

Max and Trude Heller

Interviewee: Max and Trude Heller

Interviewer: Courtney L. Tollison, Ph.D.

Date: August 10, 2004

Location: The Hellers' home

Editor: Anna McDanal – July 6th, 2010

Editor: Dr. Courtney Tollison – July 19th, 2010

Timecode

Minutes 0-5

Introduction and beginning of Mr. Heller's story of his arrival in America: Heller Service Corp, Furman Board of Trustees, Mary Mildred Sullivan Award, Johns Presidency, Bell Tower Award, Riley Institute of Politics, Austria, Vienna 1937, Hitler, Mary Mills, Hitler's takeover of Austria, *Anschluss*. Nazi Party

Minutes 5-10

Hitler's takeover of Austria in 1938, Kurt von Schuschnigg, Mary Mills, treatment of the Jews after Hitler took over Austria, results of the Nazi rule

Minutes 10-15

Mary Mills, Nazi work camps, getting a Visa to the United States, Sheppard Saltzman, John Plyler

Minutes 15-20

Mrs. Heller's story on leaving Austria for America: Hitler, brown shirts, treatment of Jews in Austria 1938, Gestapo

Minutes 20-25

Continuation of Mrs. Heller's story on leaving Austria for America: German attaché, Gestapo. Rotterdam, Holland, Belgium

Minutes 25-30

Cologne, Germany; Antwerp; Belgium; Krakow, Poland; Visa; American Consulate in Antwerp; English Channel; New York 1939

Minutes 0-5

Greenville, SC; Hitler marching through Belgium; the French Desert; New York; Chilean Visas; concentration camps; chaperoning during dating in the 1930s; Schindler's List

Minutes 5-10

Bringing Trude to Greenville: Czechoslovakia; concentration camps; New York; Piedmont Shirt Factor; learning to speak English

Minutes 10-15

The process of learning to speak English; President and Mrs. Plyler; interacting with the German students at Furman; Vienna; Hitler; Poland in 1938

Minutes 15-20

Hellers' relationship with Dr. Blackwell, becoming a member of the advisory board at Furman while Dr. Blackwell was president; being a member of the student affairs committee; Francis Hipp; Alester Furman

Minutes 20-25

Texaco; the student advisory committee at Furman and how its membership changed under Dr. Blackwell, allowing more people who weren't native South Carolinians or Southern Baptists to serve on the committee; the Hellers' relationship with Dr. and Mrs. Blackwell, Mr. Heller speaking at the Dr. Johns' and Dr. Shi's inaugurations, Betty Alverson and the Service Corps and Furman; Mr. Heller becoming mayor of Greenville, the May Day celebration

Minutes 25-28

Service Corp, Betty Alverson, Kennedy Center, Habitat House

Minutes 0-5

Laura Ebaugh; United Way; Mr. Heller serving as chair of the State Development from 1979 to 1983; Mr. Heller's service as a member of City Council beginning in 1969; the Greenville Chamber of Commerce; Visiting Nursing Service; Mrs. Heller's involvement with the Council of Jewish Women; Mr. Heller serving as chairman of St. Francis Hospital; the Hellers' visit to the motherhouse in Rome

Minutes 5-10

The Hellers' involvement with desegregation in Greenville and at Furman: the Urban League; integrating City Hall; starting the Alliance for Quality Education; Sarah Manly; Dr. Ernie Harrill

Minutes 10-15

Discussions of how the Jewish community in Greenville responded to Civil Rights; story of how the Hellers were discriminated against when they were looking for an apartment

Minutes 15-20

Discussions of Mr. Heller's priorities when he was mayor: organizing busing in Greenville

Minutes 20-25

Serving on the advisory council; the extensions at Furman: Johns Hall, Plyler hall, the new library, and the Riley Institute; Service Corps; serving on the advisory council when Furman split from the Southern Baptist Convention

Minutes 25-28

The process of splitting from the Southern Baptist Convention and the decision to move to the new campus

Minutes 0-5

The Hellers' relationships with President and Mrs. Johns and Dr. David and Susan Shi; Dr. Blackwell; discussions of the different presidents at Furman from Plyler to Shi and their unique contributions to Furman and the Greenville community; Service Corp; May Day; Betty Alverson; CFC

Minutes 5-10

Council of Jewish Women; serving as the scholar in residence at the Riley Institute of Politics; the development of downtown Greenville; local politics; Dr. Gordon; Governor Richard Riley

Minutes 10-15

Serving as the residence scholar of the Riley Institute; CFC; Betty Alverson; Service Corp; Dr. Shi; Mary Mills Robinson Scholarship; Vienna; Sheppard Saltzman Scholarship; Trude and Max Heller Scholarship

Transcript

Dr. Tollison: Today is Tuesday, August 10, 2004, and we're here at the Heller's home, and I'm talking with Max and Trude Heller. Okay, let's start off with just a few little tidbits about your connections to Furman. The service corps is of course named after both of you. You were a member of the Board of Trustees since 1999. You mentioned that you were on the advisory board for over thirty years. Both of you have honorary doctorates from Furman, and Mrs. Heller, you're a member, or a recipient of the Mary Mildred Sullivan Award during Dr. Johns presidency. And Mr. Heller, you won the Bell Tower Award in 1998. Additionally, last year you got the 2002-2003 Scholar in Residence of the Riley Institute of Politics. Why don't we start off by talking about... telling your stories from just how came to this country.

Mr. Heller: Well, since I came first, I'll start. I was born in Vienna, Austria. I'm of the Jewish faith. That's important to the story because being Jewish I experienced some anti-Semitism as a youngster. But in 1937, which incidentally was the same year I met Trude in the country (my wife was a very innocent beautiful girl). The day I met her, I told her I was going to marry her one day. And that was at a vacation place near Vienna.

Mrs. Heller: In fact it was kind of silly of him to say that.

Mr. Heller: Now that's not nice. But that same week I was on vacation I decided to go back to Vienna for just one night really, and come back with my father who commuted. When I got off the train I met a boy friend and he asked me, "Why are you here?" I said, "I have no idea why I came but I'm going back tomorrow. Let's go dancing tonight." So we went to an outdoor restaurant, which was lovely, and there was a group of American girls with a chaperone. I kept looking and wanting to dance with one of them in worst way, and finally I got enough courage to do that. I asked the chaperone if I may dance, proper manners, you know, and from 11:00 until 1:00 I danced with her. She couldn't speak German, and I couldn't speak English, but we arranged through the chaperone that I would pick her up the next day and show her Vienna. So I went out Friday morning, I bought a dictionary, and we walked for several hours, just talking about the city and so forth. When I left, I said, "I'm going to learn how to speak English. Give me your name and address." She did, and her name was Mary Mills, and she lived on Mills Avenue, in Greenville, South Carolina, and I took that piece of paper and put it in my wallet. I got back to the summer resort and I told Trude, "Guess what, I met an American girl and I danced with her. She wasn't too impressed. That was in August of 1937. In March of 1938 Hitler took over Austria, and I might add the Austrians were jubilant, very much for it. It was on March 11, I believe.

Dr. Tollison: Could you elaborate a little bit about the response of the Austrians?

