, Sunday morning I'm sitting there reading the newspaper, drinking my coffee and the phone rings and its Steve, the chairman. He said I was at the opera last night and I got thinking about LexisNexis and obviously he got dragged to the opera.

Could you come over, he said "what are you doing?" I said I'm reading the paper but I have to go to church but I don't have to go and he said can you come over after church and we want to have a discussion about LexisNexis. We had the CFO and the chief counsel and myself in his kitchen on Sunday afternoon and he pulls out this opera program and he had written all these thoughts that he had been hearing from all of us over the past couple of months.

It was just, you talk about the tipping point, that opera was Steve's tipping point and he said we really just need to sell LexisNexis. We spent the next several months interviewing investment banks, which was fascinating. We had an investment back that we had worked with but we said if we are going to do a deal this big we really ought to make sure that we have the right one. I don't think these investment banks are used to having people interviewing them and asking those kinds of questions.

They sort of just bet on the business and go with them but we hopped on the plane and went out there and interviewed all these investment banks to really pick the one that we felt could do the best job and sell the business for us. We chose Goldman Sachs to help us with that and then simultaneously I worked with Mackenzie and my team, I had a small staff that worked for me on trying to value LexisNexis and figure out who the likely customers purchasers would be for the business.

One could say that the investment banks ought to do that but we felt that it was really important for us to have of our own perspective on that. I have to say in the end I really believe that that work we did helped us maximize the return that we got for that business. We also looked at whether we ought to just spin it off to the shareholders, just do a split and spin it off. The problem is it really did need some scale for investment down the pike and so it needed to be acquired by somebody.

We went through that whole process and sold off LexisNexis which was a fascinating process for me and then it was fascinating to see the new management come in, Reed Elsevier bought it and they had bought other companies before and they had a very good system for meeting with employees, telling them what the business was going to be like and just they had a routine of how you start up into a business which was helpful for me later on when I did an acquisition.

I learned some things on what to do and from some acquisitions we had been quite successful and what not to do when you are doing an acquisition. In that week there were a couple of other things, we worked on a couple acquisitions when I was in that job and divestiture of one of our smaller plants that wasn't a good fit for the corporation. One of the other learning experiences I had in that job was working with the board of directors.

I think I made a presentation once to the board for just a few minutes but I really didn't know them and I didn't know how the corporate leadership interacts with the board. It was fascinating to me to see how that process works and it's been helpful to me later on now that I serve on the board of a public company. One of the things is learning how much information to give them and to give it to them in a digestible way so that they can provide appropriate governance.

We wanted to really get it down to the central information and not use so much paper lingo that these people from other industries wouldn't understand. We didn't want to give them too much information but we also didn't want to give them too little information. We wanted to give them enough information in the pre-readings so that when we had a presentation to them we had time for them to ask questions and engage with us.

For an acquisition we never would go in and ask for the acquisition in the first meeting, we would have a meeting where we would educate them about the company and why we were interested and sort of laying the ground work and then maybe the next meeting, our future meeting come back or a future meeting come back to them, of course it depended on the size of the acquisition but being a director now I can certainly appreciate that not getting surprised by anything.

I think Mead has been highly respected for how they deal with their board. My favorite board story is Barbara Jordan. She served on our board and was one of my heroes and when the paper study I was talking about earlier, the future of the paper industry I was presenting that to the board at their annual strategy retreat. It was a pretty lengthy presentation. I think it was a couple of hours because there was a lot of information in it.

I went through the whole presentation and answered their questions and whatever and that night at dinner, we had a hunting lodge down in South Georgia but it was down in a relaxed environment. Before dinner I'm talking to Barbara and she said, "Pat I was so proud of you in that presentation." I said "Well thank you Barbara but you are not supposed to be my advocate, you are supposed to be my judge as a director."

She said "I will always be your advocate." I will remember that for the rest of my life and boy I cried the day I heard that she had died. She was a wonderful advocate but she was a great judge, she was very helpful as a board member because she would ask the questions that other people wouldn't want to ask. Sort of some business people would say that the dummy question and it wasn't damn at all.

She was tough, I mean she was touch on unions. I thought she would have been a strong supporter of them and she was strong supporter for dealing with them fairly and not just bending over backwards. She was very strong on environmental issues, making sure we had sound practices there and really had the support of the other board members even the very conservative ones because they respected her judgment and opinions and questions.

