An Interview with

JUDITH KINSEY

OH 511

Conducted by Thomas J. Misa

on

3 December 2015

Rochester, Minnesota

Charles Babbage Institute
Center for the History of Information Technology
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Judith Kinsey Interview

3 December 2015

Oral History 511


## Abstract

Judith Kinsey grew up in southern Minnesota and graduated from Wellesley College in 1962. She applied to graduate school at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, but also took the IBM Programmer Aptitude Test (PAT) and received a job offer from the Minneapolis branch office. She received extensive corporate training especially in the first years of her work. As a System Engineer she supported IBM sales in the manufacturing area, working out of the Minneapolis and St. Paul branch offices. With the coming of the System/360 she helped install these at customers' locations by doing assembly-language and other programming. While raising children she was out of the workforce during 1970-76 then returned to IBM as Staff Programmer at Rochester, Minnesota, and then moved into management in 1980. She describes programming assignments, college recruiting, gender relations, and Rochester's distinctive work culture. During development of the AS/400, she was Technical Assistant to the Directory of the Programming Lab at Rochester. In 1995 she took a position at IBM corporate (in Somers NY) and experienced the re-engineering of IBM under Louis Gerstner. She adds descriptions of efforts to encourage Girl Scouts in computing.



This material is based on work funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation award B2014-07 "Tripling Women's Participation in Computing (1965-1985)."

Misa: My name is Tom Misa and I'm here with Judy Kinsey in her home just north of Rochester, Minnesota. We're here doing an interview today to help understand the experiences of women in the computing industry in the 1960s through the 1990s, for the Sloan Foundation. Judy, just to begin with, I wonder if you could take me back and explain a bit about your childhood or high school years. Were there any hobbies or activities or things that you were particularly interested in that may have inclined you toward considering a technical career?

Kinsey: I grew up in Albert Lea, Minnesota [and] graduated from high school there. I had always liked math and science, and my dad particularly encouraged me to take all the math and science that was available, which I did. I just liked it and was good at it. I also liked music and my dad was a music teacher. So I sang and played the piano, and played the cello. And when I got to college I was looking at the requirements that you had for graduation and I took chemistry, and I took math as a freshman, and I took music. And then I took more math, and chemistry, and music, and I ended up majoring in music but really had a minor in math and chemistry. I guess I liked it and I did well in the classes.

Misa: From Albert Lea High School, where were you considering going to college?

Kinsey: At that time, very few people in the Midwest took the SAT tests because they weren't required for Midwestern schools. And we decided [because] I did very well in high school, we decided I would take the SAT test, then your scores were sent free to three schools. So my mother picked one, and my dad picked one, and I picked one. My

mother picked Wellesley, my dad picked the University of Chicago, and I picked one in Indiana that was probably not in league with the other ones. Anyway, I received a scholarship to the University of Chicago and to Wellesley. I had also applied locally to Hamline [University], which is where my parents both went. I had a scholarship from all three. The best scholarship was at Wellesley, so that's where I went. I had pretty much a full scholarship.

Misa: Okay. Off to Boston, then.

Kinsey: Off to Boston, on the train, by myself. Very difficult.

Misa: Had you any experiences with an all-girls school?

Kinsey: No, at Albert Lea I graduated with a class of just a little over 300, so good sized Midwestern. And being in science and math, there were mostly boys in my class. I was the only girl in several of them, particularly the advanced math stuff, and was very used to having boys as friends, buddies, whatever. So the women's college was quite a shock.

Misa: In high school, were there any teachers or school staff that were particularly supportive of your interest in math and science?

Kinsey: Well, we had a science club, and I always had a project for the science fair. Also there was some research that my chemistry teacher wanted me to work on. It had to do

with oxygen and water in the wintertime. My dad helped me, and we had the tubes and cans and whatever that we submerged in the water and there were measurements that we were taking. Do I remember ***why*** we were doing this? No. I just remember that we were doing that. I always liked stuff like that, experiments and that sort of thing.

Misa: So math, and chemistry, and music were the orbits.

Kinsey: If I tell people that I majored in music they say there's always a relationship between music and math, and there apparently is in your brain. There are a lot of people who are good in math and science who also excel in music. I feel very, very lucky. I didn't plan to get a technology job. I didn't know what a technology job was but I had this terrific liberal arts education. One of the things — and this came later in my career as I was hiring people — I really disliked the, I called them cookie cutter, the engineering kinds of curriculum where they didn't have a liberal arts focus and I think it restricted the kinds of [pause]

Misa: Lot of set required classes you thought were detrimental.

Kinsey: I just didn't think they were…they couldn't think outside the box is how you'd describe it today. They had had no exposure to learning how to think. Anyway, I felt very lucky to have had this liberal arts education, and then I lucked into a technology job that was exciting from the very beginning.

Misa: Can you say a bit more about your years at Wellesley and especially any math classes? Did Wellesley have any computer education?

Kinsey: No, I never heard of a computer; knew nothing about any of it, no. I think their math program was pretty classical, pretty standard. Although I did visit some friends at Hamline, I think it was, and I forget what class I was taking at the time, but I was surprised that we were quite a bit farther ahead. One of the things that I learned about a women's college and that I came to appreciate is that women's colleges give women more opportunity. Because if there are going to be leaders on campus it's going to be a woman, and you're going to get the experience of doing that, whereas in a coed environment, at least most of my friends who went to coed schools didn't have that kind of experience and a lot of times the women were just automatically overshadowed by the men. This is all pre-[Title IX]; there's no women's athletics during this time period, which I think is terrific for leadership kinds of things for women, self-esteem, all of that. Women in the coed environment, I think, were very easily just pushed aside. Or expected to be supporting, not leading.

Misa: With a liberal arts education, typically it's not job focused at all, but other people that may have been your peers interested in the sciences, and maybe music, and math, what kinds of things did they think about doing after their time at Wellesley? Going to graduate school?

Kinsey: It was very different from the way it is now, and nobody really gave it that much thought as to what you were going to do to pay the bills when you were through. It was naïve. It was the time when you didn't need a real high GPA either in order to get a job. But the world has turned upside down, I mean, the way we operated would not be possible now. You could go with what you loved and still get a job.

Misa: Were there any particular kinds of jobs that Wellesley graduates would've been apt to consider?

Kinsey: One of the things that's very interesting, there have been some things written about this. Nora Ephron, who was a classmate of mine, and she wrote some fairly blistering articles about the women's colleges and the women's environment. What a lot of these women did was they graduated from Wellesley and they had to go get a secretarial degree, or some kind of a course, and then they'd go work as a secretary. That's how many of them started. This was 1962, right? I was just very, very lucky.

Misa: So your graduation from Wellesley was in 1962?

Kinsey: Correct. Right. And women were supposed to get married and have children, and maybe work a little while before they did. And you will see in this list that I put together for you of people that I can remember, most every one of them worked for IBM until their first child was born, and then they resigned because people didn't keep those jobs. That's just the way it was.

Misa: Just past moving into the mother years.

Kinsey: Yes. I think so much has changed for women. Title IX, women needing to stay in the workplace just from a financial standpoint, and it's all changed.

Misa: What kinds of things were you thinking about, you personally, when you graduated from Wellesley in 1962?

Kinsey: I didn't know what I wanted to be or do when I grew up. I thought maybe I wanted to go on in musicology and I applied to a couple of schools, I think. The only one I remember was the University of Wisconsin, because I was admitted and I had an interview scheduled to be a dorm advisor while I was going to school, and that was during spring break. But I had also taken the IBM interview and I did that just kind of as a lark. I met somebody who had been looking at all these companies that had been coming through campus to interview, and had talked about that one. I thought oh, that's kind of interesting, so I went to the interview and met with someone, and took the Programmer Aptitude Test.

Misa: Oh yes, the famous PAT.