Mr. Heller: There was an election to take place on Sunday, the 13th of March, and the election was to raise the question: shall we annex or shall we become part of Germany. [It was] called the *Anschluss*. And we must have had twenty political parties. The Nazi Party had been very, very violent for many years, but in the last years [it] was kind of

quiet, and every party was out politicking. On that Friday afternoon they were marching in the streets just politicking for the election the following Sunday. And then suddenly on the loud speaker over the public buildings we heard that Germany has marched into Austria, and the Austrian Chancellor said, "Do not put up any resistance." Well it was a foolish thing to say that because the people were jubilant. There was nobody putting up resistance. And just within minutes policeman took out swastikas and put them on their arms and public buildings were flying swastika flags. It was totally organized.

Dr. Tollison: Wasn't the Chancellor part of the Nazi Party?

Dr. Heller: No, the Chancellor was a Christian Democrat, I think. His name was Kurt von Schuschnigg, who incidentally ultimately came to this country and taught history at the University in Missouri. There's a Miami University in Ohio. [Editor's Note: Kurt von Schuschnigg was a professor of political science at the Saint Louis University from 1948 to 1967.]

Mrs. Heller: But his son also came to Greenville.

Mr. Heller: His son came to Greenville. He was a maitre'd at a night club.

Dr. Tollison: Not Hitler's place. Maybe it was what I'm thinking about is [that] Hitler put the members of the Nazi Party in control of Austria after the German Invasion.

Mr. Heller: Oh yes.

Mrs. Heller: I was in Vienna (I was a young girl) and I was going to gym class. I was never allowed by myself (I was only 15 at the time), and somebody walked with me to the gym class. I went in and the streets were full of people cheering for their party. You didn't see one swastika anywhere. It was the three arrows of the Social Democrats, and the red, white, and black of Christian Socialists, all kinds of parties, not a swastika in sight. It was a half-hour class. When I came out the entire city was a sea of swastikas. It was an unbelievable sight. Every policeman had an armband on. Every building had a flag, and synagogues were burning. It was that prepared. I'll never forget it, I mean, it was an unbelievable way [that] they did it. They wanted it.

Mr. Heller: I made my way home, and when I came home, I said, "We have to get out of here." I was convinced then that there was no place for us in Europe. I said we want to go to America. My parents said, "Who do you know in America?" I said, "Remember the girl I met?" My father said, "Well, she'll never remember you." And I even called Trude the next day and I said, "I'm going to the American Consulate to get an application for a Visa, shall I bring you one?" She says, "Who do you know in America?" - the same question my father asked. To make a long story short, the next day...by the way, they already had confiscated our bank account, and they were plundering stores already, and it was a free-for-all. The benches in the parks were marked "Jews not allowed." I was working at the time and going to school. On Monday when I came to the place where I was working, all the people I had worked with [for] these years wore Nazi uniforms. In

fact, a former employee of the company came with an official and storm troopers and took over the business. They fired all the Jews except two of us, and I was fired two weeks later. It was temporary halt. That was just the way it was. I wrote Mary Mills and we waited for weeks and weeks. I don't want to go into detail of what took place in Vienna, but it was a horrible, horrible... We lived in fear twenty-four hours a day, every minute. They had no concentration camps, no death camps. They had work camps, which they had built in Germany, but they didn't have death camps yet, but still they started to take people off the street already....

Mrs. Heller: It took time to build them.

Mr. Heller: And put them into the camps.

Dr. Tollison: Put in jail first or sent straight to the work camp?

Mrs. Heller: At that time, to the work camps.

Mr. Heller: To the work camps. But they were already building concentration camps. Your father was invited to come to the police.

Mrs. Heller: Yeah.

Mr. Heller: No, at first they took them to the police. Because we had a relative, to show you how horrible these people were, we had a relative who was picked up on the street. "They took him to a basement where there were maybe thirty or forty others, all Jews, and they said, "Say your last prayers, we are going to execute you, and we're going to do it in alphabetical order." His name was Lang. By the time they "L" came, he was thrown out in like an outside place, and they took off his clothes and they shot in the air and kicked him out. They didn't kill him, but they scared the life out of him. It was those kinds of things they did. But we started waiting at different embassies hoping, if we couldn't get out of... They immediately passed laws that a Jew could not employ a non-Jew, a non-Jew could not employ a Jew: the Nuremberg Laws. They also passed a law that you couldn't get out of Austria unless you had a place to go. Well nobody wanted us. But there were always rumors that this country would have a Visa or this country, so the next few months we spent standing in line day and night, hoping to get papers from somebody. Well, about two months, or a month-and-a-half after I wrote the letter to Mary Mills, I received a letter from her, and she said, "I have not forgotten you. I've gone to see a man in Greenville who has agreed to send you the necessary papers to bring you to the United States." That's a moment I'll never forget. She had gone to see an American, a shirt manufacturer, in Greenville, by the name of [Sheppard] Saltzman, who agreed that he would send the necessary papers. Papers meant an affidavit where he would agree that I would not be a burden to the American government, and he agreed to do that. It was ultimately how I came to Greenville. I came to Greenville (I had \$20 in my pocket when I left Vienna). My sister, by the way, came with me, and when I came to Greenville I had less than \$2.00 left. Well, I was a big tipper on the way on the ship. I came here at noon and I started working within the hour.

Mrs. Heller: They took him to lunch, and he had tomato soup for 10¢, and wouldn't let them pay.

Mr. Heller: The man who brought me here wanted to pay for my lunch, and I said to him, I said, "I won't let you pay for my lunch, but when I can afford to take you for lunch, then I'll let you take me." I didn't want charity. I wanted to be on my own, and I started working immediately.

Dr. Tollison: Literally!

Mrs. Heller: Literally.

Mr. Heller: Yeah, literally. My first paycheck was for \$9.90 for the week.

Mrs. Heller: It was \$10 with Social Security...

Mr. Heller: Let me tell you my connection with Furman, because this is very, very appropriate and very important. The day after I came here I started working in a shipping department. I received a call from the front office, "Max Heller come to the office: there's a judge here to see you." It just scared me something awful.

Dr. Tollison: Sure.

Mr. Heller: I was convinced they were going to send me back. And here's this tall handsome man. He said, "My name is Plyler, Judge Plyler. I've come to congratulate you and welcome you to this country." I cried.

Dr. Tollison: Sure. That's a great story.

Mr. Heller: He said, "And I will be president of Furman University. I will open my home to you and you can come and learn English. I will introduce you to German students." And then he congratulated the man who brought me here, Sheppard Saltzman, that was my first experience with Furman, and I have never forgotten it.

Dr. Tollison: Sure.

Mr. Heller: It really, it was my real welcome. So that's my story.

Dr. Tollison: Do you want to tell me yours?

Mrs. Heller: Mine was much harder than that. I had no place to go, and my father, I was an only child, and the first tribulation after Hitler marched in, we were living in an apartment my parents had bought...

Mr. Heller: Can I interrupt a minute? I need something to drink.

Dr. Tollison: Sure.

Mr. Heller: I'll be right back.