That is one of my favorite memories from that job was getting to know Barbara and some of the other board members. It was a very strong board. After I had been in that job for about a year and a half Steve did another shuffle of management, made at least a few moves and offered me the opportunity to run the consumer products business mid school and office products which is, most people have heard of the Trapper Keeper.

Because there was one time in the 80s where there was one Trapper Keeper sold for every two children in America. In terms of distribution and brand it was a great product. We had a lot of others that were very, very successful but I don't think any of them reached Trappers penetration. It was a very successful business at the school supplies, notebooks, backpacks, day planners, art papers for children, that's where the strength was.

More recently they had goiter into office products but again the premium set of office products so again day planners, envelopes, legal pads, whether there was one more commodities but office products sold through the same channel, so Target, Wal-Mart, Cal-mart, Walgreens, Krugers, were our primary customers. It is a fairly large business 500 million when I started there but we very quickly completed an acquisition of our Canadian counterpart which aided another 50 million.

We had about 3,000 employees within eight plants in Maquiladora in Mexico and did a lot of the off shore sourcing for the [inaudible 01:40:47] products, so the day planners and portfolios and those sorts of things that had labor selling content were done off shore. School and office products had been very successful for a long time and yet it was risk averse to getting into new things. There was a fair amount of complacency there.

Also a challenge that I had going in to school and office was that the fellow that was the vice president of marketing and sales was very comfortable with my predecessor who was now my boss and thought he deserved my job. He was trying to undermine me from the very beginning and the fellow who was head of the sales was joining him in that because he wanted to be head of sales and marketing.

I was sort of messing up the plan for both of those fellows. They were making my life very miserable and making it hard for me to be able to institute change. I did a little bit of the changing of the structure but not getting rid of everybody and brought in some fresh blood but I learned something through all of that. That is to be able to implement change you have to get rid of the real resistors.

If you bring in one or two people that is fresh blood they can, I mean this sounds like common sense at the time, I don't know why I didn't realize but they can't really make enough change happen. Having turned people around in the machinery division I really believe and reposition the people, I really believed I could convert these two guys.

Where I had other people telling me to get rid of them I kept thinking I could change them and also I was scared to death that I needed them. Because I came from outside the industry, I didn’t know any of the buyers, any of the people at the high level and our customers and really felt beholden to them. I spent time trying to get to know those customers so I wasn't dependent on those two fellows.

I waited way too long just like those people we had interviewed said I waited way too long to make that change. I eventually did and life was, once I get rid of the head of, I got the head of marketing and sales to take early retirement and once he was gone the other fellow got right into place and was fine. He was just getting some bad coaching I think but that was one of the big challenges I had there.

The other challenge I had was trying to make the division to take risks. Because they were getting great incentives for not making any mistakes so they didn't want to try to get too far off the mark because they didn't want to basically endanger their incentive, make a mistake and endanger their incentive. We spent some time trying to figure out how to grow the business. Because it was profitable I had the mandate from the corporation to grow.

I did what books talk about now having a big hairy goal, I set a goal and it worked, that we were going to double the size of the division in five years. We were 500 million at the time, I was pretty lucky because we had the first 50 million pretty quickly coming on because I had already started working on that acquisition and so we started to look where we could find additional growth.

We looked at a lot of different industries and we looked at more international expansion, we bought Canada, we looked at buying our counterpart at Buenos Aires because that would be good because it is counter seasonal to ours. I think we looked to Brazil and in other places, France, but we couldn't come up with one that would work and it really didn't give us that much additional volume.

What we determined was a great fit was computer accessories, so not to get into the technology side of accessories but get to the kinds of products that we knew and knew the design side. Carriers for laptops, iPhones didn't exist at the time but those kinds of carriers would have been there, things to hold CDs and whatever. We made an acquisition of and that was going to be a number of small acquisitions.

There are some big people in that industry and we began to talk to them as well. It had taken us a while to figure out where we wanted to grow and we are starting to work on those kinds of acquisitions. About the time I was having difficulty selling the corporation on that kind of growth, they were more oriented towards paper based products.

That was a bit of a push pull for me and so we made some progress in there but not nearly as much as I think we could have if I had stayed. About that time though, I was really getting kind of worn out with the corporate life. The people in Dayton are wonderful but I wasn't overly happy there, I really wanted to get back to Atlanta.