Kinsey: Right. And then they took all your stuff and sent it to New York. I got a letter from the personnel office, which was in New York City at the time, I think it was 590 Madison or something was the address.

Misa: That's right, the downtown headquarters.

Kinsey: Right, that's where it was. Armonk [NY: IBM headquarters 1963- ] wasn't there yet. I got a letter that said I should contact the branch manager in Minneapolis, Pete Adams, and arrange for an interview. And so I did. I got an interview that spring break when I came home. Had that interview first in Minneapolis, 1200 South Second Avenue; that building is still there.

Misa: Wow.

Kinsey: It's kind of a neat little building, and there was always a courtyard out in the back. Anyway, I interviewed there and got a job offer on the spot, and accepted it. [I] went home and cancelled my trip to Madison.

Misa: No need to go to Madison, then.

Kinsey: Right. And so, I mean, it was just luck. I think there were three other Wellesley classmates who went to work for IBM also.

Misa: Not necessarily in Minneapolis.

Kinsey: No, none of them were. Two of them were hired into IBM education centers, and one of them I've continued contact with, so I've got her on the list. She taught in Cleveland first, then she got married and moved to Los Angeles. Her husband was going to Occidental [College] in Los Angeles, so she taught for IBM there. And then he decided to go to Harvard Business School, so they moved to Boston and she taught for IBM there. And then resigned when they had their first child. But she, after her kids were grown up a little bit, she went to work as an independent contractor doing computer education. She continued that into the 1990s.

Misa: Kind of interesting to see a cohort of Wellesley graduates moving into the IBM world. Can you describe your first work experience? What kind of work were you doing?

Kinsey: I went to work the 5th of July, 1962, and I think I had a week in the branch office just to get accustomed to it, and then we went to a class. The class got through, I think, in September or October. It was, I think, three months.

Misa: Three months, so this is extensive training, then.

Kinsey: I'll tell you more, but the first three years I spent at least half the time in class. But this first one was designing punch card equipment, because I was hired as a systems engineer trainee. And what a systems engineer did was help the salesman make sure the

account was ready when the equipment came in. So in the case of punch card equipment, mechanical equipment, accounting machines, and whatever, you're wiring boards and getting ready. Or you may be going out to an account that's going to add a new application and you need to wire the board for that application, that kind of thing. Anyway, we learned all of the punch card equipment, starting with keypunches and learning the card code, the BCD code, and learning how to read that and keypunches, then sorters, then accounting machines, 402s, 407s, and then collators. I saw in this Rochester book that you showed me, you talked about the 77 collators that came from Rochester.

Misa: So your work after learning this then would be to support . . .

Kinsey: The salesmen.

Misa: . . . the salesmen. Well, would you actually be working in a customer's facility to help them basically get their IBM machine up to speed and doing the work that the customer —

Kinsey: We were doing the work. You're doing the programming by wiring the boards.

Misa: Right.

Kinsey: Anyway, it was fairly intense. And after every machine, and some of the courses were longer than others, [we] had an exam and they posted the grades on the board. This class, the first part was on the machines. The next part was on applications, because it was mostly what we called BIARSA — Billing, Inventory, Accounts Receivable, and Sales Analysis were the kind of things you were doing. So when they taught you the applications, on your test you had to define a whole system and who you would go through all this stuff. Then at the very end, it was a little bit of a marketing class. We had to make a presentation and pretend like you were a salesman or the person assisting the salesman, to be made to take the scope of the work that they wanted and what machines they were going to sell. And you had to put together the proposal that said here's how we would do it and here's what it required, blahblahblah. So we learned a little bit of on your feet.

Misa: Describing how the machines worked, and how they could be set up to do skilled work.

Kinsey: Then you went out to work afterward. And if you didn't pass this class — your job was contingent on passing the class.

Misa: A bit of pressure, I can imagine.

Kinsey: They posted the things.

Misa: The classes themselves, were they in [pause]

Kinsey: It was the District 12 Education Center, also at 1200 South Second Avenue, in Minneapolis.

Misa: So you'd have the classes right in Minneapolis; that was convenient.

Kinsey: Well there were people from North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Nebraska.

Misa: So the Midwest.

Kinsey: Yes.

Misa: Can you say roughly how large a class that would be and how many women?

Kinsey: In my first class there were four women. I looked for a picture that I know I had but I can't find it so I could tell you how many people there were in it. But I would guess four out of 16.

Misa: So a quarter of the class.

Kinsey: Something like that. Yes. There were two of us from the Minneapolis branch, one from the St. Paul branch, and one from Lincoln, Nebraska. And there was also a branch in Nebraska in Omaha. That was very close together. We were young, and just out of college, so we got to be good friends with some of those people and when they went home, we went on to visit them later. But in that very first class we had to introduce ourselves. We had to stand up and we had to tell them where we'd gone to school, and what our major was, and I'd say there were more non-technical majors. Psychology, political science, music, there was one guy that was an Ag major.

Misa: So it wasn't a bunch of engineers, or mathematicians, computer science was just barely getting off the ground.

Kinsey: There wasn't such a thing as computer science.

Misa: Yes. The first departments are really in the mid-1960s. You're talking 1962 and 1963, people are interested in trying to figure out what computer science might be, but had many different names for it. So you were early on.

Kinsey: After that class, then we went out and we were assigned to a salesman, however they divvied things up. But we usually had a more experienced SE kind of overseeing what we were doing and helping us out as we were learning the ropes.

Misa: SE would be . . . ?

Kinsey: Systems Engineer. But the salesmen went through the same class, technical class, because some of the people in our class were sales trainees, and some were systems engineering trainees. And then I learned — or I learned since then — that if you were hired on by IBM to be a programmer in Rochester at that time, you went through the same training.

Misa: So this is really entry then for people doing sales, support, and programming.

Kinsey: That's not exactly correct. They didn't go through the punch card class, but the next class I'm going to tell you about is where they started. I think I worked in the field for about six months, then went to programming school.

Misa: Can you tell me about that?

Kinsey: I loved it. I got just really excited about it. It was kind of like your brain opened up and I was good at it, and I really liked it. I met a woman in the first class, so we started rooming together; had an apartment. She was in St. Paul and I was in Minneapolis, and I can't remember why but she got into an early programming class. She'd come home and explain what they were doing and I could hardly wait to go there. It was like doing puzzles, or I don't know how to describe it but it just fit, just the logic of it. It was really good and really fun. I always liked my job very much. I don't remember how long that class was but it was fairly hefty and you're learning [pause]

Misa: You said some of the classes were three months in length.

Kinsey: Yes. You're learning programming and there were simple tests as you were going through, but then there was a case study at the end and I have no idea exactly what you did but you went through all this stuff, and then you had to get on the machine and make it run. I remember it was a tape application, and people were having a terrible time. That was in the days of big reels of tape per data.

Misa: What programming language was it that they were introducing?

Kinsey: They taught us 1401 and there was some assembly language, but it was Autocoder, primarily, which was a fairly low level proprietary thing on the 1401. And the 1440 was announced as we came out of the first school, the punch card school. The 1440 was like the 1401, and the 1401 was kind of a midrange workhorse. The 1440 had the disks; that was the first. They had disk packs. These things looked like an angel food cake cover, like a cake carrier. They had had disk storage. RAMAC, they had had earlier.

Misa: That's right, for the 1950s.

Kinsey: But this was the first removable disk and it was about yea big. I can't remember how many platters they had in there.

Misa: You're describing about 12 inches, maybe a little bit bigger.

Kinsey: Little bit bigger, I think. Anyway, you opened the drive and these things had a handle, and you put them in like that, and then you could pull the cover off. And the cover was aluminum color, seems to me it was aluminum with some blue plastic around it, and it looked like a cake carrier.

Misa: Okay, yes, cylindrical with a handle on top.