Mrs. Heller: The first two days there was a butt of a rifle knocking the door and I opened the door and they said, "Car key." And you, you hand them over or you die. We had a car, my father loved cars. We had a new one every year and he spent most weekends under it whether it needed it or not. He was one of those, you know, he loved cars. So they took our car, they took our bank account. We had two stores. My parents were very upset because I was a young girl and I had no protection. They could do whatever. The government looked the other way. So, they started taking people to wash the streets and they came for my mother and me, and my mother held on to me and we went down the street. There was a place that had some things from the elections from other than the swastikas, and they were painted on and they made us wash it. Then they brought us inside, and then they sent everybody else away and left me there. I started to be surrounded by brown shirts, and they knew me by name. I had lived there all my life. And they started touching me, and my mother screamed. I heard her screaming. And I walked German officers and they stopped it, and it took two days and two nights. I had to have a shot from the doctor, you know. And then they came in one day and said, "I want this apartment." My parents had put in a bathroom. "You be out in six hours or you're dead." There are many stories that people don't realize. So my mother went to look for a place and my father went to get boxes and I started packing. Of course we didn't get it all out, only what we could get out in six hours. My mother found a place in an old house that most of the people that had lost their apartments had moved in to, and that's where we went. And, then one day my father got an invitation to come to the Gestapo and nobody ever came back from that. So he said, I'm leaving. And I said, "Where are you going?" First came *Kristall Nacht*, that was when a Jewish boy in Paris...

Mr. Heller: That was in November.

Mrs. Heller: In November, a Jewish boy in Paris shot a German attaché because his parents were killed, and the Nazis gave the Nazis in Austria twenty-four hours to do with the Jews as they pleased. I had a girlfriend who called and said, "Don't let your father leave," and hung up. And my father had already left. And it so happened he took some things with him, we had cameras and he had money with him, and he said, "I'll hide it in the store." We still had one store open. And when she said that, there was a knock on the door and it was my father, and he said "I'll never see you again, they've arrested me, they are taking me away. I knew the man and I said, 'Let me tell my wife'." So my mother said, "I won't let you go," and she ran to the next-door neighbor's house. Everybody in that house was Jewish. And the next-door neighbor had a son who was very ill, and my mother went in and said, "Would you hide my husband?" She said, "Sure," and she put him in the closet. They came for her son and took him away. She didn't give my father away. I went downstairs and got a cab, and we went to the store and we shut it from the inside and they were knocking on the door, and we had no light, no water, no

toilet, and we stayed in there for thirty-six hours. We did have a phone and my girlfriend kept me informed. That's how we survived that day. A lot of people were killed that day. And then my father went to hide at a cousin's place. At that time they only took men away: they had no facilities for women yet. That had to be built by thousands of people. So he stayed with them a few days, and they weren't looking for him anymore, so he came back, and in January he got the invitation to the Gestapo and he said "I'm leaving." My father and I made up a language. My mother was a very nervous woman who had no poker face. I had a boy friend visit, a friend of ours, and he said, "Take me with you." And they left from the house, and I had some dolls. I had two little suitcases and they left. Two days later I got a call from my father and he was in Belgium. He told me exactly what to do with my mother to do the same. And what happened was we got on a train going through Germany into Rotterdam, Holland. And he picked out one of the waiters. He called him over and he said, "I have some money if you will hide me and my friend," and he agreed. And he put them under the table and the waiter stood in front, and put the cloth over the table, and they stopped at the border and they found the two little suitcases and nobody claimed them, so they started to search the train. They all stood in front of that table, and he was not detected. He got out in Rotterdam and made his way through the street and saw a kosher sign, and he went in there and asked them to help him. At that time the Belgians were giving the refugees thirty-day permits, no more, and that's where they sent my father with false papers into Belgium. My father said, "I'm in Belgium, I have a thirty-day permit, hopefully I can get another thirty days." He told me what to do with my mother, and we did. We packed up boxes and sent it to him, although only less than half got to him, but at least some. I even have some stuff from my grandmother still, which I really cherish, and my mother and I got on the train and we got into a compartment. As it so happened, there were a couple of other people like us who had no place to go, but I couldn't tell them where I was going to do. We went to the diner on the train, and I picked out, by the description, the waiter, because my father gave me his schedule. I had the menu in front of me, and I called him over and I told him who I was and I told him we had twice the money that my father gave him. And he said, "Don't speak to me: I'm being watched." And that was it. So we had to get out at the border, at the German border in Cologne, [Germany], with no place to go. And with us six other people got out that had no place. One of them had a telegram that there was this hourly hotel that would put Jews under the eaves if you paid enough. And that's where we went, all of us. They had people that were guides that took refugees through the woods into Belgium. For five weeks we ran probably eight times and were caught each time. Each time they took the men away and left the women. It was winter and my mother was deathly ill with high fever. It was [an] unbelievable five weeks that I ever hope to live through. My father found [out] that there was this guy in Germany who wanted money out of the country and he agreed to bring us to Belgium. So he picked us up at, I'd been in ditches with rifles in my ribs and caught many times by Germans. And he took us...we had to walk through half the night and then he picked us up in cars. We were searched everywhere. They had women search us everywhere. And that's how I ended up in Belgium. We had no place to go from Belgium. We had relatives in other countries who sent us the money to eat. We were not allowed to work, and they found some long lost cousin in the United States who agreed to send papers, but he was a poor man and had five unmarried daughters and no insurance, and I took the papers to the

American Consul in Antwerp and he said you know those papers are no guarantee that they can take care of you. I said, "Well, I can take care of me, and my dad can take care of us." My mother and I got a Visa, and my father didn't because he was born in Krakow, Poland, only so many Visas were given by where you were born per year. But my parents wanted to save me so my mother and I left, and left my father there. That was March 1, 1940. I came during the war.

Mr. Heller: No, 1939, no 1940.

Mrs. Heller: During the war through the English Channel was full of sunken ships and floating bombs, and it was terrible weather and the whole ship was deathly ill. No music: no nothing. But we came and my father worked with the Consul and on May 9, we had a one room in New York, my mother and I, for \$3 a week. And I started working the day I got to New York. I worked in a hat shop. My father sent me a telegram that he had booked passage on the 11th of May. On the 10th of May, Hitler had marched into Belgium. We didn't hear from him for months. They took the refugees. They wanted to into cattle cars and shipped them into The French Desert. I didn't hear from him until July 18. The doorbell rang and there was Max surprising me from Greenville, South Carolina.

Mr. Heller: I came to rescue you from New York.

Mrs. Heller: And with him was the Western Union boy with a telegram from my father, I'm alive. We didn't know until July that he was alive. And that's my story. And it took me another year to get him to the United States.

Mr. Heller: I have to add something to her story because I think...

Mrs. Heller: Yeah in between, while in Belgium, we tried to go to any country that would have us. There were all these rumors around that the embassy would take your Visa if you paid them, so we went to the Chilean, and the Chilean ambassador was out of town. The vice consul was selling Visas. We bought Visas. We booked passage to go to Chile. The Ambassador came back and found out and even our luggage was aboard the ship, he came and cancelled our Visas, and I still have those cancelled Visas, and took our luggage off. The ship sank and one hundred people drowned. The ship's name was The Simon Bolivar. So we are here because of many miracles. Like Max says...

Mr. Heller: Every survivor had his own miracle. I believe in miracles, I don't depend on it, but I believe in them.

Mrs. Heller: But every survivor has a story.

Dr. Tollison: So he was on your doorstep?

Mrs. Heller: Yes, and that was in July.

Dr. Tollison: Had you all been in contact?

Mr. Heller: Oh yeah. Trude knew where I was, and then ultimately when she got to Belgium, I got her address. So we stayed in touch.

Dr. Tollison: About how long were you in New York?