In all honesty I wanted to have more meaning in my life because by the time I had gotten to that stage of the business there was not the opportunity to be able to do community work because I traveled a lot when I was at Gilbert and school and office product. I was gone probably a third of the time, a third to a half being out with customers who were at the plant. For all those reasons I was ready to leave and I think getting a little bored.

The amazing thing I had sort of accomplished what I had set out as a professional goal because I didn't really want to be head of the corporation and it's a good thing because the guys who were there were going to be there for a while. Really I sort of checked that box, so I decided to leave and I decided it early in the year but it's a school business so I didn't want to leave.

I didn't want to tell the corporation until we had gotten through the school year which August is about the time the school supply sell, it is a highly, highly seasonal business when that's through. It's kind of funny they say that when women are having babies they start cleaning up the house and nesting or something like that. I started nesting at school and offices; I took care of some things.

A few more employees that I should have dealt with sooner and just got some projects and things done that I had let sit around but I didn't want to leave those for somebody else to have to clean up, for people to say I had left a mess. I worked on some of that but also I had a great desire to travel. I had, I traveled a lot for work but I didn’t have much time to travel on my own, vacation kind of travel and I like to go to remote places that aren't really touristy.

I started planning my travel plans and I felt like I would leave the corporation, travel for two months and then move back to Atlanta and look for a job. Actually my first hair brain idea was that I was going to find a job in Atlanta, resign from the corporation and travel for two months and then start my new job. Somebody said you are stupid if you think anybody is going to hire you and you don't know what you want to do anyway to do it in that order.

Why don't you just take the time off and then come to Atlanta once you are ready. I decided to do that and two months grew to four months, grew to six months and so I rounded it up to a year and traveled all over, I did a variety of things. I traveled to Australia New Zealand, that is not that remote but it was fascinating and fun I might say.

Then I went to Asia for about three months and to Burma and Bhutan and trekked in Nepal, spent a lot of time in India, a whole part of the world, a lot of places not Burma and Bhutan but India, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia. When I was in school and office and we were doing outsourcing because I had a manager that was responsible for that but about every two years. I would try and go over with him and visit.

Well twice I went with him and visited some of our factories to make sure I was confident that I could represent our board, that we were having ethical standards in the plans. My motto was we do not ever want to be on, anything that is on 60 minutes we want to be proud of and we were. The fellow that ran sourcing was very, very strict on that sort of thing but also wanted to know how he found new factories.

I made a couple of trips with him like that and saw places I was dying to go back to. This was an opportunity to, I sort of had a bucket list of all these places that I wanted to go but I also did some traveling with my niece and nephew. They were 12 and 15 at the time and was able to take them on some trips. That is still paying off, there was a bonding there that will last forever. I spent some time with my parents and then I did a lot educationally.

I had joined an organization called Young Presidents YPO when I was in Wisconsin, when I was a young president. I never had the time to take much advantage of their educational opportunities. In fact I remember going to one YPO conference and spending the whole conference in my hotel room working on a presentation for an acquisition we were going to do, something for the corporation but I never got to hear any speakers because I was too busy working.

I used that time also to take advantage of YPO but also some other educational opportunities. It was sort of piecing together some time that was very valuable and I don't think many people do and I feel really blessed to be able to have done that. I moved back to Atlanta, actually to my old house. I had rented it. I had gone for 10 years, 11 years and had multiple rentals.

When I left I thought I was going to go to Gilbert, be there a couple of years, leave the corporation and move back. It didn't quite work out that way but I'm glad I held on to the house. I moved back into the old house and started doing some consulting in the strategy arena for mainly small businesses. I had this vision of wnating to find a business that I could run, a medium sized business like 15 to 50 million in that range to be able to run and get a piece of equity.

I was having trouble finding a business that really made me want to jump out of bed in the morning and realize that most of my skills were in areas that, I don't know how to say this right but not people that I would want to spend the rest of my life working with or tasks I wanted to work in because they entered then a very risk averse conservative business that I had been in.

Instead I started working with an internet start-up called [Track Bay 01:55:01] that was started by a woman who is a very successful entrepreneur, great at putting together deals and creating a product and is my opposite in terms of risk, a woman who has a brilliant PhD and very talented but had not run a business. I came in as the third leg as sort of the practical manager leader experience. The three of us were leading [Track Bay 01:55:44] and what [Track Bay 01:55:46] does it's a portal for the tracking industry.