Kinsey: Yes. But there was so much we were doing at a very low level in the system. They didn't have any I/O routines. You couldn't just say read this, you had to go through all of the very basic instructions, and program that in, and write all your own subroutines. It was really something.

Misa: That really captured your imagination, your interest.

Kinsey: Oh yes. And the other thing that I haven't talked about, and I can't remember exactly when this happened. It was after I was married that I went out to manufacturing school. They divided us up by industry and your knowledge of the machine and of the programming languages and all that kind of stuff was important, but equal to that was your knowledge of the industry that you were working in because doing applications for a bank and what they had to do was totally different from a manufacturing company. I was in manufacturing and I thought that was the most interesting.

Misa: What was interesting about manufacturing, more than the financial or banking?

Kinsey: I don't know, I guess because you were building something. A build material "explosion" was one of them, and I learned how to do that. Then I sort of backed what I learned into applying it to card machines, and we did it on some accounts where we just had accounting machines to do it, and figuring that out. I don't know, it was just interesting because, a build material explosion means that you're figuring out that I'm going to build so many of these. So then how many parts do I need, and how do you figure that out? It's just that it was a fun algorithm.

Misa: Part of it's inventory control but it's also planning, too, and trying to do sequencing.

Kinsey: Yes, that's what it is, build material planning.

Misa: Yes. And what kinds of industries . . .

Kinsey: This is really dusty up here.

Misa: Well no, I appreciate your stretching back. What kinds of industries did IBM sales office support? Was it mostly things locally in the Twin Cities or is this stretching across the entire [Midwest]?

Kinsey: They'd figure out if it was a company that had multiple locations or multiple things, they'd figure out which was the lead branch office, who was in charge, who the sales team was that was in charge of it. Salesmen would go in and they'd decide they wanted to sell something on this account, then they'd bring the SEs in to figure out what they needed to do, and they were part of the pre-sales effort and planning. And then once it was sold you were involved in doing it, doing the execution. And sometimes you had programmers in the account to work with, and sometimes they were very good, and sometimes they weren't very good.

Misa: So it was kind of a challenge to get them to come on to that.

Kinsey: Yes.

Misa: Were there specific things that the 1401 was useful for? That was a newer machine in the early 1960s, I think. The 650 would've been [IBM's] standard, older computer workhorse, you said.

Kinsey: Yes. Then there were some really big — like if you went out to 3M, which everybody got to go out there just to walk through. I mean they had whole floors that were just full of I think they had 702s or 705s, which were the really large. I never worked on those, and they're vacuum tubes. I mean it fills a whole floor full of stuff, and

when you think of stuff today, I mean I've got a sewing machine upstairs that's got more in it than [pause]

Misa: These vacuum tubes, yes.

Kinsey: It's phenomenal what we do. But yes, the 1401 I don't know when that was announced; it was 1960 or 1961. It was kind of a midrange workhorse, and I would think most of the stuff it really did was same old accounting applications, inventory control, that kind of thing.

Misa: Do you remember interactions with any of the accounts, any of the customers in those days?

Kinsey: Yes, I had a mentor who had been around for quite a while, and he was on the manufacturing team, and he was very good to me and taught me a lot of techniques and ways to write code. Then I'd go write the program. Getting a full manufacturing application going was really something. I remember I was working Christmas Eve until five or six o'clock, and then I drove to Albert Lea to my parents' house, and got up the day after Christmas and I think I left about five so that I'd be back because we were in the middle of an install.

Misa: Really working hard.

Kinsey: Yes, to do that.

Misa: Was there a team that you would work with on doing an installation?

Kinsey: Sometimes, depending on how big the job was. This fellow that I was talking about, who was a mentor, was a team leader and he would decide how many we needed and how you divided the jobs up, with our input, to what we had learned.

Misa: With each new account, would you typically end up working for a couple weeks or a couple months? How long would you be in the customer's facilities?

Kinsey: Depended on what you were doing. It might be as much as a year.

Misa: As much as a year.

Kinsey: Yes, depending on what you needed. And then I would say early on we weren't very sophisticated about planning and how long it was going to take, and one of the problems you always had is that you missed your deadlines. We got to be better at that with some fairly simple methods of setting the schedule and then kind of monitoring the schedule, and then resetting it in fairly simple fashion to do that, so that in running those reports every week you knew where you were.

Misa: Programming was new and then, of course, the management of programming was something people had no clue about.

Kinsey: Right, people had absolutely no idea. At first, you just sort of tear into it and, I don't know, probably not do the best job of time management or figuring out which places you needed to start, where things were more difficult. It was really, really fun. Oh, and when you talk about the comparison between then and now, I've installed 4K 1401s. And I mean 'K', I don't mean [pause]

Misa: Not meg.

Kinsey: No. 4K 1401s with no high/low, equal, compare. So then you're subtracting every time you wanted something bigger, you've got to subtract to figure that out.

Misa: What's remarkable in a way is, of course, the memory was very small but you can do quite astonishing things with a small memory, with a lot of discipline and very careful programming. And that was your job, wasn't it?

Kinsey: It was. It took me a while to understand. At first I didn't understand when they were getting to know more about this, and they were wanting us to things in a standard manner and not play little games that would save — we called it core then —save core memory. Just the way you coded, they wanted you to do it in a straightforward, documented, understandable way, which at the time I thought that was ridiculous. Why

wouldn't you cram as much stuff as you could possibly get in there? And then it was later on that I realized that probably the biggest problem we had was maintenance, and if the stuff isn't documented and if it isn't done in a straightforward manner, it's going to be impossible for somebody to maintain it.

Misa: Did people talk about structured programming at that time?

Kinsey: No.

Misa: No.

Kinsey: No, they didn't.

Misa: A bit later. This is just a more formal way.

Kinsey: Yes. Well, we used the Autocoder and we used something called SPS I think is what it was. And I think there was an assembly language. And then the whole world turned upside down in 1964, in April, when the 360 was announced.

Misa: Can you explain why the world turned upside down?

Kinsey: Well it was big and complex, and it was probably the first, at least it was the first real operating system that I had ever worked on, because I hadn't worked on some of

the very large systems previous to that. There was work that was going on, but it was the first one, and it was complex and could do a lot.

Misa: Big family of machines, that was a real challenge at the time.

Kinsey: Correct. We take it for granted now when we think about Windows 10, you could go directly from Windows 7 to 10, or 8 to 10. Early on they got sort of burned because customers didn't like it when they had to throw out everything they had and totally rewrite, and whatever. When I was in Rochester, we only did what we called end-to-end plus one. You needed to be compatible so you could upgrade your systems. And if you did a whole new system, like going from the 1401 to the 360 — I guess I don't totally remember exactly how it worked but I do know that there was controversy about that because it wasn't as good or as solid as it needed to be. Customers had an investment in what they had, and they're not going to go into something new if they had to totally throw out what was there. It's a requirement, it's a hard requirement right now that if you do something that doesn't fit that model, it's a big whoopdeedoo.

Misa: So did you do systems programming or were you still mostly in applications with the 360?

Kinsey: That distinction, I guess, that's the word I was looking for on the 1401, because we had to do both because there wasn't all of the I/O structure and all of that stuff wasn't there, at least at first. And on the 1440, gradually, those things started to be developed.

The 360 was kind of the same. There was a base operating system that was there, but there was a whole bunch of I/O stuff that wasn't there, the high level languages weren't ready yet — like COBOL was not there. The first 360 I installed was in assembly language, which is difficult.

Misa: In assembly language?

Kinsey: Yes.

Misa: That's very detailed, then.

Kinsey: Yes, that's way down at the lower level of the machine, yes. They announced the stuff and shipped it before the high level stuff was ready.

Misa: Do you remember where that first 360 was installed?

Kinsey: No, I don't remember that. I had several accounts, but I don't remember which was the first one.