Mr. Heller: I wanted to marry her while she was still in Belgium. In fact, I'm serious, I wrote her a letter and I sent her a picture of me and said, "I don't want you to forget me. I'll marry you, and then if you come here and you don't want to stay married okay, but I want to help you." And she declined the offer by the way. And later on she said, "That picture was so terrible."

Mrs. Heller: My parents wouldn't let me. I was born in the time when young girls were chaperoned. We were chaperoned even in this country 'til the day we married. We were never out of the eyes of my parents. He didn't know what he was getting into.

Mr. Heller: We were very fortunate. My parents came over several months later, also, through a miracle. It's another story. But between us, we lost ninety people in the Holocaust who were killed, in concentration camps.

Mrs. Heller: His father was one of nine children and he's the only one who survived.

Mr. Heller: My mother was, there were seven in her family, and three came here first. You're right, three came in the early 1900s. And Trude had fourteen of her family on Schindler's List. The factory that [Oscar] Schindler took over was owned by a distant relative of her family, and the man who owned the factory said to Schindler, "If you're taking my factory at least save some of my people." So fourteen including her grandmother (her grandmother was killed).

Mrs. Heller: Some would survive, not all of them. My grandmother was killed by a woman guard because she took a piece of bread off the table.

Mr. Heller: So, here we are in Greenville.

Dr. Tollison: Ninety family members?

Mr. Heller: Ninety between the two of us. I only found one. When I went through my papers recently I found a telegram. It came from Czechoslovakia. And it said, "I am safe. Family killed in concentration camp ([it] gave me the name of the concentration camp). I lived with strangers." And we did bring her over here. She's the only one. It was a cousin of mine. She lives in New York.

Mrs. Heller: She had some family members who were alive when they freed them, and as they walked toward the exit of the concentration camp, the Germans who were fleeing ran right through them with their vehicles and killed them.

Mr. Heller: Let's talk about good times now.

Dr. Tollison: So how long were you in New York when you went up there to visit? Is that when you got engaged?

Mr. Heller: Oh, no, no.

Mrs. Heller: That was before my father came.

Mr. Heller: Her mother and father knew that I wanted to marry her. Her father was not too happy about it. Her mother was okay because I like her food and I was a very good guest. I ate everything she had.

Mrs. Heller: I was the only child. Nobody was, as far as my father was concerned, nobody was good enough.

Mr. Heller: But in 1942 Trude came to visit me with her mother over New Year's, and when she left I wasn't sure how this was going to be.

Mrs. Heller: I wasn't too happy.

Mr. Heller: She wasn't too happy.

Mrs. Heller: You knew everybody, and I knew nobody, and the girls didn't want me here. I was competition.

Mr. Heller: Some of the girls. Anyhow, they came here in February of 1942, and I guess her parents saw that Trude wasn't going to marry anybody else. I can understand how her parents felt. I mean, here I was, just starting to work here. I had to support my parents at the time: they were both ill and couldn't work. And she was their only child. So, being a parent now, I understand how they felt. But they were wrong.

Mrs. Heller: I started working the next day after I came here.

Mr. Heller: She went to work in the factory where I worked.

Mr. Heller: My mother opened a little store called The Hose Doctor. She knew how to fix...it was during the war she learned how to fix nylon hose, you know, with the runs. You couldn't buy any, and she had a little machine, so that's how she made a living.

Mr. Heller: We learned a bigger lesson, and that had to do: you must never worship money. It's a temporary thing, and you can't take it with you for sure. And it can be taken away from you. Everything we had was gone. Everything her parents had they took away. I don't know what you had when you came here but maybe you had \$100, maybe.

Mrs. Heller: We sold our own clothes.

Mr. Heller: As an aside, you had very little money because I remember I went to the little store on Washington Street. I put shelves in, and when they came we took some of our old clothes and her family's old clothes, and we had a rummage sale. This is how we -took in maybe \$50 or \$100.

Mrs. Heller: And that's how we bought the table and chairs and paid the rent on our House.

Mr. Heller: So, it wasn't easy. But it didn't seem difficult, really.

Dr. Tollison: What was the name of the factory?

Mr. Heller: Piedmont Shirt Company. They are no longer in business.

Dr. Tollison: And you became the general manager in 1943?

Mr. Heller: I beg your pardon?

Dr. Tollison: You became the general manager of the company?

Mr. Heller: In 1945.

Dr. Tollison: '45.

Mr. Heller: I was general manager and vice president of the company.

Mrs. Heller: He had learned a lot of English.

Dr. Tollison: Did you speak English to each other, here? When did you decide to start speaking English to each other?

Mrs. Heller: I think right away.

Mr. Heller: Speak English?

Mrs. Heller: To each other.

Mr. Heller: Yeah. Trude knew some English.

Mrs. Heller: Yeah, I learned in school.

Mr. Heller: I took Latin in school, and that helped me. I decided that I had to eat, and if you want to eat you have to work, and if you want to work you have to speak the

language. I resent people that come here and don't learn the language. I think it's wrong. You come to live here [so] learn, learn the language.

Mrs. Heller: I knew I had it when I started to dream in English.

Dr. Tollison: I've heard people say things like that.

Mrs. Heller: It's true.

Dr. Tollison: So, tell me about your relationship with Dr. Plyler.

Mr. Heller: Well, by the way, Mrs. Plyler was the most beautiful young woman I've known, with the exception of Trude.

Dr. Tollison: She still is.

Mr. Heller: I went to his house a couple of times. What happened was [that] he invited some German students thinking that it would help me to learn the language, and I was not comfortable. You have to remember after that experience it took me a while before I would even listen to a German word. I just wasn't comfortable. You know, perhaps, I would see him from time to time, but my connection with Furman was just that. It was only in later years that I became involved, and that was when Dr. Blackwell became president. It just teaches you something: you never know how one act of kindness, what that really can mean to people. A simple handshake, a hello, or acknowledgement of somebody, a note you write, can mean so much. What Plyler did just meant so much to me, and still does. Everybody was very nice to me. People went out of their way to help me. Somebody offered to lend me money, and I said, "I don't need any money." I have money, which was \$9.90 I earned the first week. I ultimately went to live with a family. I was offered to stay with a family, but they refused to take money. I did not want charity, and so I found a family that was \$7.00 room and board, and I stayed with that family for a number of months until later on, of course. My parents came and we moved. My sister and I moved in with my parents.

Dr. Tollison: So, in terms of your relationship with Dr. Plyler, you went over there for dinner a few times, or just that one time? [Editor's note: Plyler did not hold the Ph.D. and thus is more appropriately addressed as President Plyler].

Mr. Heller: Just a couple of times, few times, not often.

Dr. Tollison: Who were the German students? Were they exchange students at Furman or...

Mr. Heller: They had some students that were from Germany [that] spoke German. In those days if I heard a German word spoken my mind, I said "Oh my God they must be spies." And I had a fear of policemen. All that happens to you during that period when we lived under Hitler. You become a different person. Somebody knocks on the door, I

remember one night in Vienna we had a knock on the door about midnight, and we knew that was the end. Well it turned out to be a train conductor who came from Poland and had gotten some money from my father's brother to help us out. He said to me, "I have a message for you, your family thinks you should come to Poland." I said, "You tell my family they should get out of Poland because I don't think Europe is the place to be." We survived by selling things. We lived on eating potatoes everyday. Potato soup, potato pancakes, like that. You learn to manage.

