Sheila Slocum Hollis

June 17, 2016; June 28, 2016; July 12, 2016; August 1, 2016;
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ABA Senior Lawyers Division
Women Trailblazers in the Law

ORAL HISTORY
of
SHEILA SLOCUM HOLLIS

Interviewer: Alexandra Dunn

Dates of Interviews:
June 24, 2016
June 28, 2016
July 14, 2016
August 1, 2016
August 12, 2016
August 25, 2016
October 31, 2016
Ms. Dunn Good morning. This is Alexandra Dunn, and we are taking the oral history of Sheila Hollis. Welcome, Sheila.

Ms. Hollis Thank you. It’s a pleasure to be here.

Ms. Dunn Thanks for having me in your beautiful office.

Ms. Hollis Oh, delighted to have you.

Ms. Dunn It is Friday, the 17th of June, and today we’re going to start with your early life.

Ms. Hollis Great. Well, I’m a Denverite. I was born in Denver, in 1948. And I’m an only child. My mother was Irish, Irish
descent, and my father was a New York Yankee, as we said at the time. Her name was Emily Mary Agnes Caplis. And my grandparents, who were very much alive and very much involved in my life, were Thomas Francis Caplis and my grandmother was Isabella McGrellis Caplis. And she came from Northern Ireland, from a place called Cummerclaudy, right outside of Derry, and my grandfather came from Tiperrary, from Bird Hill, Tiperrary. And they had met in Philadelphia in the 1900s, got married in Philadelphia and my mother was born in Philadelphia. Because my grandfather got TB working at the Baldwin Locomotive Factory in Philadelphia, and was extremely ill, my grandmother put him on a train and came out with my mother as a baby in her arms, all the way to Estes Park, Colorado. And they got to Denver, and then they took either a car, or a wagon perhaps, for part of the trip up to Estes Park. And my grandmother and grandfather worked
there. My grandfather being about 5’2”, my grandmother being about 4’11”, him recovering from tuberculosis. He immediately got a job as a piano mover in Estes Park, Colorado, about 10,000 feet above sea level. At the time Estes Park, and still is, a resort place. They had friends, or distant family connections, who had been out there, at the time Colorado was a place for people recovering from tuberculosis. And my grandmother got a job as a domestic, as she had been as a young girl in Philadelphia. My grandmother actually was an identical twin; her father dropped dead in the fields, was a farmer in Ireland. And my great grandmother raised all of the children on her own, I think it was eight children total, mainly girls, and my grandmother had an identical twin, Bridgette, and my grandmother told me many, many great stories about Ireland, growing up on the farm in Ireland. They were seamstresses, all the girls were trained to be seamstresses.
They were all extremely religious people. Old-school, as was my grandfather, very religious, from what is now the Republic of Ireland. He came over, as a young man, very young man, probably about 16, 17 – I think greatly poor, right before Bloody Sunday in Ireland, and already there were issues, and so to avoid encounters with the Black and Tan, he got on the boat and came over to Philadelphia, and of course there’s a huge Irish community in Philadelphia. So they met there and were married there and so on.

My father was from right outside Rochester, New York, Scottsville, New York. My mother and father met in World War II, 1942, approximately. I believe that would be 1942. And they met at a dinner party. And my mother’s fiancée – she was 23 and my father was 30 at the time – he had volunteered for military service. He was a medic, and had his master’s degree from Cornell already in biology and anatomy. And was going on to complete his
doctorate at the time when he volunteered and became a medic in World War II. Anyway, they met, my mother’s fiancée before, had been shot down and killed, and she was still recovering from that. And so, anyway, they met and fell in love and here I am!

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness! Well, so, thinking about what you just said, you come from a line of people who were really no strangers to working hard and kind of creating their own space in the world.

Ms. Hollis Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn When you were very young, with your parents – was it just you and your parents?

Ms. Hollis No, my grandparents.

Ms. Dunn Your grandparents lived with you?

Ms. Hollis Yes. Well, we lived with my grandparents for part of the time. My father was, after he got out of the Army, which
would have been about, probably about 1945 - right after the war ended. And my mother worked all through that. She was a draftsman. She was an artist. And she graduated from Cathedral High School in Denver, which was the big Catholic urban school at the time, a lot of Irish, Germans, Italians – people from all over, actually. It was very urban and very diverse in the day.

Ms. Dunn Hmm.

Ms. Hollis And she graduated 1938. My father had an extremely conservative, traditional background in upstate New York, Slocum was my maiden name, and Slocum in upstate New York is an ubiquitous name, because one of our forbearers was a general in the Civil War, he was one of Grant’s generals.

Ms. Dunn Oh, wow!

Ms. Hollis And so it was two different worlds meeting, my mother
and father. They could not have been from more different planets.

Ms. Dunn Sort of the – you said conservative, kind of military, long institution and then someone who comes -

Ms. Hollis All Corneliants.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis Republicans. My grandfather, my Irish grandfather, was the ward captain for the Democrats in Denver.

Ms. Dunn Wow!

Ms. Hollis But my father converted to Catholicism and became a student of it. But very traditional, DAR mother, grandmother, great grandmother and all that. DAR. And, it looked like something out of the Music Man, the town, at the time.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis Scottsville – very old school. And very old Yankee.
Ms. Dunn And then here's your mom, the -

Ms. Hollis Wild Irish Rose!

Ms. Dunn Oh, I love it! The Wild Irish Rose!

Ms. Hollis Yes. She was very tall. Bright red hair.

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn She must have been -

Ms. Hollis She was a character.

Ms. Dunn - heart stop.

Ms. Hollis She was a character.

Ms. Dunn So tell me a little bit about your very early years as a child. I mean, most of us don't remember the, you know, being an infant or anything, but certainly some of your early memories.

Ms. Hollis Actually, I either the burden or the benefit of having
extremely intense memories of my childhood from earliest – probably from the time I was probably no more than 18 months old.

Ms. Dunn Really?!?

Ms. Hollis Because my mother and father separated – not “separated” separated, but he had to pursue his doctoral endeavors, so he went to, he had to go then to the University of Michigan, to be in a doctoral program there. My mother continued to work, and she worked as an artist, and then she became a draftsman, in post-World War II. She was very gifted, and was always recognized for her art for many years, and this is one of – that’s one of her little late-in-life watercolors up there -

Ms. Dunn Oh, it’s beautiful!

Ms. Hollis It’s a mountain scene with the aspen. Very talented artist, and anytime she had a pen in her hand, she could make a
living.

Ms. Dunn  So what did she do – what would a draftsman have done -

Ms. Hollis  Well, she designed – she became a draftsman for the
USGS, and for the Department of Interior. She was an
artist for them, and could do – basically, she had a gift.
She just had a gift. She took drafting classes at the
University of Denver. After she graduated from high
school. And, she had several misspent years of trying to
do other things – she was a phone operator in World War II
– that was absolutely not – it was not really her cup of tea!
She wasn’t born to that kind of world. She was a very
colorful person and couldn’t be really constrained in the -

Ms. Dunn  The confines of an office -

Ms. Hollis  - confines of an office, no. No, she was not an office kind
of person. And, she ended up becoming – that was really
the beginning of her professional career, was being a
draftsman. And, she was recruited to work for USGS, the Department of Interior, too, and she did a variety of things with them for a couple years, but then, interestingly enough, she was recruited to go up to Hanford National Labs, in Washington State, to be a weapons designer, that was her formal title. So, she and I -

Ms. Dunn A weapons designer.

Ms. Hollis Weapons – nuclear weapons design. So we moved to – she and I moved up to Hanford, Washington. I celebrated my third birthday there.

Ms. Dunn Hmm.

Ms. Hollis I remember this excruciatingly well, because I remember the plane flight out, it was extremely fancy, from Denver, it was quite the thing, because she was flown out -

Ms. Dunn By the government?

Ms. Hollis By the government. And, it was a remarkable experience,
and, I think that’s where I might have gotten my travel bug – we were always moving pretty fast in life.

Ms. Dunn So you and your mom -

Ms. Hollis Yep. And my father was off at the University of Michigan working on his doctoral thesis, which was on the inferior olivary gland, in the human brain.

Ms. Dunn Wow!

Ms. Hollis And – so, all right. So we were up there a couple of years, and I contracted polio.

Ms. Dunn You did?

Ms. Hollis Yes. So I ended up, she flew me, flew back, it was, I just collapsed, and was like a ragdoll. So we flew back to Denver.

Ms. Dunn How old were you?

Ms. Hollis Probably four, four and a half, by then.
Ms. Dunn: Okay.

Ms. Hollis: Maybe four. And spent about a month and a half in Children's Hospital in Denver. I was never on an iron lung. But I did have polio, and it was pretty scary. I remember everything about the experience: I remember coming home; I remember going to the hospital; I remember being in the hospital.

Ms. Dunn: Wow!

Ms. Hollis: I have extreme, very precise memories of this, these childhood experiences. When I got out, I was stronger, I was able to, you know, get up and around and had regained my strength, and then my mother was recruited to go to Los Alamos National Lab to be a weapons designer at Los Alamos. So we packed up once again, and, moved to Los Alamos, and we lived in Los Alamos for several years. And my father would come out and visit us, we'd track him down, and so on and so forth. And I actually, for a
short time as an infant, and I remember this only vaguely –
we lived in Ann Arbor, Michigan -

Ms. Dunn With your father -

Ms. Hollis Yes. But that was before she had to go to Hanford, so,
remember it pretty clearly, though.

Ms. Dunn So here you are, you’re very young. Only female child of
clearly a very enterprising woman and a very intelligent man.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn How – and your grandparents are still around, too, right?

Ms. Hollis Oh, absolutely. Very key part of our life.

Ms. Dunn So, describe, maybe, the feeling of being young, Sheila,
you know, being surrounded – was it an energetic childhood? Was it -

Ms. Hollis Oh, we did a bunch of -
Ms. Dunn Sounds like it was peripatetic -

Ms. Hollis Peripatetic. Very colorful. My mother was a big traveler. When we were in Hanford, we went up, went all through British Columbia. Took my first ocean voyage on the Princess Victoria, up and down to see the coast of British Columbia. Wonderful, wonderful experience. And, met wonderful people. I was – marched as an atom in the atomic Frontier’s Day parade!

Ms. Dunn You – was this an atom costume, or?

Ms. Hollis Yes. I was dressed as a little atom! So I was the atomic princess. And -

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness! How old were you then, you think?

Ms. Hollis I was probably about four.

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness!

Ms. Hollis It was a lot of fun. It was really outrageous. But it was very wildly – the local drive-in was called “Fission and

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness!

Ms. Hollis So it was that kind of world. It was just – it was a frontier town, with everybody with a mission. And, anyway, this is, obviously, this was post-Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But they wanted to convert, at the time it was “Atoms for Peace” program, was what it was called.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis Then we moved to Los Alamos. Which was a closed city at the time. You had to – it was – Mesa, outside of Santa Fe.

Ms. Dunn Right.

Ms. Hollis So, we lived in New Mexico a number of years and had a fabulous time there, except my mother was worried about my grandparents, so we’d drive back and forth continuously between Denver and Los Alamos, which is a
400-mile drive.

Ms. Dunn  What kind of car did you have back then? Do you remember?

Ms. Hollis  Well, actually, my mother, yes, she, again, she was ahead of her time. See, we had – first we had an old, we had a Chrysler, which was maybe a couple of years old. Bought used. But then she bought a brand-new red Ford convertible. And, so driving in a red Ford convertible, back and forth, up and down the New Mexico highways. We went everywhere, we saw everything. We went to Mesa Verde. We went – we went everywhere. And, we drove so much, we saw just about every corner of New Mexico. Great sand dunes. Aztec, New Mexico; Taos, a lot of time in Taos, because my mother being an artist, she loved the Taos world, and Santa Fe world.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.
And also hung out with a lot of the people from the lab, which were always colorful. Always amazing people. The scientists and just incredible, intellectual firepower “on the hill,” they called it at the time. And, because of the — so many people were from Austria, Germany, Italy, the physicists, and the mathematicians, they demanded top-of-the-line music, so you’d have a lot of classical music, a lot of concerts. There was a country club. It was really, like a miniaturized world, because you were on a closed city.

Wow!

So you had to create everything there. It was just an amazing experience.

I was just reading a book of 105 East Palace, about the -

Right.

That was the address that people were given, in Santa Fe -
Ms. Hollis   Right!

Ms. Dunn   - to go to, because it was all confidential, and -

Ms. Hollis   Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn   And the word is that Albert Einstein was just seen sitting on the square in Santa Fe -

Ms. Hollis   Yes. And, Lamy, New Mexico, is where you get off the train. And it was one woman, who checked everybody in.

Ms. Dunn   Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis   She ran the table. And then, you would have transportation up to the Hill. That was where you’d check in to get the job. And then, once you had the pass -

Ms. Dunn   Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis   - you had to go through the pass process, get onto the Hill. Schools were excellent, they brought in the best -

Ms. Dunn   Did you go to school on the Hill?
Ms. Hollis  Yes. Oh, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Really?!?

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  So how many children were up there? I mean, did it – were these, these were all children of brilliant scientists, the top – from all over the world.

Ms. Hollis  All over. So you had some very – it was very eclectic group, but very – they had a very highly developed teaching corps brought in.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  We were tested, tested, tested, tested. All the time. First of all, for exposure to nuclear materials, obviously.

Ms. Dunn  Oh, I’m thinking you mean academic testing.

Ms. Hollis  Oh, that, too. I mean, it was just, you know, we were like lab rats, really.
Ms. Dunn  My goodness! Was it scary?

Ms. Hollis  No, it was just – you know, when you’re little, you think, “Well, this is just the way it is.”

Ms. Dunn  What kind – how did they test you?

Ms. Hollis  Well, continuous tests – you know, IQ tests; adjustment test. Whatever they did at the time, you know. It was the 50s. They tested you on everything.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. Just to make sure you weren’t being exposed to any radiation?

Ms. Hollis  No, just try – they had a closed, experimental group they can work on.

Ms. Dunn  Oh, my goodness! That, that is an experience not many young children would have.

Ms. Hollis  No! Looking back on it, we were tested so much, we – it was unreal.

Ms. Dunn  That’s – that’s – and I’m sure no one signed any
paperwork for you to be in all these programs.

Ms. Hollis  Oh, God, no! Are you kidding?

Ms. Dunn  No parental consent.

Ms. Hollis  No, no!

Ms. Dunn  So, tell me a little bit about your relationship with your mom, because it sounds like you spent so much time together -

Ms. Hollis  Oh, yes. We were together all the time. We did everything together. She’d go out to dinner, I’d go with her.

Ms. Dunn  You were like the little adult, or did you -

Ms. Hollis  Well, I’d just go out with her. I thought it was cool. I got pretty upset if I couldn’t go along sometimes!

Ms. Dunn  So you were really, really close.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.
Ms. Dunn  Did she – were you an easy child to – did you require a lot of discipline or direction, or did you, were you very -

Ms. Hollis  My mother was -

Ms. Dunn  - simpatico?

Ms. Hollis  Had no discipline whatsoever! We had no – no, there was no discipline! We did whatever popped into our head that day or my day, and that was it.

Ms. Dunn  Oh, my goodness. Oh, my goodness.

Ms. Hollis  When we moved back to Denver, just one, this sort of encapsulates the whole thing: This must have been third grade, third, maybe fourth grade, oh, God, it was raining, and snowing, and the, it was miserably gray out, which is rare in Colorado, but it had been one of those stretches where it’s just, “Oh, my God,” really bad. She pulls up in front of the school with the red convertible after school, and she’s, “Get in.” We drove out to California, my father
was studying out in California at the time. Drove out to California, and she said, “Just tell them you have family business.” So we drove to California, we’re gone for two weeks. I came back with a suntan and a bunch of souvenirs! It was a very – I guess the closest analogy that you could think of was Auntie Mame. So, we’re extremely close, and we live, basically, together, other than when I went off to college and maybe for a couple years out here, together all the time.

Ms. Dunn And it seems that – how did her, I guess, her entrepreneurial spirit, and, and she seems like she was quite a pioneer, and -

Ms. Hollis She was. We got – she bought a lot of real estate, bought and sold real estate like crazy. And, she’d work on the, work on the houses after she got off work, and.

Ms. Dunn So you – I mean, we’re reflecting on sort of the role of
women, and women in the law, ultimately -.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn You were raised by a trailblazer.

Ms. Hollis No, she – so, when she was in Los Alamos, the thing that really stuck in her craw was, they had separate buses for the men and women, to make, when they went out to the bomb sites.

Ms. Dunn Hmm.

Ms. Hollis That was out to the testing sites, out to the other labs. The men could not ride with the women. And, she found it incredibly insulting, but what was – infuriating, that was insulting. Infuriating was the fact that the women got paid 50% of what the men did, even though they were professional jobs. 50%. And, they told her, “Well, Emily, you don’t need to worry,” you know, “You don’t have to support a family.” She said, “Well, what do you think I’m
Ms. Dunn And would she talk to you about those kinds of issues?
Ms. Hollis She would sometimes let – she tried not to, really.
Ms. Dunn Yes.
Ms. Hollis She told me much more of this when I was an adult.
Ms. Dunn Okay.
Ms. Hollis Yes.
Ms. Dunn So, you mentioned growing up, the strong presence of Catholic faith, amongst your family?
Ms. Hollis Oh, yes. Yes.
Ms. Dunn And, here you are in a very scientific community, where sometimes faith and science can be viewed either at odds, or maybe not complimentary. Did the Catholic faith stay present in your childhood?
Ms. Hollis Oh, absolutely. Yes. Absolutely. That was what got my
mother through some very tough experiences. Yes.

Ms. Dunn Yes. Well, especially being, essentially, a single mom -

Ms. Hollis Exactly. She was a single mother.

Ms. Dunn Yes. Yes. So, did you miss your dad, when he was gone? Or was it just what you were used to?

Ms. Hollis Just what I was used to.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis And, he was not a very ebullient spirit. He was very old-school, you know, there's the parents, and there's the children, and there's no -

Ms. Dunn And you and your mom were having your Auntie Mame experience -

Ms. Hollis Right! Right!

Ms. Dunn So, who -

Ms. Hollis So, you know, we'd go see him, and it was kind of fun, and
we’d go, you know, go out to California when he was in California, we’d visit him there.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Have some fun out there. Thought it was cool. You know, a little kid, go to Disney World.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Go back.

Ms. Dunn Did you feel close to him? Or -

Ms. Hollis No, it’s just like – yeah, really great, I think he’s my father! But I’m not too – you know, I mean, I knew he was my father, but I couldn’t – I didn’t really know – you know, when you’re a child, you don’t even put all the pieces, the whole thing together, really.

Ms. Dunn Yes. But he was smart.

Ms. Hollis He was smart. Very smart. And he taught me – he taught me a lot, actually. It was – but his way of communicating
was only through the intellectual stuff, really. It was basically – bringing out Gray’s Anatomy and, you know, going through the, everything that he learned and talking about science, and, really, that was all – the only thing. And very patriotic. He was a bugler in World War II, he went out all the time, when we were, he was living in Denver, to Fort Carson, to play taps. And, you know, he had his own world.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis But was very religious person, and very thoughtful. He taught at Regis College for a while in Denver, and, I guess went down to, because he taught at Florida State for a while, and then went up to Michigan to finish, wrap up the doctorate.

Ms. Dunn My goodness.

Ms. Hollis You know.
Ms. Dunn  I think about hearing all this, and, I – and of what you went on to do later, and, working with government and in government. So here you are as a child, with, you know, a military presence, a formality, a strong faith. And, also, an active life, interacting with government, and people in government. Even as a child.

Ms. Hollis  Yes. It just was, this was the world. And, my mother was a big patriot, and very emotional about it, because, so many of her graduating class – she graduated in 1938, from high school, and that’s when Hitler marched into Poland. And, so, what happened to her graduating class was unbelievable, you know, half of the young men were either injured or killed in World War II. So, she was extremely patriotic. And, that’s why she always liked working for the government. She worked for private industry at some points, but most of her life she was in one capacity or another in government.
Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. So, in terms of your age, we’ve sort of moved along. Now you’re, you’re more than four. You’re in school on the Hill -

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Until about what age?

Ms. Hollis  Must have been seven, that we then moved back to Denver, for a while. And so I did fourth grade and fifth grade in Denver.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Catholic school. Same one my mother went to.

Ms. Dunn  Some of the same teachers?

Ms. Hollis  Probably not. I don’t think so. So some of them, like the librarian, the librarian nun was – but that was a little nun, about two foot tall, and just pure feisty all the way!

Ms. Dunn  She made sure every book was returned.
Ms. Hollis  Every book was returned, and there better not be any folded corners! But it was a very – in fact, I brought the high school yearbook, so you can get a sense of the kind of zeitgeist of the school. It was a really good place. Although then, I wasn’t there long enough.

Ms. Dunn  This is just fourth and fifth grade, and then -

Ms. Hollis  Fourth and fifth grade. Then, my mother got another job, up in Casper, Wyoming, so we moved to Casper.

Ms. Dunn  My goodness!

Ms. Hollis  And I went up there for probably three-quarters of a year. But, over the course of the summer, I guess you could say it was my first job, kind of, I, we were living in the Hotel Townsend, which was like the equivalent of the Mayflower Hotel, in Casper, Wyoming, at the time. And Casper was an oil town. Very – very, very cowboy. But anyways, a lot of fun, and, I was, I didn’t like so much being away
from the New Mexico/Denver environment. But it was – it was -

Ms. Dunn  So it felt different.

Ms. Hollis  It felt very different -

Ms. Dunn  In Wyoming.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  But, so my first job was as an assistant to the local cowboy children's show. I guess host, which ran cartoons – Howdy Doody, you know, all the old-school cartoons.

Ms. Dunn  In the town center? Like, was it -

Ms. Hollis  Yes. Just next-door to the hotel. My mother was working, so I wandered out of the hotel one morning and decided I wanted to do something, and so, I went to the library, and then I went by the TV station, said “I see Old Cowboy Bob on TV all the time, I really like him.” They said, “Well,
come meet Cowboy Bob.” And so he gave me a job, which was really a lot of fun.

Ms. Dunn Helping on the weekends? You would help out, or -

Ms. Hollis No, every day, during the summer. It was a daily program. 9:00 a.m. for the kids.

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness. So there you are, almost as an assistant TV producer in sixth grade.

Ms. Hollis I sold Wonder Bread. I’d hold up the Wonder Bread. But what was really great about Cowboy Bob was, was a very colorful guy, and he lived in a van, outside the TV station. He didn’t even have a house! And I think, he had – the cowboy had a little bit of a drinking problem.

Ms. Dunn Hmm.

Ms. Hollis So Cowboy Bob would take his – take his breaks, while the cartoons were playing. So, one day the TV cameraman decided – well, they loved him of course, because he was a
character and funny – they went out, and he was passed out in the van sound asleep with this gigantic dog next to him. And, woke him up, startled him, and I was back in the TV studio, trying to man the show! That was – it was hilarious.

Ms. Dunn And you’re about 12 years old, at this point.

Ms. Hollis Yes, right. It was hilarious. Actually hilarious. It was about 11, 12.

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness. So, so how would people have described you as a child?

Ms. Hollis Probably weird.

Ms. Dunn No! You think? Or, it sounds so independent.

Ms. Hollis A loner.

Ms. Dunn Really?

Ms. Hollis Yes.
Ms. Dunn: You didn't run with, like, a posse of girls -

Ms. Hollis: Oh, no.

Ms. Dunn: - and boys, around -

Ms. Hollis: No, not at all.

Ms. Dunn: Yes.

Ms. Hollis: Because, I wasn't there. Wherever it was, I wasn't there long enough.

Ms. Dunn: So you just really kind of were very – it sounds like you were really connected with who you were, even as a young child -

Ms. Hollis: Yes, you just had to kind of figure it all out. I used to go to the library by myself in Denver, and, just, go all over.

Ms. Dunn: Did you like to read?


Ms. Dunn: Yes. So, hobbies. Aside from stepping in and running
television shows -

Ms. Hollis  Now, I have to say, a very short -

Ms. Dunn  A short skit.

Ms. Hollis  Shy of stardom, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Yes. What other things did you like to do about that age?

Ms. Hollis  Well, we would hike. We went up to the mountains all the time, and, I was always trying to help my mother, because she was always buying real estate and selling real estate and doing God knows what. And buying antiques, and this and that. She was off – we didn’t let too much grass grow under our feet, that’s for sure.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, remember, there’s no computer at home.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  The most you could do was watch black and white TV
with the cartoons or something.

Ms. Dunn So, the scenery out West, back then, must have been just breathtaking.

Ms. Hollis Yes, but you take a lot of it for granted as a child.

Ms. Dunn Right. Do you have strong memories of the environment?

Ms. Hollis Oh, absolutely. Intense, in fact, because my mother was a geological draftsman for a while. We went out, we were in the ruins of New Mexico; we explored all over, up in Bandelier National Monument, the petroglyphs, the – we went out – and my mother got a Geiger counter, we were always looking for the big uranium find, so we could get rich and relax! She was a collector of rocks. She collected a ridiculous number of rocks. And when we went to the ocean, a ridiculous number of seashells. We had a lot of Chihuahuas over the years. Dogs, parrots, cats. Bunnies. You name it. We had it.
Ms. Dunn  Did you name them all? Or they just came and went?

Ms. Hollis  Oh, God, yes! They all had names.

Ms. Dunn  They were parts of the family.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  So, listening to this, it sounds like an amazing childhood. And at the same time, with your dad being – sort of sounds like a – often a full-time student –

Ms. Hollis  Yes. He was.

Ms. Dunn  And – and –

Very formal.

Ms. Dunn  Yes. And your mom working these various jobs, government jobs where she was paid, as we now know, half as much as the men. Did you feel – did you feel like you had enough – did you ever feel like you, you were – did you feel –
Ms. Hollis  I never felt deprived.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  But I always felt – you had to be doing something.

Ms. Dunn  Yes. You had to be on the move.

Ms. Hollis  You’ve got to be – you’ve got to be doing something. Whether it’s studying, reading, working, something. It just – the notion of sitting around -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - just did not permeate our environment.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Talking. A lot of talking.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  Talk, talk, talk. Very – the characters of my childhood. Talk, talk, talk. And I was – I never had to go to bed – well, I was a baby. But, never had to go to bed. I was
always sitting there with the rest of the gang, whether it was my grandparents, or my mother’s buddies, or -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And always very international, because of the arenas that she worked in. Always very, very international crowd.

Ms. Dunn  So here you are in the West, which I would think – I don’t know – I wouldn’t expect it to be a diverse place, at that time.

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely. Well, it’s three-quarters – well, so many of my classmates were of Spanish descent, or Latino.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, because at the time of all the disruptions in the world, we had refugees from Lebanon, Hungary, all over. And then in Los Alamos, people from all over the world. And, of course, New Mexico has always been a magnet. And Denver, too, it’s the crossroads between East and West. So
you always had, just because the nature of the train travel, back and forth, East and West, it always had, well, it always has fancied itself as the big international city, when in reality I’m sure it was quite small, and, you know, come from “back East,” as we used to say, anybody beyond Kansas City was from back East.

Ms. Dunn Right, right.

Ms. Hollis Back East must have thought it was cowboy town -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis - and, you know, some people still think it’s cowboy town, but, it just was a place where there’s a lot of action, a lot of from the ground up people who invented their world.

Ms. Dunn Yes. Yes. And it really was still the Wild West, in a way.

Ms. Hollis In a way, definitely.

Ms. Dunn Anything is possible.

Ms. Hollis Anything is possible.
Ms. Dunn  My goodness. So we get you sort of, you’ve moved to Cheyenne -

Ms. Hollis  Casper.

Ms. Dunn  Casper. In about sixth grade. And then, you come back to Denver, at this point?

Ms. Hollis  Oh, no.

Ms. Dunn  Ohh! Okay.

Ms. Hollis  My mother was still playing the real estate game, so she bought a motel in the plains of Eastern Colorado.

Ms. Dunn  Where would that have been?

Ms. Hollis  It’s about 60 miles out of Denver. Place called Strasburg, you might as well have been on the Kansas/Nebraska border. It’s sweet country.

Ms. Dunn  Your mom bought a hotel?

Ms. Hollis  Yes.
Ms. Dunn  And how did she present this news to you? Do you remember?

Ms. Hollis  Well, she – we’d gone out to look at it.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. You went with her.

Ms. Hollis  Yes. Oh, yes. We did all real estate – I went to every real estate deal. Went to the closings; went to the showings; went to the sales pitch – everything.

Ms. Dunn  Were you watching the lawyers even back then?

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely. I always felt like I had to be my mother’s protector.

Ms. Dunn  It sounds like she watched out for herself, but you also felt a duty -

Ms. Hollis  Yes. I was like her sidekick.
Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis That’s how I envisioned – I think that’s how she got to envision it, too. Because we didn’t have other people.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis So.

Ms. Dunn So you’d gone out to see this hotel, and she says, “Let’s buy it.”

Ms. Hollis “Let’s do it. I can make money off this.”

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis And she doubled her money in two and a half years.

Ms. Dunn Did you live in the hotel?

Ms. Hollis Hell, yes!

Ms. Dunn Really?

Ms. Hollis Yes. I sure did.

Ms. Dunn And what kinds of things – so now you’re about seventh
grade?

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. And how -

Ms. Hollis  That was – hideous. The living in the plains of Eastern Colorado was – instructive – I learned many things I never would have been exposed to in my entire life, things I could never have even conjured up. I was figuring I was a big sophisticate of one sort or another.

Ms. Dunn  Well, it sounds like you were pretty worldly at that age.

Ms. Hollis  Well, you can leave all that behind, when you get out to the eastern plains. It was part of the buckle of the Bible Belt. It was very interesting.

Ms. Dunn  Wow!

Ms. Hollis  And my mother being the – the kind of curious person that she was, we’d – if there was a tent revival, she’d take me to the tent revival just to see what it was like.
Ms. Dunn  Hmm. This was like a religious revival of kinds?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. You know, old school, like, tent revivals.

Ms. Dunn  Wow!

Ms. Hollis  Couldn’t get out, the wind was blowing, and the dust is blowing in your eyes, and the, it’s hot as the Devil, and, the tent is flapping in the wind, and there’s a preacher preaching, and -

Ms. Dunn  Amen.

Ms. Hollis  Amen. And it was a, just an opening up into a whole different world. That I could never have imagined existed.

Ms. Dunn  But it sounds – again, knowing a little bit about your later life, that, these early experiences of being able to walk into almost -

Ms. Hollis  Anything.

Ms. Dunn  Any setting – and, adapt, become comfortable -
Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  And take something away from it. Not be judgmental. It sounds like you, you weren’t a judgmental -

Ms. Hollis  Not really.

Ms. Dunn  You weren’t even taught to be judgmental. It was to be accepting, and open to new ideas -

Ms. Hollis  Open to new ideas. Different people, different places.

Ms. Dunn  No one ever said, “This is okay, this is not okay,” or “these people are strange -”

Ms. Hollis  Not really

Ms. Dunn  Or “These people are odd,” or, you know.

Ms. Hollis  No. Just remember, you had to be careful of your – you always had to be careful, my mother was very protective of me, obviously, you know.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.
Ms. Hollis    She’s a single, basically raising me as a single mother.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis    You know, it’s not – you know, it’s not all just a -

Ms. Dunn    Right.

Ms. Hollis    - a simple world, shall we say.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis    And some of the stuff you read about now, occurred, with
great frequency then -

Ms. Dunn    Yes.

Ms. Hollis    It just was covered up.

Ms. Dunn    Right. Right.

Ms. Hollis    So, she was very watchful.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis    And careful.

Ms. Dunn    But also gave you -
Ms. Hollis  A lot of freedom.

Ms. Dunn  A lot of freedom.

Ms. Hollis  But, so this crazy motel, we had old cowboys -

Ms. Dunn  You have a name?

Ms. Hollis  - strut – it was Jones Motor Lodge.

Ms. Dunn  Jones – the name must have come with it.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  Jones Motor Lodge. And, I went with my mother to buy the running light sign, which was, she drove in the back, threw the sign in the back, this gigantic neon sign with running lights, those are the lights that flash up and down in a line -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  From a motel, was going out of business in Denver. We
drove it down there. She had it installed. And so there were flashing lights up – this is before the four-lane highway went in. There was just – I guess it would be old Highway 40.

Ms. Dunn Wow!

Ms. Hollis And, anyway, the -

Ms. Dunn This is the red – you still have the red convertible?

Ms. Hollis Still had the red convertible.

Ms. Dunn And now you’ve got the Jones Motor Lodge, neon sign in the back -

Ms. Hollis That’s right.

Ms. Dunn And you and your mom, going along. So I have this vision, really, of Thelma and Louise, I have a Thelma and Louise -

Ms. Hollis It is a Thelma – that was a joke, when we finally saw the movie.
Ms. Dunn - vision.

Ms. Hollis But, so we had that installed. But, at this motel, because it was on the highway, we had some semi-permanent residents. We’d have the road builders, and the bridge builders. We would – we had a couple old cowboys -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis We had a couple older retired vets, who lived out, who liked living out in the plains.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And then, when we really made our money, was, during wheat season, wheat harvesting seasons. You’d have the combine crews come in. They would come in and take over the motel, the remaining cabins. There were 44 of them.

Ms. Dunn I was going to ask. So, they were little cabins?

Ms. Hollis Well, they were – strips. Two strips, and then two houses
that were separated into apartments.

Ms. Dunn Hmm.

Ms. Hollis So we had a lot of real characters, as you would say.

Ms. Dunn And did you go to school?

Ms. Hollis Oh, yes!

Ms. Dunn So how far was the school?

Ms. Hollis Too far.

Ms. Dunn It's – I have this vision of you being kind of in the middle of nowhere, on this highway.

Ms. Hollis It's like – it was a small town, maybe 500 people in the town.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis But, unfortunately for us, I lived outside the perimeter of where the school bus – it was just immediately inside the perimeter of where the school bus would pick you up, even
though across the street the people got picked up. So, they had very strict rules on it.

Ms. Dunn You could not cross the street to get that bus?

Ms. Hollis No. So, I ended up walking, and being a city kid, or virtually a city kid, and being kind of – kind of small.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And, I was very, very small, compared to the girls that lived out in the country.

Ms. Dunn Small in stature?

Ms. Hollis Stature, yes.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis Pretty small. And, trudging – I know, you know, the old joke about “I had to walk a mile to school in the snow,” in fact I did walk a mile to the school in the snow, and, snow in Colorado in the winter in the eastern plains, there’s nothing – there’s nothing to break the wind.
Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Nothing. It’s just – snow blowing on your face, and, extremely cold. You know, it gets down to 10, 15 below out there.

Ms. Dunn  Oh, my goodness!

Ms. Hollis  So, trudge, trudge, trudge, trudge, trudge to school, and, I was used to being, in any environment I’d been in until then, in kind of a protected, cozy environment as far as whether it was parochial school -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - or, Los Alamos, or Hanford or wherever we were- even Casper.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And certainly in Denver. That all fell by the waysides. They had – actually, it was very non-diverse.

Ms. Dunn  Hmm.
Ms. Hollis: There was one African-American child, and, there were about two or three Catholic children, and everybody else was not. And, it was no Hispanics, despite the fact, you know, it's Colorado, and, every place else I'd been there were a lot of Latino, Hispanic students, people from all over.

Ms. Dunn: Right.

Ms. Hollis: So that came as a big shock. And very, very tough, tough kids.

Ms. Dunn: Yes.

Ms. Hollis: They were out – they were used to being outdoors a lot. I was kind of an inside, library geek.

Ms. Dunn: Yes.

Ms. Hollis: And so they made me the school librarian, which was – for the grade school.

Ms. Dunn: I was thinking about how you would turn sort of lemons
into lemonade in this situation, you know, you feel -

Ms. Hollis  They gave me a tremendous honor, which was to order books, for that year, in the school, depending on, you know, geography and all that. So in fact, I did order about 200 books on Africa, which I was quite obsessed by. And so, it was -

Ms. Dunn  Apparently the rest of the students were also going to have to read a lot about Africa!

Ms. Hollis  A lot about Africa! So anyway, it was – they kept opening these cartons and saying “Goodness, that’s a lot of books about Africa here.” They kept hoping they’d find one on something else, but, they didn’t!

Ms. Dunn  So, is this a point where you realize that your growing up had been fairly eclectic and very -

Ms. Hollis  Very eclectic.

Ms. Dunn  - very global, and just very open, and this was maybe your
first experience -

Ms. Hollis  First experience.

Ms. Dunn  - in a more narrow -

Ms. Hollis  A smaller -

Ms. Dunn  - society.

Ms. Hollis  - smaller society, and also just being in a small town, I found very oppressive.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  But the motel was interesting. There were a lot of interesting people that came through there. I got so desperate one time I actually – there was an African-American family that stayed there, and, with very beautiful car, and very beautiful people, and very interesting people, and they were nice to me, and all that. So I hid in the backseat of their car and got all the way to – they didn’t look in the backseat of the car, and I was there,
got almost back to Denver. I said, "I've got to get out of there."