Misa: Were they mostly in the Twin Cities, in Minneapolis? You said there was a branch office in St. Paul.

Kinsey: Minneapolis and St. Paul, yes, both had branch offices.

Misa: Separate branch offices.

Kinsey: Yes, and when I talked about industry, all of the industry for banking would be in one of the branch offices. And manufacturing would be in another one. Insurance would be in another one. Government was another one.

Misa: So that would be divided between Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Kinsey: But they'd move us back and forth. Because for a while the manufacturing team was in Minneapolis, but then we got moved to St. Paul for a while, but then we got moved back to Minneapolis.

Misa: And your work was mostly with manufacturing through these years?

Kinsey: Yes, until the 360 Model 20 came out, which was a card machine at first, and was aimed at replacing some of the accounting machines, and it was primarily cards.

Misa: So the 360-20 was one of the smaller of the 360 line.

Kinsey: Yes, it was ***the*** smallest. And then they opened a new branch office that was aimed at small accounts, small business. I can't remember what the name of the branch office was, but that's where I ended up. I was team leader in that small branch office and

we were mostly installing Model 20s. At the very end, just before I resigned, we were working on System 3s, which that was a Rochester product. And it had the little tiny cards that were the size of a credit card.

Misa: But not the standard IBM cards.

Kinsey: Have you never seen one?

Misa: The large cards I've seen many of, but the small cards I've seen pictures of but never had one in my hand.

Kinsey: Small cards. I worked on that for about — that was in 1970 and I was in the branch? No, I was out. They had made some changes and it used to be that the SE time came with the system, just whatever you needed is what you got. Well then IBM decided that wasn't very good and they needed to charge, so they were sort of trying to make consultants out of us.

Misa: Oh, okay.

Kinsey: There was some time that wasn't billable, but there was time that was billable, and I don't remember all the details. But I know I was out making a consulting call, I think I had to make a presentation in Wisconsin. And I came back and I almost didn't come into the office because it was at the very end of the day, but I decided I better go

check something. I went up to the office and got a call from Children's Home Society that we could come the next day and pick up our baby girl.

Misa: Oh my goodness, that's pretty exciting.

Kinsey: Yes, and we knew that it was going to happen probably within a couple of months, but it was a surprise. We had bought a crib but it wasn't put up. As it turned out, they were having a shower for me that evening. Somebody drove me home and anyway, I got ahold of my husband and he had to go with fellas to buy diapers and put the crib together while I went to the shower. And then we had picked up Julie the next day, and then I resigned. Everybody knew that I was going to be doing this. So that was the extent of the branch office, 1962-70.

Misa: 1962-70. And may I ask, it was common or not that a woman becoming a mom, or taking on child rearing like that, would end up resigning. So there was not an idea that you would continue working?

Kinsey: I never heard of anybody who didn't. I've got this list of people, they all did that. One of the things that we haven't talked about is treatment of women during that time. Women were definitely lower on the totem pole than men. We talked about it. We were hired as systems engineer trainees. Then when we completed our class, we got to be associate systems engineers. And the next step was senior associate, and the men got it in about half the time that women got promoted. Fact. If you look at the statistics.

Misa: It wasn't like that was just a female grade or something, but just that men got moved into that same slot in a quicker time.

Kinsey: Right. And then the next one was called just Systems Engineer, and I think that — I can't remember the numbers — but the women were, again, much behind the men. But I should back up and tell you about 1962, and I apologize for not telling you about this in the first place. When I was hired in May of 1962, or June, I was hired as a Systems Service Representative, not a Systems Engineer Trainee, okay? The men in our class — we all went to the same class — the men were all Systems Engineering Trainees. We were Systems Service Representatives. I didn't understand. I mean I was oblivious to this, I didn't know the difference. In September, when we finished the class — or it's about when we finished the class — IBM made this big announcement that they were discontinuing the Systems Service Representative and they were putting all of the women in as Systems Engineer Trainees. So there had been two career paths, and the way those two career paths worked was Systems Service Representatives, if they were successful over a period of time then they could come over and be a Systems Engineering Trainee. But then they discontinued that. So I was hired that way but I never worked that way.

Misa: Okay, so when you started working then it was as a . . .

Kinsey: Systems Engineering Trainee. But what they did was, the women, [it] took them longer to get promoted. Like when I got married in 1965 and I came back from my

honeymoon, they had reassigned all my accounts to men and I got some that were less desirable.

Misa: So you lost your accounts.

Kinsey: I did, and I went in and asked my manager why did he do that? And he said well, you got married, you might get pregnant and leave. They said stuff like that.

Misa: Hard to imagine today, but that was customary at the time.

Kinsey: That was just the way it was. You had to have a thick skin. Then there was the story about the young woman trainee who came up from Tuskegee. She was African American. She was one of the smartest and most professional young [people]. She was really good, and very good at her work. But you can imagine coming into Minneapolis and this would've been in I think about 1968, very difficult for her. She'd been at another branch and she moved into the small business one that I talked about, that I was in, and interviewed with — it was, I think, one of her first conversations with her new manager — and I think he was thinking he was being open and honest with her, but what he said was I probably am going to have trouble being your manager because in my mind all black women are immoral.

Misa: Oh, good gravy.

Kinsey: And he really said that. She went to the branch manager; nothing, [he] did nothing.

Misa: Did nothing.

Kinsey: She left and went to 3M and they seemed to appreciate her more at 3M as a programmer.

Misa: Thinking about the 1960s, did women at IBM have some kind of supportive network? Did you talk among yourselves in any way?

Kinsey: Yes.

Misa: Was that helpful?

Kinsey: Yes, sometimes. I mean some of it was just complaining about this. We didn't expect that things were necessarily going to change. I'll tell you another story, and this was right before I left, so this would've been 1970, I think. I was the lead SE in this branch office and the team leader was making assignments and working with the salesmen. I'd been around eight years, which was pretty good in that kind of an environment. We went out to an account and I don't remember the name of the account, I just remember the building, and every time I go by it — it was on Hwy 100 and, I think, 50. It's kind of a square building and underneath the building is where you parked.

Anyway, we parked and I was out there with a salesmen named Warren, and we got upstairs and the receptionist said oh Warren, Mr. So-and-so would like to see you. So he went in to see him, came out and said we're going back to the branch. So I followed him back to the branch and we got inside and he said they don't want a female SE. And IBM gave them a trainee who'd been there all of two months.

Misa: Wow.

Kinsey: And my job was to tell him what to do.

Misa: And you've had all this experience.

Kinsey: Yes, and that was very hurtful. That bothered me that IBM didn't say — but I suppose in that environment in those days, they couldn't. He was a super nice young trainee who happened to be a hockey player and had played hockey up at university and then me. And they're going to [pause]

Misa: They're going to choose the hockey player.

Kinsey: Yes, who's brand new, and who's just fine, but it was irritating that they did that.

Misa: When you were in that senior SE position, how many people would be under you?

Kinsey: I don't know. It wasn't a formal management position, it was a team leader position. And talking about management, in the Minneapolis and St. Paul branch offices in the eight years that I was there, there was never a female manager of any kind, including branch office administration and the secretaries. There was never a female manager. There apparently had been one in the 1950s, and that was such a bad experience for everybody that there were no female managers.

Misa: No female managers, hard to imagine.

Kinsey: I think it was 1971, and I don't know if there was a whistleblower or somebody complained, but they apparently did an investigation and made significant changes. And they promoted several women to management but they hadn't done all the prep over time for doing that and they had a little trouble with some of them.

Misa: Right. To take on management responsibilities, you need to be able to do the job really well, which means you need to have the preparatory experience.

Kinsey: Right.

Misa: I think there's a bunch of changes going on in the legal realm, too, in about 1970 because you can see IBM shifting from being very traditional to being much more embracing of women and I think minorities as well. It's unfortunate in a way that you

didn't experience the second part of that, but you got the first part of that in the 1960s when IBM sounds like they were very traditional-minded, set in their ways.