There were a lot of companies doing this at the time to be portals for reverse auctions and product sales and education, to do a lot of different things. I was part of that leadership team and some of the guys in the industry called it Track Babes instead of [Track Bay 01:56:15] because it was these three women running this business. It was really fascinating but unfortunately after about two years like many internet companies went belly up.

It gave me an introduction to a much more, even though tracking is as boring as, well it's boring as paper the excitement of the internet component of it was totally different and it was a great experience. Then I got a call from a woman in Chicago who has a very successful high end interiors business, who never really had any management processes at all, 80 million dollar business.

Usually very successful but no job descriptions, pay scales, budgets strategic plan, review processes, any of that kind of thing. She had determined that she needed a president for her company and the graphic designer that worked with us at Gilbert recommended she call me because he knew that I had left me a while back.

I told her that I would come work for her on a consulting basis. I didn’t work for her full time because I knew what that might be like. I went up and actually it ended up being two years though that I did work for her and actually being a consultant worked better because she knew that I could walk away. I liked working in smaller businesses after being in a big corporation. It's just a whole different field. Through working at Track Bay 01:58:17] and with Holly I determined a better definition for whom I am.

That would be the practical partner for the creative brain because I am not naturally creative like the real creative entrepreneurs are and I don't have the risk profile but I have a huge appreciation for people that do. I have the manager leader skills that they often don't have and so it really makes for a great team. It's been very helpful. That self awareness has been very helpful because I was having some identity issues trying to think about doing things that weren't a fit for me.

It's tough, you kind of think when you've been successful you can do whatever you want to do. My parents told me I could do, well kind of what I could do. It's been very freeing. Actually when I was workign with the Chicago Company I was also able to, even though I was living in Atlanta I was traveling up there every other week and then working from home for her.

I did have some, believe it or not some more time to be able to get involved with the community and I found Medshare which is a nonprofit here. At the time it was only about a year or a year and a half old. It is a nonprofit that collects and redistributes surplus medical supplies founded by a great, actually two entrepreneurs one of nonprofit guy and then one of a business person who had since retired.

Medshare collects and redistributes surplus medical supplies and had met in the food bank industry and found that there was the same excess in health care products as there is in the food industries. Someone had told A. B. about that and so he and Bob Freeman the co founder did quite a bit of research to find out if in fact such a need existed, if in fact there was that kind of excess and if there was some organization that was already doing that.

Because they believe was I believe which is we don’t need any more nonprofit necessarily in this world, we just need more good ones and that if once can merge or someone that really wants to help can go help one that already exists we're probably going to be better off. What they found was there were few organizations trying to meet the need but not doing it very well and none that were far off enough that could really work. There was one that they worked with a little bit.

They decided to start a nonprofit Medshare and along the way one of the people that they interviewed is Bill [Fegley 02:02:00]. He had been head of the CDC for a while and at the time was the medical adviser to the little foundation out west called the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. He is a doctor who had spent time in Africa so he had seen the need. What he told them is yes the need exists and the product that he was aware existed.

Only undertake this if you can ship what the recipients need and can use because all too often people ship things that they can't use. The example that I had heard on the news actually is not related to medical supplies but one of those hurricanes was down in Florida some people from up north snow coast packers down to people in Florida, just sort of collecting what was in their attic and sending it.

That is what happened a lot with overseas or that they ship a piece of equipment that they don't have the consumables or the spare parts to be able to make it work. They set about to put together a model that would work for recipients to be able to order what they needed. That was the beginning of the Medshare model. Now the organization has about 1200 volunteers a month that come and sort the product.

When it goes into inventory it is indiscreet boxes, all products of the same type and can go into inventory as a two inch 20 CC syringe. For example a syringe that is used for insulin is totally different than the one that is used for vaccinations. It doesn't do any good for a health facility to get the wrong kind of syringe and it's just everything is that way.

The product, Medshare, I can talk for everybody, Medshare, they collect the products from hospitals and also get donations of overstock, out of stock, overstocks and redesigned products from corporations and distributors and bring it to Medshare. Volunteers sort it, goes into inventories I was saying and into light product and we have a data system now where it is uploaded every three hours.

Somebody in Kenya or Guatemala or Haiti can go online and order the product within three hours of when it's gone into our inventory. When I met A. B. and Medshare it was much smaller, it was him that was running, not the entrepreneur, a fellow working out in the warehouse and a secretary that was doing a little bit of everything. The warehouse did not have any racking in it.