Ms. Dunn So you were, you were itchy there -

Ms. Hollis Oh, yes, it was rough. It was very rough.

Ms. Dunn Yes. And did your mom see that? I mean, she must have seen -

Ms. Hollis She was very worried -

Ms. Dunn - a change in you.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn She was worried.

Ms. Hollis She was worried.

Ms. Dunn Did she – do you think she liked it as much, either, being out there?

Ms. Hollis Well, she drove all the way in to work every day, which was 70 miles.
Ms. Dunn  Oh, she didn’t work at the inn.

Ms. Hollis  Well, she worked on the weekends, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Right.

Ms. Hollis  And then we had a couple helpers, but -

Ms. Dunn  Ohh!

Ms. Hollis  - it was rough.

Ms. Dunn  So she kept her, sort of she had intellectual stimulation, and then more of that global setting for her work, but you were sort of -

Ms. Hollis  She didn’t have much time for that.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  She was working so hard.

Ms. Dunn  Was she? What was she doing then?

Ms. Hollis  Back and forth every day. She was back as a draftsman down in Denver.
Ms. Dunn  Oh. So she was going to Denver every day -

Ms. Hollis  *Every day.*

Ms. Dunn  Wow! Okay.

Ms. Hollis  Snow. Sleet. Et cetera.

Ms. Dunn  Yes. And where’s your dad at this time?

Ms. Hollis  Well, he came down. He finally came out there to live with me, and her, and, that’s where I learned so much Gray’s Anatomy. So, that’s where – spent that summer, and, he was ill, he had Parkinson’s actually, and it was – it was rough. By that time he was quite ill. And -

Ms. Dunn  Was that a gradual onset?

Ms. Hollis  I don’t think – well, he, when he was in the Army, he had become ill, and, he served all through the Army, but, when he came out, he had had thyroid problems, and his thyroids had been – his thyroid had been removed, in several separate operations. And, I think that probably
accelerated, if it didn’t precipitate Parkinson’s. So it was, it was hard, because he was -

Ms. Dunn He was young still?

Ms. Hollis Yes. He was in his 40s.

Ms. Dunn Yes. And that’s a pretty difficult illness. And, they don’t treat it well today, and I can’t imagine back then there was much of a -

Ms. Hollis Well, it was very difficult for me, because, you know, I was a preteen -

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis And, it’s hard, because he had, his hair had gone completely white, and he was very fragile.

Ms. Dunn Hmm.

Ms. Hollis And it was tough to see him. Tough to be around, frankly -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis - because I was restless, as most children are. At that 12, 13, 14, preteens, all children get very restless at that age. So anyway, I continued on through school, and – I did well in school, I was the spelling champion and all that sort of thing. My mother -

Ms. Dunn Still at the city school, out in the plains, outside of Denver -

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn And so how many years did you go to school out there?

Ms. Hollis Oh, probably about a year and a half, two.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis And then, mercifully, sometime in seventh grade, I came back to Denver, my mother sold the motel. Moved my father back to Denver.

Ms. Dunn Was it for health care reasons, you think, or just lifestyle?

Ms. Hollis Well, to – no. My grandfather died very suddenly, back in
Denver.

Ms. Dunn Ahh! That’s her father?

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis And, my grandmother was left alone there, and she was very frail. She was, by that time she was starting to slip. And, so, you know, we had no other option. And my father was, he was not born to the country life, either, to put it mildly.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis So we moved – we sold the motel and moved back to Denver. And, anyway, it was, it was a very complicated and difficult time.

Ms. Dunn Did you all live – did you live with your grandmother, when you moved back -

Ms. Hollis Back to my grandmother’s house, and -
Ms. Dunn  You moved into her house.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  With your sick father.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  And, your feisty mom, and you -

Ms. Hollis  She just kept on working, and then I went back to Catholic school.

Ms. Dunn  Was it the same school that you had attended before?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. And they were waiting for me with open arms.

Ms. Dunn  Cathedral?

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  So, you said, “I’m back.”

Ms. Hollis  “I’m back.” And it was great, because I had -

Ms. Dunn  Sounds like it was a special place.

Ms. Hollis  It was great. Yes, and they immediately took me aside and
said, "Hey," you know, "You suffered enough in school, you’re going to skip eighth grade study now."

Ms. Dunn Really?

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn So you -

Ms. Hollis So -

Ms. Dunn - actually skipped -

Ms. Hollis - I went from seven to nine, yes.

Ms. Dunn So that made you ultimately younger as a high school graduate.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn This explains things that we’ll talk about later, about how you were doing certain things at a very young age.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn Yes! So you skipped a grade, and you were right at home
in the classroom, and, was that your escape, to be at
school, and learning, because -

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Because – it sounds like your family was all very close, but
it was just tough times.

Ms. Hollis  Very tough. My mother was working, my father was ill.
He was working on his doctorate, trying to wrap that up,
and he was so ill. It was just – it was just hard. And then,
well, I’ll get into the rest later, but, you know, my
grandfather, whom my mother was extremely close to – he
had just come out for my birthday, it must have been my
12th birthday. And then he just dropped dead. And, after
that, the next day. And, to everyone, that was a big shock.
He was not that old.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  So, anyway, it was – it was complicated.
Ms. Dunn  Yes. So school was kind of a -

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  - a safe place, and a -

Ms. Hollis  Exactly. It was terra cognita.

Ms. Dunn  Ahh. How about the faith? I mean, was it a Catholic school where there was a lot of faith imbued in you as well?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  Very much.

Ms. Dunn  That’s been very important to you?

Ms. Hollis  Well, pretty much, yes. You know, we all wander through life. But the cultural significance of it was huge, because this was – it was one of the schools associated with one of the eight basilicas in the country.
Ms. Dunn   Oh.

Ms. Hollis   We had top-of-the-line music, and a lot of classical music, a lot of arts and drama, and, top-of-the-line sisters, and taught by a lot of the priests and seminarians, too. So it was a very serious – in many ways arts-driven more than math and science, but, we had good science, but it was primarily in the humanities, philosophy -

Ms. Dunn   Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis   - debate, speech, acting, art, journalism – that was very, very much at the front of the pack of issues.

Ms. Dunn   And were your teachers mostly women? Nuns?

Ms. Hollis   Mix.

Ms. Dunn   Mix. And how about the student body? Was it -

Ms. Hollis   Very diverse.

Ms. Dunn   And male/female?
Ms. Hollis  Oh, yes.

Ms. Dunn  So there wasn’t a time, really, at that, where female students, where the standards were lower, or -

Ms. Hollis  No.

Ms. Dunn  No?

Ms. Hollis  Because the nuns, they said the only person in the entire archdiocese the archbishop was afraid of our head nun.

Ms. Dunn  She could match him.

Ms. Hollis  She was tough. Yes.

Ms. Dunn  So what kinds of things – so now you’re – you’ve skipped eighth grade, and so you’re essentially in ninth, beginning high school.

Ms. Hollis  Well, I went through seven -

Ms. Dunn  Right.

Ms. Hollis  Because I had to study for both eighth and seventh.
Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  Okay. I get to ninth grade, and I’m, same school, high school.

Ms. Dunn  Right. And so what kinds of things – what – how did you – what clubs, did you get involved in if they had clubs, or what did you like to do? You mentioned -

Ms. Hollis  Well, anything having to do with speech or -

Ms. Dunn  Speech? Okay.

Ms. Hollis  Speech, drama, debate.

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  But it was a much – it was just sort of an eclectic – you know, anything, anything that interested me, you could take.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  It was great. Yes, it was a very strong school.
Ms. Dunn  Did you work as a student? Or could you work?

Ms. Hollis  I did. I did work. I did things in the library and that sort of thing, and then I, at, by the time I was 13, I decided I really needed to help my poor mother out. So, I got a job, after school. I went up to St. Joseph’s Hospital, where I worked there, after school, from probably 3:30 to 7 o’clock at night every night.

Ms. Dunn  What kinds of things did you do?

Ms. Hollis  I delivered food to – it was not a non-profit, it was St. Joseph’s – St. Joseph’s Hospital. I was born there. My daughter was born – anyway, it was a few blocks from our house, and so I -

June 28, 2016

Ms. Dunn  So, this is Alex Dunn, and I am here with Sheila Hollis in her office in Washington, D.C. for our second interview for the ABA Women’s Trailblazers Project, and, when we
last met, Sheila, we left off with you in about just ninth grade, at about age 13 or so, getting into speech and debate issues in high school. I should say that today is June 28th, 2016, and, it is about three o’clock in the afternoon.

So, Sheila, let’s talk a little bit more about your time in high school. If you want to approach it from freshman year through, or more generally?

Ms. Hollis: Sure. Let me start briefly, with freshman year, transitioning as I just was 12 years old when I started studying high school courses because I studied both seventh and eighth grade at one time. So, by the time I was 12, I was lined up and was really studying, beginning studies for high school. Because I went during every summer from the time I was 11, to East High School, in Denver, the public school, and took extra classes. So, actually, by the time I was at the end of my sophomore
year, I had enough credits to graduate from high school at that time, but the sisters wouldn’t let me go; they wanted me to stay there for obvious reasons.

Ms. Dunn And did you feel sort of a sense of urgency to gain your education?

Ms. Hollis I did. I just wanted to get as much as I could as fast as I could. And, it was a great experience going to public high school. Taking ancient history, changed my life -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis It was extremely profound influence. But I took a lot of other, interesting things, that I could – additional science classes, or, typing, which was not, never been my long suit.

Ms. Dunn But a good skill for life.

Ms. Hollis Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn So, really, you were a full-time student at the age of 12,
going to school almost year-round -

Ms. Hollis  I did.

Ms. Dunn  - trying to get as much knowledge as possible. And then, in the Catholic school for the regular school year, and the public school, in the summers.

Ms. Hollis  In the summers, yes. Well, I figured I may as well go to school because, living in a very urban environment with not very many children and no neighbors my age at all, and no brothers and sisters, and my mother at work all day, I figured I may as well get on the bus and go up to the public high school and take some classes.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. And you’re still at your grandparents’ house, at this point?

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. So, what sorts of – we started to talk about extracurricular activities, things that you enjoyed, and you
mentioned speech and debate. Anything related to speech. Talk a little more about that, and maybe how you cultivated those interests into other things.

Ms. Hollis: Well, we took, I took a lot of philosophy. And I loved international affairs, so, I did the model U.N. program, and I organized a team for the People’s Republic of China, which was mainly girls, and they all wore, according to my dictate, everybody wore red! On the team. So, we had a wonderful time for that. I did a lot of speech-meets, a lot of extemporaneous speaking. I wrote a lot of poetry; had fabulous English teachers, just wonderful English teachers and speech -

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: - speech teachers. Took a lot of Latin, it was required at the time.

Ms. Dunn: Was that the main language that you studied?
Ms. Hollis  Latin and Spanish.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. Did you have a facility for language?

Ms. Hollis  I enjoyed Spanish. Latin was hard. But, it served me well, over the years.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Just enough of the – of a skeleton outline of romance language.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And so you were clearly a student leader. You were able to lead other students and encourage them to be a part of something you were doing.

Ms. Hollis  I enjoyed the school newspaper and was an editor of the school newspaper. And then, all the speech and heading the debate team, and my favorite debate was the philosophical debate, which was a Disputatio debate. With – and the four young people from our team went up against actual seminarians of the local seminary. And so,
it was great, hardcore philosophical debate on our logic,
and, issues of the day, and, before its time, why women
were not priests, and -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Sort of -

Ms. Dunn  Those were some of the topics you debated?

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely, yes. It was a lot of fun, and we, we actually
won, which was even more fun.

Ms. Dunn  Did – so these are young men, probably in their late teens,
early 20s -

Ms. Hollis  Right.

Ms. Dunn  - going to the seminary -

Ms. Hollis  Young seminarians.

Ms. Dunn  But they respected you all as debaters?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. They did. They’d been, I think they’d been pretty
Ms. Dunn: That’s something else. And is that something you did every year, or was that a once in a lifetime -

Ms. Hollis: That was a once in a lifetime. It was an experimental thing. And, it was just great. Great fun.

Ms. Dunn: And you received an award for that?

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: My goodness. Was it a – what did your family think of that award, when you told them about it?

Ms. Hollis: Well, it was only my mother, and she was pretty excited about it, of course.

Ms. Dunn: Yes. Yes. Did it make you think that maybe you wanted to go into politics or something related to that?

Ms. Hollis: I did. I did think about politics, but I really just enjoyed – I think I could see the outlines – I was thinking journalism at the time much more, but the outlines of
something in the vein of journalism or something that involved a lot of interaction with words and people.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Was — at the time, was your interest in sort of getting to the truth, or the exposé story, or did you have an interest in sort of pursuing facts?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. In fact, when I ran out of classes I could take — I’d taken so many classes to give me something to do and keep me out of trouble in the last year or so of high school, I, they sent me about finding all of the alums, that were, had fallen off the, fallen off the lists, and so trying to track them down, it, basically doing investigative reporting in a sense of where are they and what were they doing, and compiling the info for the school.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  It was fun, to just call people cold, and see -

Ms. Dunn  Yes.
Ms. Hollis - if they were, A) alive, B) interested in talking, what their experiences were.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis So it was a lot – actually, it was pretty interesting. And then, I worked after school a fair amount, and, just tried to help my mother, too, as much as I could.

Ms. Dunn I think it, when I look back, that we have a lot of energy when we’re young, because it sounds, to be a fulltime student, to be working at night, to be that engaged in the world – you’ve got to be young and full of energy.

Ms. Hollis Absolutely. Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn And an all-girls school?

Ms. Hollis Oh, no.

Ms. Dunn Oh, it was not an all-girls school?

Ms. Hollis No, no. This was co-ed all the way.
Ms. Dunn: Okay!

Ms. Hollis: This was downtown Denver, co-ed.

Ms. Dunn: Were the classes joint?

Ms. Hollis: Oh, yes. Everything was joint.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: Except for PE.

Ms. Dunn: Okay. So did you enjoy sort of debating with the young men in your class, your classmates?

Ms. Hollis: Yes, but I think the men were shyer than the girls! Because the nun, the sisters who, basically, it was actually about 75% sisters, and a number of lay teachers, but, the sisters were so strong, were such powerful players, that -

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: They didn’t brook much nonsense from boys giving girls trouble.
Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Did you have school dances, or was it -

Ms. Hollis  Oh, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Was it around a parish? Did your activities surround a parish, or did it pull from multiple -

Ms. Hollis  It was a big cathedral and it pulled a lot from all over. And so the children were from all over Denver, and -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - surrounding environs.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Do you remember the uniform?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, painfully.

Ms. Dunn  [laughing]

Ms. Hollis  It had a lot of plaid, and a little red tie on a white blouse, and I’ve been trying to – I’ve been – I was traumatized by it and I’ve tried to get it out of my head how I must have
looked in it!

[laughing]

Ms. Hollis  Then we moved up in the world and we actually got gray blazers and a plaid skirt -

Ms. Dunn  As an upperclassman?

Ms. Hollis  That was a great leap forward, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Yes. So, do you have high school friends that you still keep in touch with?

Ms. Hollis  I have a couple of them, in fact I just saw one from my, for one of the big reunions, shall we say. And, she was a folk singer, very gifted kid at the time, and, very, very intense, only child. And, very good folk singer. And she went on to cut a couple albums and, just very, very talented guitarist and musician. And, made a life around that, although she’s hung up her guitar for now. Although we encouraged her to get it back down off the wall!
Ms. Dunn  So, lifetime friendships. Any other lifetime friendships established in high school?

Ms. Hollis  No, it was a very – it was a very fluid time -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And because I moved east -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - right after law school. And, it was the 60s. And, people moved around a lot more. And, it was just a very chaotic time, so many of the boys were drafted, of course -

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  - into the Vietnam War. A lot of the girls married early. That was a Western thing, a lot of the young women married early.

Ms. Dunn  What would early have been?

Ms. Hollis  18.
Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  18, 19.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, so it was – and once they had children, they, you know, they had a world of, a different world that they were living in.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And there was – you know, a minority who did not go on for higher education. But the ones who did, went to colleges throughout – colleges, universities throughout the West. Primarily, primarily in Colorado. And, maybe a couple to the seminary. One – a couple – many girls to the sisterhood, actually.

Ms. Dunn  Interesting.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  So at this point, are you – had you – did you have a
vision, for yourself, you know, sort of where you wanted
to be? Did you know college was for you?

Ms. Hollis  Oh, I knew I was going to one college or – I knew, that
that would be no -

Ms. Dunn  No question.

Ms. Hollis  No question. No.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, that’s, my family had been very clear on – I mean,
there was never even a question. It was not even asked, I
mean, “of course, you’re going to university.”

Ms. Dunn  Right. So what sorts of choices did you have? Did you
need to stay local with, close to your mom?

Ms. Hollis  I wanted to be close to my mother -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Because, she’s my only relative.
Ms. Dunn

Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis

And, by that time my father was deceased, he died when I was 14. He was hit by a car and he lived for a year unconscious.

Ms. Dunn

Oh!

Ms. Hollis

And he died, so I was in – I guess I was just in my, probably my junior year, yes, my junior year in high school. And, actually, it was a – it was a first – I was the first child whose parent died, in, whatever causes, that anybody, that, you know, our class certainly was aware, but most of the high school, so it was a big deal, and, it being a cathedral environment, it was, the whole school went to the funeral. It was a big deal.

Ms. Dunn

Oh, my goodness!

Ms. Hollis

Yes. So, anyway – so it was just my mother and I. At that point, my mother was – by that time had to go to a
senior home. And, she was too ill to be alone, to stay at home by herself.

Ms. Dunn So she was also ill, by the time you were -

Ms. Hollis Oh, she was quite elderly, yes.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis Quite elderly. And so my mother was working very, very hard of course.

Ms. Dunn Oh, your grandmother went to the -

Ms. Hollis My grandmother, yes.

Ms. Dunn Oh, I thought you – okay. Your grandmother went to senior, so, like, a senior home.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn Your dad was in this, this accident, which sounds like it was a shock -

Ms. Hollis He walked out to get the *New York Times* newspaper half
a block from our house.

Ms. Dunn My goodness.

Ms. Hollis Hit by a car, hit and run.

Ms. Dunn Oh.

Ms. Hollis And, lived for a year uncon- well, he lived first six months conscious, but had horrendous injuries. And then, six months later he died. So it was a very traumatic year -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis - and the thought of leaving my mother would just be, just would have seemed absurd.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Do you remember visiting him, or -

Ms. Hollis Oh, every day. We went every day.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis Every single day at the Veteran's Hospital in Denver.
Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Wow. That must have been really, really difficult.

Ms. Hollis  It was not something I’d recommend.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  As an experience. For anyone -

Ms. Dunn  But you were able to keep up with your studies? I mean -

Ms. Hollis  Pretty much. Although it’s impossible to keep up as if everything was normal, and -

Ms. Dunn  Right. Right.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Right.

Ms. Hollis  Extremely difficult.

Ms. Dunn  Did you -

Ms. Hollis  Just the time associated with going to the hospital all the
Ms. Dunn: Yes. Yes. So, is that something, does it – did it affect you? Do you feel like it affected you? Some young people say the loss of a parent, you know, dramatically, is like a, one of these turning moments in their life.

Ms. Hollis: No, because I’ve had so many experiences up to then. I think I was -

Ms. Dunn: Very active.

Ms. Hollis: It was – I guess I just went with it. Yes, it was terrible.

Ms. Dunn: Yes.

Ms. Hollis: But I knew I had to go on. I – it was – extremely depressed, but -

Ms. Dunn: Yes.

Ms. Hollis: There was no choice but to keep moving.

Ms. Dunn: Yes. But that’s sort of – that – that’s a maturity that, I think, is beyond maybe the years, your years. That may
be because of your growing up and spending so much
time with adults and traveling with your mom and
everything.

Ms. Hollis  Yes. Yes.

Ms. Dunn  It sounds like you were able to manage this in a more
mature way than someone typical of your age.

Ms. Hollis  I think so.

Ms. Dunn  Yes. Not that it was any easier, but.


Ms. Dunn  Yes. Yes.

Ms. Hollis  It’s easy to stall out in those circumstances, and -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  There was plenty of – it was the beginning of the influx of
non-traditional influences in Denver, too, let me put it
that way.
Ms. Dunn   Really?

Ms. Hollis   Oh, yes. Because it was the beginning – it was going into the 60s, and, it was the crossroads between east and west in Denver.

Ms. Dunn   Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis   And so, by the time my husband and I went off to college, at the University of Colorado in Boulder, I was already moving in reaction to Vietnam, the Kennedy assassination -

Ms. Dunn   Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis   And, on the horizon, little did we know, Martin Luther King, and then, and then of course Robert Kennedy. So this whole cluster of events, there was – a lot of the unrest and problems associated with the whole transition to a different relationship among the races, too. I mean, it’s, it was – it was a very complex time where there were so
many forces at work, that, sitting out in Denver, you just
don’t think of. But, with all the influences that came into
Boulder and Denver -

Ms. Dunn   Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis - in the 60s, and, Vietnam War really took off at that
period. As an issue. And, before then, I think a lot of
people were – I mean, we knew of it, and we debated it. I
was a debater -

Ms. Dunn   Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis I was a debater for – pro-LBJ, as I recall. And, did the
presidential debates -

Ms. Dunn   Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis - in that format. So, it was – it was a very, even as a high
school senior, I was getting, like, the forces were
beginning to pick up, the velocity of change was great,
the unrest in the country was building.
Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  I think post-Kennedy assassination, and then Vietnam coming into clearer vision -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  So you mentioned, very quickly a moment ago, going off to college with your husband. So, we have you in high school; where has this husband come from?

Ms. Hollis  Well, he was, he was in the same school – because I had skipped a grade, I hadn’t met him really that much. I had seen him in grade school when I was at the same grade school. John is a really nice person. As a cub reporter, I had reported on his accomplishments for the high school newspaper. He won a number of art contests and a number of talent contests for acting.

Ms. Dunn  For acting?
Ms. Hollis: For acting, too. So I did the junior reporter bit. His story was very exciting to cover. He was very serious about it. So I did report, but the romance didn’t really click then. I was going out with another boy at the time. And so, it was – you know, it was – just a cub, the junior reporter reporting on a newsmaker for the -

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: - for the high school newspaper.

Ms. Dunn: Yes.

Ms. Hollis: Okay. So, time marches on. And the other boy and I drifted off. And, lo and behold, at my father’s funeral, he was the head altar boy serving his mass. And it was – a lot of priests and a lot of altar boys and all that. And, he was very gracious and gentle in that context. And, so then, being a teenage girl, after all the events settled down and high school events kept moving forward – and we
came to be in our senior class play together.

Ms. Dunn

Ms. Hollis

- we ended up being in the high school play together. In senior year. And, so anyway, we're talking and one thing led to another, and, then we went to prom together and — then we went off to University of Colorado together. He went on a number of scholarships in art and drama. And, so — and he was close to my mother, because they were both very artistic people. So they got on very well. So that all seemed to come together and they were — anyway, we went off to college together; we dated all through college; we did 60s stuff, we had a great time. It was a very — it was a fun time, but a scary time -

Ms. Dunn

Ms. Hollis

- to be a college student.

Ms. Dunn

Mm hmm. At Boulder.
Ms. Hollis    At Boulder, yes.

Ms. Dunn    So how far is Boulder from Denver?

Ms. Hollis    40 miles.

Ms. Dunn    40 miles.

Ms. Hollis    Mm hmm.

Ms. Dunn    Is it more rural, or -

Ms. Hollis    It's right, the beautiful mountains.

Ms. Dunn    Right, yes.

Ms. Hollis    Yes. Gorgeous.

Ms. Dunn    And what did you study there?

Ms. Hollis    Journalism.

Ms. Dunn    Okay.

Ms. Hollis    Philosophy.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis    English.
So it was—could you have had, like, multidisciplinary courses-

Then I’ve got the honors class program. I was picked up for the honors program, and then I took all kinds of wonderful stuff, including environment. The first beginnings of environmental classes.

Hmm!

This would be in 1967?

Okay.

A lot of geology—hiking the mountains.

Yes.

Fantastic. One thing about Colorado, they’ve got some great fossils out there.

Yes. And you enjoyed the outdoors-

Oh, God, yes!
And, your beau is with you at college.

Yes.

John.

John.

Yes. And, did you all do things together, too?

Oh, yes, absolutely.

Mm hmm.

I went to all his plays, and he helped me on – it was great.

And, because we’d go back to Denver all the time to see

my mother and his parents. His mother was quite ill, at a

very young age, and, she passed away a week after we

were married, actually.

Oh, my.

Yes. So – but, all in all, we just kept moving.

Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis  We worked, we worked all through college. Both of us.

Ms. Dunn  What kind of jobs did you do in college?

Ms. Hollis  I was the journalism librarian.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And I worked during the summer as a junior – I was the women’s page editor of a suburban newspaper in Denver, so that the real women’s page editor could travel and go on vacation with her family. It was a lot of fun. I reported on weddings -

Ms. Dunn  It was a social column, almost?

Ms. Hollis  It was. Of yes, very much so, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Ahh!

Ms. Hollis  And, I stayed in the firehouse, and, reported on the, with the firemen, and they took me out in the fire truck, and I reported on all their recipes, and how they – it was a lot of – a lot of things were a lot of fun. I went to the – the
Central City opera and interviewed the opera stars. It was a great gig.

Ms. Dunn Yeah!

Ms. Hollis It was a lot of fun.

Ms. Dunn And that was a paid position in the summer? Or did you do it more like an internship?

Ms. Hollis Oh, no, it was paid.

Ms. Dunn It was paid?!?

Ms. Hollis A dollar and a half an hour.

Ms. Dunn All right!

Ms. Hollis [laughing]

Ms. Dunn And knowing that you were cognizant of disparities in wages, did you know what the male reporters were paid?

Ms. Hollis I was just glad – no. Well, they were real reporters.

Ms. Dunn Oh, okay. Okay.
Ms. Hollis: I was the kid working on the summer. But also it was my first exposure to hot type printing, which – because they printed, they set their own type.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: At this newspaper, which, it was the owner of it, the editor and publisher, had been head of the AP offices from Kansas City west. And so, I learned a lot from a very wonderful, very senior guy. And, they had a lot of – he managed to bring out a number of really hard core, as they used to say, “hard bitten, tough reporters” from Back East, to work at this, I guess they must have just gone to get away as a result of the divorce, however they ended up in Englewood, Colorado, it was really interesting!

Ms. Dunn: Oh, my goodness. Well, you just seem like every opportunity you had, you learned from. You just took it all in.
Ms. Hollis  Oh, it was fun. Yes.

Ms. Dunn  I mean, you were just never just an observer of life. You were a full participant.

Ms. Hollis  No, you just had to go for it.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  I was a pretty lousy observer, actually. [laughing]

Ms. Dunn  So, a couple of college highlights? Working for the newspaper must have been one of them.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Anything else?

Ms. Hollis  Well, and, then – what else? I guess getting married, that would be a college highlight!

Ms. Dunn  When did that occur?

Ms. Hollis  That was in July of 1968.

Ms. Dunn  Between two of the, two of your college years?
Right. Right. Junior, in college.

Mmhmm.

Because again I was going during summers, too, to pick up as many credits as I could. And I started early, I started the summer before, matriculating up on the university campus. So, I picked up a few credits there, too. So by the time I hit college, I was – I’d had several class – college in the sense of going on campus -

Mmhmm.

Because the University of Colorado had at the time a Denver – and still does, it’s expanded vastly – a Denver campus. And, my husband was doing a lot of acting, then, and, so we were – he was acting and working. I was reporting and working and studying in Boulder. So, it was a, it was exciting. It was fun.

It sounds like the two of you were just in, just having a
really good time together.

Ms. Hollis  We did, we did.

Ms. Dunn  Tell me a little bit about your wedding. Was it a big affair?

Ms. Hollis  It was fairly big. It was fun. It was fun. It was – here’s the painting of where we were married. It’s the Chapel on the Rocks in the middle of the Big Thompson Canyon, which is -

Ms. Dunn  Really?!?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. In – outside Estes Park, Colorado.

Ms. Dunn  So what made you go up there?

Ms. Hollis  Well, interesting. First of all, it’s an unbelievably gorgeous place.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Second, it was affiliated with the cathedral, and the -
Ahh, was it like a summer -

It was a huge boys camp.

Hmm!

And, the boys camp, the boys who sang in the choir or were senior altar boys, they got to go to the camp, no cost -

Spend time in the mountains?

Yes, absolutely.

This is a church, a working church.

It -

Was it seasonally? Like -

Seasonally, yes.

Mm hmm.

And so, the parish, one of the parish priests married us up there.
Ms. Dunn  My goodness.

Ms. Hollis  That was very sweet. We had the deer outside, and the chipmunks, and, all right outside the church. It was very touching and very sweet. And, then we -

Ms. Dunn  Do you have pictures from that day?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, I have some of them left, yes.

Ms. Dunn  May have to get one for the, for this archive.

Ms. Hollis  And it was very, it was sweet, it was nice, and we had our – because my father had been a veteran, proud veteran before he died, and, very big in, big believer in veterans’ affairs -

Ms. Dunn  He was very patriotic.

Ms. Hollis  Very patriotic. So he was a member of the American Legion. And, my mother got to keep that, the access to the facility in Denver. So we had our wedding reception all the way back down in Denver.
Ms. Dunn: Hmm.

Ms. Hollis: By that time I was working as a union printer, too, in between, at the – at the – it was called the Catholic Press Society. But they printed every kind of magazine and newspaper, business newspapers, flyers – magazines, of all things. Knitting, and crocheting magazines. Which was, let me tell you, that is a really tough proofreading job.

Ms. Dunn: Wow! Wow.

Ms. Hollis: So that was as much, as many hours as I could get there. So anyway, a lot of the old printers came. Some of the old members of our parish – a lot of characters – washed-up opera stars; cowboys; printers; friends of my mother; the bullfight club members, she was a member of the bullfight club. Very eclectic group. Lot of elderly ladies from the neighborhood – it was -
Ms. Dunn    Come one come all.

Ms. Hollis    Kind of a – yes, absolutely. It was -

Ms. Dunn    It was a community event.

Ms. Hollis    It was. It was fun.

Ms. Dunn    And John was from the community, you were from the community -

Ms. Hollis    Oh, yes. And his mother and father, and he had his, two brothers. They came, and, of course, some of our friends from high school and college and all. It was fun.

Ms. Dunn    Did you get to take a honeymoon, or did you have to go right back to work?

Ms. Hollis    We did. We jumped on a plane and went to New York.

Ms. Dunn    No, you didn’t!

Ms. Hollis    And I -

Ms. Dunn    That must have been pretty unusual.
Ms. Hollis  Oh, yes. I strongly recommend Arthur Frommer’s New York on $5 and $10 a Day.

[laughter]

Ms. Dunn  That might have been big spending back then.

Ms. Hollis  Yes, it was – it was, not very big spending even then.

[laughter]

Ms. Dunn  So, you took a honeymoon in New York City. Did you go to shows?

Ms. Hollis  Oh, God, yes. We did “Two-fers”.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - the museums and all that. Yes.

Ms. Dunn  It was your first trip to New York?

Ms. Hollis  First one that I can remember. John had never been out of the State of Colorado.

Ms. Dunn  Wow!
Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: So you were – you were two young newlyweds on a mission to -

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: - to start seeing the world.

Ms. Hollis: Yes. Yes. It’s amazing the stuff you can do when you’re very young.

Ms. Dunn: Yes!

Ms. Hollis: Very cheaply.

Ms. Dunn: Oh, my goodness! So, how long were you gone, about?

Ms. Hollis: About a week.

Ms. Dunn: Okay.

Ms. Hollis: Then back to reality.

Ms. Dunn: And then back to reality. Finished college, together?

Ms. Hollis: Oh, yes. Yes.
Ms. Dunn: Graduated together?

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: Any sort of passing – when did you start thinking about what you would do after college, the two of you?

Ms. Hollis: Well, in college, in, as a result of my interest in college in, and also my work on the newspaper, I was strongly encouraged to take the LSAT.

Ms. Dunn: Really?

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: And who made that encouragement?

Ms. Hollis: My professors.

Ms. Dunn: Yes.

Ms. Hollis: And the old reporters.

Ms. Dunn: They saw your sort of analytical skills -

Ms. Hollis: Yes. Yes. They did.
Ms. Dunn  Had you thought of law school before?

Ms. Hollis  I had. Because, my mother was always playing in the real
estate market, and I had gotten to know her lawyer, who
was great, and a family friend. And his son – they were
the first people I clerked with, in law school. And they
had encouraged it greatly, too. And so it all kind of came
together. The timing was good. And, anyway, that’s the
way it went.

Ms. Dunn  So you took the LSAT. Now, was this – I guess, unusual,
for a woman to pursue, the LSAT?

Ms. Hollis  There weren’t many. There weren’t many.

Ms. Dunn  Yes. Especially, do you think it was different in the West
than maybe New York City, or some of the East Coast
cities, or do you think -

Ms. Hollis  Probably so. Probably fewer. It hadn’t really -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis  Hadn’t really hit, to the same extent that it may have in
San Francisco or New York or -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Or Chicago.

Ms. Dunn  What was John’s take on your career aspirations?

Ms. Hollis  For me?

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  He was thrilled. Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  He thought it was great.

Ms. Dunn  Yes. Very supportive.

Ms. Hollis  Oh, yes. All the way.

Ms. Dunn  So you took the LSAT, while you were a senior in
college, or?

Ms. Hollis  I think – I think so, yes.
Ms. Dunn: Yes.

Ms. Hollis: It took me longer to finish college, though, because I had a child.

Ms. Dunn: What?!? Oh, we almost missed that!

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: Well, back up!

Ms. Hollis: Before I graduated from college, yes.

Ms. Dunn: We need to back up, before the LSAT.

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: Tell us a little bit about this.

Ms. Hollis: Well, you know, it was the 60s, what can I say?

[laughter]

Ms. Hollis: It all made perfectly good sense at the time.

Ms. Dunn: Oh, my goodness!

Ms. Hollis: And -
Ms. Dunn    So, you had -

Ms. Hollis  It was great fun. Yes. It was fantastic. It was fantastic.

Ms. Dunn    When was this addition to your family born?

Ms. Hollis  '69.

Ms. Dunn    1969.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn    And, tell us a little bit about this wonderful person.

Ms. Hollis  Well, she was a quiet, tiny -

Ms. Dunn    A girl.

Ms. Hollis  - little thing. Tiny -

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.


Ms. Dunn    Do you remember her weight?

Ms. Hollis  I think 6 pounds.

Ms. Dunn    She was tiny.
Ms. Hollis: Little, little thing, yes. And very quiet baby. Unfortunately, she became quite ill in the sixth month of her life, and ended up in the hospital for a couple months.

Ms. Dunn: Really?

Ms. Hollis: Yes. In – but she pulled out of it, but, good baby, sweet baby. Very close to my mother, of course, who was still – just in the middle of her career, so she was going on, and. So, between John and I, and my mother -

Ms. Dunn: You had a team for this young lady.

Ms. Hollis: Right.

Ms. Dunn: And tell us her name, and?

Ms. Hollis: Windsong.

Ms. Dunn: Windsong.

Ms. Hollis: W-I-N-D-S-O-N-G. Because one of the printers I worked with was an Apache Indian. And that -
Ms. Dunn: Wow! I never knew an Apache Indian. Tell us about her name.

Ms. Hollis: Well, she was named Windsong Emily, after my mother, as the middle name, in case she didn’t like the name Windsong when she grew up. But, one of my colleagues, in the union print shop, was named Windsong. And, she was an Apache Indian. Amazing person, fascinating person. Lived all over the world. And, there were a lot of very interesting people in the printing business. It was the International Typographical Union.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: You become a journeyman -

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: Which I was.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: And, was just a fascinating group of people from
everywhere. And it gave me the ability to actually be in, I would call it a – a white-collar job.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Men with family of five children, supported completely on their printer’s salary.

Ms. Dunn And this is while you’re in college.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn So you’re in college, you’re now a parent; you’re married; and you’re working as a journeyman –

Ms. Hollis That’s why I didn’t graduate until 1971.

Ms. Dunn My goodness! Okay.

Ms. Hollis So I had a little stint there working.

Ms. Dunn And, you took time off from classes, worked –

Ms. Hollis It was a mix. Mix. Just kept going.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis: Right after she was born, I think I took that semester off. But other than that, I just kept going. And, was very useful life experience to see how hard people have to really work.

Ms. Dunn: Yes.

Ms. Hollis: In a job where you might work, easily, easily, 12 hours a day.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: And, all by the rules of the union. But it was tough work. On your feet all the time, the printers. And we had made the transition – I also saw the movement from a, basically, a 500 year old methodology of printing, into computerized printing.

Ms. Dunn: The early -

Ms. Hollis: Early computerization of printing. So, it was fascinating to see that evolution. And, the impact it had on people
who had been – this is –

Ms. Dunn The typesetters?