Kinsey: Yes, absolutely. Things like dress code, they were very fussy about that and there was one young guy — I felt so bad for him — I think this would have been in the late, probably 1967, 1968, something like that. He graduated from the U [University of Minnesota] and was hired and with his hiring, he went out and bought a bunch of new clothes but you couldn't wear sport coats at IBM, and that's what he bought were slacks and sport coats.

Misa: Oh, you needed to have suits.

Kinsey: You had to have a suit and you had to have a white shirt, not a blue shirt, and a sincere tie, and dark socks. So the manager told him you can't wear that, and he had quite a nice wardrobe that he had to go fix.

Misa: What was the dress code like for women?

Kinsey: It was suits or dresses. I've been told that in the 1950s they had to wear white gloves and hats, the women did. But by the time I was there, we didn't. We did wear white gloves sometimes in the summertime, but we didn't have to wear hats. It was business. I don't ever remember ever having a problem with dress. I don't remember really anybody having a problem with dress, the women, because we all wore suits.

Misa: Dark colors, conservative cuts.

Kinsey: I liked a little color sometimes and we never did get into any trouble for it. Heels, I remember, this is in the St. Paul branch. [laughs] My roommate and I, it was really cold and it wasn't shoveled out where we lived so we wore knee socks and loafers. [We] wore knee socks over our hose and loafers or boots, or whatever, and came in. The branch manager happened to see us come in, and we disappeared into where we were putting our coats, and you could hear him holler our boss' name, to get in there. We took this stuff off, but I mean, we were just trying to stay warm.

Misa: Get in the front door, yes. [Laughs.] Be something of a challenge in good Minnesota wintertime.

Kinsey: Right. That was funny.

Misa: Is there anything else about the branch office days that we should put on the recording?

Kinsey: When you say that your premise [about women in computing expanding in the 1960s] is that the numbers built up, I never really saw that because there were several times that I was the only female SE in a branch. My roommate was in St. Paul and I was in Minneapolis, and we moved back and forth several times in the eight years, from

Minneapolis to St. Paul and back. But there weren't large numbers of women and sometimes in the classes that they'd be teaching our customers, because the accounts were choosing people to be programmers and who would they choose? Sometimes they chose the people who worked in their accounting department and often they would be women.

Misa: So you might see more women as part of the customer team than as part of the IBM team?

Kinsey: Possibly, yes.

Misa: That would all fit into the larger number of people in the computing workforce because both IBM and then the people doing IT work for the customer would all be part of the national statistics. [It] doesn't say anything about your specific experience, which is our interest today.
Would it be a good time to move forward to the Rochester years?

Kinsey: Sure. I was out of the workforce from 1970, in September, until 1976, and I had decided that I would like to do some work. I called, it was actually one of my instructors that I'd had in programming school was down here and was a salesman. I knew that so I called him.

Misa: Down here, being in the Rochester area?

Kinsey: Yes. So I called him and he got me a couple of interviews that I really didn't think that it would be a match but I wanted to do. And I guess I talked to one of my old friends who said for heaven's sake, they're hiring in the lab, they're trying to get programmers, it's a good time [to apply]. So I applied and got some interviews, and went to work in November 1976 is when I came down here. My title was Staff Programmer, which was the same level that I had when I left, it's the equivalent of SE. [I] worked as a language architect for System 34 — well, 32 and 34 and 38, at the time — and then it was 1980 when I got a new boss who said he thought I ought to go into management. And I was terrified. [Laughs.] I said I'd take the interview, so I did and the fellow asked me why I wanted to be a manager and I said, I don't know. I don't know that I do. [Laughs.] We had a very good interview and a good talk, and he said well listen, I'm not going to offer you a job if you're not going to take it. So you go back and think about it and go back and tell your manager whether you will accept this job or not, if I offer it.

Misa: Okay. [Laughs.]

Kinsey: So I did, and decided that I probably should do that. I said yes, and ten minutes later I had a job. I had worked for the same fellow, actually, Dick Hedger. And I worked for him several times at various levels. Super guy. I liked management and my first job was as a software development department on the System 38, and I had the tape and the diskette support. They had shipped the 38 before I picked it up and what they had shipped was kind of a disaster and full of problems. So we were managing that backlog of current

problems and then rewriting all of the tape and diskette support. And they had staffed — I didn't have to do any staffing — they had staffed the department with a couple of really super people that just meshed, and it was fun.

Misa: What did you like about the new management role?

Kinsey: I don't know, exactly, it just fit. You're required to be technical, so that when you have to understand what's going on, but you don't have to do the tedious part of — programming can be very tedious — and you don't have to do the tedious part. You spend a lot of time, I guess, encouraging people. I just enjoyed the people interactions, and the Rochester Software Development management system that had been developed over time, maybe starting with System 3. But they had a very good development process and it was just fun to be part of that process. We delivered good stuff on time, and it was fun to be part of that.

Misa: Do you have a sense that that was something unique to Rochester, that they had a certain software development process?

Kinsey: Yes, I do. Our dedication, commitment was very definitely part of it, a good part of it. I mean we were going to do what we said we were going to do. Sometimes when we looked at the work from other labs, or they were going to help us out with something, we didn't feel that they had that same level of commitment. It was a Midwest [pause]

Misa: So it wasn't necessarily some plan, but it was a work ethic, or *esprit de corps*.

Kinsey: Exactly. It was really good.

Misa: The first project that you were a supervisor for, you said you didn't have to hire anybody, but I think you mentioned that you did end up later hiring people to do programming work. What kinds of things did you look for in a good programmer?

Kinsey: Well, you start out with the basics. You've gotta have a good GPA, and you want to see how they did in their technical classes, particularly. But that's not all. I used to go round and round with them, as some people in personnel would want you to hire only 4.0s and I didn't agree with that because I wanted to see what else they'd done. I wanted to know if they had to work, if they'd had a job while they were going to school, I wanted to know if they were involved with other college activities, leadership kinds of things. Because I could point out several programmers who'd been 4.0s who tended to be geeks who tend to stay in their office and write their codes and that's all they do . . .

Misa: Kind of narrow.

Kinsey: . . . and they don't interact, and this is a team environment. You've got to be [team] players. You certainly have to have the technical capabilities to do it, but you also have to be able to work with people and enjoy working with people. So you wanted to see

if they got a 4.0 by just hanging in their room, doing all their work but not ever doing anything in life, spending any time, that wasn't going to probably work out.

Misa: At that time, was it mostly people with computer science degrees or other backgrounds as well?

Kinsey: Yes, computer science. I think that there are many more majors now that are in the IT realm, IS or IT, or whatever.

Misa: Right, it's become very big.

Kinsey: Right. But at the time, that's what it was, computer science.

Misa: What universities did you hire from?

Kinsey: That was very interesting, too. That's an interesting question because I am in Armonk, or maybe it was our division headquarters, they wanted prestigious schools and they liked Eastern schools. And they had what did they call it? Was it CCRNAC? maybe I've got the acronym wrong, but anyway, it was they produced a list of approved schools and that's where they wanted us to hire from. Hiring people into Rochester, Minnesota, from an Eastern school, they aren't going to come.

Misa: Hard to do.

Kinsey: Right. Whereas we had very good luck with any of the Minnesota schools, the four state universities, or the University of Minnesota, or La Crosse, some of the Wisconsin schools, Madison. Well I think Madison might've been on the [list]. My acronym is going through my head, I can't remember what it is, but I think Madison was on the list. Another one that we really did well with is Stout.

Misa: University of Wisconsin at Stout.

Kinsey: Yes. Stout has a very limited number of degree programs because it started out as more of a vocational school. The lumber barons were the ones who developed it and it was incorporated in, but it does not have the broad [range]. But what they do, they do really well. They didn't have a computer science department. The computer science people were under their applied math program, and some of our superstars came from there.