Dr. Tollison: So how did you get to know Dr. Blackwell?

Mr. Heller: I had gone out to Furman a number of times, I had met Dr. Blackwell, and I was always very active in the community here. I got to know him, and Dr. Blackwell, at one time we became involved in, I've forgotten really the name of the organization. I did a lot of volunteer work, and he was a member of that group, and that's how I came to know him. Ultimately, it really happened in a different way, and I may as well tell you how it happened. Dr. Blackwell was trying to raise some money for an organization, a charity, and he came to see me and invited me to come to a private club here in Greenville for dinner. He had a drive for the funds. And I said to him, "Dr. Blackwell that club does not welcome people of the Jewish faith, and I do not go there." Well he was shocked. He had tears in his eyes. He just felt terrible. And I think maybe to show that not everybody was that way, and I knew he wasn't that way, he said, "I'd like for you to become involved at Furman, and he offered for me to become a member of the advisory board and that's how... I wasn't going to talk about it, but you know if we tell, we tell the truth. It started my life here. It was part of the life here. That has changed by the way. I'm an honorary lifetime member of that club now.

Dr. Tollison: Do you care to tell which club that is?

Mr. Heller: No, forget about that. But anyway, things changed for the better I'm happy to say.

Dr. Tollison: Was this in the...

Mr. Heller: It was in the 60s that I got on the advisory board.

Dr. Tollison: You weren't Mayor yet?

Mr. Heller: I think I was a member of City Council. I'm not sure. It was in the 60s. And I stayed on the advisory board, and most of the time I was on the student affairs committee. And incidentally I'm on the student affairs committee and enjoy it very much. I've always enjoyed being with young people, especially at Furman. It was such a wonderful atmosphere. And before Trude came to Greenville, Furman meant something else to me. They had a women's college and some very pretty girls there. It was always a good atmosphere at Furman at the time. Furman was always a very positive member of Greenville. Even more so today. Over the years the involvement has grown, I'm happy to say.

Dr. Tollison: Being on the student affairs committee, would have been late 60s, or actually throughout the 70s and 80s, I guess. There was quite a bit going on in the late 60s and early 70s among the students. From that perspective what do you remember? Do you remember any of the student demonstrations? Do you remember...

Mr. Heller: I didn't understand you.

Dr. Tollison: What do you remember about, as a member of the student affairs committee, on the advisory council?

Mr. Heller: I will tell you a very interesting thing. There were some great members of the advisory committee.

Dr. Tollison: Who were some of the other members?

Mr. Heller: Well, at that time a fellow by the name of Foley was a member of the advisory committee and Francis Hipp and Alester Furman, one of the Furmans, several doctors, I've forgotten some of their names. But there was a man by the name of Foley who at one time was chairman of Texaco who served on the student affairs committee with me, and as part of our committee work we would visit with the students in the dormitories. We came to visit this group of students in the , and one of them was obviously a disgruntled student and he said, "What's the use of saying anything, if you're not a Southern Baptist you can never be of any importance to Furman." And I said, "Boy have you got the wrong person. I'm not only not a Baptist, I'm a Jew, and not only that, I'm not born in South Carolina." People just had no idea, and I think that's sort of important, that I remember that because it was telling the student how things have changed. It took many years, however. Dr. Blackwell is the one that changed the advisory council, that's quite obvious, or I wouldn't have been on it.

Dr. Tollison: In terms of putting a more diverse group of people on it?

Mr. Heller: Putting non-Baptist and non-South Carolinians on there. There was a time when even the professors...

Mrs. Heller: Had to be...

Mr. Heller: Were supposed to be. That has changed.

Dr. Tollison: Oh yes, yes it has.

Mr. Heller: Today our trustees come from all walks of life, all different parts of the country, different religions, and it's a wonderful feeling. [They are] very good people that have only thing that they want to do and they want to do something good for Furman, and they've done a lot of good.. I was very friendly with Dr. and Mrs. Blackwell. I used to see them socially as well. And then when John Johns came he was equally as friendly.

In fact, when Dr. Johns was inaugurated, I was one of the speakers. And I was one of the speakers when Dr. Shi was inaugurated as well. Dr. Johns was already very interested at the time to get as close as possible to Greenville. And Dr. Shi has made that, also one of his priorities. One time, of course it was during those days when was on the advisory council, when I met Betty Alverson. And this is with the Service Corps, when I found out about the Service Corps, which was really one of the best things that Furman has ever done or could ever do, or that any group can do. Group of young people giving of their time and talent and their love and affection. So both Trude I became involved and we would come and we would speak on the different retreats. We talked about life [and] Trude's story, the students were very much interested, and I think we learned something from the students, and they learned something from us.

Mrs. Heller: Definitely

Mr. Heller: And then when I became Mayor, Betty organized a lot of young people to work in Service Corp. Were you involved in Service Corp?

Dr. Tollison: Yes.

Mr. Heller: Which was such a wonderful thing for the community. Then I believe they organized a boy scout, a scouting group, also. We used to come out quite often to Furman because of Service Corps. We used to go to all the May Day. I tried to be as helpful as I could be to the Furman students.

Dr. Tollison: In terms of arranging...

Mr. Heller: In terms of transportation, introducing them to people for job opportunities, and things like that. Trude did you ever teach anybody how to cook?

Mrs. Heller: No.

Mr. Heller: They didn't ask you.

Mrs. Heller: We had a couple groups here.

Mr. Heller: Here at the house?

Mrs. Heller: Yes.

Dr. Tollison: So you got to know Betty Alverson through the advisory council and through Dr. Blackwell?

Mr. Heller: Betty Alverson really started the Service Corp. How many students were there when you were there? That wasn't that long ago.

Dr. Tollison: No. It was about half, or maybe even up to 60% of the student body.

Mr. Heller: We went to, when the Service Corps was nominated for a national award, we went with Dr. Blackwell and Betty and the students to Washington to the Kennedy Center. It was a wonderful experience for us. I have found [that] the young people who were involved in Service Corps are very special people. And the thing that fascinates me is how many continue to serve the community after they leave. And we've been in touch until maybe a couple of years ago, not now as much as we were a few years ago, where we would hear from students long after they left here. They would tell us what they were doing. Some of them would come and just want to talk to use privately. Some of them became ministers, teachers, social workers, just amazing how their work with Service Corps has influenced these young people. And of course Greenville has been...can you imagine to have a labor of love of over a thousand students every week for so many hours in so many organizations.

Mrs. Heller: And they built the Habitat House in honor of Betty Alverson. Did you know that?

Dr. Tollison: No, I didn't know that.

Mrs. Heller: Yes, they did.

Dr. Tollison: That's wonderful.

Mrs. Heller: We were there. We didn't do any hammering, though.

Mr. Heller: We went when it was dedicated. It wasn't that long ago.

Mrs. Heller: No, maybe four or five years ago. The older you get the less you can remember when something was.

Dr. Tollison: The two of you don't really remember Laura Ebaugh that much. [Editor's Note: Laura Ebaugh was a Furman sociology professor from 1935 to 1963 as well as a consultant for social welfare agencies.]

Mr. Heller: Who?

Dr. Tollison: Laura Ebaugh.