Ms. Hollis The typesetters, hot typesetters. To now be, basically, in a typesetting job, but, in, with a wholly different output, which is computerized paper.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And then, pasting it together. You didn’t have a cut-and-paste function. You had to take X-Acto knives, and cut out the pieces of print, and put them together, which is excruciatingly difficult.

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness!

Ms. Hollis Very difficult work. And so, it was really good, though, for me to see the work – what it really took to work -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis - full bore, full time.
Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, to follow rules. To know that you had to be there on-time. There was no if, ands or buts. And, you couldn’t leave early, because you would leave the whole place in a lurch.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And to work in a large group of people in – I wouldn’t call it a blue-collar job – I would – it’s not quite a blue-collar job. But an ancient – it’s the old – it was the oldest union in America.

Ms. Dunn  And you were a member of it.

Ms. Hollis  I was a member. I was the, one of the youngest journeyman ever. Because of the college, the amount of college that I’d had.

Ms. Dunn  Hmm.

Ms. Hollis  But it was extraordinary, really. And I’m glad –
sometimes you pulled two shifts in a row. And, it –
sometimes you’d go on work at 8:00 o’clock at night and
get off at 4 in the morning.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Or go on at midnight, and get off at 8 in the morning.

And, it really teaches you how to work! Hard!

Ms. Dunn  Did you – were you – did you find it ever, just,
challenging to sort of, and balance all of this in your life?

Ms. Hollis  Oh, God, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. Yes.

Ms. Hollis  Every day.

Ms. Dunn  Yes. But you had a good support system with the -

Ms. Hollis  As good as -

Ms. Dunn  Right.

Ms. Hollis  You know. Realistically, was it perfect? Absolutely not.
Ms. Dunn  Right. Right.

Ms. Hollis  Because there was no -

Ms. Dunn  And -

Ms. Hollis  - fallback.

Ms. Dunn  - then Windsong was ill, you said.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Six months?

Ms. Hollis  Really hard.

Ms. Dunn  She was in the hospital.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  My goodness. That must have been scary.

Ms. Hollis  Scary. Very scary.

Ms. Dunn  Huh. So we almost – we were almost out of college, and then we had to backup, for Windsong to enter the world.

Ms. Hollis  Right. What a good choice that was.
Ms. Dunn: What a good choice that was! And so, so now you’re this little family.

Ms. Hollis: Right.

Ms. Dunn: And you’re working.

Ms. Hollis: John’s working.

Ms. Dunn: What was he working as? What was he doing?

Ms. Hollis: He was—he got in a job selling insurance.

Ms. Dunn: Okay.

Ms. Hollis: Metropolitan Life.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: And then he was, became a broker. Paine Webber.

Ms. Dunn: That’s the—now, he’s a very creative soul -

Ms. Hollis: And he managed to act some weeks.

Ms. Dunn: An artist, an actor—did he -

Ms. Hollis: That doesn’t feed a family, that -
Ms. Dunn I was going to say – was he doing what needed to do for -

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn - his family.

Ms. Hollis Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis It was good, because the market was going up then. And then the market crash of '73, '74 – '72, '73 occurred. And it took a tremendous toll in Colorado.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Things stopped in their tracks. And, the market dipped. And of course it was the beginning of embargoes.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis So, gas lines everywhere.
Ms. Dunn  Oh, that’s right.

Ms. Hollis  Tremendous impacts -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - in Colorado, where everybody had to drive a long ways to work.

Ms. Dunn  Right.

Ms. Hollis  Or school or wherever. Tremendous inconvenience, and, hassles.

Ms. Dunn  So you’re still both in downtown Denver.

Ms. Hollis  Yes. We’d moved back from – we were back and forth. Sometimes – for a period, we’d be in Boulder, and then we’d move back to Denver.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. And you graduated from the Boulder campus -

Ms. Hollis  Right. We both graduated from the Boulder campus.
Ms. Dunn And you were done in ’71.

Ms. Hollis Yes. He was, too.

Ms. Dunn He was also the same year.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn Okay. And so, so now you’ve graduated college, you’ve been encouraged to take the LSAT -

Ms. Hollis And I did.

Ms. Dunn And you did.

Ms. Hollis And there I was.

Ms. Dunn And what came next?

Ms. Hollis I went – I showed up at law school – I got – I got offers every place I went, but I wanted to just stay in Denver, because of my mother, John’s family -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis - the baby.
Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  Take your pick.

Ms. Dunn  Yes. So University of Denver -

Ms. Hollis  And I thought I'd spend the rest of my life in Denver.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. So, it was the University of Denver, College of Law, is that what -

Ms. Hollis  That's it.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. And, was it an – I don't know a lot about it. Was it an old institution?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, yes. It was – where all the old-time Denver lawyers went to law school.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, in fact, it was encouraged by the people who originally encouraged me to go into the law. My mother’s real estate lawyers.
Ms. Dunn: To go there.

Ms. Hollis: Yes. Because that's where they'd gone. And they were -

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: leaders in the community – serious leaders in the Denver community, and B'Nai B'Rith

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: And, just wonderful, wonderful people. And so I immediately started working with them, the first chance I got, of course.

Ms. Dunn: So did you start working as a first-year law student? I mean, you were accustomed to working already at this point.

Ms. Hollis: Yes. Bits and pieces, yes.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. What do you remember thinking about the beginning of law school, the curriculum? Was it – was it just – could you just eat it up, or, did you find it
Ms. Hollis  It’s a little scary. Little scary.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  Yes. It was – not – it was classes like I’d never had before, in the form of the formality, and, old-world law professors. And, some aspects of it were divine, and others were just plain hard. I think it’s how most people find law school.

Ms. Dunn  Your writing background must have helped.

Ms. Hollis  It helped. But the precision necessary -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And the style of thinking, legalistic style of thinking versus journalistic style of thinking.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. So a bit of a transition there.

Ms. Hollis  Right. Right.
How might you describe the difference, between the two kinds of thinking?

Well, in journalism, writing a story – it’s “who, what, where, when, why and how.

In the law, that may not – that may be what you want to know, before you take a case, or in, as the basics of a case, but then forming that into an argument is the next step.

And I think that, that is what is the part, the making that leap from being a journalist to being a lawyer.

You have a lot of the same skills, but just – turning your thinking in a different direction, and, seeking a different kind of – you’re not just looking for a story.
Ms. Dunn  Right.

Ms. Hollis  You're looking for a winning argument.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. So did you draw on your philosophical debating skills -

Ms. Hollis  Yes. Yes.

Ms. Dunn  - is that sort of a -

Ms. Hollis  Yes. I liked that, very much. And I did appellate moot court and I really enjoyed that.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  But I wanted to be a tax lawyer. So I was focusing primarily not on litigation, but, on tax law, because I wanted to be a real estate tax lawyer, in the firm, the small, but wonderful firm that had really encouraged me to go into the law.

Ms. Dunn  So you almost felt like you knew where you would go after law school.
Ms. Hollis  Exactly. Exactly.

Ms. Dunn  You were going to go to this firm, small real estate firm -

Ms. Hollis  And that -

Ms. Dunn  - do tax and real estate, and -

Ms. Hollis  Yes. Big real estate in Denver -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - which was – which had always been a very interesting and booming real estate market.

Ms. Dunn  It was just probably booming, really then, too.

Ms. Hollis  Yes. Except -

Ms. Dunn  Except?

Ms. Hollis  Except, that when the market crashed -

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.
Ms. Hollis  And the firm split.

Ms. Dunn  So, so we don’t want to overly breeze through law school, since it is – women’s law, Trailblazers Project. So anything else particularly -

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  - you want to highlight about your law school time?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. I took a lot of international law. I was always obsessed by it.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And I, after my first year, I just decided I needed to do something out of the ordinary, so I went to law school in England for the summer.

Ms. Dunn  You did?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, I did.

Ms. Dunn  Was that facilitated by the school, or did you have to
Ms. Hollis: It was facilitated by the school. And I went to Exeter, England. And I, because it was the forming of the EU, ironically.

Ms. Dunn: Oh.

Ms. Hollis: And so, they had fabulous courses in it. And so, I loaded up on all the classes I could get there. And, I got another semester of law school that cost half the price of what it was in Denver.

Ms. Dunn: Did you take John and Windsong with you?

Ms. Hollis: John came with me for a while. She stayed with my mother. And, I stayed there for the summer, he came back and took care of her.

Ms. Dunn: Wow! So a very modern relationship.

Ms. Hollis: It really was. You could say - well, the - because we didn’t really have any con – we didn’t have anybody to pursue it on your own?
tell us no.

Ms. Dunn Yes!

Ms. Hollis Which is, kind of an odd thing when you look back on it.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis We just weren’t – it was such a wild time. That was the least of what was going on around us.

Ms. Dunn Right.

Ms. Hollis Very ironic! But there were so many moving parts, it was – there was Vietnam; there was chaos on the streets; there was – unrest of every, of every type. It was just coming – right in the, the heart of the Vietnam War. And just the, the gas lines; the chaotic situation; the currency – you know, now with the drop in the pound, that’s what happened when we were over there.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And, sudden chaos in the currency markets, and, the
whole world. But I have to say that my time at Exeter, was incredibly invaluable.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Studying at the Inns of Court part of the time. Meeting the Chief Justice. Just stepping into a different world.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And, I was really glad I did it. I went back with a fresh perspective. I focused a lot more on international. And, wrote extensively on law of the sea -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis - which I loved. And, also, I took a class on natural resources from a man who had been the Deputy Secretary of Interior. And he had come to Colorado, to teach at the – he had just started teaching at the law school.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis And what did he talk about? Well, he had also been a
Federal Power Commission commissioner. So he kind of talked about, I was interested in it, because my mother had been in, was an energy person.

Ms. Dunn  Sure.

Ms. Hollis  So it kind of caught my – ear.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  But not particularly dedicated to it. I did well in it, but, I didn’t really think that that’s where I would end up.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And then, the law firm I was going to go to work for split up.

Ms. Dunn  While you were in law school.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  So my, all my little intricately set out plans, collapsed.
Like a lot of people's plans collapsed in the 60s and 70s.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And so I had to scramble. And so, in this process of scrambling, I clerked at a personal injury firm. It became very clear to me very quickly that was not my cup of tea.

Ms. Dunn Not what you wanted to do.

[laughter]

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And a family law firm, equally so. That did not -

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis Did not look like where I wanted to spend my life.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And - oh, so then I just decided I was going to head into international or tax, one way or the other, and I was admitted to NYU Tax Institute, but, then the Federal
Power Commission came out, to Denver -

Ms. Dunn  To interview.

Ms. Hollis  To interview. And, I hit it off with the – he was the chief of staff to the chairman. And, because I had studied so much law of the sea, ironically in Denver, Colorado -

Ms. Dunn  Uh huh.

Ms. Hollis  Where there wasn’t any water! Nothing to do with the sea! Except a brilliant professor who is basically still working on writing an ongoing saga of the law of the sea, from India. And he’s still there. And he’s still a friend. And so -

Ms. Dunn  Still in Denver?

Ms. Hollis  Still in Denver. And, he had such a huge influence on me, I did the Jessup moot court, I was the team leader for University of Denver.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis: We did very well. And, one thing led to another. And when the Federal Power Commission came out, I had a wonderful conversation with them. And, because I had talked a lot about law of the sea, and the LNG trade was just starting. And, because what was my argument in the moot court, the moot court argument was on an African energy, a big hydro project in Africa. And it involved treaties; it involved water law; it involved a variety of UN oriented issues and so on. And so, when it got time for my interview, I just winged it and talked about the things that interested me. And, it was wonderful.

Ms. Dunn: All within the jurisdiction of – much of it was in the jurisdiction of the new commission? This is a brand new commission?

Ms. Hollis: No. That’s the old commission. It hadn’t transitioned to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission yet.
Ms. Dunn  So this is the Federal Power Commission.

Ms. Hollis  Right.

Ms. Dunn  And it was created when? Do you know?

Ms. Hollis  1920.

Ms. Dunn  1920.

Ms. Hollis  Water -

Ms. Dunn  And what did it largely do? Regulate?

Ms. Hollis  Started out in hydro. And then, the electric markets, under the New Deal legislation. And then it moved into natural gas markets. Natural gas pipeline regulation.

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  And, wellhead pricing vis-à-vis interstate commerce. And that was the 1954 Phillips decision.

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  So, bottom line is, I jumped at the chance to go to
Washington. I'd never been to Washington. I thought, "Well, at worst -" from, the worst it could be is I'd spend the year there and go back to Denver.

Ms. Dunn: Right.

Ms. Hollis: And get some experience in Washington. And so, I got back to Washington and never made it back to Denver.

Ms. Dunn: So that was really a turning point. So, was – was – did they make you an offer to be a fulltime attorney or -

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: - was it more of a clerkship program.

Ms. Hollis: No, no.

Ms. Dunn: Okay.

Ms. Hollis: Fulltime attorney, although I hadn’t taken the bar, or passed the bar. It was contingent on taking and passing.

Ms. Dunn: And which bar did you take?
Ms. Hollis Colorado.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm. And, was that pretty much your main interview, that you said, "This is it."

Ms. Hollis Oh, I had talked to a lot of people, but – I got a job offer from the SEC, but my husband was still in the brokerage business.

Ms. Dunn So that would have been maybe like a conflict, or?

Ms. Hollis Yes. They -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Much to my surprise, because he was a retail broker. I thought, "Well, you know, they ought to" – they knew, but it didn’t click, and then, boom. So, that was another scramble. And, I could have gotten in with a law firm in Denver, but I really didn’t want to do – I really did not want to do PI, or family law at all.

Ms. Dunn Yes. So what intrigued you about the Federal Power
Ms. Hollis    Well -

Ms. Dunn    Had you heard of it before they came to interview?

Ms. Hollis    They – yes, because of the class I took with the -

Ms. Dunn    Right.

Ms. Hollis    - commissioner, who had strongly encouraged me to take it.

Ms. Dunn    Who had been the commissioner.

Ms. Hollis    Yes.

Ms. Dunn    Okay.

Ms. Hollis    And because they had an international law element -

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis    - to it.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis    The LNG exports, which fascinated me. Imports, I
should say, at that time. And because, because energy was a super-hot topic. Obviously, the Arab oil embargo -

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis I figured, “Well, this is going to be where the action is.”

Ms. Dunn Wow!

Ms. Hollis And that’s how it went down. It was very quick. I interviewed probably in October. I was offered the job in November. I put my foot to the, on the accelerator, and got out of law school in December, a few months early.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis And, took the bar in February, and showed up March 18th, on the doorstep of the Federal Power Commission.

Ms. Dunn So how did you, Windsong and John get from Denver to D.C.?

Ms. Hollis I went out on my own, because, my former secretary, or my, should say, my partner’s secretary at the real estate
firm. She had gotten a job at the State Department.

Ms. Dunn Really?

Ms. Hollis She was a secretary, and brilliant woman. Really sharp. And, she had an apartment in Washington, so I stayed with her, slept on her front-room couch for the first couple months. Just to see if this was proof of concept whether I could cut it, at the job, and in Washington.

After a couple months, I said, “Well, I think it’s time for you guys to come out here.” So, renting the large U-Haul truck – baby, John, my mother riding along, and, they, and a German Shepherd by the name of Prince all came out.

Ms. Dunn Oh, so you had acquired a pet?

Ms. Hollis Oh, always had pets.

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness. So, what – was this a big change for you, to go from the West East?
Ms. Hollis Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn For real. Permanent.

Ms. Hollis Yes. Huge.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Huge. But I kept thinking, “Well, maybe I won’t stay more than a year or so.”

Ms. Dunn Right. Right. And how did John feel about the move?

Ms. Hollis I think everybody was scared.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis Yes, it was scary. Yes.

Ms. Dunn What was – what was unique about your hiring at the FPC?

Ms. Hollis I think I was one of the first women.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And, first woman, not the first woman, but one of the first
women.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, I was put in with a bunch of, a group of men, young men, in the – it sounds obscure now when you say it – natural gas certificates – but it was a natural gas pipeline authorization group.

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  It was some interaction on rates-related issues, but primarily it was building, and putting pipe in the ground, and allocating the natural gas within the curtailment period.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Huge natural gas shortage in the country. Total chaos, with respect to the allocation of natural gas – who gets it, when do they get it? Also, the pressure on the old form of regulation, which was cost of service regulation
impacting, not just pipelines, and electric utilities, but, producers, who were caught in the interstate market, making interstate sales.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And, the push to keep gas prices down, in a period of shortage, was very tough, because the intrastate market was deregulated. So there was a lot of action, huge amounts of litigation -

Ms. Dunn Challenges to FPC actions?

Ms. Hollis Oh, challenges to FPC actions, up one side and down the other. And -

Ms. Dunn Did you go to court?

Ms. Hollis Not – I was administrative only.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis For the first year and a half.
Ms. Hollis: But I almost immediately upon arrival, I would say within three weeks, still a law clerk, you understand -

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: This is the honors law clerk program. So, I was assigned to the Assistant General Counsel, who was, who had been at Patton's side all through the war – I mean, these were serious, serious people. And, I don't think he'd ever had a woman work for him in, except in the secretarial capacity. A great person. Very tough, but very great. And, he saw me there, kind of lost in space for the first few weeks, trying to get the lay of the land. And so he gave me – he said one evening, "Here, take a look at this and see if you can find something on these guys." And it was the SEC's S-1 registration statement for the spinoff of United Gas Pipeline, United was the main feeder pipeline from everything east of the Mississippi,
basically.

Ms. Dunn Hmm.

Ms. Hollis By Pennzoil Company. Pennzoil Company had acquired it, and what they were doing in this reconfiguration was to strip out all the cash, in United, which was cash-rich, was a huge cash-rich operation. And, with tremendous natural gas reserves under contract. Long-term commitments. Pennzoil moved in, got it, and then – this is my argument, anyway – stripped it.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Of the valuable assets. And, so -

Ms. Dunn Is that the type of activity that the Commission was to guard against?

Ms. Hollis In theory, but, the statute, had never been confronted with anything like this or of this magnitude. So I sat there, because it, you know, most people thought it was absurd
and a hopeless case. And because I came with no predispositions. I just looked at the statute, which was the Natural Gas Act, and I looked at the S-1 registration statement. And two things jumped out at me.

Ms. Dunn  Hmm.

Ms. Hollis  The necessity to seek approval before abandonment. So I said that the dumping of the pipeline, without any natural gas reserves, and a lot of the cash stripped out, was essentially a de facto, a constructive abandonment, they may as well have abandoned -

Ms. Dunn  What, the infrastructure?

Ms. Hollis  Right.

Ms. Dunn  They would just be leaving -

Ms. Hollis  And the other argument, which was, turned out to be more significant, was, in an obscure section of the Natural Gas Act, a section which had never been tested before - I
mean, it was an extremely obscure – and the basic provision is section 12 of the old Natural Gas Act was, “Thou shalt not issue a dividend out of a capital account without FPC approval.” Well, guess what? The hundred million dollar dividend, paid by United up to Pennzoil -

Ms. Dunn No approval.

Ms. Hollis I argued, in this memo, which I’ll tell you about in a moment, this agitated memo, still being a – basically in the world of journalism in my head – I wrote a very lengthy and highly colorful memorandum, to the assistant general counsel, on what I thought, based on just reading – nothing too elaborate – but, the S-1 and the Natural Gas Act, and then, digging up a couple cases, and, I was starting at ground zero here, you understand?

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And, so I gave it to him, it was on a weekend, going into
the weekend. I said, “Here, take a look at this and see if there’s anything here.” Said, “Okay,” and he threw it in his briefcase and he left for the weekend. He lived way out in Maryland someplace. And, so he came back in Monday – and he called me into his office on Tuesday, the following – he said, “That was really interesting.” I said, “Oh, did you like it?” you know, very eager beaver style. And, he said, “Yes, it was really, really interesting. Let me take another look at it, and, see what I can come up with on it.” I hoped he would have some reaction to it. But I didn’t know exactly – I thought, “Well, that’s good -” at least I got him to read it.

Ms. Dunn Mmm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And, he didn’t say, “You’ve got to be kidding.” Because there was no precedent for having, anybody having written anything like that.
Okay. So, about a week goes by, and I’m working on some other little things. At that time, it was the Nixon administration still. So the backdrop was all the Watergate hearings and all this was going on. And, it was a very interesting time. Wonderful, wonderful chairman. Great guy.

John Nassikas. And I was such an eager beaver, I was – I was in on the weekends, because my family hadn’t moved out, I had nothing to do. Except go with my poor friend, and, lean on her to show me Washington. So I just kept going into the office, because I didn’t know what else to be doing. It’s like going to high school classes in the summer, because you don’t know what else to do. And, so, I went in, and I was in on the weekends. And so, it was – but they didn’t have air conditioning on the
weekends, at the Federal Power Commission. It was absolutely unbearable, hideous, really. And so I complained and I took it – I wrote a note to the chairman – I don’t know why I thought I could do these things! I said, you know, “I’d like to come in and work on the weekends, but it’s so hot I can’t stand it, and I have —” So he set it up for me – he came in on the weekend to see how really hot it was, and had me meet him there. Embarrassing to admit, but he was so gracious about it, and he said, “Well, we can’t deal with it, we’ll get fans in” and all that, “but why don’t you come sit in the computer room, I’ll give,” you know, “I’ll give you access to go into the computer room where it is cool,” because it was just the beginning of computerization.

Ms. Dunn Keeping the room nice and chilly.

Ms. Hollis Yes. So that’s where I did – but, so – several weeks – maybe two or three weeks, I guess, after I wrote the
memo. I was sitting at the desk, I didn’t have a proper desk, I didn’t have an office. I had a secretarial desk, because the guy who was supposed to leave hadn’t left.

So, I was sitting at the secretarial desk. Phone rings, it’s about eight o’clock at night. It was one of those, “it was a dark and stormy night” things. And, a voice came on, this very gruff voice, “Is this Sheila Hollis?” I said, “Yes, it is. Can I help you?” And he said, “Well, I’m so and so from The New York Times, and I have your memo in my hand.”

Ms. Dunn Oh, my gracious!

Ms. Hollis Yes. Now, I didn’t have sense enough, I didn’t know the way that Washington worked at all. That – well, I suppose I could have leaked it, but I wouldn’t have known how to do it. I mean, I had literally just -

Ms. Dunn Someone must have gotten -
Ms. Hollis - almost, fallen out of the sky into – yes, somebody had
given the memo. And my memo had been passed around,
a few officers, a few of the senior officers at the
Commission. So whoever – I never will know to this day
how it got in the hands of The New York Times. And then
Jack Anderson called. Then Fortune. And all them. And
before you know it, well, it’s a somewhat more
convoluted story, but, about a month and a half, two
months later, right after I got sworn in at the bar, I was
given the whole case. And, so my first witnesses, my first
experts, were the heads of every major office at the
Federal Power Commission. Accounting; economics;
natural gas – it was called the Bureau of Natural Gas;
rates.

Ms. Dunn They were supporting you, or?

Ms. Hollis Yes. They were -
Ms. Dunn They were your -

Ms. Hollis They were the ones -

Ms. Dunn They were your witnesses -

Ms. Hollis - that were told -

Ms. Dunn - to bring the case -

Ms. Hollis - make this win.

Ms. Dunn - against -

Ms. Hollis Make this a winner.

Ms. Dunn - Pennzoil.

Ms. Hollis Right.

Ms. Dunn Wow. Do you – did it get written up in *The New York Times*, in the papers?

Ms. Hollis Oh, yes. And in Forbes.

Ms. Dunn We might want to find one of those articles about -

Ms. Hollis Yes, I might be able to dig up some.
Ms. Dunn And what was so explosive about this case? Or -

Ms. Hollis Well, nobody had ever done anything quite like it. Nobody who had been – so naïve as to think that there might be something there. So, for the investigation, because it was an investigation – again, not like anything – this was not your typical rate investigation – the first witness, adverse witness I ever cross-examined in my whole life was the general counsel of Pennzoil Company.

Ms. Dunn Going it alone.

Ms. Hollis The third witness, was the CEO of Pennzoil Company.

Ms. Dunn And you, you were -

Ms. Hollis I’m sure they were -

Ms. Dunn First [redacted]

Ms. Hollis I was it. Yes. I was the – I had all the – I had all the cross. The chief judge, was a wonderful judge. Judge Joseph Zwerdling, heard the whole case.
Ms. Dunn: And what court were you in?
Ms. Hollis: FPC.
Ms. Dunn: So it was an administrative case.
Ms. Hollis: Yes.
Ms. Dunn: With oral argument.
Ms. Hollis: Yes.
Ms. Dunn: And then appeals from this would go to a -
Ms. Hollis: It was a settlement. Finally, the way it went down was a settlement. Because they had to go on with their business. And it was -
Ms. Dunn: You must have gotten quite a reputation through this case.
Ms. Hollis: It was amazing. It was a catapult. Because the settlement, they paid back the hundred million to the pipeline for operations, just for starters – that’s for openers. And they signed an agreement to dedicate a huge amount of natural gas to meet the needs of the
United customers.

Ms. Dunn  There is a lot more to explore here in terms of the precedent that you were able to set in this case, just by looking at something, using your journalistic skills.

Ms. Hollis  It was just -

Ms. Dunn  Looking at the facts.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Seeing what didn’t add up.

Ms. Hollis  And just seeing it with a pair of completely fresh eyes, and not knowing what you can’t do.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Can we pause here?

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn  All right!

July 12, 2016

Ms. Hollis  [The audio began mid-sentence.] This is a continuation
of an interview by Alex Dunn of Sheila Hollis, July 12, 2016. All right. This is the July 12th interview. Alex Dunn and Sheila Hollis.

Ms. Dunn  Good afternoon, Sheila.

Ms. Hollis  Hello, hello, Alex.

Ms. Dunn  I am glad to be back. So we were just going to talk a little about the first big case you worked on.

Ms. Hollis  Yes, it was a rather remarkable case, and I must say to this day, I believe it is a remarkable case. It is the *Pennzoil United* spin-off. I think I mentioned to you when last we spoke that I had written a memo – the type of memo that a young law student just out of law school awaiting their bar results might write – and it was a very passionate memorandum questioning the validity of the spin-off and the role of the then Federal Power Commission, any possible jurisdictional reach that it
might have over it. That was the basis of the memorandum. The memorandum touched on two key areas. The first was the notion of the pipeline being abandoned by the acquirer and then the entity that was spinning it off – that was Pennzoil Company – the big oil and gas company, and, additionally, the possibility that there had been a dividend issued out of a capital account which was, at least superficially, forbidden under the Natural Gas Act. Both of these issues fell under the two sections of the National Gas Act. Starting from scratch just having read the Natural Gas Act when I arrived on the scene at the Federal Power Commission in mid-March, and I believe the memo was probably written before mid-April and it went to the Assistant General Counsel, and I was to get my bar results about two weeks later, and I did pass the bar. We went to hearing. After the Commission in response to a lot of press that hit Jack
Anderson, *Forbes, The Journal, The Times, The Washington Star* at the time and certainly *The Washington Post* as well, and was becoming a cause célèbre at least in the circles that followed these things.

**Ms. Dunn**

What made the case so enticing to the media?

**Ms. Hollis**

I think the magnitude of it. It was one of the largest transactions that had ever come before the Federal Power Commission. The fact that the country was in a huge natural gas and oil shortage due to the formation of OPEC and all that was to follow from that and the tightness of energy supply, the concerns over natural gas availability in general and the fact that natural gas was being curtailed across the board to all the interstate pipelines, and the fact also that there two markets that were by then developed for natural gas – one controlled by the then Federal Power Commission and the interstate commerce and then the intrastate state commerce where it was completely
unregulated. So the prices for natural gas in the intrastate market were much higher, and the prices for the natural gas in the interstate market regulated by the Federal Power Commission were covered by cost of service regulation which had sliced and diced natural gas supplies depending on when they were developed, where they were developed, production costs and so on. So there was a vast gap between the intrastate market and the interstate market in prices.

This was setting for it, and it was teed up in a time of extreme tension over supply of natural gas for homes, businesses, hospitals, prisons, industrial utilization and so on. It was an extremely sensitive issue and this just was a match thrown into kindling which was ready to burn anyway. While I was not very sophisticated, I wrote a very passionate memorandum and I think that passion came through in the memorandum; however, it made its
way to the press. I was too much of a neophyte to know the ways of Washington at all. It was just the birds and the bees of Washington had not been explained to me whatsoever.

Ms. Dunn  And so your memo had been leaked?

Ms. Hollis  It had been leaked by somebody, and no one has ever admitted to it or told me how it came to pass, but I was sitting by myself working on a project because I hadn’t even moved into an apartment by that time yet, and the phone rang and it was *The New York Times* calling me about the memorandum which they had in their hands. It really after the Federal Power Commission had closed that night. It was just the middle of a work week, and I didn’t really want to go back to the circumstances I was in when I first moved out, which was sharing with some very kind person who let me stay in their place until I got settled. So that’s how it came to pass.
Ms. Dunn Do you remember the feeling of realizing you were in the middle of a maelstrom?

Ms. Hollis I was scared, as I said, I don’t know anything. I can’t talk period. Well, the question was asked, “Is your name Sheila Hollis?” I said, “Yes”, and “Are you the author of a memorandum regarding the Pennzoil United spinoff?”, and I said, “I can’t talk to you anymore.” Then I hung up and I went to the Assistant General Counsel first thing the next morning and told him about the call and it went from there.

Ms. Dunn Do you feel that they had your back?

Ms. Hollis Because the Assistant General Counsel was a fighter and was a World War II vet, had been with Patton all through Sicily, I had no doubt that he was a man good for his word and that he felt passionately about this or he wouldn’t have given me the memorandum to work on
anyway.

Now, how did it come to pass that I ended up doing, being the lead lawyer on the case, that’s a story unto itself. The gentleman – who is a wonderful man and also a World War II vet – who took the case had some severe injuries from World War II that he dealt with very beautifully. The case was such a tough case and the validity of it was so highly questioned, including by the administrative law judge when the Federal Power Commission said it, said we wanted to investigate this –

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis We are going to send it immediately to the Chief Administrative Law Judge to handle this case. It was said almost with a matter of a couple weeks before the beginnings of the hearings. It was an investigative hearing which was quite unheard of in this type of dynamic environment. There had been rate case
investigations, that type of thing, but nothing like this had come down the pike. So those first few days it was painful because the Chief Judge was extremely tough and was extremely aggressive in his questioning of the validity of the investigation of something like this, the tenuousness without further explanation of the jurisdictional reach of the Commission and everything. Everything was on the table right off the, from the minute we walked in the hearing room, and the bottom line is that the gentleman that was handling it stepped down. I was immediately put in his place as soon as I had my bar results, which was about the first week in, I think it was May 4, and so it moved extremely fast, extremely fast.

Ms. Dunn Did you have someone second you?

Ms. Hollis No. I had a law clerk and then I had, but I did have amazing, amazing technical back-up. I had the head of the Accounting Department at the firm, the Federal Power
Commission, rather, the chief economists, the Head of the Bureau of Natural Gas it was called at the time. So I had some very serious, smart people working with me. They really were enormously supportive and strong, and they were dealing with somebody that basically was, as they would put it, “wet behind the ears” still. They were able to help me put that case together. So we put a case together, and over the course of many hearings over many months – this went on for about 18 months.

Ms. Dunn Was it the exclusive matter that you worked on?

Ms. Hollis Pretty much. It was all-consuming.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis So hearings, settlement conferences, cross-examination, cross-examination of my witnesses, cross-examination of their witnesses, I had - one of the first witnesses I ever cross-examined was the General Counsel of Pennzoil
Company. About the third or fourth witness I cross-examined was the CEO of Pennzoil. I cross-examined the new CEO of United Gas Pipeline and all their top people. It was, and some of the toughest, biggest law firms in the business were across the table from me.

Ms. Dunn: And the Federal Power Commission at this time, was it a well-established agency?

Ms. Hollis: Oh, yes, it had been around since 1920, and it had the five-member Commission independent of any other entity.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: All nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Ms. Dunn: But the view by the regulated community was perhaps that this governmental agency was sort of out-of-bounds?

Ms. Hollis: Well, certainly for Pennzoil and United they felt that way.
Ms. Dunn    Right.

Ms. Hollis  But it was that there were a whole other set of dynamics that were, all the other pipelines that had purchased natural gas or transported natural gas on the United Gas Pipeline were enthusiastically supporting, very enthusiastically supporting this big investigation because of the impact of the availability of natural gas, the cost of gas and so on, on those pipelines, at an absolutely critical juncture in the nation's history.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm. So this is your first case, 18 months of your life. Do you remember what your lifestyle was like then?

Ms. Hollis  It was kind of wild because my husband and daughter moved out after I figured that, okay, it looks like I am going to stay here for a while. I think they arrived mid-April.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis  It was, time, events move, when you are young and you are in the midst of something big, events compress and things move so fast. So things moved very fast for me, and I basically just never looked up. We went down to Houston several times. I went through J. Hugh Leidtke's personal files on my knees, going through all of his personal files. He stepped out of his office. I went through everything, my team did. It was intense to put it mildly, exciting and intense and slightly scary.

Ms. Dunn  Did you ever feel that you couldn't do it or did you, something told you you could?

Ms. Hollis  Something told me I did. I did feel that I had the ability to do it. I had been a reporter before.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. That's true.

Ms. Hollis  I was scared but not overwhelmed.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.
Because by that time, I guess I was 25.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

And I was dealing with some of the toughest, hard, smart, top-of-the-line lawyers in the country across the table both for and against what we were doing.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm. Did anyone ever question your credentials or your youth?

Oh, sure. I was like an alien. They had no women lawyers involved in any of this at any point before.

Were you one of the first women hired at the FPC?

In a capacity where you were not essentially a back-office lawyer, pretty much, pretty much.

This case became your life for, are there one or two highlights of the activity under the case that you remember?

The cross-examination of these very, very brilliant, well-
prepared witnesses. That was something, and dealing with such smart people on all sides for and against our position and our own team was so smart and so committed to bringing this case and making it work.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis So those are the highlights. Also, going to Houston for the first time. Never been to Houston before. Never been to that part of the world so it was all new to me.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And then the intensity of the settlement conferences which were ordered by the Chief Judge.

Ms. Dunn And the case did settle?

Ms. Hollis Oh, yes, yes. Very, very, very successfully. Also getting to see these great lawyers in action.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Their cross-examinations, their, it was basically a Ph.D.
in the law right there in real time, and so it was insanely exciting, yes. I guess the highlight to me was the Chief ALJ's decision, and it was a very, he was as tough and as smart a judge as I have ever met. Zwerdling, when he wrote his decision said that the cross-examination was the most brilliant he had ever encountered by –

Ms. Dunn  Your cross?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, and that meant more to me, I think I could see those words in front of me to this day.

Ms. Dunn  Oh, that's amazing.

Ms. Hollis  So, and I feel it was particularly brilliant because I definitely had to feel my way, particularly at the beginning it was quite, quite tough.

Ms. Dunn  Did you ever run into that judge again on any other matter?

Ms. Hollis  Oh, over the years, yes, intermittently, and he was just
such a presence, and he had been there a long time and was so well respected. Yes, over time, even after I left the Federal Power Commission and went in with the next chapter, of course, but went into private practice, we always had a great, there are some very funny parts of the settlement conferences and the hearings. Some of them were absolutely hilarious because I think people knew that the settlement was in the offing, so that as time went on and we narrowed the issues, we were together so much, the whole group, that while it was still mapped out that certain things were not going to be settled really, they just either had to give in or we would take it to the next level. But it was the, the settlement negotiations were really a remarkable experience. And then getting to see the public interest lawyers at work, too, which is how I ended up going into, basically, into public interest law for the next several years.
Ms. Dunn: So in FPC cases or FERC cases there is usually a voice who represents the public, right, the public’s interest in fairly priced energy?

Ms. Hollis: Well, the staff, the staff itself.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm. Okay.

Ms. Hollis: That is your primary job, although there’s been for years calls for a consumer –

Ms. Dunn: Advocate.

Ms. Hollis: Advocate.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm. Some states have them today.

Ms. Hollis: Some, not many of them do, yes.

Ms. Dunn: Yes. Okay.

Ms. Hollis: But at the time and still, the state public service commissions played a key role, too, and also the representatives of the consumers as in some cases, it would be industrial consumers; in others it was large
cities, and in others, the key ones were the public service commissions or regulators in the various states that were most dramatically impacted. And in this case, the one that was most dramatically impacted was, well, there were several, but I would say New York was at the top of the list.

Ms. Dunn So what did you feel that your mandate was essentially in moving this case? What did you want to achieve?

Ms. Hollis I wanted to, well, first of all, make it clear that this was covered by the statute even though at least one provision had never been test driven before. It was one of those obscure sections that nobody paid much attention to it because it was so obscure.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And so that was one part of it, and then second, it was just to, to protect the consumers, and I felt pretty
passionately about that in the context of the times that by
stripping a company’s assets the way that was originally
proposed that that could not be good for consumers.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm, mm hmm. Thinking back to what you have
told us about your childhood and growing up and your
reporter background and just looking for truth, looking
for equity, this was an opportunity to really see that in
action.