Everything was in palettes on the floor and it was really just getting started. A. B. himself said I love to start businesses but a lot of the nuts and bolts I don't enjoy. The practical partner, I really never planned it to be that way, when I had free time I would go out there and help him or he would call me and we ended up just kind of being a team in terms of working on things together. He is just an amazing person whose ego is so much in check.

He reaches out for help, he is not afraid to say what he doesn't know and engages other people. I fairly early went on the board and really had two hats with Medshare. One was at a board member which is the judge role as I was talking with Barbara about and then it's the volunteer as more of an advocate role and worked very hard with him to talk about which hat and the board members which hat I was wearing.

When I joined the board it was already a really strong board and continued to get stronger. It's really amazing that the Medshare had the kind of board you would expect a much bigger organization to have. I think the budget was like 400,000 dollars when I joined the organization and yet we had one of the top attorneys with King and Spalding on the board, we had the school of public health of Emory on the board, one of the leading doctors in town, just a great group.

The reason is because the mission was so compelling and A. B. as the leaders was so compelling that people wanted a board like that rather than something where you just sit and listen to a bunch of presentations. We all got hooked. He got everybody hooked and we all got hooked and in fact the attorney said A. B. as this wonderful skill of getting us to do a bunch of the work and chuckles because we all love doing it.

I helped with some of the more management oriented things of processes and whatever but also strategic projects. When we were looking at needing a new warehouse it's working with the staff figuring out what characteristics we needed in a warehouse and help and go look at them and put all that together, things that a staff would normally do but Medshare staff was just too small. Also on the expansion we had said for many years we wanted to perfect the model and then expand to other communities.

The trick was we had a process for evaluating how we were doing and perfecting the models so we didn't grow too soon. We knew we would never be perfect so perfect may be the wrong term. We didn't want to duplicate too many mistakes and so we wanted to get it be on sound footing. We worked on that and then once when we felt that we were on the part where we could expand is the whole process of expanding where to go, how to go.

One of the board members is from Accenture. They donated a tremendous amount of analytical time for us so there are lots of strategic projects. It was so rewarding to be able … The projects are really, the questions are the same. I tell people that a four profit business is just like, a non for profit business is just like a four profit business or should be in terms of governance, rigor, all good marketing, understanding your customer, the products that you offer, all those, how you go about expanding, developing new products, all that is the same.

The only thing that's different is the revenue model and the whole development set of things and how dependent a nonprofit is on development. Other than that it's really the same so I loved working on it and I was very attracted to Medshare because it dealt with real products, service kinds of businesses have never really attracted me or fit me very well at all. I ended up doing a lot of pro bono work as well as board work with Medshare and in many ways sort of part of my identity. It will never leave.

That also is a chapter that is changing because about a year ago, maybe a little more than a year ago AB announced to the board that he felt it was time for him to step aside and that he always wanted to be a fan of Medshare and if he could help he would. He said he wasn't going to retire, he was going to do other things as with so many businesses that when they are growing like that it's time for a different kind of leader.

I served on the selection committee for the new CEO and I'm thrilled to say that we have a woman that is not a criteria but it so just so happens that a woman Meredith Rent is running the organization now. The transition could not have gone better, everyone was committed to it going well but anytime an organization with a very strong culture as Medshare has transitions and loses its founder, there is a huge of things going awry.

I think it's really to the credit of everyone that it's gone so well and Meredith is bringing a lot of and the reason I say this is because it's a change for me is that she is bringing the skills that I had provided. I'm still very active in the governance, I chair the nominating and governance committee for Medshare and help lead some of the support our donor trips to visit our recipients which I love obviously.

It is a different kind of role in a much smaller role and I'm really ready for that change too. I will always be connected and it will be in my heart but I'm really this sort of catches me at an opportune time of I'm thinking about what the next chapter is. It will definitely be and I'm working with some other small non profits and small entrepreneurial business. I've realized what really gets me going is where I feel like I'm impacting lives.

The challenge that I continue to have is giving up money and title for that and being comfortable with that identity. I know in my heart it's the right thing to do. It is a big change for a person that has a little bit of a competitive side to her but I do know it is the right thing to do. The way that I stay involved in the traditional business which I'm very glad to be able to do because I don't want to lose that completely.