Mr. Heller: I remember Ms. Ebaugh of course. She was a lovable person. I would see her at Furman concerts. I would see her at different organizations, volunteer organizations, whether it was United Way or what have you. She was very active. She was a very positive influence on a lot of young people. Furman has made a great contribution to this community. When you think about, first of all, the community has use of the facility so to speak. I come out to Furman and there are people jogging. They come from anywhere around there. They made it their park.

Dr. Tollison: Right.

Mr. Heller: What a beautiful park. They come to lectures. Furman has helped to bring art to the community with their programs.

Dr. Tollison: Concerts. All types of things.

Mr. Heller: It's been a wonderful thing from an economic development standpoint. I was involved with the economy of South Carolina for a number of years and when I [brought] people to Greenville, one of the places I showed them was Furman, and they were so impressed that we would have a university.

Mrs. Heller: Some of them sent their children to Furman actually. Even from overseas.

Mr. Heller: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Tollison: Is that when you were chair of the State Development Board?

Mr. Heller: Yes.

Dr. Tollison: And that was after you were married.

Mr. Heller: Yes I was married, that was from 1979 to 1983, five years.

Dr. Tollison: Let's back up a little bit, you became a member of the City Council in 1969, is that correct?

Mr. Heller: Yes.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. And you said you've been involved in community activities and civic organizations and things like that. What were some of the organizations?

Mr. Heller: I was involved with nurses...

Mrs. Heller: Building housing.

Mr. Heller: I started a housing foundation, housing for low-income families, and raised several hundred thousand dollars from the community. We hired an executive director. I was involved with United Way. I was involved with the Chamber. I was involved with the Visiting Nursing Service. My first involvement was with a group of Christian women who wanted to do something about youthful and first offenders. That was my first involvement. [They wanted] to separate them from hard criminals. I was involved with the symphony. I was involved with my synagogue of course, and so was Trude was president of the congregation. I was involved with a number of Jewish organizations. Trude was involved with the Council of Jewish Women. We've always been involved. I

have a long list of organizations. I was chairman of St. Francis Hospital. That was a surprise to many.

Mrs. Heller: That's when they built the new hospital.

Mr. Heller: They built the new hospital. I remember when I became chairman of St. Francis. We were trying to raise money to build the hospital, and I needed the guarantee of the bishop and the motherhouse in order to sell the bonds to finance it. And so we were going to Europe, and I found out that the motherhouse was in Rome. We went to visit the sisters in Rome, and they were under shocked. They said, "Are you Jewish? And you are chairman of St. Francis." And I said, "Of course. It's a community hospital." They couldn't get over it, and they had their own vineyards. They gave me two bottles of wine. And they didn't guarantee the loan. The organization in New Jersey and the bishop in Charleston...

Mrs. Heller: They came here.

Mr. Heller: They helped to guarantee the loan. So that was another one of my involvements. You have to be involved in a community where you live. If you want it to be a better community, do your share. I was also involved with the Urban League very much. There's one thing that shocked me when I first came here to Greenville was the segregation. I had no idea. None whatsoever. I remember going into the plant. They had two water coolers, and one was marked "whites" and the other was marked "colored." Innocent as I was, I was going to taste the colored water. I thought the water was colored. Then, of course, I saw the restrooms were separated. I couldn't get over that. And so in my own way...

Mrs. Heller: You integrated City Hall.

Mr. Heller: Yes, in my own way I tried to make a change. And when I ran for council I was very open that I was against this segregation business. And, of course, when I ran for mayor there was no question about how I felt about that. We are a better community today because of it. I started together with nine other people the Alliance for Quality Education, and Hayden was chairman of it. And Sarah Manly was one that, I think Sarah was actually the first. It was her idea. And it's been a very successful organization. We've always been involved in education. It's one of the things I learned, maybe the most important lesson: that what you learn nobody can take away from you. And what you learn you can take with you. I left with a few dollars, that's all I had on me, my education I had with me.

Dr. Tollison: I was thinking that when you were talking about...

Mr. Heller: That is so important. And I tell that to students when I speak to students. Learn, It's yours.

Mrs. Heller: They are so privileged to be able to learn. Because my education was cut short. I could no longer go to school because I was Jewish. When my father grew up there were no schools. He grew up in Poland. There were no schools for Jews. They had to have a teacher come to the house because Jewish kids couldn't go to school. When I grew up I went to school until Hitler came, and then I was no longer welcome.

Mr. Heller: And that was the case with my parents as well. They were self-educated, and that's one reason why education was so important in our family. It was probably the most important thing. I went to a private high school, not that we were wealthy, but they would have done anything for my education. Trude went to a private high school, and her parents were a little better off than my parents. Her father let me know that. We were middle-income people. But education was the most important thing. I was active when we integrated the school. I was active in a quiet way [by] visiting schools, talking to people. Dr. Ernie Harrill headed a committee about to integrate the schools, and Furman had an impact. That was one of the great things that Furman did is help to do this. And Furman was always outspoken about that, and they did it in a classy way. Really it was done just beautiful. And Furman still continues, whether that be...Furman is a big economic tool. After all, there are several thousand students that live in this community.

Dr. Tollison: And stay here often after graduation.

Mr. Heller: Yes, and remain here, and contribute to the community. But they make their facilities available for concerts. They still, I think it was until recently, the symphony used their halls for Sunday concerts. So you can be very proud to be a Furmanite.

Dr. Tollison: I am.

Mr. Heller: So are we. It means a great deal to us.

Dr. Tollison: What about, in terms of the history of Greenville, other than certain clubs being off limits and things like that, did you experience any other forms of discrimination?

Mr. Heller: We had one experience when Trude and I, after we became engaged and we knew we would get married of course, just before we got married we started looking apartments.

Mrs. Heller: We couldn't afford very much.

Mr. Heller: And there was one apartment that we liked and we told the real estate person that we would like to take it. And a week went by and we didn't hear, two weeks go by and didn't hear, four weeks, and finally I called him. The real estate man said, "I don't know how to tell you this, but the owner of this apartment will not rent to Jews." And I was really shocked. The next day we saw an ad in the paper so we went out looking for apartments. I came upon a apartment on McDaniel Avenue, an elegant apartment. And

we met the lady who owned the apartment, and we loved the apartment. She told me how much it was and I said, "I'm afraid we can't afford that much." She said, "Well, I'll take less. I said, "By the way, I want you to know we are Jewish." "Oh," she said, "that's wonderful." So we didn't take it [because] I could not afford the apartment. I think in those days they asked \$80, and I think we wound up paying \$25 for another apartment.

Dr. Tollison: Wow.

Mr. Heller: Between the two of us we weren't making much money. So you know, you have a bad experience. You have to forget that. The good experience overshadows all the bad.

Dr. Tollison: So most of the experiences were good.

Mr. Heller: My experiences were good.

Dr. Tollison: The community was very welcoming, for the most part.

Mrs. Heller: Oh yes, very much so.

Dr. Tollison: What about people in the synagogues during this time of racial change in Greenville. How did most of the people..

Mrs. Heller: Very well.

Mr. Heller: No problem whatsoever. In our synagogue we have some African-Americans that come to services. I don't know...there are only two congregations in Greenville.

Mrs. Heller: Our secretary is an African-American woman.

Mr. Heller: If Jewish people haven't learned a lesson about prejudice, who should, you know?