Ms. Hollis I felt that way, and I think the consumers definitely were
in a much better off place than they were, should it not
have been taken on as a case.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Even with all of the uncertainties, at least we brought the
case and we brought it unashamedly and gave it
everything we had and we got a pretty good deal out of it,
pretty good deal.
So this was your first government job, your first legal job, what were your takeaways from this experience?

Well, I had, I clerked all through law school so I had in a sense, so I’d seen, but I had never seen it at this magnitude, ever. I had never seen the stakes this high. I had never seen all these players representing a variety of states up and down the East Coast, the city of New Orleans, the state of Louisiana, everything, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, all the way up and down the East Coast down to Louisiana, Mississippi. So it was huge, it was, as the saying goes, it was really huge.

Mm hmm.

And so meeting all these people with all these intense interests was amazing, amazing. Getting to see people in action in such a “bet the farm” kind of case, which is like fast-forward. You have come from law school. Yes, you have clerked in law firms, but I never saw it. It was like
stepping onto another planet.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Did you think you would stay at the Commission?

Ms. Hollis I was very, very, very tempted to, but then I got this wonderful offer from the representative of the state of New York, which was in a small firm, very high-end administrative law – FCC, CAB, FPC, that type of work.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And the former General Counsel of the Federal Power Commission did all of the Federal Power Commission work in that firm – very, very, very respected man; won the Tom C. Clark Award; had been head of the Appellate Anti-Trust Section of the Department of Justice; Deputy General Counsel of the FCC; and then went on to be the General Counsel of the Federal Power Commission.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis: He was in Kennedy-Johnson, so when Nixon came in, he was out and he went into private practice, but he represented the State of New York as an intervenor in the case, and so that’s where I got this –

Ms. Dunn: In the case you had worked on?

Ms. Hollis: Yes, yes, and that’s where I got to see him at work, and no matter whether people hated him or loved him, they had absolute, total respect for him. He was just that kind of person. He was a scholar of the highest order and also a brilliant advocate. Time marched on, the case is settled, and that is when he asked me to, would I be interested in being his associate.

Ms. Dunn: Did he just call you one day or?

Ms. Hollis: I think that is how it went down. I think that is how it happened finally.

Ms. Dunn: Did you have to think hard about it?
Ms. Hollis: I did, because I had other people from other parts of the country back in Colorado that wanted me to come back and do Federal Power Commission work back in Colorado and so on, but I liked the thrill of the chase and seeing the interests of New York being so broad and the issues being so hot in the curtailment period with huge shortages in everything, it was so exciting. I had that desire to do consumer-oriented law and so that is what led me in that direction.

Ms. Dunn: And what was the firm called?

Ms. Hollis: It was "Wilner and Scheiner."

Ms. Dunn: And the main partner that brought you in?

Ms. Hollis: Richard A. Solomon – one of the legends of the Bar.

Ms. Dunn: Did you stay close to him over the years?

Ms. Hollis: Absolutely, absolutely. In fact, we remained very close over many years, and his son is at the Federal Energy
Regulatory Commission now as a solicitor remarkably, and he was just a little, tiny boy when I met him.

Ms. Dunn So what was the office like there? How many attorneys?

Ms. Hollis Probably, I guess, no more than 15 or 20, and they were in very defined areas, although they were all very smart administrative lawyers and they had all been agency people, Assistant General Counsel FCC, General Counsel CAB, that type of environment, a lot of people from New York, but not exclusively, and just very, very smart, very committed lawyers that really were deep thinkers. Fabulous appellate lawyers, Dick Solomon who argued many cases before the Supreme Court and, of course, the Court of Appeals all over, he was the best, was among the best of the best of the appellate lawyers in America. And so he, and also just a great general counsel from what I understood at his time at the Federal Power Commission, and so this array of issues which was presenting itself as a
result of energy shortages and the opportunity to work across such a broad spectrum of issues and to work with the best, I just thought this is for me even though it was not, there were a lot of other firms that I might have pursued had I been desirous of going in a different direction, but I didn’t, I didn’t want to. I really wanted to continue kind of doing what I’d been doing at the FPC, but under a different context.

Ms. Dunn So was New York your primary client?

Ms. Hollis Yes, that was about, I would say 80% of my time, and we did all the curtailment cases, all of the gas pricing cases. We did electric. It was a very wild time, and it just opened up all kinds of amazing experiences of going to, from one end of New York to the next, and also one end of the country to the next because all these cases were being argued, settled, all over the place. So dealing with that world was very, very exciting.
Ms. Dunn  So the law was really evolving?
Ms. Hollis Fast, so fast.
Ms. Dunn  As you were in it?
Ms. Hollis Yes. Shortage. Shortages were the driving force and pricing, and, of course, there was a tremendously bad winter – the winter of ’76, ’77 –
Ms. Dunn  Oh, I remember it.
Ms. Hollis - when the Emergency Natural Gas Act was passed. In this Emergency Natural Gas Act, and then President Carter came in in this phase, too, he was there in ’77, so during this phase, the natural gas supply situation in New York had reached a critical, desperate situation, and a deal was brokered among all of the local distribution companies in New York to get gas from Canada, and in return, the deal was that New York Public Power would pay back, New York Power Authority would pay back to
Canada in electric power later.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Very complex transaction. Never been anything like it.

All the LDCs (Local Distribution Companies), and all the New York Power Authority players entered into this deal because it was, there were 300,000 people out of work in New York due to natural gas shortages. Remember New York, upstate New York and it was incredibly industrialized then, plus the dangers to the populace – hospitals, prisons, universities, everything – so that deal was brokered on the day, I actually was at the Federal Power Commission at one o’clock in the morning getting the order signed, and it was on, it had to have been on New Year’s, because I was wearing a formal outfit. And I was there at the Federal Power Commission with just the Commissioners; that was it, and hand walking this around and having them hand sign it, so that at that point
I could call the State of New York and say, “Okay we’re ready to go”, then a tractor/snow plow came out – huge blizzard snow storms upstate New York – a tractor came out with the Customs Agent and they turned the spigot, they turned the valve to allow natural gas to move from Canada into New York. That Monday morning, 250,000 people went back to work. That was the kind of –

Ms. Dunn  You helped bring that power back.

Ms. Hollis  Yes, just not because I was particularly sharp, but just because I was there in the midst of this –

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - this maelstrom of activity and need. And that was, that’s hard to beat. It’s hard to go back and do real estate closings in Denver after you have done stuff like that.

Ms. Dunn  Walking around the Power Commission in a formal dress on the holidays trying to get signatures.
You can’t make this stuff up. It was a simpler time.

So I am thinking about your life. You are this hard-charging lawyer cutting new ground everywhere you go, and you are a mom and a wife, did you find it challenging to balance all that?

It was crazy. It was absolutely wild.

Did you ever feel like you were not doing what you needed to be doing in one area or another?

Many times, particularly at home, I was gone a lot. Just the investigative phase alone – back and forth – fly, fly; here, here; there, there. A whole new world.

Yes.

And mercifully I had a great husband who, and my mother would come out when she could get off work from Denver and stay, but it was, there was not too much grass growing under our feet as the Irish would say.
Ms. Dunn: And you had a lot of support in your mom, in John, your husband.

Ms. Hollis: John, particularly John. My mother was still in Denver. Oh, she moved out in '75, yes, so I did have a lot of support. She moved out before the end of '75, so, yes, she did support me greatly.

Ms. Dunn: I am thinking about not just support in tangible sense, but in the emotional sense.

Ms. Hollis: Oh, yes, yes.

Ms. Dunn: That these were people who wanted to see you succeed.

Ms. Hollis: Absolutely, and supported me.

Ms. Dunn: And you knew had to.

Ms. Hollis: Absolutely. Yes. And she had been a working mother herself so she didn’t need anybody to draw her a picture when the need was there.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm. So how many years did you stay in the firm?
Ms. Hollis  That was, let's see, three years.

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  And then Carter came in and I got the call, "We'd like you to come over here and be the Director of Enforcement."

Ms. Dunn  Where?

Ms. Hollis  The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the successor agency.

Ms. Dunn  So when was name changed?

Ms. Hollis  That was the Department of Energy Organization Act of 1977, late '77. So by '78, late '77 beginning of '78, I was over there.

Ms. Dunn  FPC became FERC.

Ms. Hollis  FERC.

Ms. Dunn  And did you work on the campaign that led to these door
opening for you?

Ms. Hollis  No. It was not a political appointment. Nope. I wasn’t that sharp. [laughs]. I mean –

Ms. Dunn  You hadn’t learned about those birds and bees in Washington yet?

Ms. Hollis  I was catching on, but I was, I was certainly not a political player.

Ms. Dunn  But people, you had a reputation at this point. People knew that you knew your work.

Ms. Hollis  Yes and they knew that I had a name. I had already been on TV. I had been on national news with the State of New York and related issues, and I think, God bless Jimmy Carter, he wanted to appoint some women, too. Well, he didn’t directly appoint me, but he encouraged it so –

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis: So I was one of the top in the Carter Administration if you can believe it.

Ms. Dunn: So what – so you were the Director of the Office of –

Ms. Hollis: Of Enforcement.

Ms. Dunn: – Enforcement. So I know enforcement, at least in the world that I work in, that is some forward-facing work.

Ms. Hollis: Well, especially when you have to build it from the ground up when there is nothing there when you walk in the door. There was no enforcement.

Ms. Dunn: Was this new authority?

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: Created by the new law?

Ms. Hollis: The Energy Organization Act and all of the Energy Policy Act which was to follow. There were clearly going to be some big changes in energy and changes in regulation. That was the beginning of a huge amount of change, a
floodgate of change opened up and enforcement was part of it.

Ms. Dunn  So enforcement in this area of law is designed to do what?

Ms. Hollis  Well, that’s a very interesting question. A lot of different things. I had the full panoply at the time, which was natural gas regulation, which is producer wellhead regulation, still was very much in effect. Although in November of ’77 I guess, November of ’77, maybe it was ’78, okay, the National Energy Policy Act was signed into law. It was November, it was called the “turkey” –

Ms. Dunn  And that’s while you were in this director job?

Ms. Hollis  Right. I had just gotten there basically a few months before. But there wasn’t even an office. I mean, it literally was go build an office of enforcement.

Ms. Dunn  In the middle of an energy crisis?
Ms. Hollis: Yes. And you have to be under 30 to think you can do this.

Ms. Dunn: Oh, absolutely. And was the idea find the bad actors, the entities that are skewing the pricing?

Ms. Hollis: Pretty much. But then all sorts of other things were loaded onto it immediately. You’re always looking for violations and you’re trying to encourage compliance. There are really two phases to it. The hope is that your presence, your very presence and your activity will encourage compliance on a broader scale, especially with new laws that nobody ever heard of before. And secondly, to go after the bad guys and to make law. We were making law.

Ms. Dunn: Did you have a team of people that worked with you?

Ms. Hollis: I had to hire them from the ground up, every single one.

Ms. Dunn: How did – what type of person did you look for?
Ms. Hollis  Well, I was sent to work at the SEC for six weeks to work with Stan Sporkin, who was Director of Enforcement at the SEC.

Ms. Dunn  So you were supposed to sort of learn from –

Ms. Hollis  So I sat with Stan Sporkin and I stole two of his people. And they were very good. One was a dogged investigator, just as tough as they come. Had been there his whole career and he wanted a change. And the other was a younger enforcement guy, but he was able to help develop the regulations to implement all these enforcement requirements. Brand new, delivered fresh and hot to our doorstep. And so that’s where – we wrote the original regulations for enforcement at FERC that had never existed before. There was no such thing as enforcement.

Ms. Dunn  The SEC was maybe the closest and –
Ms. Hollis: Absolutely. If you look at our – if you look at our regulations, they’re directly traceable back to 10(b)(5) of the SEC Act.

Ms. Dunn: And it was like, try it, something like this.

Ms. Hollis: Right, right. To get the lay of the land and just get something on the books as soon as possible so that we had something to work with. And then when the full Energy Policy Act hit, we were able to deal with this massive influx of issues – 33 categories of natural gas, I mean, just for openers. We had a staff and I started with myself. In fact, I took my daughter in with my mother and my husband to see my new office. And I had come from a law firm, you know, which was not incredibly fancy, but it was normal. And so I was given this forgotten corner office where boxes of junk piled around and so my little daughter, who was about seven then, sat down in the middle of the floor and started
crying. She said, "Sheila, I thought you were getting a
better job."

Ms. Dunn Did she call you Sheila?

Ms. Hollis Oh, yes.

Ms. Dunn Your daughter called you Sheila?

Ms. Hollis And I called my mother Emily, and my mother called her
mother Bella because we were only-children.

Ms. Dunn Oh, that’s something else.

Ms. Hollis Yes. She said, "Sheila, I thought you were going to get a
better job."

Ms. Dunn She sounds like she was spunky.

Ms. Hollis Yeah, yeah.

Ms. Dunn So there you were in this corner, crazy –

Ms. Hollis – office with a bunch of junk lying around and had to just
start from ground zero.
Ms. Dunn  And you’ve got two colleagues now that you poached from the SEC.

Ms. Hollis  Yeah. It took a little while to get them in, too. And then I poached a couple of people from around the Federal Power Commission that were left over from – I should say people who had worked at the Federal Power Commission who were good and nice. And then there are other people that were brought to me. And I hired a number of young lawyers right out of law school, many of them – one of them just ended his term as the president of the Federal Energy Bar Association. The other one I hired right of law school just ended his term as the chair or president of the Foundation of the Energy Bar. So many of the people that I hired went on to have stellar careers and many, I’d say, 50% of the lawyers I hired, went into energy law and have never left it.

Ms. Dunn  Hmm. Did you find at that time that you had to sort of
sell energy law to people and tell them why or did they come to you?

Ms. Hollis  No, I think they were eager. You know, it was the era of Ralph Nader and “go get em” kind of atmospherics that coming out of the 60s and all and I think people wanted the action. They wanted to be pro-consumer and so it was great. There was a lot of really smart young people that wanted to participate and I was fortunate to hire a number of them.

Ms. Dunn  Did you feel like the industry was fighting back against the Commission?

Ms. Hollis  Oh, sure. And anytime you set up a new office, there’s a lot of jealousy and competition. And I was the first woman office head and, you know, there were a lot of issues. It’s history.

Ms. Dunn  How did that feel?
Ms. Hollis  That was scary actually.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. So were you part of a management team?
          Was there a management group –

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  – that would get together?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. But our office was so tiny and so fragile that it was, you know, just – it was very, very tough. I’m not going to underestimate in these discussions the complexities of that type of situation where you’re brand new, you’re a woman and the other offices are headed by very sophisticated, if they’re not political, they’re certainly politically adept and well-versed people, if they weren’t political appointees. And it was, I don’t want to soft-pedal it. It was extremely tough and I had no, I was not used to the environment of raw government at its management levels. And some of the people were
heavenly to work with and others were very threatening and aggressive.

Ms. Dunn So I’m thinking about your first position where you cut your teeth at the Commission and you had a very supportive –

Ms. Hollis Very much.

Ms. Dunn – empowering boss.

Ms. Hollis Well, that was an anomaly.

Ms. Dunn Right.

Ms. Hollis I was like a pet rock or something that showed up.

Ms. Dunn And then you went to a law firm where you were also –

Ms. Hollis It was hard but it was fair and the competition was – there was no competition because there were only a couple of associates and we just, we got on well and –

Ms. Dunn Everybody did their thing.
Ms. Hollis – everybody did their thing, you know.

Ms. Dunn And so now, now you’re trying to build a bureaucracy in a sense.

Ms. Hollis Yeah, right. De facto, you have to, you are clawing jurisdiction from other offices.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And I had never really dealt in that bureaucratic environment before.

Ms. Dunn Where did you go for advice? Who was your sounding board?

Ms. Hollis A couple of the commissioners were very helpful and they had the wisdom to help. They shared wisdom from their own experiences. But pretty much it was pretty rough, pretty rough sledding.

Ms. Dunn I bet.

Ms. Hollis Now remember, I was only 29.
Ms. Dunn  Right.

Ms. Hollis  I wasn't even 30 when I got this job. So, not just the fact I was a woman and this was a new office, but I was younger, so much younger than all the other office heads by far.

Ms. Dunn  Did you feel like you had a peer group? A group of –

Ms. Hollis  No.

Ms. Dunn  – sisterhood that you could –

Ms. Hollis  No. No, no. But I was very committed to hiring women and hiring diverse attorneys and that was new, too.

Ms. Dunn  Yeah. Tell me a little about that. What a feeling.

Ms. Hollis  It was great. It was wonderful because I hired some wonderful people who were still trudging along in energy law and it was just wonderful to see it happen and see their capabilities and –

Ms. Dunn  Was there push back when you tried to advance a diverse
candidate or a female candidate?

Ms. Hollis  No, no. If there was, I was oblivious to it because we were just trying to, we just wanted to get people behind a desk and working on this massive backlog of stuff because there had been this whole period before the Office of Enforcement was opened up that had been backing up, including hydroelectric enforcement, licenses that had not been, the conditions had not been fulfilled. Everything from, I don’t think I got into the safety arena, but there were a lot of things going on vis-à-vis compliance with some environmental issues and construction of the jurisdictional dam and, you know, things that were left undone. And the same was true with natural gas pipelines. And there had been a lot of monkey business that had gone on before the Energy Policy Act was passed and just a variety of things. So it was, there was this whole tidal wave of stuff that hit
immediately. And then because at the time, if you contextualize it, there was no computerization. So how was I getting my cases? It was either referrals from the offices, or calls in the middle of the night or anonymous letters that would come in. And trying to see if they were a lot of nonsense, you know, by a competitor, just to rattle cages or whether there was substance to it.

Ms. Dunn        Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis      So getting our arms around that and having, because of the nature of FERC jurisdiction. You’ve got hydroelectric, you’ve got electric rates, you’ve got natural gas producers and pipelines plus other miscellaneous stuff.

Ms. Dunn        I’m trying to think about, I’m trying to imagine you – How did you dress for work? Were you up at the crack of dawn?
Ms. Hollis  Oh, God, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Were you a coffee drinker? Did you stay all night? What was it like?

Ms. Hollis  Well, it was, I did, I got in pretty early and yes, I drank a lot of coffee. I think when you’re young, you know, you’re fearless. You just keep at it and at it and at it. And because of the introduction of all the new law, I had to go around the country and speak all over the country with the other office heads on particularly natural gas price controls which many of the players – remember, you’re bringing a whole new market under this new statute, the whole natural gas industry at the intrastate level had not been regulated before.

Ms. Dunn  So when you were travelling and speaking, were you talking to state public service commissions about this or who were you talking to?
Ms. Hollis: Oh, God, no. We were right out into the field with the producers. You’d go to the Petroleum Association of Jackson, Mississippi, the Petroleum Association of Louisiana, Oklahoma, Ohio.

Ms. Dunn: It can’t strike me that there were too many women in those rooms.

Ms. Hollis: None. Some of it was very, very funny.

Ms. Dunn: So you were a petite blond –

Ms. Hollis: At the time, I’m embarrassed to say, I had a slightly different hair color.

Ms. Dunn: We’ll edit that from the transcript.

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: But you were petite?

Ms. Hollis: Very short.

Ms. Dunn: And very feisty.
Ms. Hollis: Yes. But you know what really helped me? Being a westerner.

Ms. Dunn: Do you think? Because you got it. You got the culture.

Ms. Hollis: I kind of got the culture, but it's because I think being Irish helped and being a westerner helped. It's that you –

Ms. Dunn: You weren't from, like, New York, uptown.

Ms. Hollis: Right, right. Uptight New Yorker coming down to shake her finger at us and tell us what to do. But to say that it was a walk in the park would be underplaying the complexities of going into a ballroom filled with 300 producers.

Ms. Dunn: Who thought you were out to eat their lunch.

Ms. Hollis: Who thought I was the devil incarnate.

Ms. Dunn: That's worse than eating their lunch.

Ms. Hollis: Right.
Ms. Dunn So your way with people, your charm and your ability to – all those maybe childhood experiences of the Wild West characters that came in and out and your ability to sort of operate in almost any environment –

Ms. Hollis Yes. It also is so interesting, too, seeing different environments and seeing different people and different – getting to know the South. I’d never really been south very much. I think I went to New Orleans once on a trip and that was about it. But seeing the South and some of the functioning of the South, that was a big, big news and big experience. And Texas was a whole, obviously a whole world unto itself. Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio – let’s see, where else did I go? – Oklahoma, about seven or eight places that we did major road shows. And, yeah, you can be friendly and pleasant and all that, but the message was not a pretty message.

Ms. Dunn Right.
Ms. Hollis: It was, "You boys got to straighten up here because I’m the new sheriff in town and this is the new law," and it was not pretty. You have to say some very tough things and there’s no sugarcoating when you are an enforcer. There just is no sugarcoating your job.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: You’re not recognized or congratulated for not enforcing. And so that was, it was a little scary sometimes.

Ms. Dunn: I was going to ask if you ever felt uncomfortable.

Ms. Hollis: Well, it’s hard to get up and deliver bad news to a ballroom of 300 men, you know, and there’s no way to make it pretty. And so no matter how you try to be nice and pleasant and businesslike and all that, it’s still rough. And then go back to the office and then trying to keep that ball rolling, it was really – because we went from 0 to 65 employees in a matter of 18 months.
Ms. Dunn  And how many of those 65 did you have a role in hiring?

Ms. Hollis  Every single one.

Ms. Dunn  Met them all, knew them all by name?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. About 25 lawyers, 25-30 lawyers, then technical people and then, of course, staff, administrative staff. It was a workout and sometimes you can’t get them all right because some people were happy there and other people weren’t. But that’s just the nature of the beast in a big startup with an uncertain future basically and no history, and with a whole new law, a whole new set of laws, controversial laws.

Ms. Dunn  Did you have the opportunity to sort of define a culture of the office?

Ms. Hollis  I think so. I think that it was a serious office and we got the regulations through the Commission, so there was a format, there was a plan, there were cases. We did the
first major criminal referral to the Department of Justice in the history of the federal part of, the history of FPC, FERC. We got some very significant penalties, $10 million back when $10 million was serious business. We got paybacks of natural gas. We did all sorts of things. And we got pipelines that had never bothered to get licensed, part of their systems licensed. So there was a lot going on and it was, but I don’t want to say it was easy. There was nothing easy about it.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. So how long were you there in this role?

Ms. Hollis  About three years.

Ms. Dunn  And then what led to the next opportunity?

Ms. Hollis  I was – I finally just said this is about as much as I can do here. And –

Ms. Dunn  You fully staffed it?

Ms. Hollis  Yeah. It was an up and running proposition.
Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. From nothing?

Ms. Hollis  From zero. Yeah. It was a tumultuous, very, very 
tumultuous time. So when the elections were coming up 
again and that’s when Ronald Reagan was on the horizon 
and sure enough he did win. Because Carter was a one 
term president, you remember.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Okay, so that was on the horizon and so finally I said, you 
know, “This is all.” And so, but it was very, very tough 
sledding. I don’t want to tell you that it was easy, 
anything about it was easy in the last several months 
because it wasn’t. It was – there were triumphs and there 
was a lot of stress associated with it.

All that being said, I then went into private practice with 
an old Texas firm and it was fun because I liked Texas. 
My experiences in Texas, even though it was under
extreme circumstances every time I went there, it turned out very, very well.

Ms. Dunn   What was the name of the firm?

Ms. Hollis Butler Binion. Butler Binion was one of the old line firms out of Houston. They had just — they hadn’t been involved in any of the cases that I was involved in, but they just, they struck me as very nice, civilized people and they had just opened up their Washington office. And it was, it was a really nice group of people in that office.

Ms. Dunn   Who did you know in the firm that —

Ms. Hollis Nobody. They, I talked to a lot of different players before I made my move and I went in as an associate and made partner shortly thereafter.

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Ms. Hollis   This is Alex Dunn and Sheila Hollis together again.
Ms. Dunn  Interview 4. Where we last left off was you had left FERC and begun working at Butler Binion. This is your second private sector job. I think we had started talking about what drew you to Butler, and I think you said they had a very unique practice.

Ms. Hollis  They did. They had a wonderful oil and gas practice which was fun and exciting, and I wanted to get some experience out in the real world of development, so that’s what I did, and I was very impressed by the very genteel people that I met, particularly from the Houston office of Butler Binion. I liked Houston. It wasn’t a huge firm, but it was a very well-respected firm, trial – a lot of trial work, a lot of old oil and gas patch work, too.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  So it was still at a time in history when there were a lot of characters left over from the beginnings of the oil
industry so it was fun.

Ms. Dunn  What did they, how did you feel coming into this firm? What was the office size?

Ms. Hollis  There were about 20-25 lawyers in DC and probably 150 lawyers firm-wide, which was a big firm for the times.

Ms. Dunn  That’s a big firm for the time.

Ms. Hollis  For the times, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Were there a lot of women in the firm.

Ms. Hollis  Very few, very few.

Ms. Dunn  What sort of support structure, here you are coming out of FERC –

Ms. Hollis  Right. And so I couldn’t do anything. Of course, I couldn’t appear before FERC –.

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  – for, I believe, a year or two at the time. I can’t
remember what the exact parameters were at that time.

When I left the FERC, of course, I had all the documents in place as to what could and couldn't be done in the opinion of the General Counsel and so on, but I accomplished everything I wanted to do at FERC, really, which was to set up the office, to get the regulations on the record to begin the process of setting up an investigatory process. We had accomplished many, many significant investigations – the first penalties, the first criminal referrals, huge disgorgements, a very significant amount of work done within the first two-and-a-half years. Plus, we had shown we could succeed in the beginnings of the enforcement at that time of the wellhead pricing regulations which were the beginnings of the Energy Policy Act of 1978, but, particularly, the Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978 ("NGPA") which had "only" about 33 categories of gas. But then in addition to
that, there was a Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act which began, basically, the reconfiguring of the hole electric industry by allowing the development of small hydro, small power production facilities, renewable energy, and basically decentralized energy development which was a huge break from the past.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Third, I also had the old school enforcement obligations which were sitting on the shelf for many years and they did not have an enforcement office to begin to take them on. Things like hydroelectric issues, hydro facilities which had never completed all the terms of the licenses, pipelines which had been built but were not properly licensed, the switching of gas between the inter- and the intra-state markets, and several other, there were a lot of, lots of unfinished business which just because there had never been any enforcement mechanism. So I felt that we
had really made a very significant impact on the industry. I had talked to most of the oil and gas industry. I had met with a huge number of the producer associations throughout the country and basically had to deliver the bad news that things which in the past had either not fallen under the purview of the jurisdiction of FERC or which now may have been under the purview of FERC, but nobody had done anything about it, or felt they were unable to, and they had been waiting for years to get the enforcement business going at FERC. So we got it, and it was controversial, but we survived it and we did everything we set out to do and more considering the circumstances starting out with zero employees and ending up with 65 in two years.

Ms. Dunn Unbelievable.

Ms. Hollis Yeah.
Ms. Dunn    And just reflecting back on that, I think we had talked a little about your effort to bring on women into the office.

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely, and minorities, absolutely. I was very dedicated to that, and we had a, I think probably a majority of women and minorities in the office – some were out of law school, some were from other parts of the Agency, and some were from outside the Agency but were already functioning as either lawyers or investigators or along those lines, or utility experts.

Ms. Dunn    So did it feel different going into private practice from sort of that sense of accomplishment and charting new ground at FERC?

Ms. Hollis  Well, the ironic thing is for the first few months it was sort of learning how to ride the bike of a big law firm practice.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis: I’d been, I’d clerked in firms before but never any of that magnitude and also the Houston connection – some extremely interesting people there – but because of the restrictions on what I could do and not do at FERC, I went in a very different direction, and that’s how I ended up working in Ethiopia off and on all those years.

Ms. Dunn: Really?

Ms. Hollis: Yes, on a World Bank Project.

Ms. Dunn: Okay. Tell us a little bit about that.

Ms. Hollis: Writing the oil and gas code for them, World Bank, but, basically, for the government of Ethiopia which no longer was Hailie Selassie. Hailie Selassie had fallen in the revolution, Ethiopian Revolution, so it was actually a Marxist government, but the U.S. and the World Bank were very interested in getting back in there because the Russians had moved into Ethiopia big time, and all the
Eastern Block was in there. I made many trips to Ethiopia; the Ethiopians changed my life; and hopefully I helped them, too. It was a remarkable experience. I spent a lot of time in East Africa –

Ms. Dunn Really?

Ms. Hollis — over the course of several years, three years.

Ms. Dunn In the 80s?

Ms. Hollis In the 80s, yes.

Ms. Dunn This must have been, were people surprised to see you?

Ms. Hollis Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn Yeah.

Ms. Hollis I didn’t fit the, I was something new and different in Ethiopia in the times –

Ms. Dunn Yeah.

Ms. Hollis — it was, but Ethiopia had been a very sophisticated place
before under Hailie Selassie, and then things in the revolution, it was terrible, if you remember the terrible starvation and all the rest in Ethiopia.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Ethiopia has, and had, significant oil and gas reserves in the Ogaden Desert and the Red Sea elsewhere, but they had not been, they had had some work on them and then the revolution occurred. So then there were some attempts to get back into East Africa. At the time, the U.S. was backing Sudan and Russia was in Ethiopia and, of course, that flipped later, but it was all very confusing, kind of wild politics and wild and passionate times all over East Africa. I have to say it certainly one of the most exciting things I’ve ever done, and it just introduced me to a whole different world and a whole different culture, and we still remain friends with some of the people that I worked closely with in Ethiopia, many of
them ultimately got out and came here when that option became available to them and their children. We became close to their children. It was just a wonderful, wonderful experience – really life changing. Also during that time frame, I was asked to lead a delegation, the first major delegation of women lawyers and judges to China. I spent about a month in China with a delegation of women judges and lawyers from all over the country, a total of about 60, and we went to the law schools and met with a lot of government people, Chinese government people, both in provincial cities all over China. So we were not just confined to Beijing-Shanghai, but we went to Wuhan, Nanjing, places were there just weren’t that many Westerners who had been in a long time. That was very exciting. Very, very –

Ms. Dunn Who was that with?

Ms. Hollis That was with, it was through People-to-People.
Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: But it was such a great experience that I was asked later, in 1987, to take a delegation all over South America to study women's legal rights in South America. That was another month-long venture. And so at that time, there were just very exciting times. Then, of course, I did regular, traditional oil and gas work in the field in Texas, Oklahoma. I represented the states of Oklahoma and New Mexico in a number of things during that time frame—just a lot of really fascinating, great stuff. A lot of the independent power developers, too, all over, which is just, was a huge surge then because the price, first, because of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act opened up the opportunity for a non-utility-owned generation that really opened up the whole electric market. It was really exciting times. I did a lot of hydro work. I did across the board just about every kind of
energy work in addition to this wonderful adventure in East Africa and all over.

Ms. Dunn: So was your work in East Africa was for the firm as counsel to this World Bank Project?

Ms. Hollis: Oh, yes. Yes, I was a consultant to the World Bank, and in that capacity you actually get the check that came to the firm which was written by the Marxist government of Ethiopia which caused quite a stir in the Houston office.

Ms. Dunn: I bet.

Ms. Hollis: It was really interesting, but really was a World Bank-funded project.

Ms. Dunn: Did you travel with a group from the firm? Were you a team?

Ms. Hollis: No, no.

Ms. Dunn: It was just you at the meeting. What an amazing experience. How long would you stay on these trips?
Ms. Hollis: Sometimes a couple weeks.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: Sometimes more.

Ms. Dunn: Yeah.

Ms. Hollis: Sometimes a short time but it was an adventure. It was really, really an adventure.

Ms. Dunn: But I still think this comes back to your childhood and being so adaptable in so many different environments.

Ms. Hollis: Oh, yes.

Ms. Dunn: Because this, for a female in the early ’80s, an attorney in energy, in oil and gas, in Ethiopia.

Ms. Hollis: It was, it was unique.

Ms. Dunn: I can’t imagine there were many people doing what you were doing.

Ms. Hollis: No, not many, no. And then the amazing thing about the
Ethiopian experience is some of the Ethiopians traveled here and we had meetings at the World Bank, too. So they got to know my family – my mother, my daughter – and they became great friends over all the years because they’re all very religious people, and the Ethiopian, Coptic –

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis – Ethiopian Orthodox Church. My mother was a very religious Catholic, but basically it’s the same images but with some iterations like on the study, the whole explanation as to how Ethiopians came to be and why they are such a unique group of people.

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness!

Ms. Hollis Just amazing history, amazing art, amazing culture, and, of course, we know the wonderful food, but at the time Ethiopia was suffering such deprivation that having a
fancy dinner in Ethiopia was just not really (a) not appropriate, and (b) very difficult no matter who they were in government to pull that off.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis That doesn’t mean that we didn’t have nice dinners, but the thought of having huge feasts or spending so freely, it just wasn’t, they weren’t that kind of people.

Ms. Dunn They kept a lower profile.

Ms. Hollis Yes, they felt that they should not be doing that if the people were suffering, and people were suffering terribly. You just cannot imagine. Well, I guess, I had lived in a world where I’d had some exposure to poverty going to Mexico, but nothing like what you see in East Africa when the drought, the famine, the wars, the disruption.

Ms. Dunn So this was during, if I remember the concerts, here in the States they had the concerts.
Ms. Hollis    Right, right.

Ms. Dunn    They had the concerts for Ethiopia and U2 was playing.

Ms. Hollis    U2 and Bono.

Ms. Dunn    Yeah.

Ms. Hollis    Yeah, yeah.

Ms. Dunn    This is all at that time.

Ms. Hollis    Yep.

Ms. Dunn    My goodness. So how was it getting there? Was it one stop, direct?

Ms. Hollis    Usually I'd go Lufthansa.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis    Because the Americans weren't flying there, although, ironically, TWA had been a very big presence in Ethiopia until the revolution, so all the old pilots, the ones that survived the revolution and the purchase and all that, they
had all been trained with TWA. So they had the
Ethiopian Airlines which was still at the top level if you
were flying in a diplomatic context or anything, which I
wasn’t, but they would have the, kind of the essence of
what, and because Ethiopians are such gracious, elegant
people, that type of thing suits their culture very well to
do that right. It was just so different than what you might
expect. The whole experience was so wildly different.
Then I went down to, I spent down in Kenya, I went
down to Kenya to study the way they were doing their
laws pursuant to the World Bank.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  But very different set up in Kenya because of the English
history there and all. And then over to Sudan, I got
sidetracked. I spent a week in Sudan that I hadn’t
planned to because, at the time, Muammar Gaddafi
wanted to be the head of the OAU, so our plane was
diverted and I ended up over in Khartoum.

Ms. Dunn Oh, my goodness.

Ms. Hollis That was a –

Ms. Dunn How old was Windsong about this time?

Ms. Hollis Let’s see, this would be, it would have been –

Ms. Dunn ’80 to ’84.

Ms. Hollis Let’s see, she would between 10, 11, 12, 13.

Ms. Dunn What did she think of her jet-setting mom?

Ms. Hollis She – she was just, she never knew what was going to happen from one day to the next. [laughing] What mom was going to come up with.

Ms. Dunn Did you bring her souvenirs and things from these places?

Ms. Hollis Oh gosh, yes. Oh, yeah.

Ms. Dunn Yeah.
Ms. Hollis And she became friends with the family, very close friends with the family, too. It’s so amazing. Their children have grown up. We’ve stayed in touch with them. The girls stayed with us for a while, and they are just such beautiful, exquisite, spiritual people. I mean we’re talking about down on your knees praying spiritual people. The little girls every night, amazing. It’s just the whole essence of propriety and gentility.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm. Oh, it sounds like it was just an experience. So other highlights from Butler & Binion? It sounds like you were just –

Ms. Hollis Yeah, it was wonderful, and then unfortunately for Butler Binion, they split up down in Houston, and it was never the same after that. That’s when I went to the Broadhurst firm.

Ms. Dunn Broadhurst. Mm hmm. Was that also in D.C.?
Ms. Hollis: Yes, but it was based in Louisiana.

Ms. Dunn: Okay, okay.

Ms. Hollis: And the way that I, it's a convoluted story, but it's kind of an interesting story. The way I got to the know the Broadhurst people was they came to me because the man who had worked on writing the regulations for the Natural Gas Policy Act had been a consultant to the FERC, and he was at the time Dean of the University of Houston Law School, Rhodes Scholar, Dr. George Hardy. Dr. George Hardy and a man who was the Vice Chair, at the time they had a Vice Chair at the FERC, Don Smith from Arkansas who had chaired the Arkansas Utility Commission and Securities Commission, all that, very tied in with Arkansas politics, but a wonderful lawyer, wonderful person. I negotiated a deal for Don Smith and I to go with Broadhurst and that was part of the Louisiana firm, because Broadhurst was from Louisiana –
Broadhurst, Brook, Mangham and Hardy. And

Broadhurst –

Ms. Dunn You and Don Smith went from –

Ms. Hollis And George Hardy was there, and then we brought a
couple other people with us, associates and all.