If nothing else to have strong business skills is I serve on the board of a small New York stock exchange company called Tricks. I joined that board in 1998 so I've been on there for a while and also chair their nominee and governance charity. Tricks makes and hopefully you've heard of them because we do quite a bit of advertising in shelter magazine like Architectural Digest, Southern living, Television ads, certainly doing more on the web now.

We make composite decking of recycled grocery bags and other plastic films that's used in distribution and saw dust from furniture manufacturing. It is all ecological, that under heat and pressure makes planks that are used for decking. It sounds like a sales pitch but it is a long lasting, it doesn't stain or fade and has a wood texture to it.

Much more practical I can attest, I remember my old deck up in Wisconsin I got this huge splinter and also it was sleek and went sliding and fell on it, a wood deck and so I understand the advantages of Tricks not even being on the board. It is a great company, it too has grown dramatically. It was a start up entrepreneur that sold it to mobile oil and then mobile spurn it out. We had some hiccups with leadership but now have the CEO that's very capable.

I think even through the ups and downs it was fascinating learning experience and sometimes extremely trying but it's on very solid footing, doing very well now. It was interesting to me though serving on the board to wear the other hat. When I had been in corporate strategy I had related to our board and now to be the board member and think how the staff is thinking but also what my expectations are of them.

I think a theme through my career has been to really cherish and grow from being on opposite sides of the fence, walking in those shoes, getting a diversity of experiences and really being able to knit it all together. [Zaleo 02:16:30] told me, my first boss when we were flying to Dayton, I had told him how much I was, this was when I was a little business planner and how much fun I was having.

He said well, if you get to the point where you don't enjoy getting out of bed in the morning for too many mornings find something else to do. That has sort of been my driving force and unfortunately I have enjoyed doing what I have done most of my life. I feel really, really, blessed to have had the opportunities. Even some of the challenges as I'm thinking back to the stories that I haven't told about some of the things.

It's all been fun and after a while you can laugh about some of them. That's my story, the biggest challenge that I've had from a career stand point is figuring out what I'm going to do. Because when I was in need there was one opportunity after another and so the whole idea of marketing in my staff, I had a vision of what I wanted. That was a piece of it and so I wanted multiple experiences and was able to work with them on that. It just sort of followed a natural course then I sort of had done that.

When I was ready for another chapter in my life it was a bit of a loss. Then this whole issue of identity because I wanted to take a more nontraditional route and at times I would feel like when I see people that have gone on, climbed the corporate ladder or gone to another corporation I feel like a failure for not doing that. Then when I say would I want to be in those shoes I say no and then I say well I'm a lazy and I don't think that's it.

It's just I'm marking to a different drama now. I don't think so much that I've hit a wall as is that identity thing of how I want to live my life. I guess it's a constant kind of thing. My definition of work, life, balance is different from a lot of women you have probably talked with because I think the first thing that comes to mind is with a family. We were talking about earlier that has not been an interest of mine other than my niece and nephew and that's very important.

For me work, life, balance is more defined as having the time to devote to the community. Early in my career I was able to do that but later in my career I wasn't able to figure out a way to do that and maybe if I, because certainly I should have been able to create the time because a lot of the executives that had the job I had had a family and kids. They curved out some time for them but for whatever reason I also tend to be a workaholic.

I'm obviously much better at it now but that is how I got my jollies. It was very easy for me to stay late hours and work because it just felt good. I think it's that balance more in terms of involvement in the community and giving back. This sounds terrible but I didn't have personal goals. I mean other that physical exercise. I was actually disciplined about working hard when I had this horrific schedule that I have now.

I was very disciplined about working out and just running and working out at the gym I would regularly if I couldn't … That's why the club used to close at eight. If I couldn't get in by seven then I'd go in early in the morning before work. That was really my primary personal goal and everything else was grouped into work.

Speaker 2: A strong work ethic, paper industry is probably more male dominated.

Pat: Oh yeah.

Speaker 2: Did any women chose to [inaudible 02:21:13] and then have trouble coming in at any point or, I mean I know you were one of the first in that industry.

Pat: I will say one thing by the way about being the only woman in the industry, if you are in an industry meeting and they take a break you have the whole bathroom to yourself because there are no any women there. I cannot think of any women, not just in the paper industry but in other of friends that have left and come back into the same industry. My friends tend to either be super moms that by having a supportive husband and a nanny are able to do it all.