Dr. Tollison: It's an interesting intersection of culture and race and spirituality and all this other stuff combined. Just historically, I'm interested in it and I've read where some Jewish people were very hesitant to become involved with civil rights, some people were outspoken about civil rights.

Mrs. Heller: Others marched with them.

Dr. Tollison: Exactly. I think some were hesitant because they were concerned about their status, in terms of their status being questioned.

Mr. Heller: Well, Jewish people are people. And just like not everybody in the Christian community...

Dr. Tollison: Certainly not.

Mr. Heller: So you will find in any walk of life. Once a year we celebrate the Jewish holiday, Passover. And the story of Passover is a very important story. It's my favorite holiday because it deals with the exodus. So every Passover we have a meal with family, and try to tell the children, "You of all people must fight for freedom, because we were slaves once and we must never forget it, and people should not forget it." I'm happy to see our children and grandchildren feel the same way.

Dr. Tollison: I'll have to get on tape later on.

Mrs. Heller: They are good people.

Mr. Heller: I'll tell you an interesting thing about the integration of schools. Most people were so delighted and they said, "It's about time." They were very happy. We had a plant I went in business, we went in business, manufacturing children's wear at two plants in Greenville. We had to have the signs out for a number of years, that was the state law, separating race. And one day I just decided I was going to take those signs down. Not a word. People who used to be separated I came together.

Mrs. Heller: First when they came in they looked around.

Dr. Tollison: No problems?

Mr. Heller: Never did. One of the labor inspectors came one day to the plant and saw that the people were sitting together and he says, "You know we've got a state law you can't work in the same place." I said, "You go out there and take the bread out of those people's mouths." I said, "I won't." We've come a long way.

Dr. Tollison: What do you feel were some of your priorities when you were mayor?

Mr. Heller: Well, housing was one of my priorities. One of my priorities was also recreation centers. We built about one every year, a recreation center, in the different neighborhoods. Because downtown development was one of my big, I should say our big projects, because it was really a government-private sector involvement. It worked, I'm happy to say. Although we had a lot of people that were very hesitant. They would say it will never work and some of them signed petitions against it. I remember I went for re-election in 1975, and the fellow that ran against me went around saying to people on Main Street: "We don't need trees on main street; we need policemen. We don't need any benches; we need policemen." And that was his...by the way I won by 70%. Public transportation was one of my priorities. I remember one time the company that had the bus service came and gave us notice, 30-day notice, they were walking out. What are we going to do? And so, I called a group of churches together and said, "Would you lend us

buses until we can organize a bus company.” We had more churches agree and had more buses than we knew what to do with. I went to Greenville Tech and asked Dr. Barton: “Could he train within thirty day (bus drivers)?” He, in typical fashion said, “You got it.” Our council was most supportive of it, and on the thirtieth day, when the other company walked out, we had a bus company running in Greenville with church buses, some of them saying, "Jesus saves."

Mrs. Heller: There was a Christmas parade one afternoon, and we went in a car together waving, all up and down Main Street. People were yelling, “Thanks for the buses, Mayor.” And I cried.

Mr. Heller: We've always been very, very people oriented. That's what makes a community, not buildings. Builders, but not buildings. And that's why I love being at Furman because I'm surrounded by young people. It's just great.

Dr. Tollison: What were some of your more memorable experiences as a member of the advisory council?

Mr. Heller: The extension, which an ongoing extension at Furman, is of course very important, and we've been very supportive of it. The last number of years buildings have been, like the science building, that's new, the Riley Center is a new undertaking. The new library is a new undertaking. We are now building a convention facility, but those are all very important. The decisions that have been made, they've always kept in mind how would it affect the students, and sometimes people have said, “Do we have to spend all of this money for these trees?” But can you imagine a Furman without trees?

Dr. Tollison: They are so beautiful.

Mr. Heller: Can you imagine a campus that is not as beautiful as this is? And it's our obligation, I think, to make the place where we learn as attractive as possible, and as comfortable as possible, and as efficient as possible, because these young people who come here for four years, and most of them make it in four years, they come in as teenagers and they walk away as adults. What they learn here, and they should learn here, is not only about learning but about living, and that's another reason about Service Corps. You learn about living. You learn how to live and what it's like because students are exposed to people they would never meet otherwise, and they've probably seen poverty which they have never seen before. But they've also seen a love that they have perhaps not experienced before. So I'm all for it, and we have a great faculty I think. We always hesitate when we have to raise tuition, and I hate to bring up that subject. But we live in a time when we must give the best to the students, and we certainly have to treat the faculty right. We certainly have to treat the administrative people right because they are giving their lives, too, to educate people, and it's happening throughout the country. People have to look at education as an investment. When you send your child, and I hope that maybe some parents will read this sometime, but when you send your child to a college, you're investing. You're investing in giving the child an opportunity also to

learn. So it's been a very good experience. I have another year to go, and I don't look forward to retiring, but Furman has a very good way to keep you involved. And they ask you on different committees, and you will participate and I hope to continue to stay active at Furman. You can trust me after I'm not a trustee.

Dr. Tollison: So I guess you were a member of the advisory council when Furman split with the Baptist Convention.

Mr. Heller: Yes.

Dr. Tollison: How involved were you all in that decision making process?

Mr. Heller: Most of those decisions were really made by the trustees. And the president of the university presents a number of issues to the advisory council. The advisory council considers itself very important also when it comes to the relationship within the community, and that includes fund raising as well. And I have no objection to that. The trustees are involved in raising monies, the advisory board is involved in that, and the advisory board doesn't tell the trustees what to do, heaven forbid, but we only express whether it be with students, shall we build a new dormitory, things like that. How much should we spend for this versus this? Those are all decisions, and then they bring those decisions to the trustees and the trustees are the ones that make the final decision.

Dr. Tollison: What do you think have been some of Furman greatest challenges?

Mr. Heller: What?

Dr. Tollison: Furman's greatest challenges in the past thirty years or so since you've been an observer, a friend of Furman?

Mr. Heller: Well, the biggest challenge was of course moving the campus. That was THE, THE big decision. There was some objection on that, and again we had people, Dr. Plyler, Alester Furman, Sr., who is dead now, who had the foresight to do what they did. You know, what Furman is today, in those years it seemed like it was in a different city, different place, and a lot of people wanted Furman to stay in the city. So there was some feeling about...but that has changed. That was probably the biggest decision because other decisions that Furman made such as integrating, leaving the Baptist Convention, those were decisions Dr. Johns gets a lot of credit for that...those were decisions that were made by the trustees and the advisory board, who were asked for their opinion. That was one of the most important decisions also that Furman made.

Dr. Tollison: Tell me about your relationship with President and Mrs. Johns.

Mrs. Heller: Very friendly, very happy relationship. I always love to see them.

Mr. Heller: We see them socially. We used to see them socially before; we see them socially now. They are a lot of fun to be with. They are great people. John Johns has a

very, very good down-to-earth judgment. We had very good Relationship with Dr. Blackwell.

Mrs. Heller: And Dr. Shi and Susan.

Mr. Heller: But now Dr. Shi. We visit quite often with Dr. Shi. They visit us, and it was the same way with Dr. Blackwell. They are just wonderful to be with, the Shi's. It's amazing, you know, as I talk to you I think how each president has brought something special to this university. Dr. Blackwell [was] excellence in making education... Dr. John Johns, what he did about becoming more independent. Dr. Shi, about all these different expansions, the learning that we have now has changed, too, and their house is open. I don't know how they get any rest. I have to say something about Susan Shi. She has just been wonderful, just wonderful.