Ms. Dunn Really.

Ms. Hollis Yeah, yeha.

Ms. Dunn And you did the negotiation pretty much?

Ms. Hollis Oh, yes, because Don said he never enjoyed that aspect of
the practice of law. It wasn’t really his cup of tea. He
could do all kinds of things – brilliant, brilliant guy.
They were really brilliant, funny people.

Ms. Dunn Where did you get that ability to negotiate about moving
a whole firm?

Ms. Hollis My mother.
Ms. Dunn  Yeah.

Ms. Hollis  Watching her in action in the real estate wheeling and dealing.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And going to all the closings with her. It was fun for me.

Ms. Dunn  Yeah, you were very comfortable.

Ms. Hollis  Yeah, well, as comfortable as you can get. We got together and went to Broadhurst, Brook, and it was a very exciting ride, shall we say. This is one for the books what happened.

Ms. Dunn  So you were there three years according to the chronology.

Ms. Hollis  Right, three years.

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  "A funny thing happened on the way to the Forum" as
they say.

Ms. Dunn Yeah.

Ms. Hollis Yes. Mr. Broadhurst, who is still practicing law in Louisiana – a very, very sharp guy – he became a big backer of Gary Hart for President.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis The ship that Gary was on?

Ms. Dunn Oh, yes.

Ms. Hollis That was a client of the firm, Broadhurst, Brook. They’re all hunting, fishing-type people.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis So one thing led to another and I thought three years of excitement and fun was about enough. [laughs]

Ms. Dunn So it was a very politically-oriented firm.

Ms. Hollis Totally politically oriented.
Ms. Dunn: Yeah.

Ms. Hollis: Very gifted, well the Louisiana delegation –

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: - the Senate, the House, and just very, very active politically throughout the state of Louisiana and some in Texas. Then up here, Vicky Reggie Kennedy was one of my partners.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: She’s from Louisiana – a very fine banking lawyer, just very, and another partner who went on to be the one of the founders of the Telecommunications Association.

Ms. Dunn: Yeah.

Ms. Hollis: Very, very interesting people. A lot of scholars in the firm that had banded together to do this. It was in the *Legal Times* and I’ll bring in the paper for you.

“Louisiana Firm on a Roll” on the front page of the *Legal
Times. Very colorful, very interesting group.

Ms. Dunn So after three years that appeared to be time to make another move.

Ms. Hollis Yeah. It was pretty clear then that things were not going in a direction where it was sustainable for me personally.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis So anyway, and then other people, it just kind of came apart in Washington.

Ms. Dunn Right.

Ms. Hollis That’s when I went to Vinson Elkins.

Ms. Dunn So tell me about your negotiation to go over to Vinson.

Ms. Hollis It wasn’t hardly any negotiation at all. They just welcomed me with open arms.

Ms. Dunn Really. Had you worked with people there before?

Ms. Hollis I had known them over the years because they had been
in so many of the cases – either on the same side or opposite side or – they were just good people and it’s a very nice firm, and I liked the Houston connection, too.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm. So you went there as a partner, but –

Ms. Hollis Oh, yeah.

Ms. Dunn – later became head of the D.C. office.

Ms. Hollis No, D.C. Energy Group, just the Energy Group.

Ms. Dunn Just the Energy Group.

Ms. Hollis A very substantial energy group in Houston and all over.

I did a lot of fun, interesting stuff all over the world at Vinson Elkins.

Ms. Dunn What kind of things?

Ms. Hollis Oh, Mexico, London, a lot of the big power projects.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis A lot of the big pipelines, LNG, all kinds of exciting, big
projects, getting them through the regulatory process, both state and federal – big deals, fun deals, existing deals. Hard, very, very hard work, very high expectations. I represented the Algonquin Gas Pipeline up in New England and then the big power producers, big independents that were the first big players of the 500-600 megawatt gas-fired plants. Those type of players.

Ms. Dunn

So this was the beginning of natural gas becoming a major part of the U.S. energy portfolio?

Ms. Hollis

Real big, real big. Well, it was before, and then because of the shortage, then it diminished, so then you’d substitute with coal, whatever. Then the realization came that gas was, there was just a dawning of awareness with respect to climate-related issues.

Ms. Dunn

Really, even then there was the beginning of people
thinking about carbon?

Ms. Hollis  I think so, yes, by the mid-80s I think there was a concern

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis — and they saw gas as being, and gas, the price of gas had come down and it was feasible to build very large gas-fired power generation.

Ms. Dunn  And big pipelines, too, I guess at this point.

Ms. Hollis  Oh, yes, but more of them were already in the ground. Just expansion or reconfiguration.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. It’s interesting the way this chronology sort of set up. It’s all professional and then we’re going to talk about some of your professional engagement because, clearly at this time, you’re also getting involved in the Bar Associations —

Ms. Hollis  Oh, yes.
Ms. Dunn — and so we have that segregated.

Ms. Hollis And teaching, too, you know, I had started teaching.

Ms. Dunn And teaching, right, right.

Ms. Hollis Teaching in 1980 and then for 20 years at GW.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm. Mm hmm.


Ms. Dunn Yeah, let’s talk a little bit about this. So we’re in this period where now you’re established, I think, and so well known in the field, you’re starting to do much more Bar Association work, professional work, teaching. So let’s talk a little bit about that unless it’s mixing too many things.

Ms. Hollis No, no. It’s because at this time I had a chance to step back. I’d always liked the Bar Associations.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis: I really had. I always was a joiner as a human being so it was a natural thing so ABA was certainly a key part of that for me. I became active in the Natural Resource, at the time it was just called the Natural Resources Section of the ABA.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: I think I had always been a member of it, from almost law school I joined as a student.

Ms. Dunn: Was there an Energy Bar then?


Ms. Dunn: Okay.

Ms. Hollis: I became active in that before I even went to the FERC.

Ms. Dunn: Okay.

Ms. Hollis: That was with Dick Solomon. He became President of it and I succeeded him many years later. There’s a photo over there of us, and Dick Solomon had encouraged me to
be active in it.

Ms. Dunn Federal Energy Bar. Federal Energy Bar Association, which before that was the Federal –

Ms. Hollis Power Bar.

Ms. Dunn – Power Bar. I like the new Power Bar.

Ms. Hollis It was kind of nice, it was nice, wasn’t it?

Ms. Dunn I have to get a look at that picture.

Ms. Hollis As that time rolled on with Dick Solomon, I was, I have to think about that, I became Assistant Treasurer, some little thing like that, and then I went into government and I had to drop it.

Ms. Dunn Mmm.

Ms. Hollis I couldn’t do it at the time.

Ms. Dunn Mmm.

Ms. Hollis Sometimes you can, sometimes you can’t, but anyway, at
the time I just couldn’t do it.

Ms. Dunn    Yeah.

Ms. Hollis  And besides, I was so busy I didn’t have time for Bar
            Association stuff. When I got back out, I jumped back
            into it and just continued on working with the Energy
            Bar. Come 1990, ’91, ’92, that’s when I became
            President of the Energy Bar.

Ms. Dunn    So that’s when you were at Vinson & Elkins about?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, that would have been V&E time.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm. Mm hmm. So you became President, the first
            female President of this Bar Association.

Ms. Hollis  Yes, yes, that was a lot of fun. It was a lot of fun.

Ms. Dunn    I feel like I’m going to ask the same question. I bet they
            just weren’t sure what to make of you.

Ms. Hollis  Well, by then they had gotten kind of used to it. My face
            had been in front of them so by then they were broken in.
[laughs]

Ms. Dunn  My goodness. How did you enjoy contributing in that way to the profession?

Ms. Hollis  It was just wonderful. It’s just so great. Yeah, I loved it. I loved the old guys that set it up. Some of them were mean; others were fun; but it was just, you felt at home with them because you had the same language, the same underlying language. A lot of them were very traditional people who were big in their churches, whatever their church was and very devoted to their family. They really set a good example. They all had their foibles. We all do, but I never felt, I’m sure there may have been some resentment, but I probably was oblivious to it or else I’ve forgotten it. [laughs]

Ms. Dunn  Was this a very D.C.-oriented Bar?

Ms. Hollis  No, it was all over. Mainly Houston, I’d say a lot out of
Houston; Ohio; all the big utility states where really the electric utilities had dominated and then as the gas industry grew up, then it became about 50/50.

Ms. Dunn: Okay. So did you, did they hold meetings around different parts of the U.S.?

Ms. Hollis: That's when it first started. That's when they first had a Houston chapter, and then I think New Orleans opened up after that. The big, there's one huge meeting and then various smaller meetings throughout the year. It was everything in person and you delivered papers. It was very old school.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: Great parties at the annual meeting. That was back when it was a different mentality about celebrating in those circumstances, shall we say.

Ms. Dunn: Yes, yes.
Ms. Hollis  When I first started going, the ladies all wore long gowns.

Ms. Dunn  To the evening events?

Ms. Hollis  To the evening events.

Ms. Dunn  Even you?

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn  Oh, my goodness. And did the men were tuxedos?

Ms. Hollis  Yeah, many of them did.

Ms. Dunn  It was formal professional.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  That must have been a nice time. So did you, you said you wrote a book chapter around this time, is that –


Ms. Dunn  Okay.


Ms. Dunn  Oh way before Vinson. Energy Law and Policy. Who
did you write that for?

Ms. Hollis I think it was Anderson Publishing Company.

Ms. Dunn Really?

Ms. Hollis Then I worked in '89, I fell short of exactly co-authoring it, but the Energy Law textbook with Joe Tomaine and a couple other very wonderful professors.

Ms. Dunn So at this point you’ve also begun teaching?

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn Tell us a little bit about that.

Ms. Hollis It was wonderful. The only problem was the travel, the clash of travel schedules. It was extremely stressful. Sometimes you get back from the four corners of the world.

Ms. Dunn For class?

Ms. Hollis Yes, definitely.
Ms. Dunn And you taught at GW?

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn You began in –

Ms. Hollis I guess '80.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And hung up my spurs in 2000. So it was 20 years basically.

Ms. Dunn A full two decades of teaching.

Ms. Hollis Mm hmm.

Ms. Dunn How many students do you think ultimately you taught?

Ms. Hollis Over 600, maybe 600 to 700, and it varied with the price of oil. It was so funny. When the price of oil was down, there would be 15 people in basically a seminar arrangement. When the price of oil was up, I’d have 50 people there. A lot of them were already, had passed the
bar and they were getting their LL.M.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  It was part of the Environmental Law Program.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. So you taught, it was called Energy Law or did the name of the class change ever?

Ms. Hollis  Energy Law.

Ms. Dunn  Energy Law?

Ms. Hollis  There was a nuclear, a couple nuclear classes. There were a number of environmental classes. They were starting to really get moving on the environmental law and much more.

Ms. Dunn  So you taught at night after teaching a full day?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Would you teach every semester or once a year?

Ms. Hollis  Once a year. That was plenty. Well, I think one year I
may have done, one or two years I may have done them both semesters, but it was a workout. The class met from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. It was one of those late-night classes, but that's really the only way I could do it.

Ms. Dunn  What are your, if you could just look at, think about teaching, what are some of your fondest memories and thoughts about teaching?

Ms. Hollis  Seeing so many of the people that I taught are in government today or in private practice. They say it all went back to that funny little class when they realized, “This is actually pretty interesting.”

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And they realize that they could do it and I told them all. I wrote a lot of recommendations. Some of the students were brilliant. They went on to very senior policy roles in government. In all, I'd like to think that maybe those
seeds were planted there. A lot of the Army Corps of Engineers people took the class. Over the years I’ve hired a number of the students from there. They moved into government or moved into another firm, but it’s so great. You just feel like, I know how a teacher really feels. You know, you’ve taught yourself, so you know full well how good it feels to see people you know and want to teach, how they thrive, and how if you can take a crumb of an idea and you throw it out and they run with it.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Did you teach from a textbook?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, my textbook.

Ms. Dunn  Your textbook? The Energy Law and Policy book?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. And then the Energy Law book which had a lot more case studies in it. The Energy Law and Policy was a modest book, maybe 200 pages. But the other one is
very serious it covered all, basically, a survey course of all types of energy law.

Ms. Dunn Did you ever bring in guest speakers?

Ms. Hollis Oh, God, yes. Thank God, because without them – but not a whole lot, but quite a few.

Ms. Dunn Did you ever have any regular guests that were always a part of your class?

Ms. Hollis Not always, but some would go for a couple of years and do it. I think the world changed. Everybody’s business got – the business was more aggressive and they may not have had the time.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis I think everybody was feeling the pressure of the economy, a whole lot of different things in the early 90s. I just kept trudging along and it was a great experience for me.
Ms. Dunn  So now we've sort of got you active in the Federal
        Energy Bar, active in the ABA Section of –
Ms. Hollis  Environment.
Ms. Dunn  Environment. Was it called that then?
Ms. Hollis  Yeah, Section of Natural Resources.
Ms. Dunn  Section of Natural Resources. And you're teaching. And
        you're at Vinson & Elkins as Head of the Energy Practice
        in the D.C. office?
Ms. Hollis  Right.
Ms. Dunn  And you're charging away, all cylinders?
Ms. Hollis  Yeah. I was about six years at V&E.
Ms. Dunn  Yeah.
Ms. Hollis  And I got a bee in my bonnet that I wanted to have my
        own firm.
Ms. Dunn  Really?
Ms. Hollis: Yep. So that's when I went forward with Metzger, Hollis, and we had that and that became the Washington office of Duane Morris.

Ms. Dunn: So let's talk a little bit about this bee in your bonnet, about having your own firm. How did you start thinking about this?

Ms. Hollis: Well, it's a women-owned business concept.

Ms. Dunn: Okay.

Ms. Hollis: And that was really beginning to take off. This was Clinton.

Ms. Dunn: Yeah.

Ms. Hollis: It just started to take off. So when I went in with Mr. Metzger, he was a very much an entrepreneurial guy, a very smart appellate and banking lawyer. Bank regulatory. He argued many cases before the Supreme Court. I think he was with the Comptroller of the
Currency and all that before.

Ms. Dunn	How had you met?

Ms. Hollis	Personal. My mother had gone on a cruise and met his wife. So when they both got off the boat and ended up back getting off the plane in D.C. at National, that’s when we all – she had called me. She was on a 45-day cruise with this lady and so one thing led to another. We became friends and then over the years Mr. Metzger said, “You know, you really should come with me because I have a small firm, but I want it to grow. I think it would be great. I think that RTC and the FDIC work is something we could do.” Sure enough, I did and we did, and here we are.

Ms. Dunn	The RTC was?

Ms. Hollis	Resolution Trust Corporation.

Ms. Dunn	Okay. So how does that connect to energy?
Ms. Hollis  Well, I brought the whole energy practice over and then
because it was a woman-owned firm, that's how it came
to pass. He signed over his interest and said run with it.

Ms. Dunn  Wow! So how many people were there when you got
there?

Ms. Hollis I guess about 20, and by the time we mutated over the up
and down, and in and out. Mr. Metzger unfortunately
died very tragically. He was quite ill and got sicker and
then he died. I mean it was just over the course of about
2½ years when he was well and then 2½ years where he
was sick and then he passed away.

Ms. Dunn  Wow!

Ms. Hollis  By that time, it was clear that we had to make a move and
so we talked to a lot of different firms and that's how we
moved the firm over here, and Metzger, Hollis went away
and we became part of Duane Morris.
Ms. Dunn: Okay. Well, before we go to Duane Morris, I want to talk a little bit about your time at Metzger, Hollis and Gordon & Alprin, too?

Ms. Hollis: Gordon & Alprin. Yeah, they all came.

Ms. Dunn: So were they with Metzger before?

Ms. Hollis: Yes, yes.

Ms. Dunn: So Hollis crashed the party?

Ms. Hollis: Hollis crashed the party.

Ms. Dunn: And took over the firm?

Ms. Hollis: Well, yeah, essentially, yeah.

Ms. Dunn: With their buy-in.

Ms. Hollis: With an approval by all. Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn: These were three gentlemen? Metzger, Gordon & Alprin.

Ms. Hollis: Right.

Ms. Dunn: How did they feel about becoming a woman-owned firm?
Ms. Hollis: I think they were enthusiastic. They were kind of — well, certainly, I guess Mr. Metzger, and Mr. Alprin perhaps a little more conservative, and Mr. Gordon was very excited about it, too.

Ms. Dunn: Really?

Ms. Hollis: Yeah, yeah.

Ms. Dunn: And they all became good colleagues?

Ms. Hollis: Oh sure, absolutely, yeah.

Ms. Dunn: So the firm was at 20 when you got there, and in five years you pump it up to?

Ms. Hollis: About 35, maybe 40. It vacillates, you know, depending on how you count it. There were a few part-timers.

Ms. Dunn: You brought the energy practice to their previously sort of banking-oriented.

Ms. Hollis: Right. Banking and litigation.
Ms. Dunn: Okay.

Ms. Hollis: Business banking and litigation. Small, but very, they did some particularly in the banking area, extremely high-end work.

Ms. Dunn: And then did you set out to sort of cultivate as you grew the firm to bring in more women, more diverse people?

Ms. Hollis: Oh, sure, absolutely, yes. Absolutely. A lot of women, yeah.

Ms. Dunn: Did you ever sleep?

Ms. Hollis: I didn’t need much sleep.

Ms. Dunn: My goodness.

Ms. Hollis: I was pretty wound up for the most time.

Ms. Dunn: Wow! So was it different having it be your firm that you owned?

Ms. Hollis: It was. Worrying so much more about it actually. It’s a
When your name’s on the door.

Exactly, exactly. It’s very, very – in a small firm it’s very up close and personal. That was something I had not experienced before, but it’s just the way it is in a small firm. There’s no, no matter anything under 150 lawyers I consider to be a small firm. And it’s very direct. I mean, there’s just everybody’s right there in the office and when it comes time to write the checks for the Christmas bonuses, the holiday bonuses, it’s on you.

So you really were the steward in many ways, not just the lawyers, but, albeit, the support professionals, the paralegals.

Oh, yeah. A lot of people there.

How many employees altogether?

Oh, God, we must have had 15 employees that had been
there forever. Very sophisticated employees, too, really smart, wonderful.

**Ms. Dunn** Mm hmm. So this is ’92 to ’97, so this is the technology revolution as well?

**Ms. Hollis** Yeah, we did what people did in ’92 which is to go out and get the whole computer – well, I’d been broken into that at Vinson Elkin, they invested heavily in their own computer system, very elaborate. And then, of course, all the stuff that everybody invested in, if they had bought their own systems, got washed away by Microsoft and Apple and all that. It was just the same in the small firms getting that whole thing. Very few people used e-mail until, I think, late 80s, early 90s. And then it moved real fast after that. Just it was a whole different planet. I mean you’d get –

**Ms. Dunn** FedEx?
Ms. Hollis    FedEx was great. You know, you could get FedEx
package and read the document and think about it
overnight and then send it back and have them FedEx it
or fax. It's a whole different planet. But then the
acceleration of technology hit. It was pretty clear that we
were going to really have to invest in really very huge
investment in technology to keep up. When Mr. Metzger
passed away, we knew that we had to, we just had to link
up with a bigger firm because the practice of law was
changing, too.

Ms. Dunn    Right.

Ms. Hollis    And the practice of law was demanding deeper benches,
demanding more insurance, everything, the whole cost of
business was going up. We were on the cusp of new
leases and all that type of thing and that type of
investment, too, for a small firm was major. Mr. Metzger
being so ill for so long, a full year of desperately ill, it
was very rough to see. And in the meantime, it kind of stalled out a little, too.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: All that being said, I talked to, in the course of the search for the best place to come together with a new firm and keep as many people intact as we could. We came over with a very good group of people. A significant proportion of the people in the firm. Some people went into government, some people drifted off, some retired out. But we came over with a very significant, the majority of lawyers in the firm came over and most of the staff, too. So they came with me to Duane Morris. But to get to the point of going with Duane Morris, I'd met in person with 35 different firms throughout the world. Everything from London to L.A.

Ms. Dunn: Wow!
Ms. Hollis: And I talked to, I believe, somewhere approaching 100 firms, from one end of the country to the next to see what would be the fit.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: And one of the key criteria was – how many people can we keep onboard? Or whether it would be a wholesale wipeout. That’s Step 1. Step 2 – we’d like to keep intact the Banking and the Energy group in particular. But life being what it is, some firms wanted all Energy, other firms wanted all Banking.

Ms. Dunn: Only take a piece of it.

Ms. Hollis: Cherry-pick it. Cherry-pick it.

Ms. Dunn: Right. Right.

Ms. Hollis: We had kind of taken the blood oath to try to stay together. So we did that to the maximum extent possible. When we came over here we had the full, it was – we
signed the papers one day and we were moved in a week later, not at this site, but on 1667 K. And the whole Duane Morris was so great, they had it all set up and running, down to the paper clips and the pens and the pencils and the computers. Everything set up, ready to go at the new space.

Ms. Dunn  
So had they had an Energy or Banking practice before?

Ms. Hollis  
They'd had Banking, but never Energy, but we were the Washington office. They'd never had a Washington office.

Ms. Dunn  
Oh, you were at the first D.C. office.

Ms. Hollis  
That was another part of the thought process is not to have to be superimposed in a large group, where there's this whole, we're the aliens coming into the Washington office.

Ms. Dunn  
You were the Washington office.
Ms. Hollis  Right. So it was from the standpoint of a clean move, it was ideal. And we just really liked the people at Duane Morris who were so gracious and so nice that they really -- I must have met with them 10 times before we decided to join them and vice-versa.

Ms. Dunn  Was this in Philadelphia often that you would go meet with them?

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Because that's where, did the firm just have a Philadelphia office then?

Ms. Hollis  And some -- an office in Cherry Hill, New Jersey and about two people in New York City that had been Shea & Gould.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. An old, how many, a 100 year old firm or getting close to 100?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, close to a 100. It turned 100 in 2004.
Ms. Dunn  Wow! So it sounds like in the end it was the people.

Ms. Hollis  It was the people and the graciousness and certainly –

Ms. Dunn  And the ability to sort of carve your own path?

Ms. Hollis  Right, and connect. It was exciting for them – first, to have a Washington office; second, to have an Energy practice; third, to have a couple of extremely high-end banking lawyers. Just kind of the makings of a firm. It’s like a cup of soup. They added their support, backing, friendship, and the interaction with the rest of the lawyers, and cross-selling and a commitment to cross-selling, and it worked. It was remarkably pristine, as these things go, amazingly so.

Ms. Dunn  Well, and probably not without credit to you and the work that you had.

Ms. Hollis  It was a lot of negotiations.

Ms. Dunn  And the negotiations and really thinking through them.
Ms. Hollis  It wasn't torturous negotiations. It was not painful. It was just the difficulty of coming to, trying to put the pieces together, who gets what and where they're going in the office. There's a lot of complexities to making a move like that.

Ms. Dunn  Well, and in the five years that you were Metzger, Hollis, Gordon & Alprin, Mr. Metzger had passed on and that five years was a sea change in firms.

Ms. Hollis  It really was, yeah.

Ms. Dunn  So you became sort of the captain of that ship and –

Ms. Hollis  Right.

Ms. Dunn  – brought it to become the D.C. office at Duane Morris. That's amazing.

Ms. Hollis  It was amazing because it's one of the few happy stories in all these law firm mergers and all. There was not too much blood on the floor. Hardly any.
Today as we sit here at Duane Morris, almost 20 years later?

Twenty years.

Twenty years next year. Are there others still here who were a part of the Metzger group, Metzger, Hollis?

Yes, yes, yes. Next door neighbor, the immigration lawyer, Denyse Sabagh. She has a great immigration practice. She had it, she brought it over, it's succeeded.

Wow!

It's amazing.

Great. So let's get back to the professional work. You're still teaching and you're engaged with the American Bar Association, and, obviously, still the Federal Energy Bar.

Energy Bar.

And then did you have any other organizations that you –

Ms. Dunn: You had that started up about that time?

Ms. Hollis: A little before I got there, but I became a President of it, which was wonderful, exciting, fun. I was doing a lot of work in England, so I got inducted into the Commercial Bar of England and Wales as an International Honorary Member. I still am a member of that. Oh, what else? A lot of, look around the room here, lots of different ABA stuff. I went in the House of Delegates and that was starting in about '91, '92 for the Energy Bar. After I became President of the Energy Bar, the year after that I went into the House of Delegates for the Energy Bar.

Ms. Dunn: So you were the, so this is interesting. You brought these two worlds together. So you were the representative in the ABA House for the Energy Bar?

Ms. Hollis: Right.
Ms. Dunn: Okay.

Ms. Hollis: It was great fun. Then following that, when I was offered the opportunity to be in the House for the Section of Environment, Energy and Resources, then I moved over and did that because the term for the Energy Bar appointment to House of Delegates was, I think, a year-and-a-half, two years, two years, yeah.

Ms. Dunn: So that interesting. So your first sort of official officer-type position with what we know today as “SEER,” the Section of Energy, Environment and Resources, was as a House of Delegates rep?

Ms. Hollis: But by then I think I had been President, let’s see –

Ms. Dunn: Or Chair of the Section?

Ms. Hollis: – Chair of the Section and that would have been 2000.


Ms. Hollis: Right.
Ms. Dunn  Wow! Okay, so these are your first – you’re at Duane Morris, you’re moving this transition through, and you’re rising up to Chair an ABA section. Because you take several years.

Ms. Hollis  That’s right.

Ms. Dunn  And you were Chair from 2000 to 2001.

Ms. Hollis  Right.

Ms. Dunn  And that was only a couple years into time as merged or in the D.C. office.

Ms. Hollis  Right. And then, also, I had chaired a number of standing committees, too. I had forgotten that. The Standing Committee on Environmental Law – I think that was ’97 – of the ABA. Oh goodness, a lot of different stuff there.

Ms. Dunn  Yeah, a whole lot, a whole lot. If I look over – International Oil and Gas Law Center.

Ms. Hollis  Oh, yeah. That’s the old Southwestern Legal Foundation.
That was part of my Butler-Binion days when they encouraged me so much to be active in it because of them had been President of it. That was part of that world.

Also, I took, let’s see, in ’91-’92, I took a delegation again – this is People-to-People – but it was an Energy Law, an Energy delegation to Russia right after the wall fell. The Southwestern Legal Foundation also backed this delegation. That was wild, and we worked for a couple of weeks with the Ministry of Fuels and Energy of the former Soviet Union, and that was an incredibly wild and interesting experience right there.

Ms. Dunn  So, so far I think we have Russia, Ethiopia, how many countries did you help impact their laws around oil and gas and energy?

Ms. Hollis  I would say probably 12 or so.

Ms. Dunn  What other entities are represented in these office
mementoes?

Ms. Hollis That's the standing committee, and the Standing Committee on Environmental Law.

Ms. Dunn ABA Journal, too.

Ms. Hollis ABA Journal. I went on that – that would be about 2000, I guess, maybe a little later than that – 2004 around in there maybe – and did that for nine years.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Then the, I have to get my list out, but quite a bit of other things. I did Eastern Mineral Law Foundation.

Ms. Dunn Oh, yeah.

Ms. Hollis Yeah.

Ms. Dunn We haven't even talked this the mineral – Eastern? I'm thinking the Western Mineral Law.

Ms. Hollis No, Eastern Mineral Law. And, I was on the ABA
Nominating Committee for a few years.

Ms. Dunn  For the whole ABA?

Ms. Hollis  Right.

Ms. Dunn  To help nominate the officers?

Ms. Hollis  Right.

Ms. Dunn  Of the entire ABA?

Ms. Hollis  Right. And then Chair on the Fund for Justice and Education, that was from 2006 to 2009.

Ms. Dunn  And you're still involved with FJE, aren't you?

Ms. Hollis  Oh, yes. Well, I'm a –

Ms. Dunn  Contributor?

Ms. Hollis  – President's Club, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Yeah. So here you are playing all these different roles in the ABA. Meanwhile, you're Head of the D.C. office of Duane Morris.

Ms. Dunn: Energy and Environment Section. So you were one of the first, I think, to really bring Energy and Environment together in a practice.

Ms. Hollis: Right, right.

Ms. Dunn: Because I think up until this point, they'd been really very separate.

Ms. Hollis: They had been very separate, yeah. It's interesting. Around this time I got some very interesting cases. One of the largest fines by FERC in a penalty for violation of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Ms. Dunn: So FERC assessed this penalty?

Ms. Hollis: Right.

Ms. Dunn: And against?

Ms. Hollis: Because it was against a major pipeline, and it was
settled, ultimately settled, but it was because the pipeline
did not get the exactly proper – this was FERC’s position.
It was settled out. We never actually –

Ms. Dunn Did you represent the pipeline?

Ms. Hollis Mm hmm, after the fact. A major pipeline through the
Southeast, which unfortunately hit what are considered to
be historic or archeological sites in a lot of Native
American sites – mainly, lithics, arrowheads, that type of
thing – but not exclusively, there were other things as
well. But the NHPA, and to this day it’s the most it’s the
most significant NHPA Resolution ever. It’s amazing.

Ms. Dunn So you resolved the case?

Ms. Hollis We did, yeah. It settled. Settled it, yeah.

Ms. Dunn But –

Ms. Hollis I was handling some very big cases.

Ms. Dunn Right.
Ms. Hollis: This was one in enforcement. I was doing a lot of enforcement work by then.

Ms. Dunn: So were you doing defensive work to help?

Ms. Hollis: Oh, yes. Yeah.

Ms. Dunn: And so even if the penalty was very large, ultimately, the win is that it could have been even bigger?

Ms. Hollis: Right, right. And then, also, there’s a lot of other things that go into it, too, as you know.

Ms. Dunn: Right, right, right. So National Historic Preservation Act, you worked on the case that was the largest?

Ms. Hollis: To my knowledge, the largest ever.

Ms. Dunn: Penalty assessed?

Ms. Hollis: Right. It’s very interesting. Like the Endangered Species Act, it is an absolute liability.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis That’s what makes it a different kettle of fish.

Ms. Dunn Yeah, yeah.

Ms. Hollis Interesting, very, very interesting, walking the pipeline route. Very fascinating stuff. Things you never think about.

Ms. Dunn Right.

Ms. Hollis And I’d had a great love of archeology when I was in undergraduate school. I was obsessed by archeology. I was a very happy, happy puppy to have that opportunity to represent this company and to understand the implications.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis The company was certainly not deliberate. I can, really there was a very proper pipeline company, and I think they just had some bad archeological coverage.

Ms. Dunn Information, yeah. So these, so you’ve got this very full
plate. Did you manage large teams of lawyers at this stage of your career?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Yeah. So you worked with some of the young attorneys who came into the firm?


Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm

Ms. Hollis  All the way through Vinson Elkins and straightforward.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. So one of your roles at Duane Morris has been the Diversity and Inclusion Committee work?

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  How have you focused on that?

Ms. Hollis  Well, I certainly promoted the diversity component in the firm, but the firm is very committed to it. We have had a wonderful leader in that regard, and our two leaders that I’ve worked with so closely were very, are very
committed to it. It’s a huge firm effort. In the context of the City of Philadelphia, diversity is a very key issue, as it is for the whole country, but particularly in Philadelphia, for all the reasons which have been discussed in the recent press with respect to the DNC. What is Philadelphia? We had one of the most outstanding and famous people in the world of diversity, Nolan Atkinson, who was our Chief Diversity Officer until a few months ago, and now he’s the Chief Diversity Officer for the City of Philadelphia.

Ms. Dunn He left the firm to do that.

Ms. Hollis Yeah. He’s a very mature lawyer, and he’d been with the firm for many, many years – long before I showed up on the scene. It had always been a key part of the firm, historically. It’s just that’s the way it is.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis: So I’ve spoken at the Diversity Summit. I’ve participated in the mentoring and meetings, and basically done whatever I can. I was the first woman on the Executive Committee of the firm.

Ms. Dunn: Really?

Ms. Hollis: In the hundred year history, yeah. And the first non-Philadelphian on the Executive Committee of the firm in a hundred years.

Ms. Dunn: Wow! That’s impressive.

Ms. Hollis: The first woman Office Head, and the first head of a section of the firm, Practice Group they call it.

Ms. Dunn: So you cut a lot of territory in this law firm.

Ms. Hollis: Sure.

Ms. Dunn: This old Philadelphia law firm, but it sounds like it was pretty progressive, too.

Ms. Hollis: Yes, very much so.
Ms. Dunn: Meaning sort of from the original beginnings?

Ms. Hollis: Very, very much. It’s surprising. You’d go in and you’d think, “Oh, my gosh, it’s all very button down,” but really this is something that is in the DNA of the firm. It’s really, really quite remarkable, and it was from the day I walked in the door. There was no “Oh, she’s a woman” thing at all, ever, nothing. It was never, I don’t know how it came to pass, but there I was. [laughs]

Ms. Dunn: I think to succeed you not only have to be this incredible person that you are, but also have the right environments, right?

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: If we think about Malcolm Gladwell and some of the writers –

Ms. Hollis: Yes.

Ms. Dunn: – he talks about The Beatles, right?
Ms. Hollis  Right.

Ms. Dunn  The Beatles could have been four or five talented guys anywhere, but they were in the right place, at the right time and that the chemistry –

Ms. Hollis  At the right time. I was very lucky.

Ms. Dunn  And it seems like you were in environments where the chemistry was good – the right place, at the right time in this field.

Ms. Hollis  Right. And I like people. You get to know people and they put more trust in you.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And you perform, you deliver, generally speaking, good things happen.

Ms. Dunn  Right, right. So meanwhile your family has grown? Your daughter and husband have been by your side, your mom?
Ms. Hollis: Yes, thank God. Oh, yes. She passed away in 2000, but she was right there with me all the way.

Ms. Dunn: What did your mom think of you? Did she give you advice as you moved over to Duane Morris?

Ms. Hollis: Oh, she was just so proud, just so proud.

Ms. Dunn: Yeah.

Ms. Hollis: She didn’t last that long. She was only around for three years, unfortunately, after I moved to Duane Morris, but she loved it. She thought the world of them.

Ms. Dunn: What did she think of you when you had your own firm, too, Metzger Hollis?

Ms. Hollis: She was proud, but she knew the stresses of business. At a small firm, the stress is much more direct. It’s direct in all practice of law, but it’s particularly direct in a small firm.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis  Just the pressures of, just the mechanics of running a small business.

Ms. Dunn  Right, right. She knew. She’d lived it.

Ms. Hollis  Yeah. She’d seen it and she knew full well.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And then you mentioned the extended family that you’d built around the world, the friends in Ethiopia.

Ms. Hollis  Yeah.

Ms. Dunn  I think you had said that they came to stay with you?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, yes.

Ms. Dunn  Your home sounds like a revolving door.

Ms. Hollis  Not quite, but we had these wonderful people. We had the Chinese, wonderful Chinese intellectual who was responsible for re-writing the energy laws in China, who ended up – I met him through the Harvard Energy Program. He became very close. Actually, I don’t know
if you were there when Windsong got married this time, and there was a beautiful Chinese girl in the congregation there, and also my Ethiopian friend was there. So they were all – these are these wonderful human “souvenirs of your heart” that you carry so close to you forever. They are really magnificent people that opened up a whole new world. We’ve had a lot of fun. I’ve got no complaints.

Ms. Dunn And the ABA, too, has been just – you have been a star at the American Bar Association.

Ms. Hollis I love the ABA. It’s just been, the world is changing and voluntary bars are changing and all that, but I really found a home there. I found a lot of friends, and over time they really become – essentially, because I such a tiny family – they become as close as like cousins and friends. Really great, only you’re not stuck with them! [laughs]

Ms. Dunn They say you can choose your friends, but you can’t
choose your family.

Ms. Hollis  You can choose your friends, and they are some really magnificent people. I have to say that ABA is responsible for creating a number of friendships for us that I would never have had.

Ms. Dunn  And helping you explore the world more through the ABA.

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely. Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn  Getting to meetings all over the world.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Do you want to pause for a minute here?

Ms. Hollis  Yeah. Let me stop for a second here.

August 12, 2016

Ms. Dunn  So, this is our – it might be our fifth interview.

Ms. Hollis  Numero cinco, yes.
Ms. Dunn: This is numero cinco, fifth interview. It is Friday, the 12th of August, and this is Alex Dunn, sitting in the office of Sheila Hollis, here in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Hollis: Good morning, Sheila.

Ms. Dunn: Good morning. Thanks, Alex, for being here.

Ms. Hollis: Oh, and you’re just back from the ABA Annual Meeting!

Ms. Dunn: Yes, once again. Yes.

Ms. Hollis: Very good. Very good. And, would you also like me to just do a quick overview of my other firms in private practice leading up to Duane Morris?