Or people that have either cut back significantly or taken some time off and when they've come back wanted to do something completely different. I'm wondering if there is, just thinking now about something that gets in your blood, some kind of an endorphin when you are in the corporate world that if you are away from it for a while you are more able to sit back and think about more broadly about what you want to do.

I'm not quite sure about how to define that but I just have not seen people want to get back into the same thing. I know it happens but I just haven't seen it.

Speaker 2: It's interesting, I know this is … My daughter had a three week old baby now and she is in a pharmaceutical industry. That certainly changed because she is very competitive, makes the numbers and now it is kind of like, do I want to go back into that and pursue that as hard as I did.

Pat: Something else along the lines of work life balance is I think men have that same challenge and where women have a right to complain about the challenge of all that and still in most cases the predominance of the children care rests on mums although that's changing more and more. I know stay at home dads are super active dads but the whole idea of being able to change careers is something I think most people when they get into their 40s and 50s start thinking back on their careers saying is this what I want to be doing for the rest of my life.

Many people and more so men than women feel that they have to stick with what they are doing, that they can't sacrifice income, that they are the primary bread winner or at least a significant … The men that I have run into I don't think feel the flexibility that women have run into feel. I think to balance some of the other challenges that we have to deal with, I think that that is one of the nuance benefits that we get. I think that is one of them.

Speaker 2: I agree, that is kind of like those golden handcuffs …

Pat: Exactly.

Speaker 2: [Inaudible 02:24:41] when I'm providing for my family. Question now, do you think other women help women? What is your experience with that?

Pat: The quick answer is I don't know. I think that women try to mentor and the reason I'm pausing is I'm thinking about myself and simultaneously about women in general. Maybe the best way to answer that question is start with myself. I have felt that, I have strong feelings about minorities and helping minorities and women. I have in some ways have felt more able to advocate for the minorities because it looks like I'm not advocating for myself.

I'm sure many of my feminist friends would have epilepsy of my saying that but it is a challenge and certainly I think I have looked for people with capabilities and tried to mentor them no matter what color or gender that they are. I think that gets the quick answer to your question is some but not focused on women.

Speaker 2: Sometimes you find being the only woman in a position than the women who hold those initiative positions sometimes don’t help the women coming up because they perceive them with competition.

Pat: I have never run into that, I've never, my philosophy is you always try to hire people that are better than you are because you will be just a heck of a lot better off for lots of reasons. That jealousy kind of thing has never gotten in the way. I will say this is I guess more than anecdote, sort of tangential what you are saying but when I went to run the machinery division the woman that was the assistant to the plant manager and I will say she ran the place and let us get the title and the salary.

She knew everything that was going on and how things worked and you definitely needed Edina on your side. When I came in, I had only been there like a week or two and she came in to see me, oh I'd been longer than that, maybe a month. She said I worked for a woman once before and we didn't get along at all. I wasn't very excited about you coming but I promised your predecessor that I would try to help you be successful.

I just want you to know that it's going to be hard for me but I'm committed to trying to help you. Then she went on to tell me something I was doing that was offending someone that I didn't even realize I was doing. She was really sort of being behind the scenes helper but that really surprised me because I had never thought about people not wanting a woman, not wanting to work for a woman but I guess that's happened.

Speaker 2: Unfortunately I've heard other women say they [inaudible 02:28:16].

Pat: I think I've worked with so few women that I just never had an opportunity to, I worked almost entirely with men and so I just haven't seen it. I think hugely and I'm jumping to the answer but at the same time I don't want to sound like that parent that says I walked six miles to school in snow. I still teach at the Dayton school, I go up twice a year and teach a class there on Medshare actually and they'll often ask questions at the end about experiences being a woman in the industry.

When I tell them some of the stories of things that have happened to me they just can't believe it. I think in terms of being accepted it's much easier. I do think in terms of technology and companies are getting much more flexible. When we were starting out our careers I had mentioned that I turned down a job opportunity with the corporation. I was red circled for, part of that career for years for having turned that job down.

I thought that that actually Dick was asking about hitting a wall, I thought for a while I might have really done myself in. Had I turned down a second move I certainly would have done myself in. It took me a little while to get out of the penalty box. I think now I was talking to a woman that works in a very conservative corporation and she was saying when we hire somebody they tell us where they want to live.

That wasn't on the agenda early on so I think corporations are more attuned to the needs of employees than they used to be.

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