Misa: From Stout.

Kinsey: Yes. And I also had, in addition to having programmers, later in my career I had the responsibility for the information development group and we hired some graphics designers from Stout.

Misa: Did you have relationships with faculty members, professors at these different schools, or mostly was it just hiring grads?

Kinsey: No, I didn't. I believe there were people who did, but not the general manager kinds of things. There were some other, like Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, top notch. And some of our superstars came from there, too.

Misa: Any from Iowa State or University of Iowa?

Kinsey: Yes, Iowa State more than University of Iowa. Iowa State, definitely. And South Dakota State, North Dakota State, that's where we liked to hire from and they [IBM corporate] didn't like that.

Misa: So you were looking for people with technical background, but also with good people skills, and ability to work in a team.

Kinsey: It's a team environment and I used to get upset — I think it got better but it used to frustrate me because our education system was all aimed at the individual and, you know, when you got in trouble if you copied somebody else's paper, or whatever, you're supposed to work just for yourself. And then you come into a place like IBM . . .

Misa: And it's just the opposite, isn't it? [Laughs.]

Kinsey: I mean it might be only three or four people on your team but they're going to divvy up the work, and you're going to have some piece of it. Then your team's going to review it and they're going to say we don't like the way you've coded this because blahblahblah, and then maybe you don't want to make those changes, right? I mean they haven't had any experience doing that. I think they did start adding that kind of stuff, as I understood it, to the curriculum so that they are getting more team [experience].

Misa: There's capstone projects, and team projects, and laboratory projects that are team oriented, but I think that's something that universities have [needed to] learn.

Kinsey: Right.

Misa: . . . and I don't know exactly — you probably know this much better — when university grads started having that experience while at the university because for years, of course, you're taking a class, you yourself take the exam, and you yourself got an individualized score.

Kinsey: Yes. And if you're on a team it doesn't matter what you do.

Misa: It's the team, right.

Kinsey: And it's your team but then it's a bigger team, and a bigger team because we've got deadlines and dates, and what can you do to help all these other guys. Can you

provide some of your stuff early? And you've got to be making those types of decisions all the time.

Misa: Did you notice any marked difference in IBM with either the number of women or how they were treated from the 1960s to, say, the 1980s?

Kinsey: Well I think it was better. When did the sexual harassment and all the legal stuff come in about that?

Misa: Well there's the equal opportunity laws kicked in in the 1970s, and then sexual harassment was a little bit later.

Kinsey: To me, if there was a difference it very definitely was an old boys environment, and women who had trouble with that didn't do so good. That's something that doesn't bother me.

Misa: Even in the 1980s you felt something of an old boys environment?

Kinsey: Well sure it was. But then the sexual harassment training must have started in the early 1980s because I can remember, I wasn't the manager yet, and a young woman coming to me, and it was discrimination or sexual harassment she felt was going on. I said what's the matter? Well, when I go to lunch with my team, all they talk about is football. I said that's interest, that's not sexual harassment or discrimination or anything

else. You're going to have to find a woman to go to lunch with or you're just going to have to sit and listen to football. I used to laugh because, this is when Dick [Hedger] and I were on the staff together. They'd come in on Monday morning — and I'm not a sports person — and they'd be going on about [something]. There was one guy on the staff who was a NASCAR nut, so we didn't know, when they're throwing out names, you don't know if they were talking about a football player or if they're talking about a NASCAR driver, or whatever.

Misa: NASCAR driver, okay, you've got to be careful.

Kinsey: And I don't know what they're talking about. So once in a while I'd say "Pavarotti!" [Laughter.] And they'd laugh. And it didn't bother me at all but some women found it just not comfortable. And I think because with me it went way back to when I was in high school and being the only girl in math classes, you learn to be just one of the guys and I always liked being one of the guys. One of the things I didn't like was if people stood up in front of a meeting and they'd say okay you guys, and oh, excuse me Judy, I didn't mean to… I always hated that because I didn't want to be excluded because I thought I ***was*** one of the guys. When they'd say I'm sorry, that bugged me because I wanted to be included.

Misa: It's probably hard to get a perfect balance because the times are different, but also the job was different, but were there any larger numbers of women in your working groups in the 1980s? You said in the 1960s there were very few.

Kinsey: I don't know what the percentages were, I don't remember, but they weren't huge. We still had women who were resigning after her first child or sometimes, though, they'd take an extended leave. I don't remember [but] I wish I knew the statistics. I don't, but what I remember was that there weren't a lot. And particularly in the leadership. We operated with what they called DCGs, Design Control Groups, is what we called them. And they were the ones that, for the operating system of the System 38 or the operating system of the AS/400, these were our most experienced and expert people. They monitored what was going on within their area of expertise. As a product was being developed they went to the reviews, I mean this whole development process was not automated. It's you have a review of your design, or you put your design together and then you send it out for review. You send it to your team but you also send it to your DCG member in your area of expertise, and then you schedule your review. There was a formal process for this review and if somebody was the — I forget what they called them — the person who wrote down, kept track of all the stuff, and then they input that into the system and you had to fix those errors. But it was the experienced people who were in the DCG.

Misa: It sounds like a key job.

Kinsey: Yes. And the key technical jobs, the managers weren't doing that. The managers were listening to the DCG and getting reports of how things were proceeding, and would

maybe have to make decisions to change something if they got reviews from them. But they were more worried about schedule and resources, and all that kind of stuff.

Misa: Kind of classic managerial things rather than the technology.

Kinsey: In depth design, yes. Now some managers did that but most of them didn't. Anyway, in the DCG there were very few women, and that started to change I guess in the 1990s, I would say. So the lead technical . . .

Misa: The lead tech.

Kinsey: . . . would be mostly men.

Misa: Did you work on the AS/400?

Kinsey: Oh yes.

Misa: Can you tell me what you did with that project? That was one of Rochester's real stellar successes.

Kinsey: I was the TA, the Technical Assistant, to the Director of the Programming Lab. I did that until it shipped, and after it had shipped then I moved into the [Paradigm]

management position. The way our development process, in my mind, was very vigorous and when you hear things like the Obamacare fiasco [pause]

Misa: Oh, the software somehow wasn't working.

Kinsey: It's like what kind of a process did you have? I can't believe [it]. I mean, that flat out couldn't have happened, the way we developed code. It couldn't have happened. It wouldn't have been shipped. We had a very rigorous process, there was a great deal of effort. But you're talking about an operating system and that's different than having an application error. The whole thing could go down, the whole account can go down the tubes if you've got problems there. Anyway, it's very complex and hitching it together. We ran status meetings at kind of all levels and we reviewed stuff every week. Where are you in your schedule? And we looked at design review statistics, and we also at that time did — I think they backed off on doing this later — but we did code inspections. First thing you did were the design reviews before you even developed any code, we had a way of specifying what your design was. And then you went into code and code inspections. And there was always a question if you needed to do that if your design reviews were good enough, vigorous enough. But it was a hands-on process, at all levels, and reviewed every aspect every week. And some of those were head butting kinds of group [meetings]. But we got it done, and my job as the TA to the director of the program was really to do whatever he needed.

Misa: What kinds of things did you get involved with?

Kinsey: I was always in all of the status meetings, and sometimes he would send me off on investigating something, or figuring something out. I also did a lot of his personnel work, helped with evaluations and that kind of stuff. I don't know if that's what a TA does, I guess. He was a great big tall guy, and I was running around on three inch heels. Well some of the TV shows where — I think it was *Madame Secretary* — where she's walking along and these people are following her and she's giving direction while she's walking along. That's what we used to [do], so I would be going like this to keep up with him.

Misa: The AS/400 became something really big. Did you have a sense that it was going to become something super important?

Kinsey: Yes we did.