Ms. Dunn: Yes. We can do that. I think we covered some of them, but let’s go quickly through the chronology, just so we put ourselves in the right place.
Ms. Hollis: Certainly. Well, I mentioned to you that before I became Director of Enforcement, I was at the firm of Wilner & Scheiner. And represented the Public Service Commission of the State of New York, in all of the shortage cases, all of the natural gas shortage cases. Also the coal strike. And, a variety of other issues were emerging then. And, then when I went to the Office of Enforcement, and founded that office, we moved into another arena entirely, because of the new law, the Energy Policy Act of 1978, a very major component of it related to the development of regulations and enforcement of regulations dealing with the wellhead pricing of natural gas, which was an incredibly complicated, so, depending on how you counted it, somewhere between 17 and 33 categories of natural gas pricing, depending on when the gas was developed, where it was developed, whether it was in the interstate or
the intrastate markets; the difficulty of developing, a number of categories; a specialized natural gas, which received higher prices, because of the shortage mentality at the time. Tremendous problems associated – I mentioned to you the winter of ’76-77, and the emergency natural gas act of that winter.

So – and then, also, hydroelectric – a lot of hydroelectric enforcement issues, natural gas pipelines that hadn’t been properly licensed and certificated or had not fulfilled all the conditions -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis - in the arena of compliance and environmental placement of the pipelines, actual agreements in place to support the pipelines and so on. And, a variety of other miscellaneous things. Some oil pipeline related issues, the propriety of rates for certain oil pipeline issues. And a host of, basically, a host of other things because it was a
complete – complete redo of energy law and policy, pursuant to the Natural Gas Act, the Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978. The Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978. The – a variety of other – the DOE Organization Act, which preceded the natural gas modifications, and also the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act. And interestingly enough, the Power Plant and Industrial Fuel Use Act, affectionately known as PFUA, which stressed the, ironically, and this will point out how times change and how perceptions change – which encouraged the utilization of domestic coal, versus the burning of natural gas, which was in the shortest supply, but coal was being strongly, strongly supported in its development, because, it was an accessible, domestic fuel, and, the price was right, much easier to deal with than natural gas at the time. So it was so ironic, although shortly thereafter, there came to be a realization of the greenhouse gas issue
and emissions problem and much more focus on those issues. And so, the realization was that maybe the Power Plant and Industrial Fuel Use Act, which was going great guns for the first year or so, post-1978, had maybe been a step not in the right direction, but in the wrong direction.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Also, there were a number of oil pricing regulations, because oil was in short supply, too. We were still dealing with the embargo situations. So all of that, the whole mentality, was shortage, shortage, shortage, domestic supply where possible -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Because also, because of the crisis of supply in the U.S., which we were still all traumatized by that mentality. It led to the beginnings of importation of liquefied natural gas in larger quantities and the proposals to do much
more of that. Also, construction of new pipelines began.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Immediately post the passage of these laws, in order to encourage the importation of gas from Canada. A variety of things were happening very fast. All with this kind of fear of not having adequate energy supplies to run the economy.

And, that was a – it was a huge – huge cloud hanging over decision making and perceptions at the time.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  So, when I left the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to go into private practice, I started out with an old Houston firm with a very nice Washington office, Butler Binion. And, that’s where I first began representing the – working with the World Bank as a consultant to the World Bank, and that’s how I ended up
going to East Africa. So much during those years. And, working with the Ethiopian government, and the wonderful people that I met there, to develop an oil and gas code to encourage basic – Western investment in potential resources in Ethiopia, Ogaden Desert and the Red Sea, offshore Red Sea. Because there had been development there before the fall of Hailie Selassie. And, they wanted – I think the World Bank and a number of interests wanted to reinvigorate their relationships, which had fallen by the wayside under the presidency of Mengistu Haile Mariam, who was essentially the president of the country at the time. And the influence of – extreme Marxist influence which had come to the country. So, the Russian government – I should say the Soviet Union, and its states associated with the Soviet Union, and that Iron Block – were very, very active in Ethiopia, so it was North Koreans, Cubans, Polish, East
Germans, Albanians – a variety of players, which I had
certainly not encountered before, to any significant
degree.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  But they had moved in in a very major way, into Ethiopia.

And were interested in the same things that the World
Bank and Western governments were interested in. So it
was a very tense and stressful time, for the country, and
of course there was Darfur – there were a variety of
terrible things happening in the country at the time. But
there were good people at the core -

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - still trying to make a difference, and still trying to help.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, so I think that – it was a really profound impact on
my life.
Also during this time I led the delegation to China.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  With the women judges and lawyers, which was an extraordinary experience, and has really shaped a lot of my subsequent activities.

Then, I also, during this time period, when I wasn’t in East Africa – and I was at the firm for about four years – I spent a lot of time getting to know more about the production arena, and the actual physical pipeline structure of the country. Also, much more involvement in infrastructure – rather than being on the outside looking in, being actually out in the field. A lot of significant activity in Mexico and Canada. A lot of activity related to exports and imports of, particularly of natural gas, but not exclusively.

So, a lot, a lot of international work, but also a huge
amount of domestic work. Some hydroelectric activity. But I’d say a fair amount of it, a significant amount of it, was oil and gas.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, being, getting to know, basically, more about the industry, which I had participated in the oversight of, but really, this was a real opportunity to learn the actual mechanics of it, to a much greater degree. And it was very exciting, actually. It was fascinating.

So, I look at that as a tremendous growth period. I came in as an associate, just for a few months, and became a partner shortly thereafter. And, we spent a lot of time working on things back and forth between Houston and – all over Texas – Oklahoma, New Mexico, Wyoming. I represented, during this period, the State of Oklahoma, and the State of New Mexico. And, that was a marvelous
experience, really marvelous.

So that was about -

Ms. Dunn  That was at Butler Binion.

Ms. Hollis  Yes. And it was a wonderful experience, a wonderful old firm. Unfortunately, the firm split up in Houston. It impacted the Washington office. And, I went, then, I moved to a firm, which no longer exists, but Broadhurst, Brook, Mangham and Hardy -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - and, Hardy – the Hardy name, is of Professor George Hardy. Professor Hardy was Dean of the University of Houston Law School, but he had been seconded to the FERC and was a consultant, to help them develop the natural gas regulations that I discussed earlier, that is, the Natural Gas Policy Act. Because, he was such an expert on Louisiana codes, Texas, all the others, to help begin
the process of regulating entities which had never been regulated ever before, in places that had never been regulated. So, this had to be introduced in a number of arenas, a number of states, referring back to the Natural Gas Policy Act, so that’s when I got to know Dr. Hardy, who was a Rhodes scholar, and had been Dean of the University of Houston Law School. Then he was – he was a Louisiana native, and tied in with the group that is the name of the firm, Broadhurst, Brook, Mangham and Hardy.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Out of – primarily out of Lafayette, Louisiana, but also New Orleans, and some other folks, too. But we had a very wonderful Washington office, that had the former Vice Chair of the FERC, Commissioner Smith, of Arkansas – wonderful lawyer. And, a number of other lawyers who had held significant positions in government
throughout the country. And, very, very interesting

group. Smallish group – I guess under a hundred lawyers,
but a wonderful group, and, really got to know Louisiana
very well, which is a world unto itself.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Also during that period, that’s when I led a delegation
throughout South America, very exciting experience, all
women judges and lawyers, starting in – I think we
started Venezuela, Costa Rica, Argentina, Brazil,
Guatemala, and it was an extraordinary experience over
the course of a month. And, the issue was women’s
rights in the legal systems of South American
governments. And, this was during the period where
there were “desaparecidos” in Argentina, and, met with a
number of indigenous peoples groups – it opened a lot of
horizons in different ways, for me. So it was just an
extraordinary, amazing experience. And I came back
with a lot more wisdom, than I had gone down with, that’s for sure. About what life was really like, in a number of these countries. Particularly with respect to the indigenous peoples and seeing the environmental impact on their world, and how it was shaken up by development of various sorts of — not just — certainly not even with an energy focus, because this was not an energy-focused group. It was strictly women’s rights, but, the women were such a diverse group — everything from the aristocracy of Brazil and Argentina, right out to the indigenous peoples, who were brought in to meet with us — the “abuelitas” — that is, the mothers and grandmothers, and, relatives of the disappeared ones in Argentina. It was extraordinary, really. Extraordinary experience. And, my Spanish is not very good, but I was able to put it to work in a number of contexts there. And, it was just a remarkable, intense experience that lasted
nearly a month. So that was -

Ms. Dunn  And was your firm supportive of you taking this time –
this -

Ms. Hollis  Very. Very. They were just supportive. Because they –
they had a – they were that kind of people. There were a
number of academics in the firm -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Vicky Kennedy. She and I were close friends. We were
all in the Washington office together. So it was a very
intense, very remarkable, small but active firm. And
then, a variety of things happened, some of which people
may be aware of and may not be aware of, but, the – I left
the firm in 1987. And, the reason, it was a variety of
things happening. Of course the oil and gas business was
undergoing a recession at that point, too. In fact, there
had been too much gas, there was a gas surplus, as
opposed to a gas shortage, but that was only part of the story. A very dramatic story. Which – it was, involved Mr. Broadhurst, and the interactions that he had in the political scenes. And, I’ll leave it to those who are interested in pursuing that tidbit, that – but -

Ms. Dunn So things became a little too colorful at the firm.

Ms. Hollis Yes. I think it was. It was one of those things when you just said, you know, “This is -” and, it was one of those things, it was just – a decision – I loved the people, many of the people remain very close to this very day. And, I, instead, moved to Vinson Elkins, in D.C., and, in that capacity, I became the head of the Washington office energy practice for Vinson Elkins. At an extraordinary period of Vinson Elkins, very exciting, interesting, remarkable experience. And, did that for five years. And, represented pipelines, big pipelines in getting authorizations from the FERC. I also did a huge number
of other fascinating projects. Doing a variety of natural
gas related, but not exclusively – there were a lot of
independent power projects being developed in Europe.
All over the world. So, I traveled very, very extensively
throughout the world on projects in a number of places.
Eastern Europe, for example, was beginning to open up
because the wall fell.

Ms. Dunn   Yes.

Ms. Hollis  So, I actually took, from the Center for American
International Law, previously the Southwestern Legal
Foundation, right after the wall fell in Russia, Soviet
Union, FSU, I think it was going – the name at the time –
title – I led a delegation for the Southwestern Legal
Foundation, to work with the Russian government, in
developing an oil and a gas pipeline code. You know,
this was pro bono, obviously -
Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  But very, very exciting times, because the wall having just been – basically taken down, and everything – it was a very wild kind of time, in Moscow, where we worked for a couple weeks. It was a group of men, all men in the – either general counsels, or international development people, from a variety of different places – and, a couple academics. And so, I led the delegation, it was remarkable. And meeting the senior Russian officials, that had basically built the Soviet pipeline, in the 1980s. So, you can only imagine how dramatic it was. There were – I didn’t meet with any women in the business to speak of at all. However, we had a woman translator. But everybody else was male on this. And, very, very smart people. And, very, very interesting, because, the rulebook hadn’t been written, for the new government. So it was – it was very unpredictable, and, wild, but we
did come out with suggested codes for the gas pipelines for how to restructure the gas industry. Of course, it was premature at the time, but over the course -

Ms. Dunn  They were looking ahead.

Ms. Hollis They were looking ahead over the course of the next several years, it unfolded very rapidly. And that’s when so many of the – so much of what had been all integrated Gazprom, broke up. And became different separate producing companies, different pipeline companies and so on. So, very, very interesting experience. So, very valuable.

I should also say that, while I was at Vinson Elkins, I had a – it was a very, very wonderful experience with many of the partners, who I had gotten to know over many years, both in Houston, and in Washington, D.C., and, very outstanding lawyers – a lot of appellate work there.
Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  I had some appellate cases. And in fact I’m – I’m trying to remember which firm I was with at the time, but, I’ve been cited in a Supreme Court decision on some of the obscurita, in an article I wrote on the obscurita of the Mid-Louisiana gas case, which was actually one of these natural gas pricing cases in the restructuring of the gas pricing regulations. And, the concept of first sale. So that was – it was a very – it was – first of all, it was a tremendous compliment. During this time, also, I was teaching and writing, very extensively, from 19 – approximately 1980, late 1979, 1980, all the way up through 2000 at George Washington Law School. Throughout, that was the undercurrent throughout this entire process. And of course I wrote very extensively during this time and spoke all over the world, literally. From the restructuring, the beginnings of the restructuring
in Great Britain; that was a very extraordinary experience. It had all been integrated, British Gas and British Electric. And, the national power. So those industries were being – they were following on the process of what had transpired, in the U.S., the U.S. became a model for so much of the restructurings throughout the world. So it was extremely interesting experience. You can only imagine going around the world, and, talking about what we had done in the U.S. and the successes and the questions and the failures, and, the concerns about the implementation process. So I lectured at University of Warsaw; in Great Britain, of course; Germany; I think Hungary, yes; also Mexico quite a bit; Canada quite a bit; Northern Ireland, I worked in Northern Ireland for the closure of a huge coal plant, and the reconfiguration of that. And also during this period, I did an extraordinary project called the Tri-National Project, which,
unfortunately, the government changed, so it never got to completion, it never got to actually be built, but over the course of several years, developing a desalinization plant to serve Tijuana.

Ms. Dunn Oh, interesting.

Ms. Hollis Which desperately needed clean water.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Because there is no – there’s basically no groundwater there whatsoever. And, so the restructuring of the Mexican electricity and gas markets, because it would involve the importation of gas from the U.S., into Baja, California and Norte. Now this is – this has all happened, now. In these iterations, this was in the 1990s. So the iterations of it, there is, all these things have transpired to one degree or another. But at the time, it was a huge project which involved an entity which would be a
co-generator, would sell power back into the United States, across the border, Tijuana back into San Diego and that world; bring gas in from Canada by displacement; construct new pipelines; build a huge desal plant, which would qualify it for co-generation. And, obviously, the Mexican government was enthusiastic about it, but it was a very lengthy, and involved process, involved a lot of time in Mexico City, a lot of time in Baja, California, Norte. And all along Calixico, Mexicali, that whole part of the world.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis And, I had been, as a child, I probably mentioned to you, we went down to Mexico quite a bit.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis My mother and I, but never deep, deep into the heart of Mexico as we did on this. And, also, I traveled there
during college and all that, but not in, with the same mindset as to build a huge project. So, we basically had to take on issues associated with Pemex, because Pemex controlled all oil and gas in Mexico. Step one. And then, also for the CFE, that’s the Comisión Federal de Electricidad, which controlled all electric generation, distribution, transmission, everything in Mexico. So, it was – the unions; the complexities of the political situation; the complexities of building a project of that magnitude, multibillion – basically a multibillion dollar project.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis So, all that came together, was – it was a very exciting time, because of NAFTA. NAFTA was driving a lot of it. But, very precedent setting and intense period of years, it was several years that I worked on this – not all the time, but, a lot of the time.
Ms. Dunn  So, while at Vinson and Elkins.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Yes.

Ms. Hollis  And, wonderful experience. Very extraordinary. And then it, that rolled over when I – I left Vinson Elkins and set up my – basically set up my own operation, with Metzger, which I'll talk to you a little bit further about. But, when I left, some of that came with me, and I continued to work on that.

Also, another very important case, which was kicked off while I was at Vinson Elkins, and was deep into it, was the New Don Pedro case, which is the relicensing of a huge hydro facility, in California, that served direct, indirectly, because of the unique water laws of California, indirectly the City of San Francisco, upon which the City of San Francisco is about 85% dependent for its water
supply.

Ms. Dunn  Hmm.

Ms. Hollis  It’s all related to very interesting facility, the O'Shaughnessy Dam, in Yosemite. Which is, has a special statute, that regulates that, that allowed it to be built back in – it was authorized in 1913, and it’s in the heart of Yosemite, and, it is, they say, why John Muir, created the Sierra Club, because of the flooding of the Hetch Hetchy Valley, in Yosemite, in order to build the O’Shaughnessy Dam. The O’Shaughnessy Dam was not just a lark, but San Francisco had burned to the ground – you may recall the Great Fire of San Francisco -

Ms. Dunn  Sure.

Ms. Hollis  They had no water. They had little, little wagons, with some water in it. And that was what they had to fight a major fire with. They had no water, adequate to the task
whatsoever. So O’Shaughnessy – an engineer from Ireland – came in, and, was a visionary, you could disagree or agree with what he did. But, he saw it, he saw it through, and that’s why the dam in Yosemite is named the O’Shaughnessy Dam. And it still provides, and is related, directly related to, through the riparian rights and preexisting contractual rights in California, directly tied to the New Don Pedro Reservoir. So you’ve got the irrigation districts; you’ve got the City of San Francisco; you have Santa Clara water; you have a variety of other water players, in California, that are in the mix with respect to this.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And, it’s an ongoing story, it’s an ongoing story. And, the whole question of the appropriateness of ever having built O’Shaughnessy and keeping it in Yosemite, and that is an issue that is still -
Ms. Dunn    Still today.

Ms. Hollis    An issue today. But then, you experience a water shortage, as has been the case in California – tremendous – tremendous challenge.

Ms. Dunn    Yes.

Ms. Hollis    So, beginning to unscramble the eggs that were scrambled in 1913, is a very tall order.

I also worked on a couple dam removal cases, in the Pacific Northwest. On the Elwha and Glines – Elwha and Glines dams. They were old dams. FERC certificate – licensed. Back in the 1920s. Because the Federal Power Act was passed in 1920, which was the first – which was the beginnings of the Federal Power Commission, Federal Power Commission just had authority at that time, over hydroelectric facilities.

Ms. Dunn    Okay.
Ms. Hollis: And the licensing and oversight of hydroelectric facilities. Then along came 1935, and the Great Depression, and the Samuel Insull, those issues, and that’s when the Federal Power Act of 1935 was passed. Then, in 1938, that is when the Natural Gas Act of 1938 was passed. So there was – and then the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935, in that same New Deal legislation package, to regulate the electric industry, the transmission of electricity, and the interstate commerce, and, aspects of the securities, the boards of directors and so on.

Basically, directed to the Samuel Insull question and the integration, both distribution company, distribution – the relationships where it was one-stop shopping; distribution company, electric generation, transmission, all in one entity.

Ms. Dunn: Wow!

Ms. Hollis: And so, breaking that up -
Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: Part of this was what—what was—at least to oversee what was going on in these relationships. So the antitrust, the trust busters, that same mentality, had followed through into 1935 and 1938. Different—understanding that the then Federal Power Commission mutated itself—it started out with three commissioners—

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: I think it was agricultural, defense, and interior. And then, over time evolved, legislatively, into the five member commission.

Ms. Dunn: That we have today.

Ms. Hollis: That we have today. Yes.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: And, very—

Ms. Dunn: And now they’re politically oriented, as opposed to sort
of where they come from professionally.

Ms. Hollis  I think that is correct.

Ms. Dunn  I think they have to be balanced by Repub -

Ms. Hollis  Right. Right. It's no more than three of any one party.

Ms. Dunn  Right. But it doesn’t matter whether they come from Ag, or Defense – anything like that.

Ms. Hollis  Right.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. So it’s changed. Right.

Ms. Hollis  Yes. So, that was – so the entire experience with San Francisco went on for nearly ten years.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Beginning in 1989, and going on for a good ten years. Played a major part in my life. We had – very interesting with respect to the City of San Francisco, how the case was handled. Chairman Moler, Elizabeth Moler at the time, really took the initiative here with the other
commissioners, to have this handled by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

Ms. Dunn  Interesting.

Ms. Hollis  So, for the first time in the history of FPC, or FERC, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service had two mediators come in to work with us over the course of many, many, many, many months and to reach a resolution, versus duking it out in a litigated proceeding. There were so many forces at work here, because of the – there was a drought, at the time.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  The environmental community and the water-related issues were huge. The farm community, the water districts involved – very – these are all very passionate issues for everybody involved. Everything from the kayakers and the fishermen's association, Sierra Club, a
variety of other players, had a great interest in this.

Because the Sierra Club, of course, was founded by John Muir, this related, ultimately related back to the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, and the O’Shaughnessy Dam.

Ms. Dunn There was a connection.

Ms. Hollis Yes. There was a huge connection. And really it was a huge environmental case.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And also during this time frame, just to make it more interesting, it really was a period where a realization of greenhouse gas related issues had come to the fore. And, so the beginning evolution of the -- shift away from coal-fired generation, while not explicitly out there, it was beginning to fall, into place. You saw the Clean Air Act; you saw the water-related legislation passed. It all started to fall into place about this time, and you saw the
beginnings of a shift much more towards natural gas and renewables.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  I should also say that with respect to the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act, which was part of the initial package of statutes in the Natural Energy Act of 1978, that was really the beginnings of – not unregulated, but differently regulated independent power.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And that was a huge, huge change. This began to break up the big monopolies. The utility monopolies had generation, distribution, transmission, all under the same roof. So, small power production facilities, qualified facilities, which basically was related to the Mexico project I alluded to earlier -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis  This really began to emerge in a much greater way, and with an acceleration of it. Why? The price of natural gas had fallen, too, so there was a huge opportunity and opening for some very smart people, backed by some very smart money, to build large natural gas-fired generation facilities, to fill in the gaps, which were certainly about to emerge.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And the economy was moving. And, other things were happening. So you were seeing a lot of big natural gas-fired generation, and I worked on a number of those projects all over the country. California; Mid-Atlantic; Northeast; Georgia.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, additionally, small hydro. Solar. Renewables. Biomass. I did early – the first active that I know of
anyway, first active biomass project up in Connecticut. New Hampshire; Maine; Massachusetts. And, just a lot of fascinating stuff going on. LNG importation fell into a holding pattern, because the price of domestically-produced gas began to drop. And so it was no longer viable trying to – because utilizing rolled-in pricing for gas had gone away, too. So, very interesting, how to unload the natural gas -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis How to force pipelines to transport natural gas on a more open basis, so it was more accessible, so it wasn’t just their supply or only from their affiliated companies.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis So that all began to unfold. And, a lot of work on the Public Utility Holding Company Act, which really unbelievably complicated issues with respect to
ownership structure of power plants—internationally and domestically. Because all these new ownership structures and corporate forms were taking place; a lot of Wall Street money was coming into existence then for investing in ways they’d never invested before, in the power markets. Also, natural gas, I should mention, because it’s a really important factor in all this—natural gas trading and electricity trading began to appear. So I worked early on in the development of a technology company, which was an affiliate of an eastern utility, to develop a natural gas trading platform in concert with the New York Mercantile Exchange. So we worked very intensively on that and the rollout of that.

Ms. Dunn You mean, like, stock market trading?

Ms. Hollis Well, futures and commodities trading issues.

Ms. Dunn Futures trading.
Ms. Hollis   Yes.
Ms. Dunn     Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis   Yes, like on ICE -
Ms. Dunn     Yes.
Ms. Hollis   And NYMEX.
Ms. Dunn     Yes.
Ms. Hollis   And so -
Ms. Dunn     The natural gas futures -
Ms. Hollis   Natural gas – natural gas contract – organizing natural gas contracts in a way where they were more routinized – and on a grander and faster moving system.
Ms. Dunn     Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis   There were models, you know, to work from. And, regulation, by NYMEX, and of course, ultimately, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.
Ms. Dunn  Wow!

Ms. Hollis  Plus FERC, was of course always overseeing aspects of this. So, a lot of very progressive oversight development. Construction of new pipelines – I worked on a lot of the new pipeline construction going into the Northeast, particularly desperate need there. Old infrastructure; working for local distribution companies that needed this supply put in place, and a pipeline to move the gas to them. So you were seeing a flurry of activity from one end of the country, one end of the world to the next, basically. Analogous things going on – the opening up of markets; opening up of new investments, in foreign countries throughout the world, too. Big power projects throughout the world. India, they began to emerge in India; all eastern Europe and all that. So that was all part of this motif of activity that I had involvement in. And it was just a tremendously creative period for energy
Ms. Dunn  The innovation and exciting creativity just seems to be the theme of all of your work. You were always right where things were changing, and, you had an opportunity to be a part of the change.

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely. And, to see it up close, and to know the people and to see the brilliant people and the successes, the failures, the impediments.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And to see the overlay of shifting policies and regulations. And government. You know, the different administrations. And how that impacted things.

Ms. Dunn  Yes. And being here in Washington, did you – do you think your practice had a particularly, sort of political orientation as well? Knowing what was going on, knowing how the policies of different administrations -
Ms. Hollis  Sure.

Ms. Dunn  - were going to affect your clients?

Ms. Hollis  I testified before Congress on a few occasions, on this, that and the other thing. Natural gas pricing, or, the power markets -

Ms. Dunn  Hmm.

Ms. Hollis  So. Shortages in the power markets, that type of thing. And, very challenging, exciting, and, the committees that, both in the House and Senate, were – very sophisticated. Many of the players, chairs of the committee, for both parties, depending on who was running the table at the time, very, very sharp people who knew the energy business and the energy industry very well, either – they were for it or against it, but, in any event, they were very, very sharp. And of course, the San Francisco case was highly political. You can only imagine, and, everybody
in the, everybody in California was basically involved in this. So, it was very, very interesting, exciting times.

Never – no regrets. I had so many opportunities to meet so many brilliant, outstanding people. You know, there’s always – there’s always black hats and white hats in everything, but, as far as just raw intelligence, and creativity, to reshape an industry which had basically been fundamentally ossified from the day it was created, until unleashed in the early 1980s, was pretty remarkable thing to be involved in in any capacity.

Ms. Dunn So this is – what we’re trying to do here is sort of highlight some of your cases, your roles, the work. You know, we’ve talked a lot about your life, and how you made it to different places and the choices that you’ve made, and, some of the more personal side, but this is the work. This is the -

Ms. Hollis Work -
Ms. Dunn: What you got up and went to do every day, and -

Ms. Hollis: You got it.

Ms. Dunn: - what you were doing. And then, and how challenging it was, and, what – what personality traits or skills do you believe you brought that made you uniquely suited to this type of work?

Ms. Hollis: I think what’s basically the same – the same – fundamental mechanisms built in, that is, an ability to be quick on your feet -

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: To interact with various kinds of people, with various perspectives. To negotiate with all types of people.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: Including many people who had never interacted with a senior woman lawyer before. Senior, not necessarily in the age. But, with authority. And, so I think my
experience in the Enforcement Office, as tough as it was, and as challenging, actually prepared me for this. And so did working with Dick Solomon. All the way through. And it also got me into leadership roles, in the firm, in the firms. And also, in the bar associations. Knowing people. Knowing people all over the world. And I don't mean that in sort of a cheap way. I mean, knowing people, understanding their problems. And I also, you know, not to be romantic, but, I have to say that the energy business is such a, an incredibly far reaching business, and, has so many interesting people in it. From one corner of the planet to the next, that no matter where you go on Earth, everybody wants to always talk about energy. Because it’s the lifeblood.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And that aspect, I think, was what really enthused me. And so, you know, not that all of the issues were easy or
simple or fun – some of them were just horrendously challenging. You know, that’s just the way it is. These are big stakes, this is life and death for businesses and people – and in the enforcement arena; people’s reputation; companies’ reputation; shareholder value.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  FERC precedent. DOE precedent. EPA precedent. All of those come together. I mean, this is – this is not small stuff. This is big stuff that matters. And, being able to step up, and understand, regardless of what side of the issue you’re on, this really, really matters to a lot of people. And it matters to the country.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And you’ve got to be right. And you have to – you know, your role is not to crush everybody who doesn’t agree with you. It’s to try to find a solution – it’s not always
possible. Sometimes there is a binary thing, sometimes.

But many times there is a way out of the – out of the
thicket of – that, at least provides a, a patch –

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis - to get to the next phase that unfolds, knowing full well
that it will unfold, because, every morning you wake up,
the energy business changes overnight.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis An invasion; an explosion; a question about a chemical;
you name it. And also during this time frame, of course,
by now we’re up into – nearly into 2000 –

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis 9/11. And, the beginnings of – the beginnings of the
whole national security related issues. The blackout of
2003. I represented the grid, before Congress, in that.
The – and was right at the witness table; and it was a
very, very intense experience. The sudden blackout of 2003, because the grids were just then really emerging.

This is a major challenge.

Ms. Dunn  So people were questioning "was this the right direction to go?"

Ms. Hollis  Well, they were – they were just stunned, by the impact of the blackout and the roles played by the utilities, the electric transmission owners and the regulators. And, the fact that this department was in its – basically in its infancy. The implementation of Order No. 888, at FERC, and the restructuring of the electricity industry, setting up the independent grids; trying to get voluntary buy-in by all the players. And, a very tricky legal area. When you get a voluntary buy-in, to turn over control of electric transmission assets to a new entity – and attempting to ascertain how do you build this massive system to deal with the issues on a huge electricity grid that serves
50 million or 60 million people? Just the technology development alone, and to have a market to operate on the system, as well as to oversee the reliability related issues – raises questions on where transmission lines should be built, who should pay for them? This whole set of questions that’s – multitrillion dollar issues, in their impact on the country. I don’t think I’ve ever had a boring case.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis I can honestly say I don’t think I’ve ever had a really boring case.

Ms. Dunn Yes. It doesn’t sound like any of your -

Ms. Hollis A case of any consequence when -

Ms. Dunn - work became just -

Ms. Hollis Tedious.

Ms. Dunn Tedious, or ordinary -
Ms. Hollis  No.

Ms. Dunn  Each case was, had some novel aspect of it.

Ms. Hollis  Extraordinary. I feel like I’ve been on a round-the-world tour on a, on – well, back in the day when they had the supersonic flights, I went, I took a few of those over the years, and, you know, back in the day when you’re developing projects all over the world and working in the international environment, but, you know, just the – you know, sometimes you feel like you’re on a supersonic jet. Just moving through issues, and time, and people, and places, and spaces.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, issues of the day. That’s the one notable thing. I think there was one time when the – when – there was a kind of tedious time when oil and gas prices fell in the 1980s. In fact, oil went below $10 a barrel for a while, if
you can imagine that.

Ms. Dunn   Wow! No, I can’t, actually.

Ms. Hollis That was pretty grim. It lasted maybe two years. And, if
you were to go down to Texas then, the bumper stickers
will – let’s see – well, I can’t repeat – but some of them
were rather rude. I can’t say some of them -

[laughter]

Ms. Hollis But some of them were, basically, if you, “Dear God,
Please send me another boom, and I promise not to
squander it.”

Ms. Dunn   Yes.

Ms. Hollis I’m cleaning up the bumper sticker for you here!

Ms. Dunn   Yes.

Ms. Hollis And, “We’ll pump oil for food.” So there were a bunch
of – there were bands playing with that theme. You
know, like Farm Aid, only “Oil Aid.”
Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Because the layoffs were so intense.

Ms. Dunn  Wow!

Ms. Hollis  So we’ve seen the booms and the busts. And that’s something I had not been prepared for, the tremendous boom, post the enactment of the Natural Gas Policy Act and all, because of the desperate demand for energy. And then the bust.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Tied to the economy. The demand for energy. So those peaks and valleys, and the accelerated nature they can take on, in the energy business -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Extremely interesting.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Do you think the energy booms and busts were almost precursors, just sort of more
widespread economic changes? I mean, did that go first?

Do you see changes in energy as almost an indicator of what’s about to come, throughout the economy?

Ms. Hollis  It’s a good way to assess what may come. They go – I think they go hand-in-hand many times. But coming from Colorado, and Wyoming -

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  - you see a lot of boom and bust cycles out there. You know, Colorado was one long history of boom and bust – for example, the gold mines. You know, the gold, when they put the gold standard into place – millionaires became paupers overnight.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  The silver mines. They, you know, the value of silver dropped overnight, and the silver multimillionaires in Colorado were penniless. Had to sell everything. So, I
saw boom and bust growing up.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And I was prepared for that.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  I just expected it to be part of life. If you’re in a resource-based economy, that’s what happens. Power was practically given, being given away at the border in Canada, 75 cents, some ridiculous, slow, ridiculous – basically, giving away gas and power. Because there was excess power tied to a lot of hydroelectric output. After years of not having enough, then when we had too much – huge issues.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And the impact it had on Canada.

Ms. Dunn  And it seems like your work around the world, too, let you see the impact of energy on society -
Ms. Hollis  Oh, God, yes.
Ms. Dunn  And actual, entire populations.
Ms. Hollis  Oh, yes.
Ms. Dunn  Entire countries’ futures.
Ms. Hollis  Yes. Yes. And when you see people have no energy.
It’s just so – shocking, horrendous. Stunning.
Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis  To see what it’s like from – to see women in Ethiopia,
walk with a pile of twigs on their head for 20 miles to be
able to cook supper. Getting up at 4 in the morning and
walking up to the Ethiopian highlands and walking back
in the Addis Ababa. And seeing centralized
governmenting, Marxist-oriented government, make
every truck that came in and around Addis at the time, to
go in a huge holding pen, where they just, they could sit
much like ships offshore, that wouldn’t, that could not get
into port. Very interesting.

Ms. Dunn Wow!

Ms. Hollis Really scary.

Ms. Dunn I’m looking at my notes from last time. You wanted to make sure we talked about Plymouth. We haven’t talked about Plymouth.

Ms. Hollis Oh, yes.

Ms. Dunn The United States Energy Association (“USEA”).

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn And the Royal Society.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn The Law Society of England and Wales.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  So what’s left is – I’m just going to make a little note here. We had Plymouth – you – I don’t know if there’s a natural order to things. So. We have Plymouth; USEA; Royal Society; and maybe some of these you don’t want to talk about anymore. British Water Research Authority. Is that related?

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. Water Authority. Northern Ireland. Romania and Poland?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. I mentioned – I think I’ve talked enough about those.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. Including Northern Ireland?

Ms. Hollis  I would like to talk a little bit about Northern Ireland.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. And then, you talked about Mexico. Okay. So, maybe in the next little chunk – is there an order – do
these go in any order? Are they at your time -

Ms. Hollis Plymouth is last.

Ms. Dunn Hmm?

Ms. Hollis Plymouth is the most recent of the bunch.

Ms. Dunn Okay. So -

Ms. Hollis That goes last.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis USEA, I can talk a fair amount about, because there’s been a lot of activity there. But that’s not a client. That’s a -

Ms. Dunn That’s activity.

Ms. Hollis - that’s a board. Yes.

Ms. Dunn Okay. So let’s hold that, because I think next time we’ll do activities.

Ms. Hollis Okay.
Ms. Dunn: So, Royal Society is an activity?
Ms. Hollis: Yes.
Ms. Dunn: Okay.
Ms. Hollis: But I did represent them on some things.
Ms. Dunn: Oh, okay. All right. British Water Research Authority?
Ms. Hollis: I was on a board. I’d like to talk about it, see -
Ms. Dunn: Okay. All right. Well, that’s okay, then. So – and then Northern Ireland, was a client, or?
Ms. Hollis: It was a client. Well, it was an electric developer in the U.S. And, it was part of this massive development overseas. And consideration of picking up projects all over the world.
Ms. Dunn: Okay.
Ms. Hollis: Okay.
Ms. Dunn: So what other, before we jump, just what other cases do
you want to make sure you talk about? We don’t have to get all of them. But I want to just make sure we – so, in your outline, I’m at the Duane – I’m in the Duane Morris section.

Ms. Hollis Right.

Ms. Dunn Because we sort of got to here.

Ms. Hollis Okay.

Ms. Dunn And then -

Ms. Hollis And some of these – some of these overlap.

Ms. Dunn They do. I know. It’s hard to parse it all out.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn Well, I’ll let you – I’ll let you -

Ms. Hollis The Plymouth project started here at Duane Morris.

Ms. Dunn “Plymouth, nuclear.” Okay.

Ms. Hollis Yes. Plymouth, and central upstate New York.
Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  And -

Ms. Dunn  And then what about Northern Ireland? Was that here, too? Or was that before?

Ms. Hollis  It was with Metzger Hollis -

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  - and then -

Ms. Dunn  So we can talk about that before -

Ms. Hollis  - going over to -

Ms. Dunn  - a little bit into -

Ms. Hollis  - little into – you know.

Ms. Dunn  Into here.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  I think that’s the way it was written down.
Ms. Dunn: Okay.

Ms. Hollis: Some of this is kind of hard to remember what we did -

Ms. Dunn: Oh, I know. And I don’t think, you know, that’s the point of editing, if any dates are off or anything.

Ms. Hollis: Okay. Yes. Let me think, also, let me just think a second here.

Ms. Dunn: Yes, yes.

[short pause]

Ms. Hollis: Okay.

Ms. Dunn: All right.

Ms. Hollis: And let me say that the MISO, helping launch a new grid and working through the blackout -

Ms. Dunn: Yes.

Ms. Hollis: - that was here.

Ms. Dunn: Okay.
Ms. Hollis That was 2003.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis And -

Ms. Dunn So we haven't hit the discussion of Plymouth yet. Okay.

Ms. Hollis No.

Ms. Dunn Okay. So we were just – you were just talking about the boom/bust cycles, seeing it growing up. The lack of energy; you know, just being really comfortable in a boom/bust cycle. But you had said something about pipelines, right when the thing hit.

Ms. Hollis Right. Okay.

Ms. Dunn Okay. It just might be hard to pick up exactly where we left off.

Ms. Hollis All right. This is part two, of our interview of August the 12th. Alex Dunn and Sheila Hollis, continuing on.
Onward.

Onward. In some of these – I should say that there was a transition – because, I’d like to just put in context. The Metzger Hollis firm became part of Duane Morris. Essentially was absorbed into Duane Morris, in 1992.

