

Interviewee: Joyce Norton-McCormick (Hyphenated maiden with husband's name)

Interviewer: Gracie Rennecker

[Intro and consent] *What is your last name story?* Well, my present marriage is the second marriage for me and I think my... I just wanted to be part of the family but separate. I wanted to have my own individuality as well. So, the first time I got married I just took my husband's last name and I think I sort of developed this independence during that period of time. I was very young when I got married, 20, and I was still in college. And the more time went on I became a lot more independent and by the time I got married the second time I had lived independently for quite a while and had been living on my own. And I think it was kind of an expression of my independence but I didn't want to just keep MY maiden name, I wanted to also... I was pretty sure we were going to have a family so I didn't want to... I guess I kind of felt like if I didn't have the same last name as my family as well I would feel sort of separate from them. So I decided to do both. *Perfect.*

*Did this or does this have any effects on your children? You mean how they feel about it? Yeah, what they think, what they feel.* I think that when... John's never really expressed anything about it. But when Hugh was younger, probably 6 or so, he used to always... not always, once in awhile he would say something about, "What's that Norton thing? Why do you do that Norton thing?" Because it was almost like he, you know, he wanted me to change it so that I wouldn't be different from the three of them. *Right.* So that's how I read that. Well, I think that he gets it. *Yeah, absolutely.*

*Is there an importance of ethnic or history of your name? Not really, no. Ok. Did you have role models for your decision?* Well, yeah I did. I would have to say that Gloria Steinem certainly was a very important role model for me and maybe the antithesis of role models, maybe kind of observing my mom going through life and how her last name to me represented the way she was treated, which wasn't really equally. *Right.*

*What did you hope for in choosing the name that you did and has that worked out well?* Um... I, I think that I chose it the way that I did because I had seen other people do it and that seemed to work for me. Um... it gets tougher, I've even said to people, "O what I would do for my independence," because so many people, believe it or not, in this day in age still don't get it. You know, when I tell them that my name is hyphenated, its Joyce Norton-McCormick, they continue to go to McCormick for medical records and they can't find it. I'll say, "It's Norton-McCormick" and... many people aren't aware of hyphenated names to the point where I think, why did I ever do this? Why didn't I just use McCormick? [laughs] versus using Norton. But I think other than that... and it takes forever to sign your name, for things like credit cards. But I kind of like it, I think it really keeps me in touch with my past and my family.

*Kind of along the same lines of what you were talking about, and you can talk about other stories too, have there been any unforeseen consequences or problems that have arisen?* No, hm-

mm. *Are there times, or have there been times that you are called by other names rather than Norton-McCormick, such as John's friends, when they were little calling you Mrs. McCormick?* Ya, I do both. Normally I just use Norton-McCormick when I want everything to match. [inaudible] Everything that I did in the shop was Norton-McCormick and um... even though that seemed really long at times, when my name was in the class schedule and when it could have been just Joyce McCormick. I think it was important to keep everything the same weekly, but a lot of times all the kids friends call me Mrs. McCormick, Joyce.

*Would you make the same choice again?* Um... [chuckles] that's an interesting question. Uh... well I don't know, you know? I think it was a lot more important at the time when I did it and I think that now that there are more important things that I've done that were more important ways for expressing my independence, that to me it doesn't really seem... uh... quite as consequential. I have found that it's interesting, I think, to watch people like Tracy, people that are quite a bit younger than I am, um... you know it doesn't seem to be something that a lot of people, around here anyway, are doing all that much anymore. It will be interesting to see what you find in your interviews because I get this feeling that that was more something to do that, in the 70's than it is now. [I will give you the info for the website]

*What kinds of reactions have you gotten from your family or your friends about your name choice?* Um... well not really a whole lot, I think just that little, you know, that couple of times that it seemed to bother Hugh that I wasn't exactly like them. *Right.* Um... but other than that not really anything. My sister has a hyphenated name you know, so she, maybe I was kind of following suit with her a little bit, but, she certainly was ok with it. And my dad was ok with it because it was his name, so [laughs].

*How effective do you think your choice in intervening in women being erased and the whole idea of feminism, how effective do you think your choice has been in this?* Um... you mean in the overall influence and the whole movement? *Yeah, or even your own individual movement, any kind.* Um... I don't know if I really have any way of gauging that, I don't know, I think, I think people have pretty much accepted me for who I am. I don't know if they look at my name and say, "O she really must be a feminist because she's got a hyphenated name." I don't know maybe they do, I don't know what people think when they look at that. Maybe they think it's dumb, I don't know. I don't really know. *Do you feel that your choice has, instead of taking husband's last name and becoming erased, do you think that keeping your name in your hyphenated name has kept you from being erased?* Yeah, it might, especially in my case where McCormick is a big name in Baltimore, I think that was probably at work [mumbles] but I think that that was at work. Um... ya I think that might have become a little overpowering that maybe I wanted a voice there, I didn't want people to think that I was just going to kind of melt into the McCormick dynasty kind of thing.

*How meaningfully does a woman keeping her father's father's father's name speak to feminist goals?* Well that's a very good question because why wouldn't I have wanted to take my mom's maiden name? *Right.* Yeah. So I've thought about that too, um... yeah there's a little conflict there you're right. I have to agree. *We talked about it in class a little bit, like what's the point of not*

*keeping one man's name in order to keep another man's name.* Yeah, you know that thing is, is that, going back to the other question about would I change what I did, um... yeah maybe I would go back and change my name to my mother's maiden name.

*Even though your children did end up taking the non-hyphenated name, but what do you think the generation of children with hyphenated names should do as they marry and have children.* [laughs] Um... huh. I, let's see. I guess it would just be sort of a lot of variety of choices of combinations that you could do. Maybe they will, I mean like you could do all kinds of things. You could have all your kids different! *That would be crazy!* [laughs] Like if you had four kids you could, like in our family, have one Norton, one McCormick, one Norton-McCormick, one McCormick-Norton. [laughs] But that doesn't really take other stuff into consideration. But um.. gosh I don't know it would really leave it wide open for a lot of choices that you could make.

*Also, can you talk a little bit more about the decision for John and Hugh's last names to be just McCormick versus Norton-McCormick.* Well, yeah, I don't think I ever thought that far ahead and Hugh and I never really talked about it. It would be interesting to see how Hugh would have felt about that. He was totally ok with me being Norton-McCormick and I think he probably would have been ok with Norton-McCormick for the boys. But I would image that what we were thinking is it would be really long to learn in school and, you know, uh... I don't know. I haven't really thought about it that deeply. You can ask John if he wishes his name was, or his name is Norton McCormick. *Right, his middle name is Norton.* Yeah so that wouldn't have worked for him. And we were conscious about them having equal opportunity and so if we would have had Hugh be Hugh Norton-McCormick then, you know, John would have been, well John wouldn't have gotten what Hugh got. [laughs] I don't think I really thought about that that much and I guess when John became John Norton McCormick, that I liked, and I thought that was good.