Mrs. Heller: Terrific.

Dr. Tollison: She is very involved.

Mr. Heller: They entertain a lot of people, and they are very much involved in fund raising, and they know how. And Susan Shi, she presides over that home just beautifully.

Mrs. Heller: And all the educational things in Greenville.

Mr. Heller: David Shi has made a great impact on the activities in the community. He serves on a number of boards and he is called upon. David Shi and I served not too long ago on a bi-racial committee when we had some problems with the county jail. And David was one of the people that, there were six whites and six African-Americans on that committee. But he is called on almost like a judge from time to time. People value his judgment a great deal. He deserves it. Well, I think you've had enough.

Mrs. Heller: I just want to say my husband included me in everything, you know, from the very beginning. I would stay in back of him. If people want to know what I was doing...

Dr. Tollison: I understand what you're doing.

Mrs. Heller: Because we were both kept busy since we were both involved. I had three children to bring up, too, because somebody had to be home, right?

Mr. Heller: Like with Service Corps. I went out May Day and spent all day serving, Trude did it just the same.

Mrs. Heller: But even when he was mayor he included me in everything, which had never been done. I was there with everything.

Dr. Tollison: So what would you consider your relationship to be with Furman?

Mrs. Heller: Involved now.

Dr. Tollison: Certainly. Do you still belong to CFC?

Mrs. Heller: Yes.

Mr. Heller: We spoke to students recently.

Mrs. Heller: Yes, we did. We spoke many times when Betty Alverson was there. We gathered most every year to speak and do, and that was he life, you know, it really was. But I can't say what I did because I did it with him.

Dr. Tollison: Did you speak on campus?

Mrs. Heller: What I meant is, you know...

Dr. Tollison: You were very involved as well, right along with him.

Mr. Heller: Like on the political science, I wanted Trude speak there as well. They did, the professor did, wanted her, but I did it, too. Number one, I want her to know what I'm involved in because we both talk about the things we do. Trude was involved in organizations like the Council of Jewish Women who did a lot of charity work. I would know about it, and we would talk about it and I believe.

Mrs. Heller: He became the Man of the Year for the Council of Jewish Women.

Mr. Heller: We've been married sixty-two years. That's a long time.

Dr. Tollison: Congratulations.

Mr. Heller: I think it has been a good thing for our marriage, but I didn't do it for that reason, it was natural thing for me to do. I love pillow talk.

Dr. Tollison: Tell me about being a scholar in residence at the Riley Politics Institute.

Mr. Heller: It was a lot of fun. Again, the students are so bright and the questions are so good, and the interests are different interests, they are not all cut from the same cloth. I found conservatives, I found maybe more conservative than I thought there might be, but in a decent way, not like: "my way is the only way." But they are conservative in their thinking, and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm conservative in some of my thinking. It depends on the issue. So I enjoyed it, and the different questions that were asked were really fascinating. One time the former city manager and I went to a class, and we were asked to speak about the downtown development. What I wanted to do is tell the student what political life is really like because it's a little different than the book. You learn from the book, you learn how to read from the book, but you've got to learn how to speak, too.

And so you learn from reading and you learn from participating, being part of it. A lot of them had perhaps a different impression of what politics is like. For instance, the give and take of politics, which is absolutely essential.

Dr. Tollison: Compromise.

Mr. Heller: It can't be just my way. Compromising, I don't like to use the word compromising, negotiating is a better word. But that's important, especially if you learn... political science majors, you gotta know that. Or how government works and how does it relate to the people. How important is it, really? One reason I like local government is because it's the closest government to the people, and so we talked about that. I had...I know Washington is a very important part of our life, I'm not stupid, but it's removed from us. Most of the time we don't even know what goes on. Locally, if you run for public office, they see you on the street and you can't escape anybody. So it was that kind of thing that we talked about.

Mrs. Heller: When he was running for office, I was asked to speak all over the place. At that time, I was a little shy at first, but you learn. Sometimes we were invited. I was invited to come to the church, and I looked at the program and I was the main speaker, but they didn't tell me.

Dr. Tollison: How did you become a scholar resident of the Institute of Politics?

Mr. Heller: I have no idea. I was just asked. I have a letter from Dr. Shi and I have a letter from Dr. Gordon, and I think Governor [Richard] Riley was asked about it. I have a lovely letter from him. Our relationship with Governor and Mrs. Riley was a very close personal relationship.

Mrs. Heller: For years.

Mr. Heller: And I think one of the reasons they selected me as the first one was because they knew we had that close a relationship. I enjoyed it very much. I don't know how much I contributed.

Dr. Tollison: What were your responsibilities?

Mr. Heller: I could select how many times I wanted to be there. They gave me...one of the professors would tell me what he wanted me to talk about. One will say "Austria and German empire," which I looked up on the computer.

Mrs. Heller: I did, because he didn't work on the computer. I do.

Dr. Tollison: Anything else that you would like to add, either one of you, that you think would be important to become a historical record about Furman, how it's impacted your lives. What are your hopes for CFC?

Mrs. Heller: That it continues because it's a most wonderful thing that Betty Alverson did, and that is still being done.

Mr. Heller: And they are doing a great job. My hopes are the same: it must never stop. They raised a lot of money for an endowment and hopefully the income from that endowment will ensure that there will always be money available for the Service Corps. We were so honored when Dr. Shi told me about naming it the Heller Service Corps.

Dr. Tollison: Unbelievable.

Mr. Heller: It was something I never imagined.

Mrs. Heller: And they did it while he was quite ill, and we were out of town some months, and I got it on the computer and I couldn't. ...

Mr. Heller: I broke down. I could not believe it.

Dr. Tollison: Quite an honor.

Mr. Heller: I know that we're going to have to behave, or they're going to take the name away.

Dr. Tollison: Now you've got to watch it.

Mr. Heller: Both of us, Trude and I, hope that in years to come after we're gone that somebody in our family will always be active in Furman. I don't want this to end. We have three scholarships at Furman. One of them is named after the girl I met in Vienna, Mary Mills Robinson Scholarship. The other one is named after the man who brought me here, Sheppard Saltzman Scholarship. And then the third one is the Trude and Max Heller Scholarships.

Mrs. Heller: And our children have contributed, too.

Mr. Heller: You know, I want my children to be involved, too.

Dr. Tollison: That's wonderful. Do you all meet with the student recipients, or what are the stipulations for the scholarships?

Mrs. Heller: That we don't know.

Mr. Heller: One of the questions they have to answer is my strong preference that they are active in Service Corps. That is one of the conditions. And the rest of it has to be whatever Furman, some it will be a need and some will be scholastic. That's not left up to me. I hope that need is very much considered. I don't know how you can go to school today without some assistance.

Dr. Tollison: Well, thanks so much for talking with me. I really do appreciate it. I hope I haven't taken up too much of your time.

Mr. Heller: I've been looking at you, and you look a little like Mike Douglas' wife.

Dr. Tollison: Catherine Zeta Jones. Well, thank you.

Mrs. Heller: I like the way he said, Mike Douglas' wife.

Mr. Heller: I couldn't think of her name immediately. But you look a little like her.

Dr. Tollison: Well, thank you. I appreciate that.