Mm hmm.

And so, some of these cases just moved from Metzger Hollis to Duane Morris.

Okay.

And, for that reason, there’s not a strict dividing line, or a number of things that moved forward together.

Mm hmm.

One of those – just to stop for a second, to recall, it was a project in Northern Ireland, on behalf of a U.S. developer, that was looking at a number of opportunities around the world, to step into existing power plant situations, that,
because of restructuring in the country, and particularly Northern Ireland, and England, and elsewhere, needed to be either vastly reorganized, and restructured. Because it was no longer going to be part of the state.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis It was going to be auctioned off.

Ms. Dunn Okay.

Ms. Hollis That could be said, as well, in the U.S. But also internationally. So, just one example, spent a fair amount of time reviewing, basically, part of a due diligence review before action. In assessing the viability of a Northern Ireland power plant, not very far from where my grandmother was born -

Ms. Dunn Huh!

Ms. Hollis In Derry, Ireland. Right outside of Londonderry. And, this particular project was one that had been run for years...
and years and years as an example of how both sides of
the debate in Northern Ireland could work together. And,
it was strongly supported -

Ms. Dunn  Interesting.

Ms. Hollis  - by the EU, and you may recall I spent far too much time
in undergraduate and law school worrying about the EU.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  But the EU had, basically used this as almost a model
project, to show how things could work. Let me say that
it was still tense between the players. But they found
ways to work together, despite the fact that they were not
the closest of friends, but they found a way to make the
system work. And it had employed, this plant, some
1,200 employees. Which was a massive – of course, you
can imagine in Northern Ireland, with all the other stories
there are to tell, how having 1,200 well-paid jobs made a
difference.

However, it was subsidized and supported by the government, because it was part of the government.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Well, unfortunately, like all good things, that was coming to an end, and also it was very obsolete technology. And really what it needed was natural gas-fired generation to, because of the emissions issues. And then also it just needed – it could be run much, much, dramatically more efficiently and cleaner.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis This project was not one that my client decided to proceed on. But it was – I spent a fair amount of time in Northern Ireland.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Digging into this, to the issues associated with what it
means for 1,200 people to be confronted with job loss. And, you may recall an analogous situation in the U.S., in the Rust Belt, had emerged over that same time frame. And I guess – while I had seen boom/bust, I had never actually seen just the obliteration of almost 1,200 jobs, at once, in a particular industry. And to see how this could be handled, if it could be handled in a way which was not soul-crushing for the people. Very, very challenging, difficult circumstances.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And, I've always had, and had been in Ireland several times before, but had never been to Northern Ireland. And just learning about the troubles, seeing my distant relatives after all of these years and seeing – going out to what had been the family well, the holy McGrellis water well, in Northern Ireland. It was extremely profound and very, very moving, the entire thing.
Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis    To see how they lived, over generations. And just getting
to know a little bit more about the other side of Irish
culture, not just the Leprechauns, and green beer and all
the stuff that we have here, but seeing, having a better
understanding into the culture, and, emotions and
passions and history.

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis    About that same time, I also began to do some work in
the water area. And I served on the board, the American
board, of a, the privatized British water research entity.
And, that was a very, very interesting thing to get into,
clean water; water treatment related issues. And, spend a
lot of time with that crowd, which I had not done before,
and understand the nexus between energy -

Ms. Dunn    Mm hmm.
Ms. Hollis - and water. And -

Ms. Dunn Much earlier than many people had.

Ms. Hollis Right! It was extraordinary, actually, to see the impact.
And the issues that were emerging in the clean water area,
and the description of it, was just a very, very
eye-opening thing.

Ms. Dunn So did this board meet here in the States?

Ms. Hollis Yes. And in England, too.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis I spent a lot of time going back and forth there.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis It was privatized, and, the type of work that they were
doing in the EU, they were basically consulting, too, the
EU, with some of the top environmentals and engineers in
water-related issues, in England. It had been, you know,
highly subsidized and supported pre-Thatcher, and then
all of the wheels came off that bus when Thatcher came in and it started to evolve into something entirely different. But, also as part of this package of issues that I handled in England, and this is, it had started before I was at Vinson Elkins, but certainly accelerated while I was at Vinson Elkins.

Ms. Dunn  Hmm.

Ms. Hollis  And so I did a lot of work in the U.K., and represented a variety of players. And participated in some rather extraordinary fora. And became involved in the Royal Society. And – I'm on the Board of American Friends of the Royal Society, which is, they insist, the oldest scientific society in the world today, and which was doing work all over the world, and which was in part what took me to China, on one of my ventures in China.

Ms. Dunn  Hmm!
Ms. Hollis  And, the extraordinary experience to meet with, and we had formal dinners, with the leaders of the – all of the various British and European electric distribution companies and water companies, we’d have formal dinners about once every three or four months, at one of the clubs in London. Generally speaking, not all the time, but generally speaking, I was the only woman, to see the – the bastions of the old world state-owned utilities, being challenged and having to respond to that challenge, and, the breakup of the government-owned entities, like British Gas, National Power, and their distribution companies associated with them. Amazing. Absolutely amazing. And, that was a tremendous privilege, I did it for about five years. And, just seeing that world unfold, and the impact it was going to have, was utterly extraordinary.

Another matter I worked on domestically at the time, was
the reconfiguration relating back to the discussion we had previously, on the power grid here, the power grids here. Well, one of the projects that I worked on was absolutely fascinating. It was a restructuring of the Georgia grid, and the Georgia – the development of the electric grid for Georgia. Very interesting. I represented the Rural Utility Service, and in fact, as part of the Rural Utility Service, this is the rural electric cooperatives – which are huge – Oglethorpe Power, in Georgia. It's a consortium of 39 small to extremely large, including the suburbs of Atlanta, electric coops.

Ms. Dunn Still – is that still around today?

Ms. Hollis Oh, absolutely.

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis They're building the new nuclear plant.

Ms. Dunn Okay. Really?
Ms. Hollis: Yes. Yes. And, so, the restructuring of the Georgia grid, was part of what we did during that time frame.

Another major grid project we had, was in California, first of all representing the City of San Francisco, and some very complex energy pricing cases, in the, on the newly-created Cal-ISO, California Independent System Operator. And, seeing that unfold, too, with issues with respect to those rates, and charges, and the structure, that would impact San Francisco on locational marginal pricing – fascinating. And then, also the governance of the ISO itself – also fascinating. So we were there at the beginnings. I mean, really at the birth of many of the major entities, and the development of the regulations, and the policies, and the structures necessary, and, vital, to make them function. Whether it was before FERC or elsewhere. So, really, I have to say, it’s like looking over the Grand Canyon, and saying, Wow!, in all of the
massive restructuring that transpired.

Ms. Dunn Do you feel that you can say that you’ve seen the contemporary way we look at energy evolve from -

Ms. Hollis Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn It sounds like you have.

Ms. Hollis Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn That between the early 70s, and, 2016 -

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn - this entire field, globally, you’ve been a part of its complete transformation and evolution.

Ms. Hollis Absolutely. And what’s extraordinary, also, is that, the clubs that existed, that is, the – nobody writes the word “club,” but, it was the utilities’ club -

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis - it was the distribution companies’ club; it was the
pipelines' club. Of golf. Hunting. Fishing. Wining and dining. Very few women, saw the light of day. They had some outstanding women. But they tend to be in administrative roles. Tended to be – not a hundred percent. But they tended to be much more in administrative roles. Although, I must say that many of the administrative individuals, that I encountered, the women particularly, essentially ran the lives of – of many of the gentlemen, who were running the companies. I mean, they had a huge influence.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  So, I don’t ever want to underestimate the role that women always played in the energy industry. It’s just, they didn’t see the light of day, as much. And, there’s a wonderful organization still around called Desk and Derrick, in the oil and gas business -
Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: And these were these very powerful, very smart – primarily, almost a hundred percent, but not exclusively at the time – women, who were in those roles. Who were right – who were in the room taking notes, shorthand, back in the day when shorthand was still one of the most useful skills any living human being should have! It was great to see. They saw and heard everything. And, they were extremely smart people. And many of them were extremely well educated, too. That just happened to be the place they ended up.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis: Then, as time went on, female lawyers started to emerge, public utility experts, the economists – many more women, it picked up a lot of velocity. And, it changed, the world has changed so dramatically. It’s not perfect, but still, I think for women, there’s so much progress that
has been made, and I’m proud to say that at every turn, in, where I’ve had an opportunity to be in a capacity to hire people, I have tried to make the hiring as diverse as possible. I felt very passionately about it.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And, so, well, I hired our – a significant portion of my office at the FERC, enforcement office, African-American; Asian; women; LGBT – although, nobody even, you know, it’s – just – it just came – you know, it just was the way it was.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis And, so I, throughout every twist and turn, I really have been – I must say I felt pretty passionately about it, that women should have their shot.

Ms. Dunn If you could think of a boardroom, early in your career, a boardroom of 30 people, just as a representation of the
number of women in leadership roles, influencing the energy industry, early in your career, a room of 30, and a room of 30 today – how many women would have been in that room of 30 early?

Ms. Hollis  Hardly any. Hardly any. Would have been a rarity. Not impossible.

Ms. Dunn  But rare.

Ms. Hollis  Rare.

Ms. Dunn  And how about today?

Ms. Hollis  More, but it’s got a long way to go.

Ms. Dunn  Okay.

Ms. Hollis  More, but it’s – we have miles to go before we sleep. Really.

Ms. Dunn  That might be a good place to pause today.

Ms. Hollis  All right.
Ms. Dunn  Thank you.

August 26, 2016

Ms. Hollis  This is Sheila Hollis and Alex Dunn on August 26th and we are doing this on a very hot afternoon.

Ms. Dunn  After you had returned from an overseas trip.

Ms. Hollis  Yep.

Ms. Dunn  Welcome back.

Ms. Hollis  Thank you. Now, let me see if this is still functioning and we’re going to be doing this both on tape and then also through the BigHand app.

Ms. Dunn  Okay. Well it is good to see you again, Sheila. I hope you had a good trip.

Ms. Hollis  I did, thank you so much, Alex, and thank you for being here on this almost the end of the end of summer.

Ms. Dunn  I know. We are a week out from Labor Day. So this has
been a summer journey listening to your history.

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely.

Ms. Dunn  So I think today we wanted to talk about your leadership in Duane Morris, in the management of this firm where you have been for coming up on 20 years.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  And then talk a little bit about the Bar Association that you played such a major role in and some of your family and outside interests.

Ms. Hollis  Yes, yes.

Ms. Dunn  So let’s talk about Duane Morris and your role in management and particularly you were a pioneer in this firm in many ways.

Ms. Hollis  I was – there were several very well-known and well-loved individuals who became partners back in the day and one, Jane Dalton, who was the first woman partner at
the firm; Midge Rendell who is just retired off, is now on senior status with the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and a very superb judge, Judge Rendell. I met her several times although she had left the firm shortly before I got here. Two other very senior women who I have had the pleasure of working with in a variety of cases we’ve worked together on. Some of them big investigations, complicated investigations, of difficult issues that touch upon the energy and environmental field, but across the board some very fine women who were here long before I arrived on the scene. I had essentially my own firm and moved it over to and helped it become the first major office outside of the Philadelphia region for the firm of Duane Morris. Duane Morris was a 225 lawyer firm when we came and it is now well over 700 lawyers. So we built a tremendous firm on a very wonderful base of nearly a 100-year-old
firm at the time. It was just a wonderful experience and I was very happy with that decision. Obviously from the discussions that we have had, you know, I had with a number of firms, some very small and some very big, but I think we found a good home here and the firm, the Metzger, Hollis, Gordon and Alprin firm when it moved over we wanted to preserve as many of the partners and associates as we possibly could coming over into this new environment, and staff as well, and so this was where we found our home and where we felt comfortable with the people who were very warm and welcoming to us at the time. It was not a simple transaction. It took several months to work out, but we discussed potentially either a merger or other relationship with a variety of other firms but this is the one that worked for us.

Ms. Dunn That is terrific. So looking back on your time here, seeing the firm almost triple in size, more than triple in
size, what changes can you reflect on?

Ms. Hollis: Well, the structure of the firm changed very dramatically after the Washington office was proof of concept that this non-Philadelphia structure could work. From there we developed a number of other offices. We acquired either in whole or in part other firms around the country and in London and we moved from London into Singapore and then throughout Southeast Asia into Oman now and a variety of Southeast Asian offices in Vietnam, Singapore, Shanghai, Taiwan, Myanmar, two offices in Myanmar. So it's been very, very exciting, and we are certainly considering other possibilities as well at this time. So it was great. We were really pioneers. The Washington office was a pioneering experiment for Duane Morris (at that time it was Duane Morris & Heckscher). I have to say that the way that it worked was that we liked the people and the people I think liked us in Philadelphia and
the surrounding environments. And it was I think kind of a shock to the system of the Philadelphians in particular because the Philadelphia region is, despite the magnitude of the clients and the sophistication of the practice, Philadelphia is not like Washington. There are so many more firms here and so many different perspectives that Philadelphia being the extremely historic, traditional, wonderful place that it is I think it was sort of on the sudden influx of all kinds of different players with all kinds of different interests and different practice areas.
The firm had had an environmental practice but not a true energy practice and we had very sophisticated banking expertise that we brought to the table, too. There was very good banking expertise, old school from the history of Philadelphia and that region, but then the FDIC, the comptroller of the currency practice, that was something that we brought to the table which was different. And
then we had the microcosm of a big firm in our small firm
so it really worked in a lot of ways. We had two very
sophisticated practices, good litigation, good corporate, a
miniaturized version of a big firm.

Ms. Dunn  So as you integrated Metzger Hollis into Duane Morris
were you right away part of the management of the firm?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, I went on the Partners Board immediately and that
was a great experience because I was managing partner of
the Washington office and also chair of the newly
developed energy and environment practice for the firm.
So, yes, and it was – already I was being included right
off the bat because of the size of our office which was a
big investment for Duane Morris to invest, get new
offices, move us over, put in all the computerized and
communications equipment, do the training, all the rest in
the ways of the firm. So it was a big decision and it was
best that we had that close relationship from day one.
Then as time went on one of the wonderful people who brought me into the firm went off the Management Committee of the firm, which is a five-member executive committee of the firm, and then I went on instead. I was the first woman and the first non-Philadelphian ever to be in that capacity with the firm. So it was very, very exciting and just a wonderful experience to see the true inner workings at the highest levels of a major firm that was in growth mode. That was the nuances of big law, which even as a full partner or even on a partners board which has about 35-45 members, you see a lot, you know a lot but it is not the same. It is never quite the same as being in that executive position in the firm where you see and hear and know of the broader mix of issues that confront a big law firm on a day-to-day basis. It is a very challenging environment to work in particularly when a law firm is in a growing mode and with complex
international and domestic offices and practices. Also it is interesting in that the firm both has practice groups and then offices and the integration of the interests of a practice group which may have lawyers in ten different offices or 20 different offices with those of – because like all politics is local, all law is local to a certain extent because each and every office has a different perspective, a different personality, styles of integrating the desires to grow a big practice group and to make a domestic firm into an international firm as well as a true national, national firm. It’s a different world.

Our model is really quite unique. There have been two Harvard case studies on us. One in 2005/2006 and then one about three years ago in 2012. It is very interesting the integration of various people and the whole practice group model and the more, I won’t call it softer but maybe perhaps softer-edged approach to avoiding hard
core votes on issues. That is there has never been an up or down vote in the firm on anything. It’s much more, I would say because the firm was founded by Quakers, for lack of a better description I would say it is sort of a very Quaker style. It’s almost harmonic convergence in some ways. It is a very interesting phenomenon. It does not have the, some – I think a lot of people witness in big law the slamming of doors and harsh words. It’s quiet as these things go because although all law firms have their complexities, a fairly genteel environment in that respect, and just very interesting to see how that unfolded and how the firm has worked so hard to avoid the harshness that you see in a lot of other environments in big law.

Ms. Dunn  In your role as a member of the Board, the Partners Board and the management, what are some areas where you on worked on women’s issues in the firm?

Ms. Hollis  Well, on the Diversity Committee and then there also is
the Women’s Interest Network in the firm for both of those. So I’ve done, first of all I have been involved in a lot of hiring decisions, not just with respect to women but all lawyers across the board with respect to, “Is this person the right person for us and how can we help them succeed when they come to the firm?” Obviously, if you are in growth mode like we are, you have to go through the acquisition of laterals, and acquisition of laterals is very complex. You have to make sure of a good personality match as well as the fundamentals of business and practice. That is a whole process unto itself. So I like to think that as a woman on the Executive Committee I could bring a perspective that perhaps was a useful one and would be helpful in the context of growth mode particularly of the nature that we had.

Ms. Dunn I know you have talked about working with Nolan Atkinson on the diversity issues of the firm.
Ms. Hollis: Yes, so what a great person he is. I'm now working with Joe West. Joseph West, who comes to us from the MCAA Minority Corporate Counsel's Association where he was the director of that, and he also has an energy background, too, so we have great — and he's from New Orleans — so we have a whole lot of relational things to talk about, too, similar shared experiences, but I have enjoyed that tremendously. You know, it has given me, I always thought — I don't even think I had articulated it adequately, but the whole diversity issue not just the women's issue, not just an ethnic issue but expanding beyond that as we have seen in society as a whole, under the legal system as a whole and moving in that direction so it has been a real growth experience for me and sort of pushing the limits of the way you thought before so it is very good. It is not the same old same old by any means. So obviously I have done mentoring. I've done a lot of
talking for and speaking for the firm. I have done a fair amount of actual work on the Women’s Interest Network giving presentations, offering mentorship and all that type of thing, and then through the Women’s Council on Energy and the Environment showing up in a leadership capacity. Also, a variety of other women’s associations, I served on the Women’s Bar, D.C. Women’s Bar Association Board for a number of years. And then also going international as a woman. I have found that very exciting and representing the firm in an international context, as well as a woman is always, has been a challenge, but it has been great and just wonderfully rewarding in so many levels. I hope I made a difference and gave some ideas to people along the way outside the context of the firm itself and also the confines of the American practice of law which has been undergoing change but still has a long ways to go.
Ms. Dunn  In terms of another way that you have worked with future lawyers and leaders is through the teaching.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Can you talk a little bit about your work there?

Ms. Hollis  Oh, yes. What a great treat, what a great honor and what a great reward. The whole practice combined with the teaching experience at George Washington Law School. I’m going to set aside for a moment the speeches, the lectures, right after I left the federal government for many years I did two solid days of lecturing on the National Energy Act and the National Gas Policy Act and all the nuances that came after the National Energy Act to audiences all over the country and, for that matter, all over the world, but with respect to the George Washington Law School stint which lasted 20 years it was a lot of work. Because the physical requirement that you be there, because of the world travels was the greatest
challenge. And I was blessed to have some very excellent people to cover for me a few times when I couldn’t get back from China or wherever because of the, well, life being what it is, whatever, the plane delays, the whole issues we are all too familiar with, but it always has worked out and I think it is well over 600, perhaps 700, students that I taught. Many of them already had been awarded their law degree and were working on their master’s degree in a specialized area, in this case part of the environmental program at George Washington. So, there were lots of men, lots of male students in these classes, because many of them were either in the military, retired from the military or with the Army Corps of Engineers in particular. They had a big GW program for the Army Corps people. Then as time went on you saw the influx of international students and then also more and more women and that was great. I think I have had, I can
honestly say that I have had an impact on a lot of people, men and women, who, because of the class, the nature of the class and the nature of the issues, really found a home. They found a professional home. That this is something that they could enjoy doing, it had so many different aspects to it, and many of them are either in practice, in government, in corporations throughout the country and, in some aspects, internationally today. To see them prospering and enjoying energy law as much as I have, I can’t tell you the absolute pleasure that it gives and satisfaction to know that actually because of, it may have just been one half an hour that you spent on a particular topic that it resonated with them and the opportunities presented themselves. Because as I start looking back on how I got started in energy, it was certainly sort of in the air with my mother, but I had never articulated the desire to go into energy law, but I did the moot court and it was
all about, of all things, a hydro project in Africa. Little did I ever think I would end up doing a hydro project in Africa, but I did. I happened to go in and pick up the brochure on the Federal Product Commission going into the interview, not a very sophisticated approach to it, and there were LNG tankers on the cover and, law of the sea, I had taken law of the sea, and it all just clicked from that point forward. It is something. It could be that little snippet of experience, insight, information that opens that door. I like to think that during the course of the 20 years that I showed up and gave tests and read papers over the holidays, that it made a difference and that a number of people benefited from it tremendously, and it was a spur for them to either go into energy or when the opportunity came their way, they had at least enough capability to talk about it to be attractive to a potential employer.

Ms. Dunn So in addition to teaching, and we talked previously about
the texts you’ve worked on, the book that was largely used in your classes, tell me a little bit about some of the awards and recognitions that you’ve received throughout your career that mean the most to you. I know you talked about the Platts Award being very special.

Ms. Hollis

Yes, and also awards from the Energy Bar Association, the Charitable Foundation of the Energy Bar and the Energy Bar. It was founded in memory of and to honor his great contribution, Paul Nordstrom, who unfortunately passed away at a very early age after his presidency of the Energy Bar. I was the first living person to get the Nordstrom Award. I found that extremely moving on so many levels, having been so actively involved in the Power Bar, evolving into the Energy Bar and so on, that I found that extremely moving. And then -

Ms. Dunn

What is the Nordstrom Award for?
Ms. Hollis  For achievement either in the charitable arena or a
collection to community and a contribution to the field
of energy law, here, I think I may have it on my desk.
Hold on, let me see if I have it here. Here we go.

Ms. Dunn  Oh, it is quite lovely.

Ms. Hollis  Yes. This is 2010. It says "Honoring her exemplary
long-term service to the Energy Bar and to the
community."

Ms. Dunn  Oh, that’s incredible.

Ms. Hollis  So that was, that actually made me cry when I got it
because -

Ms. Dunn  And you knew Charles.

Ms. Hollis  Paul. Paul Nordstrom. He was such a close friend and
such a good person and it was just such a loss to
everybody, he left us too soon.

Another that I received that was incredibly moving to me
was this recent one. This is the Cheryl Bryson Award of the firm for leadership as a woman in the Woman’s Initiative. Chery Bryson, unfortunately, a beautiful African American woman, a brilliant lawyer, a brilliant trial lawyer, exciting human being, just a wonderful person, unfortunately, passed away. A huge loss to the firm, a huge loss to Chicago where she was from, where she practiced law, but she was actually a Maryland person, and she and I were close friends, so an award was developed to honor her memory and so I have this wonderful, wonderful award from the firm which meant a great deal.

And then walking over here, this is from The University of Denver Journal of International Law, from my old hometown, because my law professor, Professor, Professor Ved Nanda who is still going strong and well over 85 now. I received an award of excellence from the
University of Denver Law School for the Alumni Excellence. I gave a major lecture in Denver on the role of international law and energy, and there was Professor Nanda and his family in the front row. To see it come full circle on that was a wonderful thing, too.

So there have been a number of them. Those are some of the highlights. I think I have gotten some, a number of them from the ABA, that type of thing, and also I'm trying to think if there are any others that are interesting. Well, of course my wonderful, beloved section of the ABA Section of Environment, Energy and Resources which was just a wonderful experience, and I devoted a lot of my life to them, and then I became a Fellow of the American College of Environmental Law.

Ms. Dunn Oh, yeah.

Ms. Hollis And a Life Member of the American Law Institute, and I also received recognition from George Washington Law
School, of course, for all of those years of trudging to teach class. That was nice. So there have been a number of them, but I would say that the Platts Award, the Energy Bar Award and the Bryson Award had a very significant impact on my life, and, as they say, make your momma proud, my mother was alive for some of them. She didn’t get to see all of them, but she got to see some of them.

You know, my world has been energy law, and so being recognized in that area has been truly, I can say to the people who were kind enough to recognize me, that it has meant so much to me and just very, very touching. I received some others from a variety of other, I should say the Women’s Counsel Energy & Environment awarded me with the Woman of the Year way back in 2003. I’m looking at that over here and that was wonderful, Woman of the Year Award. Very emotional, too, because it isn’t
all just, I shouldn’t say just lawyers, it is a wonderful
group, diverse group of -

Ms. Dunn  Multidisciplinary.

Ms. Hollis  Multidisciplinary, yeah, and just a great, great group of
people. I received an award, the publication no longer
exists today, it was the *Petroleum Economist*, but I wrote
a column for them called the “Roving Advocate” for
many years. I would write a column as the world energy
markets began to open up, so I wrote a column on the
goings on in a variety of arenas, but I wanted to go
anonymously so it was the “Roving Advocate.” So they
gave me the cartoon up there of me headed off in my
barrister’s clothing off to the land of milk and honey with
my briefcase.

Ms. Dunn  So your pen name was the “Roving Advocate”?

Ms. Hollis  The “Roving Advocate.”
Ms. Dunn  It never said “Sheila Hollis”?

Ms. Hollis  No, I never wanted my name on it because some of it was
delicate and I didn’t want to in any way to cause
heartburn to clients in the law firm.

Ms. Dunn  Oh, my goodness. So the Platts Award, just context for
those who may be listening, what makes the Platts Award
so special?

Ms. Hollis  Well, it is international, and it’s not only for lawyers – I
was the first practicing lawyer to receive it – it’s for all
aspects of the energy arena, specifically not for lawyers –
people from all over the world, CEOs of some of the
major corporations in energy, some of the major NGOs,
some of the most famous people in energy. It is awarded
at a very, very glamorous event in the New York
environment, very seriously New York glamorous and
because it is done by a panel of experts and people from
all over the world who put their pen to paper to say, “this
is the person,” so it was very, very, very exciting.

Being in the top 50 women in Washington, top 50 women attorneys in Washington and the top energy lawyers in Washington and so on. That’s been a wonderful thing, too. So there’s been a lot of them and I am probably leaving out some and I’m probably, I got more than I deserve, but I have to say that each one of them meant an awful lot to me. It’s the sort of thing – my mother was alive for some of it, but not all of it, but my daughter and husband, it was very touching to them. My partners came up for the Platts Awards. We had two tables filled with my colleagues. It was a very supportive environment. Just a great, great experience. It brings home, there is a tendency to want to dismiss the significance of it and say oh, you know, just the same old same old, but it is not at all. I can say it really had a great impact on myself, my family and it just allowed me to share with them, you
Ms. Dunn

So let's take a minute and talk a little bit about John and your daughter and how they – here you are traveling the world, cutting new legal ground, pioneering cases, building law firms, being recognized globally for your expertise, and you kept the family intact through all of this.

Ms. Hollis

It is remarkable because whatever they told us in high school it must have stuck, because out of our class of 150 students there are five couples that got married and after 40 years all of them are still married. Whatever they put in the water in Colorado, I have no idea. Some had no children, some had five children, some never left Denver, others were on the four corners of the planet, but most of them stayed in Colorado. It just was an environment where I think living through the '60s, surviving the '60s,
the ’70s, the ’80s, the ’90s, the 2000s, it is a remarkable thing. It is not common anymore and I guess I got lucky. We had been through some trials and tribulations together as living in downtown Denver, and we have been through some great experiences together in high school together and it is simple little things like the senior class play. It’s high school musical, “Annie Get Your Gun.” John and I have been acting together from the start. We both had a profound love of art and a profound love of music and theatre even as very young people, and I think a lot of that, a lot of our relationship started off on that basis. Sort of naïve teenage stuff, but then having our fantastic daughter come along and both of us being utterly and completely ignorant about babies and what to do with them. Somehow, with the help of my mother, we just kept trudging on and survived because by the time our daughter was one year old we were down to one
grandparent left for her. So she only had one grandparent growing up. I think it just drew our little family intensely closer together. My mother had no siblings, and my father's family was far removed up in New York State and had some contact, but it was not daily like traditional families living in the same community or in the same area together at all so we were just on our own. I guess it was either keep trudging, or, it really helped to crystalize relationships because we were both very young parents and we were looking at this poor little baby and not quite sure what that was all about, but we managed to get through it with the help of my mother and a couple good friends and she survived and grew through it with us. Because basically our daughter grew up with us, because we were not sophisticated parents at all because we were both working and we were still moving towards graduation from university, it was intense.
Ms. Dunn: And she is quite an accomplished woman herself today?

Ms. Hollis: She has done alright for herself! She is a neuropsychiatrist. She was a philosopher first and then switched over to medicine. Molecular cell and molecular biology and then went on into medicine. It is highly specialized in neuropsychiatry with a particular specialty in geriatric psychiatry. A lot of this grows out of the fact that she spent so much time with my mother. She and her grandmother were extremely close and they were characters travelling the world together. I do recall one moment when I got a phone call from my mother in New Zealand saying, "Sheila, I hate to tell you this but Windsong is in a helicopter with a news crew going over Christchurch, New Zealand." So those kind of colorful adventures, they were always an adventurous twosome, and as a result, God bless frequent flier miles, we were able to send them on a lot of great experiences together.
from one end of the planet to the next. So they saw a lot of the world and bonded very, very closely, and their relationship formed the basis for our daughter going into focusing on geriatric psychiatry in particular. It is ironic because my poor father never got to wrap up his doctorate because he died so young, but she was able to carry on, but I think she had some sort of quiet spirit about the brain and the nervous system and that it was incredibly gratifying to all of us that she was able to finish the dream that he was unable to.

Ms. Dunn  That’s incredible. And sitting here in your office we have some of John’s artwork?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, he has been a great painter and he has done Christmas cards for us, holiday cards I should say for many, many years. We have got paintings from all over the world and also a lot of Colorado, and we have a lot of paintings at home, too, that he has done. His degree is in
art from the University of Colorado, and it was his
scholarship in art and theater that allowed him to go
through the University of Colorado, because his family
was of very humble means. So it enabled him to go to
university and enjoy it. It has been the basis of a huge
amount of enjoyment in both of our lives.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm. So do you have time for hobbies other than
your passion for work, which I think sounds like a bit of a
hobby, too? It's all consuming.

Ms. Hollis  Well, we love art, theater and music. And one of the
great things about living where we do is we are very close
to the Library of Congress, so the Concert Series of the
Library of Congress is just steps away and, of course,
many of the great art museums of the world. And travel,
because we have travelled extremely extensively and that
has been a key part of our relationship over so many
years, too. And John did a lot of acting until about 20
years ago – well, when my mother became so desperately ill, the rehearsal schedule and all that made it almost impossible for him to keep up with that. But he did a tremendous amount of acting here, starting out at the Arena Stage and then a lot of community theater, at Little Theatre of Alexandria, all over in a variety, every kind of play, a lot of very avant garde plays, very interesting, and that has always been a source of tremendous enjoyment to us, is theater. Whether he is on stage, I must say I enjoy it more when he is off stage because it was less stress on the family because of the amount of time it takes to be fully participatory in the theater is mindboggling, actually. He did a lot of set design and a variety of other things.

We’ve had this other kind of life outside the law and that’s probably healthy. I am sure it is healthy, actually, because it has opened different worlds. It has enabled us
to enjoy each other in a context of the art world and just lifting up out of ourselves into that other world. And then I have been active. I think I mentioned to you being on the Board of the Royal Society – the American Friends of the Royal Society. I am the only non-scientist on that board that, actually I don't know how long it goes back, but the Royal Society was founded in 1660.

Ms. Dunn  Wow!

Ms. Hollis  In London, and it is, as far as I can tell, the oldest continuous scientific society in the world. So through that, we participated in the 350th anniversary of the Royal Society and met the Queen. It was just an amazing experience and met many of the Nobel laureates. I got to meet Stephen Hawkings. It's rare that you get those kinds of things and it was such a great opportunity. As you know, I have been over all these years of despite the fact that I am half Irish, I am an Anglophile, too. So I
went to law school at Exeter and that has carried on. It is an international honorary member of the Society of Independent English Barristers. I gave a lecture on Magna Carta and on the history of the Supreme Court up at the U.S. Supreme Court when they had their meeting here in early April 2015. My love of England has opened up so much. We spent so much time with our English friends over a very, very long time. Anyway, that has been another aspect to it. And I’ve represented a number of English clients, very interesting English client, when their markets were opening up, they were investing in the U.S. and in other parts of the world. That is what took me to Northern Ireland.

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis That’s what took me to parts of South America and all over the U.S. It was very exciting during that phase of the restructuring of the world’s energy markets. When
the U.S. opened up its markets and the energy business changed so dramatically, that caught on. It was like the flu spreading all over the world. So that’s how I ended up in Poland and Romania and other colorful parts of the world like that. Well, it seemed pretty colorful at the time. But the adventuresome aspects in the law have been such unpredictable, remarkable, great projects and with great people thinking completely differently and learning about all these different cultures, and the great thing about energy law is that everybody cares about energy. No matter where you go on earth, people always want to talk about energy. They don’t take it for granted because it’s had such — it’s such a key element in, certainly in progress, but also just human comfort and decency. As you know, you’ve experienced it up close and personal what with going on the many missions that you have. Anyway, those are some of the aspects of it
that have been just so great.

And then leading, I'd say leading the women's groups that I have on all of these major kind of exploratory experiences when the world was just opening up to women professionals, really, in a major way. And women's rights became front and center to do all that, too. So I guess you could say there may not be an award on the wall for any of that, but the experience itself is the award and getting to meet the people, to always have people around the world and, you know from your own international experiences, how that changes your life to be able to contextualize it, not just be a tourist, but actually be a participant in things that matter to people. That's a rarity and it's an honor to have people open up to you. And sometimes it's a very oblique way that it opens up, but things open up in a way you never could have predicted.
Ms. Dunn: So, Sheila, you’re working full-time today?

Ms. Hollis: Oh, yes.

Ms. Dunn: What’s keeping you busy? What are you working on today in the energy field?

Ms. Hollis: A huge project. A project in Puerto Rico to allow Puerto Rico to shift to cleaner burning fuel for their electric power, working on some grid-related issues, working on the nuts and bolts of energy regulation at FERC, oil pipelines, gas pipelines and then also this major shift in the generation mix in the U.S. and beyond. The closure of the nuclear plants and the impact that that’s having on a variety of communities, the employment situation, the economic activity, and so on. That is a huge issue, whether it’s the coal plants shutting down and the coal mines shutting down. What has been happening, what’s unfolding in the coal business is now unfolding for the nuclear plants, too, because the costs of operating the
plants are very high, but they’re not emitting. Okay, so the costs of planned operation could be very high, the reliance on the community on them can be very high, too, because of the tax base, the employment, the accoutrement of having a major facility that employs a lot of people, including the restaurants, the hotels, the real property value because of workers able to have a significantly higher income than the average income in the state, and buy houses in areas that have big houses, nice houses where there is a lot of land and families that can live so comfortably. And then suddenly see this, it’s fairly sudden – all this begin to diminish is very tough. So trying to help communities in this context deal with that. And also with respect to nuclear – the nuclear waste issues, zoning issues associated with a closed nuclear plant planned, decommissioning-related issues, and also grid security. Where is the power going to come from
exactly? The integration of renewables under the grid which is a topic that you know an awful lot about. One of the interesting cases, I think I mentioned to you, is when the threat to close down the Mirant power plant across the Potomac River came, this was about ten years or so ago, maybe a little less than ten years, in the middle of August, because of emissions-related issues. That was the middle of August and it closed down in a very short time right after that, and nobody really looked at the consequences of it, but that was feeding power into a critical part of the grid to feed power to supply the Department of Justice, Homeland Security, the White House, other things like that. So seeing the pieces of the puzzle and how this giant puzzle fits together, that’s an eye opener.

And cybersecurity, certainly cybersecurity issues come up a great deal. Inward investment into the U.S. by major international corporations that want to buy into the
infrastructure, because as complicated as our problems here are, it may seem a lot less complicated than other parts of the world for investment. And then representing American entities going outside the confines of the U.S. in the latest round of initiatives in that regard. I’ve worked through when the world first started to open up after the opening of the electricity markets, I mentioned that I worked very extensively, well, now we’re going through the second phase of inward investment into the U.S., inward investment in existing infrastructure and new infrastructure. A lot in the LNG front and I should mention, you had asked what I was proud – we got “International Finance Deal of the Year” last year from the ALM Media.

Ms. Dunn Does that denote the award over here?

Ms. Hollis Yes, yes. That’s Deal of the Year.
Ms. Dunn  From the *American Lawyer*?