Misa: What was that like? Exciting?

Kinsey: Absolutely.

Misa: Frightening? Nervous?

Kinsey: No, it was a fun time. I think everybody really enjoyed their jobs. The other thing that I think was unique about Rochester is there was a family emphasis, also, more

so I think than in most labs. Most everybody had kids that were in sports, and everybody took off to go watch their kids' games. Everybody built their work around it or figured out how to work around that, and we tended to go in earlier in the morning I think than other IBM labs, certainly. I'd never miss any of my kids' stuff and I think most everybody pretty much did that. Then if you had to come back at night, you did, or you worked at home.

Misa: So there was some type of accommodation, you were still doing your work and putting in long hours, but just in the middle of the day if your kid had a sporting event, or music, or . . .

Kinsey: Yes, after school or something. Yes, very definitely.

Misa: You said that the software development group at Rochester was about 1,000 people.

Kinsey: Yes it was.

Misa: That's fairly big.

Kinsey: Yes. But we're building the AS/400 and we're maintaining the 38, and the 36, and the 34. One of the things that we did that we had trouble with — and I mentioned a little earlier — in order to make the AS/400 a successful project, they had to figure out

how the System 34s and 36s could come over to it, because the 38 and AS/400 really wasn't a compatibility problem. But they had something called the 36 environment on the AS/400, which didn't go so well when it was shipped.

Misa: Was it like an emulator or something?

Kinsey: Not exactly. It was difficult, and had some problems. Whenever they shipped something, there'd be usually something that had some problems that had to be straightened out. And that was a major one on the AS/4000. I would think today that, in the computing today they'd have to do that. That was like Windows 10 being able to go directly from Windows 7 seamlessly, right? Just convert to 10.

Misa: Yes. That's a huge accomplishment to get all the pieces to work together, and then to have an upward migration.

Kinsey: It's amazing. And yes, I've been through some that failed.

Misa: You want to talk about any of the bad years? [Laughing.]

Kinsey: No. I mostly picked up the responsibility for the 36 environment after it had been shipped, and was responsible for implementing the changes to, finding the changes. We had some very, very vocal customers. There was an organization called COMMON, which was a user group for IBM midrange products.

Misa: COMMON, just the standard [spelling]?

Kinsey: C-O-M-M-O-N.

Misa: Right, because user groups are so important.

Kinsey: Yes, and it was a big deal. There were some 36 leaders at COMMON who typically made presentations, and applications, and had a following. Well they were just bonkers about the AS/400 and what a disaster it was. So we pulled in the noisiest of these guys and brought them into the lab, and had them actually do some work with the developers, and actually do some extended testing.

Misa: Because it was software that was supposed to be creating this AS/400 environment.

Kinsey: Right.

Misa: But they had specific problems with that.

Kinsey: It wasn't working.

Misa: So it was a helpful way of getting you to see it clearly.

Kinsey: And they were bringing in their applications to run on it, and then work with the developers. It was overtime that was quite successful. We got it fixed, straightened out.

Misa: One of the observations I read about the AS/400 is that there was quite a lot of interaction between IBM and respective customers, which was fairly new for IBM, I gather. This sounds like this is extending that.

Kinsey: Right. Actually I didn't mention that, but that was one of the things I was involved with when I was the TA to the lab director. The idea came from a woman named Sue Eldritch, and we implemented it. Got somebody to set up the machine room and had them come in, had customers come in and bring their stuff. And yes, it was brand new doing that. It had never been done before.

Misa: This direct interaction with customers, bringing them into [IBM]?

Kinsey: We actually had them come in.

Misa: Into Rochester.

Kinsey: We had a lab and had them come in, and actually run their stuff.

Misa: So it was part of your responsibility, then.

Kinsey: Yes it was, just getting it started.

Misa: What did you end up doing, you said, after the AS/400 shipped, then you moved to the System 36, is that correct? The environment 36.

Kinsey: No, no, no. The 36 environment was part of the operating system of the AS/400. Until the AS/400 shipped, I had been working as the TA to the lab director, and it was — I can't remember when I took that job — it was after it shipped, there was an opening and I took the opening. Where I went was where this 36 environment, which was part of the operating system, but it was where it had been developed, that group. And I had responsibility for that, and it was a firestorm out in the customer world and COMMON. So we had to put a bunch of things in place to get it fixed. That was one of my first jobs as a full time manager, was getting that squared away.

Misa: And how did your career evolve from that position?

Kinsey: Well, I was there for maybe six or seven years. And then there was a reorganization and it matched what was going on outside, where they were taking down, compacting the structure, management structure, and they did away with those jobs. They put the second line managers — we used to have third line areas that had like four or five second lines. They got rid of the third lines so then there would be one second line manager, and they'd have a whole bunch of first line departments. I had 12 or 15.

Misa: So flattening the administrative [structure].

Kinsey: Yes, that's what they did, flattened the organization. So I took a corporate assignment. Very interesting because this is when Louis Gerstner came in.

Misa: Oh, yes, early 1990s, then.

Kinsey: Yes. I think when I went out there it was 1995. I reported to the Director of Information Development, the one that had responsibility for all the information that shipped with the systems. And when you look back on this now, it seems pretty funny, but we were still doing — when we shipped an AS/400, do you want to know how tall the stack of information that went with it was?

Misa: I've heard it's immense.

Kinsey: Yes, about six feet. And could you talk anybody into maybe doing more online. Well it would be just fine, but not for my area; it's got to be shipped with. So what we were doing was trying to work on new ways to provide information. The internet was in its infancy. There was one guy in my department who was kind of a pioneer in that stuff, and they did do things like they set up a website for all of the information within IBM. And when you talk about web design now, and all that, we had one guy who did web

design and I was the team leader and I'd have to occasionally fill in for him, and actually write html.

Misa: Okay, really, to get a website up.

Kinsey: Yes. To make changes, and I mean it was almost like going back to the days of 1401. Now they've got all these tools, but they didn't have that kind of stuff. But anyway, there was an IBM re-engineering task force. It was at a very high level within IBM and I went to that for my boss. It was software re-engineering, what they were doing, and focusing on process, and cutting expenses, and doing more for less is really what it was about.

Misa: And was that work where you were still based in Rochester or did you move to corporate headquarters?

Kinsey: I had an office in Somers.

Misa: In New York.

Kinsey: Yes. That's where the division headquarters were, and that's where this woman who had the information development was. I had an office there, and I had an office in Rochester, and I was supposed to be around half time back and forth.

Misa: So quite a lot of traveling.

Kinsey: Yes, pretty much every other week I'd be heading out there. Sometimes I'd stay for a couple weeks. One of the things we were doing from an information standpoint, is monitoring all of the sites that produced information. We were trying to settle on a common set of tools, because we didn't have that. And we were trying to send out tools, and formats, and [laughs] at the time they wouldn't accept PDF. Things have changed so much in the last five years.

Misa: PDF was new, and it was also proprietary with another company . . .

Kinsey: Right.

Misa: . . . and not well known, not ubiquitous the way PDF is today.

Kinsey: Yes. IBM was still doing OS2 at the time, so we were putting our eggs in OS2 basket. And that didn't fold for a couple of years, I think.

Misa: You were searching around for something; the web was just emerging at the time.

Kinsey: Barely.

Misa: Well, 1994-95 was when the first popular web browser [appeared]. 1991 is when Tim Berners-Lee announces the web, but 1994-95 are early backgrounds. This is all very, very, very new.

Kinsey: We still had the IBM one, what was it? The name of the IBM browser that was not well-received.

Misa: Microsoft would've been Internet Explorer, but this is something specific to IBM, I don't know.

Kinsey: Yes, I can't remember. We did have a browser effort that then was discontinued, and then OS2 was discontinued.

Misa: You don't know what that looks like ahead of time.