Ms. Hollis  Yes. On a major LNG export project. We represented – there were a number of law firms involved in it – but we represented the major investor in the project. So we did that and there’s been a lot of different things, but that was a very, very exciting project. I worked in the arena of inward investment into the U.S., and in these circumstances you could double the complexity when investing in nuclear plants, too. And you are seeing these issues associated with the, well, who owns the technology behind the nuclear plant, how is that working, who controls it, really, and so you are seeing this, certainly in the English context right now with the massive investment on the cusp right now into new nuclear plants in England as a result of the closure of some of the older plants and the construction of new ones which is just set to begin, but issues have arisen in the context of Brexit
and beyond about, "Well, how is this all going to work now," and "Do we want to try to build it ourselves or do we want to bring the contractors and investors from Asia or wherever to do this for us?" So there are a lot of sensitive issues right now on how the world's energy supply shapes up, who will be served by it, the intensity of the urbanization that is going on all over the world, the megacities, the need for complete change-out of the way that the infrastructure of cities works with respect to clean water. As you know from our experience in Brazil and beyond, clean water, reliable power, decent living conditions, and as you get this intensification of urbanization, to come up with ways to deal with this and build the infrastructure and make it work and make it affordable for people so that they can have the basic elements of civilization. It's a huge challenge. How is that going to happen? How is that going to come about?
I think that’s going to be the big issue for the world and one that I’m involved in, but only tangentially, because it is in the think tank stage now and it is moving out of the think tank and into the real world here very quickly. Just things like driverless cars and renewable energy and efficiency. All of that is coming together. Water treatment as you know full well as you “live” this issue of water concerns and interaction with electric power issues. But the water related issues are going to be the next big push. Food, water, energy, all part of a package that makes life on earth livable. But how do we get it to happen without destroying all of our resources, and are we going to have to look for a private company to take us to that other planet that we just discovered and poke around there and see if that’s livable? But it’s a scary time, it’s an exciting time, it’s a challenging time.

There are health related issues as well: You can see with
the Zika virus – evolution of disease and transmission of diseases in the world. This is an exciting but also treacherous time, too, in some respects. This is not just a glass half full, glass half empty type of mentality. In some cases, it’s binary. Will we survive as a civilization? And there are wars that are being waged over different things; but still at the core, a lot of conflict is energy related, energy and resource-related. Dealing with the reality of that is something that is compelling and very attractive intellectually. It is going to be a question for the philosophers, as well as the scientists and the developers at this time in the world. The issues are going to transcend money alone because so much of the movement of the human population has been driven by food or availability of water and clean air. So we may, if we want to not face a future where there’s mass extinction, not only because of climatological-related
issues but just simply running out of resources, have to solve these issues. Those are the, that’s what is so compelling about energy law. It’s tangible. It’s not theoretical; it’s actually tangible. You can see it and so those are the issues that confront the world today.

Ms. Hollis Hello, okay, so this is the second side of the tape on August 26th with Alex Dunn and Sheila Hollis

Ms. Dunn And Sheila you were just saying that you can never be bored in energy law because -

Ms. Hollis Because it - I keep saying you have only yourself to blame if you are bored in energy law, because it is always changing and unpredictable in the extreme. Whether it’s a nuclear plant exploding or having a major problem, or a tsunami that takes it out, or an invasion someplace around the world, or major breakthrough in technology that is a disruptive technology. All of that is part of this amazing, changing, literally minute-to-minute world that makes it
all worthwhile.

Ms. Dunn  And so I’m sure anyone listening to this can tell that you are not slowing down. There is nothing about you that says slow. Nothing about you that says back off, do less.

Ms. Hollis  It would be sad because I haven’t done a very good job of developing any hobbies. I guess energy is my profession and my hobby, because it is such an unlimited resource of interesting people, interesting places, great issues that actually matter and fascinating issues that tickle your imagination and make you want to reach beyond. All of that adds up to just something that is – and the law itself is such a vast arena, that it’s this huge show all the time of great issues. Issues that matter to everybody. So the combination of the physicality of energy with the intellectualism of the law and the emotion of the law is so great. So for me it’s worked out to be a compelling combination, but I have other interests, too.
I love history. I'm involved in a number of aspects of activity that involve history which I have always enjoyed. Archaeology, anthropology, all of those still have resonance with me. I'm involved in a very interesting Trustee of Plimoth Plantation founded in 1620 where the Mayflower Compacts sprung forth from. (It's the old English spelling there – "Plimouth.")

Ms. Dunn Yes.

Ms. Hollis Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, Massachusetts and -

Ms. Dunn What are you doing with them?

Ms. Hollis Well, I'm a Trustee, and that's a just a wonderful experience because growing up out west, I did not immerse myself particularly in colonial history. I was fixated more on Spanish American history and the founding of the west and the Native Americans. I was more focused on western Native Americans because of
my experience in Los Alamos as a child and also Denver and Wyoming. So I am learning Colonial the history I should have learned when I was a grade schooler. So it’s that working, representing the town of Plymouth, the modern spelling, and becoming involved in Plimoth Plantation has been so exciting because we are coming up on 2020, the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower Compact. And if one was to go into the American Bar Association headquarters in Chicago, one would see a large etched glass entranceway, and in this etched glass entranceway are three figures. One of them is a figure representing the Magna Carta days of our development; the second is the pilgrim from Plimoth Plantation and the Mayflower Compact; and then third is the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. And so all of that adds up and you say, “Wow!”

Ms. Dunn You’re working on all of them.
I'm working on all of them. So that's been just wonderful. The coming up on the 2020 celebration, the restoration of the Mayflower II which was given to the U.S. in honor of the contribution the U.S. had made in World War II to England, was built in England, sailed over by an English crew in 1957 to Plymouth, Massachusetts to recognize, from Plymouth, England to Plymouth, Massachusetts, to recognize the amazing contribution America made in World War II to aid England. I was there when they brought the Mayflower II back and met some of the members of the original crew that had sailed it over in 1957.

Oh, wow!

That was very emotional. The event was celebrated in 2007. I have been a Trustee for a number of years now, and we are gearing up for this 400th anniversary extravaganza event.
Ms. Dunn  In 2020.

Ms. Hollis  Yes. It is interesting that there is no original version of the Plimoth Compact. It is all primarily in the diaries of some of the original Pilgrims. What makes Plimoth Plantation interesting, even more than it would be just talking about the Mayflower Compact, is that it is a combination, Plimoth Plantation is a combination of both colonial history and then also the Wampanoag Tribe history. In Plimouth Plantation the recreated village combines the Colonial and Native American cultures. It's the only museum like it, a living museum. Millions of people have been through it. It is incredibly educational, they have the Wampanoag village right next to the Pilgrim village. Reading about this early colonial history is amazing. Some of it is extremely painful for what it did to the Native Americans. The Pilgrims were not all warm and friendly with one another, but that is why the
Mayflower Compact was so important because the sailors who came over who were not affiliated with the Pilgrims but just were sailors were stuck having to deal with the Separatists, and the Pilgrims were stuck having to deal with the sailors. So, they had to work out basically the first civil compact of its kind, which was, “Look, we may not like each other, but we have to survive here, and this is how we are going to do it.” And that enabled them to get through the horrendous winters and the horrendous freezing bitter cold and lack of food, and it was the Native Americans who stepped up, who helped them after a while. It was not, obviously this was not a smooth or happy history and our history with the Native Americans found its way into this story, and it’s not necessarily a pretty story, but here we are. This memorializes it. Plimouth has extremely sophisticated people on the staff, and there are reenactors for the Pilgrims and the
Wampanoags themselves have descendants that are there
during the summer. They are living history. They are not
amusement park Indians. These are real people who
embrace their culture and keep it alive.

Ms. Dunn  So you love history.

Ms. Hollis Oh, God, I love it. I love it so much. So that's a major
initiative that I am participating in.

Ms. Dunn  How about your work on Magna Carta?

Ms. Hollis Oh, my, don't get me going on the Magna Carta, because
now we have the Carta de Foresta coming up in 2017.
We are working through the Law Library of Congress, I
chair the Standing Committee on the Law Library of
Congress of the ABA, which is one of those dream jobs in
the ABA. It is just so interesting and the quality of
people on the committee who are and those who are
advisors to the committee and the Library of Congress
itself. It is such a treasure trove for the American public and for the world, the whole Library of Congress, that it is a pity that more people don’t use it and know about it, both now that it is available online, so much of it, not just in person, but so much is available for free online.

Anybody can go online and get information which is priceless information, access to the library staff to help you in research. It is an extraordinary thing. That has been a new chapter of my life. I was in an advisory capacity, a representative of the International Law Section and that’s how I got started in it. I never could have believed what I didn’t know.

Ms. Dunn  Now you are chairing the committee?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, and so that has been – I had wonderful predecessors who chaired the committee who took me by the hand and helped me do some of the things that are necessary in that. It’s complicated, like everything else that matters, is
complicated. So part of the Magna Carta celebration, going to Runnymede, experiencing that – the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta out at Runnymede and all of the British royal family pretty much was there. Almost every single one in the family and the Queen, Prince Philip. Of course this all ties in with my experiences in Exeter and it was emotional. I really cried my way through a lot of it. Just the overwhelming emotion of history and what history is like and the influence of Magna Carta, even with all its hideous flaws, it’s a great example of how flawed people in a flawed world with a flawed product, still when all is said and done can have an impact, and over the long haul a positive impact on the history of the world. And Magna Carta is certainly one of the prime examples of that. And then the Carta de Foresta, which we are hopeful that it will actually be exhibited at the Library of Congress. It will be the first
time it's ever been out of England and the first time it has ever been outside of Lincoln Cathedral I believe, and having the Carta de Foresta in the U.S.A. and having the opportunity – there will be many entities that will participate in that effort – not just with the ABA. However, the ABA, by being a key player and being certainly convener of a lot of it is very helpful, but the Library of Congress, the Law Library of Congress, of course, is very deeply involved in this. Because what is unique about the Carta de Foresta is that it didn't just apply to the king and the bishops and the knights. It applied to everybody that had interaction with or impact or could utilize the forests. So it's a different kind of document. It is much shorter and it doesn't have all the complexities of the Magna Carta in it, but it is at least a blueprint for dealing with "environmental" issues which obviously has – there are some resonances that still exist
in it to this day. Use of resources, who gets to use them, how do they get to use them, under what circumstances and recognition that the forest was for people.

So that’s been exciting and then in the same historical bent, because I just can’t get enough apparently, I serve as trustee on the Center for American and International Law. It’s the old Southwestern Legal Foundation which is now called the Center for American International Law. It is the oldest CLE organization in the U.S., and in that capacity we are working on the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Nuremberg trials. They have a massive collection, a very significant collection, it’s called the Storey Collection of many of the materials from the Nuremberg trials. Dean Storey went on – he was the Dean of SMU Law School, but before that he was the chief clerk to the lead prosecutor at the Nuremberg trial. As a result of that assignment he received many of
the documents. They are going to be permanently exhibited for the public at the Center for American International Law, but on October 24th we are having a lecture series on that day on the significance of the Nuremberg trials and actually the legal aspects of the Nuremberg trials (as opposed to the Holocaust itself). So that's going to be very, very intense. In fact, I just returned in late August from Berlin. During my time in Berlin, we had in-depth study of the implications of the Holocaust within the German legal system. Naturally, it was an emotional experience. And though I've been to Berlin before, we had a very intense experience with respect to the study of the Holocaust and the lead-up to the Holocaust and how things evolved. And we still haven't fully recovered from it actually. But all this history and trying to extract what is still relevant and how to learn from it and how to make things better, how the
law plays into it and each twist and turn, is – how could you ever give up wanting to do this? You can’t give it up. It’s an addiction.

Ms. Dunn A good addiction.

Ms. Hollis It’s a good addiction.

Ms. Dunn I’ve listened to you and I think about all the ground we have covered in these interviews from your early days as a child out in the west with traveling performers and hotels and your mother and trips to Mexico and you are a true renaissance woman. I mean, you are a real citizen of the world and you are passionate about so much more than just your practice.

Ms. Hollis Well, the practice is a great – it’s a great springboard to be able to travel and to think outside the narrow confines and I’ve been blessed. I thank God every day that I have it and that it has allowed me to do things that a simple
country girl from Colorado should never have been allowed to touch. Here you are. Just, I haven’t even had a chance to tell you about the Royal Society very much except to say that the Royal Society has been a part of my life now for 15 years. Just meeting the Nobel Laureates and, ironically, we had the President of the Royal Society (who is a Nobel Laureate) in the office this morning. We were talking about the Royal Society and the future of the Royal Society post-Brexit. How could you give up talking about things like this? I certainly have no impact on it, but as far as being stimulated every single day, I mean, it’s a – you have to embrace life and be stimulated by life.

Ms. Dunn Do you have a bucket list?

Ms. Hollis No, I just live it day by day. It’s much more interesting that way. I do want to make it to Australia. I haven’t been to Australia yet.
Ms. Dunn  Maybe we’ll pause here just for a moment.

October 31, 2016

Ms. Hollis  We are back here for our sixth interview.

Ms. Dunn  Seventh.

Ms. Hollis  Seventh interview?

Ms. Dunn  Seventh interview.

Ms. Hollis  It boggles the mind. Okay.

Ms. Dunn  Happy Halloween!

Ms. Hollis  Yes, Happy Halloween!

Ms. Dunn  We have been through a long, hot summer together.

Ms. Hollis  A long, hot summer. So we are getting to that part of the interviews when it is, I hate to say it is time to wrap it up, but I know you must feel that way because it is Halloween, and you have obligations.

Ms. Dunn  We are getting to the end.
Ms. Hollis  All right.

Ms. Dunn  I think we covered so much ground. It has been incredible.

Ms. Hollis  It has been an honor to work with you, Alex.

Ms. Dunn  It has been a lot of fun, and you have just shown me a number of pictures and special newspaper clippings and your high school yearbook, and books that you have written – all of which will become part of this oral history.

Ms. Hollis  Thank you so much, Alex, for taking this part of your life with me and helping me recall this 43 years of practicing law.

Ms. Dunn  It’s amazing. What I love is that you have a document that complements or goes with all your major milestones.

And you thought I didn’t believe some of it.

Ms. Hollis  Well, I’m Irish. I know how to tell a tale or two.
It’s all true and it’s all backed up.

I have restrained myself. All right.

Well, it’s incredible. Today we are going to talk about the role of the American Bar Association and your role in the ABA. We have talked about the Energy Bar and its precursor—

Yes.

— and your involvement in that. We have talked about your involvement in other bar associations around the world.

Yes.

But the ABA has been a very special part of your legal career in so many ways. Do you remember your first ABA meeting?

I do. I remember my first ABA meeting in the University of Denver Law School. I was walking out of the Law
School and I happened to notice a little cardboard sign on a big classroom saying “Lecture on Environment and Energy Development in Colorado, $5.00 Admission for Law Students.”

Ms. Dunn Was it an ABA event?

Ms. Hollis Yes, it was. It was the old Natural Resources Section of the ABA. And so I thought, “Well, so for $5.00, why don’t you just go in see what this is all about?” And I did, and I was interested. I wasn’t overwhelmed, but I was certainly interested in it, and it just brought to my attention the role of the ABA. Then, actually, we had the White House counsel come out to the University of Denver to lecture. He was a big ABA member. I was impressed by that at the time, too. He was from the wrong party at the time, but I was impressed by that fact. So it began to click with me, and I put it in my “things to do,” but I did become a student member in probably
about 1971 or '72 probably.

Ms. Dunn  What role did the ABA play, along with other professional bars, in your early professional development?

Ms. Hollis  Well, I think the most important things for me were that when I went to government, when I first started in Washington, a number of people had mentioned to me, "You know, you really should get into the ABA, it might be useful." So I did, but then because the rules changed. If you were in government, it was sort of frowned upon, so then it was time to get out of the ABA. I was in and out a couple times, but, basically, it became obvious that some of the people I admired and knew and wanted to practice with over the years were active in the ABA. So that is why I committed to it more heavily. I started out in the Natural Resources Section as, I think, Vice Chair of the Natural Gas Committee, or something like that. It
was just great. I got to know many people at the time. It
was a much simpler group in the sense of, not that the
lawyers were simple, they were extremely sharp, tough
lawyers, but there's a lot more golf, frankly, there's a lot
more golf and a lot more tennis, and there was a –
something I mercifully did not participate in – there was,
in fact, a drinking contest, but we won't speak of that.

Ms. Dunn  No, no.

Ms. Hollis No more. But it was all goodhearted and fun. It was a
simpler time, obviously.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis The 1970s. And then I just stuck with it over the years
and kind of worked my way up, but in the meantime,
outside of the Natural Resources Section, I became active
in the International Law and then also began to be
appointed as chairs of a variety of entities – the
Coordinating Group on Energy Law, which was very exciting. This is in the '80s. The Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary came later, but it was extremely exciting. I was the Federal Circuit Representative for three years in that. I became Chair of the Standing Committee on Environmental Law which existed at the time. I chaired the Fund for Justice and Education. I chaired the Board of Editors of the ABA Journal, which was incredibly great; I actually devoted nine years of my life to the Board of the ABA Journal, and then, of course, as the Chair of the Board of Editors.

Oh, a variety of things over many, many years. Just wonderful experiences, wonderful opportunities, I have nothing but happy thoughts about the ABA. Yes, it's political, but it is really a wonderful, really a tremendous benefit and a tremendous sorority/fraternity of people who actually enjoy each other's company and who
actually want to do good things. Many times they do accomplish good things. I always was a bit of a joiner in grade school and high school. It's probably because I had no brothers and sisters, and I didn’t have any family to speak of except my mother and my grandmother, so it just became an outlet and it was encouraged in the context I was working in over the years as a student, as a child into –

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis I was a joiner and I always enjoyed it because as an only child in an urban environment most of the time, you might as well go do something. [Laughter.]

Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis I never got to be in the Girl Scouts because we moved around so much in my childhood it was almost impossible to keep up with an obligation like that. So
other things, the church, I should mention that I became President of the Thomas More Society in Washington, a wonderful, dedicated group that tries to live up to the standards and the thought process, the analytical thought process and commitment to doing what you think is right that Thomas More set and that example. That was part of it, too. I certainly enjoyed that. I did that simultaneously.

I became an Honorary International Member of the Bar Association of England and Wales, which is the Independent Barristers' Association. That has given me tremendous, tremendous exposure to different things in the international context which is something that has been near and dear to my heart, the international environment, which I figured I would mention to you.

Ms. Dunn Oh, you have.

Ms. Hollis Yes.
Ms. Dunn So you left out that you chaired the Environmental Law Section.

Ms. Hollis I did. I did.

Ms. Dunn Wow!

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn I remember that is where I first remember seeing you, Sheila Hollis, at a podium at the head of a very large room. It was after 9/11.

Ms. Hollis Yes, right after, October.

Ms. Dunn Yes, and it was the Section Fall Meeting, and people were nervous about traveling. We had gathered in St. Louis and were having an event at the St. Louis Arch in the event arena below the Arch.

Ms. Hollis Mm hmm.

Ms. Dunn And I remember you standing up and making such powerful remarks about the fact that these lawyers had all
come together after this national event, this national tragedy, gotten on a plane to keep doing good work together.

Ms. Hollis  There were commitments. There were commitments to be kept, and I think the fact that everybody packed their suitcase and went to the airport for the first time since 9/11, had the guts to get on an airplane and go to the middle of the country was not able. It was not a handy location. There were limited flights, but everybody made it. It was probably 300 people, which was remarkable. There was also, incredibly, a strike in front of the hotel where we were staying. It was a very complicated situation, but we had the Honor Guard come out and people cried. It was very, very emotional. I was just so proud of everybody to show up. I remember your smiling face there.

Ms. Dunn  [Laughs]
Ms. Hollis: It’s just that it was so supportive, though, because I had these nightmares of the catastrophe of having this big meeting and having this catastrophe, financial catastrophe, because nobody could make it, and it worked out wonderfully. It was really a very great bonding experience. Similar to when the Congress stood on the steps of the Capitol and sang, I think we sang, “God Bless America” and said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Dunn: Mm hmm. Yes. Well, I think that showed your, such an example of your leadership skill, your grace under pressure, your ability to bring people together in difficult times. I think it has been a hallmark of your career in many ways.

Ms. Hollis: Thank you. I have certainly felt a great commitment to the ABA, which I am sure in retrospect there are many other things that people can do other than be members of the ABA, but to me it’s been a very good thing. It has
provided a basic group of friends for 35-40 years. It is incredible when you look it. You look at the inconstancy of relationships – law firms, marriages, well, you name it. You could go down a long list of things that are not constant. The ABA has been there for me. It’s been great and the people have been great.

Ms. Dunn What role do you play in the ABA now?

Ms. Hollis Well, right now, I chair the Standing Committee on the Law Library of Congress which is tremendous, fun, exciting. When you think you have seen it all and you become jaded in life, it opens up this whole world of different thoughts. Things that you have had in the back of your mind for so many years. The areas that you love – books, poetry, ancient books, rare books, art books, law books, science books – and it’s there. It is just sitting there. It’s a national treasure. Having the joy of even playing a tiny role in it, while the work is focused on the
Standing Committee of the Law Library, it is a part of the big library. It’s just a wonderful thing, and I am honored to be able to help in a small way and to link in with the Library and the ABA because it is a treasure for the country, particularly in these calamitous times where funds are short, people need access to information and not many people know or have the wherewithal, just the knowledge base, to know to take advantage of the Library of Congress and the Law Library.

For young lawyers, for solos, for not-for-profits, small law firms, people in government, it’s tremendous, tremendous, and it’s just sitting there as this national, international treasure. People come from all over the world, and here our own American public doesn’t take advantage of it. So I know the new Law Library of Congress is going to be very, very dedicated to opening up the Library of Congress to broader audiences and to
get more utilization, practical utilization, not just theoretical and for scholars in the field, but for everybody. I feel very enthused about that and excited.

Ms. Dunn So you’re still contributing to advancing law in our country in all fields.

Ms. Hollis Trying.

Ms. Dunn Not just energy.

Ms. Hollis Yes, trying, trying. Energy is just, it’s like a door you open into other things. That’s the way I see the specialty areas in the law. You look through that door and you open a door and it leads in so many different directions. I have been to every corner of the earth with the exception of Australia – I’m going to get there – but just about every place. I have to say that energy has been the door, energy and environment has been the door into those worlds.
Ms. Dunn  
Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  
China, Russia right after the fall of the Wall, Romania, 
Poland, Laos, Vietnam, all over South America, every 
corner of Canada – the only one I have missed is Nova 
Scotia, but I have been to almost every province of 
Canada. They all have huge energy problems and 
concerns and opportunities. Central and South America, 
England, all over England and Ireland – it’s just so 
fascinating, and you could go anywhere on earth and you 
always have something to talk about because it impacts 
everybody. Africa, working in Ethiopia over such a 
lengthy period of time. Going down to Kenya and 
working with them briefly. It’s just a remarkable story.

Ms. Dunn  
You have showed me today one of the items that we are 
going to put in with your history is the Regulatory Model 
Proposal and Recommendations to the Ministry of Mines 
and Energy of the Provisional Military Government of
Socialist Ethiopia.

Ms. Hollis: Yes, thanks to the World Bank, that’s how I ended up there. It was a World Bank project that spanned three years, and we wrote the Petroleum Code because there was hope that there would be an influx of Western investment back into Ethiopia because it had undergone a tremendously gut-wrenching, terrifying revolution during the fall of Haile Selassie. Basically, the Russian government, frankly, the Communist and Marxist governments controlling Ethiopia and the Sudan, was switched over to being a U.S.-oriented environment, but there were massive wars being waged. The Eritrean War was being waged. The Yemenis were in the action.

There was one event I do remember, which I have to mention, that I went to meet some of the people from the team at a place called the Buffet de la Gare which was a nightclub at the old train station. There was only one
train, and it went to Djibouti back and forth. That’s the only railroad there was in Ethiopia. There were Cubans, North Koreans, Chinese, Russians, Polish, Romanians, Czechoslovakians, every corner of the Communist world was represented in Ethiopia at the time. It was an astonishing experience – access to resources, access to information, war footing in a critical part of the world – the Horn of Africa, extraordinary. I think it one of the most profound experiences I have ever had in my life. The government had shut down a world famous museum, at one time Haile Selassie had a magnificent museum which contained some of the anthropological and archaeological treasures of the world of Ethiopia, Africa and the world in general. It had pretty well been stripped clean, but one thing that was left was the famous “Lucy” skeleton. History on the Lucy discovery had been rewritten in the museum because the explanatory material
on the wall explained how it had been found by the Russians, not the Leakey expedition. Of course, it was Dr. Leakey who found it with the Ethiopian team. Poor little hominid Lucy’s bones were laying there on a pile of sand, basically, almost in a cardboard box. It was extraordinary.

I think the entire experience of being in Ethiopia was one of the best things I ever did. It showed in that phase what it means to be in a totalitarian world where you cannot get a newspaper, you can’t get unbiased news – a three-year-old *Time* magazine was a precious commodity. When I went into a market and I wanted to buy tapes of Ethiopian music, they had to be censored before they went out of the country – sealed and censored, every tape. I was followed everywhere, my room was tapped because there weren’t that many Westerners and certainly not Western women from Washington, D.C., stomping
around over there. We were being followed. Being under that microscope was very unnerving, and also seeing the desperation of the people, absolute desperation. That was the period of Ethiopian famine, and it was just stunning. The restaurants pretty much were just shells. They were barely functional. Going to what once had been a famous restaurant in Addis called the "Villa Verde," the "Green Villa," all the old waiters were there still in their old outfits. Haile Selassie had fallen in the mid-70s, about '74. They were still wearing those uniforms, and they had a huge menu, extraordinary menu of things listed, listed, listed. So you would say, "I'm amazed you have this. I'll try this." They would say, "Sorry, that's not on tonight." What it boiled down to was all that was on the menu was pasta with a very plain sauce. The liquor bottles were filled with water that was colored. It was this whole Potemkin village kind of feel
Ms. Dunn Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis Then I was in Russia right after the Wall fell.

Ms. Dunn You just showed me a picture of your delegation.

Ms. Hollis Delegation – a group of men who were oil and gas general counsels, all through the old Southwestern Legal Foundation. I led the delegation. Just coming from the airport we had a couple drivers and we were in separate cars. It was kind of mad. We were going about 70 miles an hour into the heart of Moscow. They had to stop and pay off the police about every half mile and give them a few rubles; just that whole experience, it was so wild. We came to a hotel which had been the former Communist party headquarters hotel, it was called the “Poliskaya.” The Poliskaya was this very elegant marble building on the outside. The inside, going up this marble
staircase was this huge marble pediment and there were only palm trees on it. I thought, “Well, that’s kind of nice, that sort of soft touch.” It turned out Lenin’s bust, a gigantic Lenin, Lenin’s bust had been there until they took it down about a week before because they knew an American delegation was coming in. [Laughter.]

Ms. Dunn Unbelievable.

Ms. Hollis Yes, yes.

Ms. Dunn So, Sheila, some of the pictures you have shown me today are of your mom as a little girl in Colorado and pictures from your high school yearbook, and you have this life that you were all over the West, but you were a girl from the West traveling with her mom from the West.

Ms. Hollis Yes.

Ms. Dunn What you have just told me about being in Russia and Ethiopian and even holding meetings in the U.S. after
9/11, you are at home in any setting.

Ms. Hollis  I really, my mother used to say that, Sheila, you need to be ready to be parachuted to any part of the world and be ready for action, and that’s the philosophy I am always trying to follow.

Ms. Dunn  So where are you spending your time now? What are some of the projects near and dear to your heart? You mentioned a project in Puerto Rico that you are working on.

Ms. Hollis  And after ten years, I’ve been working for ten years on the, on behalf of the town of Plymouth, Massachusetts, in dealing with the existence of large energy facilities that are being decommissioned. I really enjoy working with the communities because they have to go through a tremendous transition. I am trying to do whatever I can to aid them in this transition, vis à vis the closure of a plant, the economic impacts of closure of major energy
facility are huge. Tax base changes have a big impact on
the community, but also general employment issues.
Social services needs go up because people don’t have the
employment they had before at the level they had before.
I really have enjoyed that aspect of it because I like
dealing with real people and places, I like to go see
things. I like the tangible quality of energy. You see real
people being impacted in either a good, bad or
challenging environment. Anything I can do in that
environment to help them cope in those difficult contexts
I really, really enjoy. And also working on some
international projects and on renewable energy issues.
There are so many breakthroughs that are just, the
disruptive technologies are just in the wings waiting to
come in. Being part, to ride that wave, it’s always you’re
looking for the perfect wave. I feel the perfect wave
building up that is going to transform so much.
Ms. Dunn: So thinking of what you have just told me, you are really not only so knowledgeable on the substance, but you are a people person. You bring people together. You connect people. You guide people through difficult times. So there have been people that have been around you, part of your inner circle, your family. Talk about a little bit about the people. We talked so much about your mom in your early life and really far into your life. In fact, I was so struck. You showed me one of your schedules from in the '80s.

Ms. Hollis: '84.

Ms. Dunn: And you were traveling non-stop, and it was typed up for your mother.

Ms. Hollis: Yes. Just as an example, she always wanted to know where I was because this was the pre-computer, pre-BlackBerry, pre-cell phone era. When I went to Africa for a month at a time and went all over Africa, or China,
or Russia, or Poland, any of those places, yes, she wanted
to have a sense of how she could reach me if she needed
to and vice versa. That was part of it. Of course, my
wonderful husband, my high school sweetheart, I think I
shared with you a photo of us together in the high school
yearbook.

Ms. Dunn  And what were you voted?

Ms. Hollis  The most unique or most –

Ms. Dunn  Individualistic.

Ms. Hollis  – that’s it.

Ms. Dunn  The most individualistic. Both of you.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  And no one knew, were you boyfriend and girlfriend
then?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, we went to the prom together.
Ms. Dunn  So you were already an individualistic pair?

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Recognized by your peers?

Ms. Hollis  Yes, as being that, and then my husband also was the most artistic by a long shot. That is why I am surrounded by his nice paintings here in the office.

Ms. Dunn  So this amazing husband, high school sweetheart and incredible mom, a daughter who you have told us has accomplished so many wonderful things as a physician.

Ms. Hollis  Yes, and we’re just such a tight little family that we have plenty of time to think about each other, and we just haven’t had that many distractions other than the vicissitudes of life, of course.

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Unfortunately, my husband’s parents died by the time we were 21, and my father was long gone, and that was it.
You just keep on going. That's why the intensity of the relationships in the family has been — everybody has intense relations in their family, but when it gets down to basically four people and now three people, with my daughter's wonderful husband, four again, thank God, it's pretty distilled.

Ms. Dunn Did you ever struggle with career and family?

Ms. Hollis Oh, yes, all the time. They hadn't really invented decent child care. My mother was working. My husband was working. I was working. It was terrible, very challenging. Trying to find the right setting and the right school, it's hard. It's very hard and at the time was a very primitive situation. Most women didn't work. Certainly my poor mother she just, that was very rough for her with me. So, I had experienced what it meant as a child, but, mercifully, everybody pitched in. We covered for each other with our daughter. Everybody pitched in. It's
great. Everybody has ups and downs, but everybody got on well in it. We were such young parents that I think we were just more flexible. It was the 1970s and was a different world, but they were just starting to catch on to the need for child care that meant something, but even at that we were all “Nervous Nellies.” We didn’t want to let Windsong go. We had a pretty intense family relationship since most of the time, but not all the time, we were living together, but my mother worked until our daughter was 15 or 16. It was still catch-as-catch-can a lot of times.

Ms. Dunn And you have showed me some pictures of John and Windsong and your mom and you at bar events and professional bar events.

Ms. Hollis Right, yes.

Ms. Dunn Looking ahead, you are certainly someone who isn’t
slowing down any time soon.

Ms. Hollis  It doesn't look that way.

Ms. Dunn  You have mentioned Australia is on your bucket list.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  What do you see yourself doing over the next few years?

Ms. Hollis  Well, I am still in the middle of cases, so I see that continuing. The Standing Committee on the Law Library, I certainly want to do that. I may try something new and different. I may go back to my poetry writing experience. I would love to write about a lot of the times and experiences I had in the West growing up which are not quite a normal childhood, shall we say. I think some people might get a laugh of it and other people may find it useful, just maybe some tools for survival.

Ms. Dunn  So if we fast-forward five years, do we see you here at Duane Morris?
Ms. Hollis  Could be, could be. You never know. [Laughter.]

Ms. Dunn  My goodness. Well, I guess maybe a way to close this.

You have mentioned some awards that have meant a lot to you that you have reached, and certainly your office is full of incredible accolades, can you pick a couple that just really touched you?

Ms. Hollis  Well, the Platts Global Energy Award, I have to say, was quite meaningful because it was not just a lawyers award, it was for contributions to energy law, or energy in general, the energy world, and that meant a great deal. I have had some other wonderful, wonderful awards, not the least of which is the firm’s own award, the Cheryl Bryson Award, I think I mentioned to you. I did the “Dean of the Oil and Gas Bar” lectures, which meant a lot. That was with the Southwestern Legal Foundation, now Center for American and International Law.

I was an Editor of the Oil and Gas Reporter for many,
many years, which was exposure to some of the great law professors and law school deans who had made their way in the early days of the development of the oil and gas industry and they were still active until they were 95 years old. A couple times a year we would get together. It was just a unique and wonderful thing, and I just respected it so much. And then, the Nordstrom Award from the Energy Bar because I was the first living person to get it, let me put it that way. The first person to get it was Paul Nordstrom, and, sadly, he passed away very early in life. He was a wonderful lawyer and a very charitable person, and so it meant a lot to me to be the first living person to receive the award.

Just having an opportunity to participate in these wonderful things meant so much. And, of course, the Women’s Council on Energy and Environment Woman of the Year award, to be President of the Women’s
Council of that was fantastic.

Ms. Dunn: And then this is the Women’s Trailblazers Project. You have blazed the trail, literally, through an entirely new field of law that was emerging around you through federal agencies, throughout the globe. You are still setting things on fire, Sheila.

Ms. Hollis: [Laughter.] That’s because it’s fun!

Ms. Dunn: In a good way.

Ms. Hollis: It’s fun and you want to help, and everybody in the energy world right now needs a lot of help. There’s up, there’s down, ins, outs, unpredictability, uncertainty, risk, high risk, cybersecurity. My God, you think about it, I represented the blackout, the grid in the blackout of 2003. There’s nothing that’s more significant than that. It’s the lifeblood now. Without energy supply from whatever source, there is not going to be survival of our societies.
Ms. Dunn: Do you feel like enough young lawyers are going into energy?

Ms. Hollis: I do. I think it’s with a different quality to it. I think most of it is now energy/environmental or environmental/energy combined because it’s like the old love and marriage, horse and carriage thing. You can’t do one without the other. So figuring out the fixes, solutions, ways to prevent bad things from happening, that’s a key part of it, too. It’s all mitigate, mitigate, mitigate, mitigate, and, if possible, avoid, but where it can’t be avoided, to mitigate, and recognizing that there are always tradeoffs. There is no free lunch. You need energy supply. It’s got to come from somewhere, and in order to make that happen, you’ve got to make some tough decisions. I think that’s what we’re seeing and being involved in those matters is sometimes extremely painful, but you want to do everything you can to make it
come out in the right place. You don’t want to look back
and say, “My God, how could that have happened?” You
want it to come out in the right place.

Ms. Dunn  That goes back to your first significant government job
being the first-ever Enforcement Office, and it was true to
that mantra.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  Get out. Get to the right place. Get the right outcome.

Ms. Hollis  Absolutely. At the time, remember, there’s no
computers, no cell phones, no meaningful computer, no
ability to really do metadata analysis. It was all very
hands-on, personal stuff all the way. Very emotionally
charged, much of it. You break china when you go into a
new arena like that, but I think the headline said it best,
“45,000 cases, 10 Lawyers,” 20 people total when we
started the Office of Enforcement. Now it’s got
hundreds. The same basic rules are in place since 1978, yes, the same basic rules that were brought to the table by my office when I was Director are still fundamentally in place in the FERC regs.

Ms. Dunn That’s incredible.

Ms. Hollis Yes. That’s, we’ve done a lot of living at FERC since then. [Laughs.]

Ms. Dunn Wow! This might be a place to end. I think we could talk for really for so much longer, Sheila.

Ms. Hollis Oh, yes. It’s been such a privilege having you here with me to share some of these little wanderings down memory lane, but, hopefully, there’s some kernels of use to people, particularly for women, to be unafraid, to always be prepared for whatever may walk into your office that day or get you on the telephone or an e-mail. You’ve got to be ready and you’ve got to be a risk taker
(within reason).

Ms. Dunn  Mm hmm.

Ms. Hollis  Don’t ever sacrifice your integrity.

Ms. Dunn  Wise counsel.

Ms. Hollis  Yes.

Ms. Dunn  From a very wise counsel sitting across from me.

Ms. Hollis  I can always get a lot wiser. [Laughs.]

Ms. Dunn  Well, you’re not done. That’s for sure.

Ms. Hollis  No.

Ms. Dunn  Thank you, Sheila.

Ms. Hollis  Thank you.

Ms. Dunn  Thank you so much for being a part of this project.

Thank you for contributing your story to the Trailblazers Project, for sharing your memories, your personal history, your contributions to the law, and I’m just glad that I

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have gotten to do this at a time when you are far from
done making an impact.

Ms. Hollis  Thank you so much, Alex.

Ms. Dunn  There’s more.

Ms. Hollis  There’s more to come.

Ms. Dunn  There needs to be another chapter to this oral history.

Ms. Hollis  Yes, stand by. [Laughs.] Thank you, Alex, for your
time.