Kinsey: Right. The OS2, everybody felt that OS2 was much better. It was technically a much better system than Windows. But that didn't matter. Just one of those if you got the numbers, that the better doesn't matter. It's hard for people to understand that. Anyway, I did that for three years, and then I took a development job back in Rochester on something called a network station. The development organization was half in Rochester and half in Austin, Texas. They used to move people all over the country and they quit doing that. Jobs would be classified local, which would be secretarial support or that kind of stuff, but programmers were not classified that way. If a site either was closed or if a

project was closed and there were people available they would send them. I'd been moved, right? All over.

Misa: IBM, that's right.

Kinsey: Yes. Well, that changed in the Gerstner re-engineering because the recognition was it was way too expensive, and we maybe didn't need to move people. You could do development work without having people in the location. That's how they totally operate today. As a matter of fact, I think Rochester right now has become very fragmented because of that. They've got little pieces [pause]

Misa: Oh, I've heard people [are] working with teams all over the world, literally, so it's hard to know what's going on in Rochester.

Kinsey: Right. Anyway, this one that I was working on was half of the organization was in Austin, Texas, and half in Rochester, Minnesota. Well, they didn't get along very well and the people in Austin thought that the people in Rochester were — I mean to the people in Austin, this is a high tech university town and whatever, and the Midwest, what do they know. And the people in Rochester who happened to be very experienced, whereas the ones in Austin were a little wet behind the ears — newer — but the experienced ones in Rochester don't blow their horn, it's just their personality, it's low key. [Chuckles.] Anyway, they didn't get along much at all and it got pretty bad. So they decided they needed to change the reporting structure, so they took the development

organization — and there were two development managers, I was one of them and there was a woman in Austin — and the split up our departments. I had half my departments were in Rochester and half were in Austin, probably four or five departments in each one.

Misa: And so the woman in Austin had the reverse, then, so that you complemented.

Kinsey: And so we had to travel. So I had an office in Rochester and I had an office in Austin. Usually I flew down on a Tuesday and I would work in Austin when — well depending on when I got there — Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and then I'd go down to see my daughter, who lived in San Antonio.

Misa: Oh, okay, kind of nice.

Kinsey: Over the weekend. And then I'd come back up and work Monday and Tuesday, and then fly home Tuesday night. And then two weeks later I'd do the same thing all over again.

Misa: Okay, so a week on, week off sort of a thing.

Kinsey: Yes. And that was a neat little project but it was not a successful project. The network station, the idea was that everything had gone to PCs and what they were recognizing was that maintenance and administration of those things were significant expenses. They wanted a PC but they wanted to go back to centralized [pause]

Misa: Central control, yes, so not everybody had the same.

Kinsey: They wanted to go back to a dumb head, but they needed to have some other PC kind of capability. So that's what the network station was. As I was retiring they were phasing it out, and eventually it went away. But it was a neat little project and I think they sold it to somebody else, eventually, and I don't know if it ever did anything or not.

Misa: We get some glimmer of that with upgrades that are supposed to be centrally administered, and then software from Microsoft is no longer a process but it's a subscription. So there's some parts of this that are in different ways getting worked into our IT environment these days. Interesting to think of how that might have gone on. When did you retire then?

Kinsey: 2001.

Misa: 2001.

Kinsey: Yes. So I worked in the IT field for 38 years. No, my credit at IBM was 32 years over a 38-year period, because I was out for six years when my kids were little. Fantastic, just super, and mostly worked with really super people.

Misa: Lots of really interesting projects and interesting responsibilities. Well, Judy, this has just been so helpful, thank you so much for the day. Anything you think you might like to include in our conversation, any questions I might've asked you or topics that we could pick up?

Kinsey: The only thing I'd like to mention and I think I'd mentioned it to you on the phone, one of the things that I was involved with was Girl Scouts. I was on the board of the local Girl Scouts Council. Somebody, and I don't know if it was a foundation or if it was the government, but somebody was projecting the workforce out — this was probably in 1980, I would guess — they were projecting the workforce from a technical standpoint, IT standpoint, and there weren't going to be enough people to fill the jobs. And so what could they do about that? Well, they looked at the makeup and they could get a whole lot more people working if they got women involved. So what they did was they wanted to get girls to do what they needed to in high school so they'd be prepared in college, and then they could get more that would be open to IT careers. They worked with — as I understood it — three organizations: Girl Scouts, Girls and Boys Club of America, and I think Camp Fire. I'm not sure but I know there were three organizations. What they did for the Girl Scouts was develop some badges that these kids who were junior girl scouts, cadet, or senior girl scouts could earn. Girl Scout badges are like Boy Scout badges. So they developed these on computers, and I was a leader at the time and my kids earned the computer badge. We didn't have any trouble with it, but apparently, when this organization or whoever it was checked back on how these badges were going, nobody was earning them or very few. So then they did another little study and said why

are they not earning them? And the problem was the leaders were mostly women who were not comfortable with anything having to do with hard science. If it was medical or anything having to do with natural sciences, they would lead those things with the girls but they stayed away from —

Misa: Getting the activities that promoted getting the badges.

Kinsey: Yes. They stayed away from it. Badges, what they had was prescriptive. They had [to] do 10 of these activities, is what the badges say. So they weren't doing that. What they came up with was a Train the Leaders, and there was a pilot area [including] North and South Dakota, and Minnesota. They had an advisory report, and I think it had to have been after 1985 because that's when I went on the Girl Scouts Council board. And then this advisory thing came a couple years later, I think. Anyway, they established partnerships with science museums. We had one with a science museum and activities that Girl Scouts could do, overnights that they could do. They had special training for the leaders, and they had come up with some activities that they could do that would make them more comfortable with the hard science stuff. But it was all aimed at getting the leaders comfortable leading the girls, and then getting the girls comfortable. It's very similar to the STEM emphasis that's going on right now, and getting the girls to do that. I lost touch, I don't know what happened, but the basic premise when we came and said we're looking to find out what happened or it's like we've done this before and we can't seem to… I suppose what I worry about with women is there's sort of a dumbing down of America that in my view has been going on and I don't know that the dress, a lot of the

TV stuff, it's almost like it's back to the 1950s in how women are portrayed as objects, not . . .

Misa: People.

Kinsey: Yes, and that bothers me a lot. I've got two granddaughters who are sixth grade and ninth grade, and you can see that. I'm a Girl Scout leader again with them, and you can see that in some of the kids, and some of the way they dress, and it really bothers me. I guess I hope this study is successful at finally figuring something out because women are obviously smart and capable and they ought to be able to fill some of these IT jobs, which would be good for IT but it would be good for them, too.

Misa: It would seem like it would be a healthy thing all the way around, yes. We have a programmer shortage today, well, we have a programmer shortage only because there's not enough women so the story's come around a couple of times. It seems a little frustrating, almost, isn't it?

Kinsey: Yes, it's very frustrating. Anyway, I guess my overall is I would say I don't know anybody that's as lucky as I am. I got into this just by a fluke thing. I didn't know anything about it, and it's been terrific. It matched my skills and what I was capable of doing perfectly.

Misa: You hope that other women would have the same opportunities.

Kinsey: It's interesting when I talk about a match. When I was in a branch and there were firms that I knew that would hire part time programmers. And sometimes they'd hire, if you got them trained, they'd hire high school kids. I had a sister who was five years younger than I and I though oh, if I could get her some of this training she could go write some RPG programs, and she could earn a little money because she was a poor college student. So I took some material to her and just nothing, math block or something.

Misa: Didn't click with her.

Kinsey: No. She eventually became a mortgage loan underwriter, and then a branch office manager for a mortgage company. And she can do that stuff, but the computer stuff was just no. So I think it is a match. I mean sometimes it clicks and sometimes it doesn't, but I always really enjoyed it.

Misa: Well thank you, Judy, I appreciate your comments and our conversation.