

Interviewee: Kayla Hunt (kept maiden name in a union)

Interviewer: Gracie Rennecker

[Intro and consent and pseudonym discussion] *What is your last name story?* You mean why did I keep my last name? *Yes that's perfect.* Alright, um... let's see. I got married in 1984 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and I was very much a feminist. I was also a little older than the normal bride, I think I was 31. I had my career. Even if I hadn't had, you know, my independence and career I don't think I would have changed my name just because of my feminist leanings. Um... also in Minneapolis at the time, things were pretty liberal, very progressive and it was interesting because we moved from there to Cincinnati and Cincinnati to Annapolis and there were definitely fewer women keeping their names in those two cities.

Did this have any effect on your children? Ya, I think it was a pain for them [laughs]... because you know in school, things were just starting to change, that people realized that and recognized that there were different last names in the same family and it got better as time went on. My kids are in their early 20's now so. I also think it helped that computer programmers were getting better as far as, you know, putting in letters and also that, I mean and the paper work wasn't really good about having two names. But anyways, it just got better as things progressed and we did get... later. So yeah and I think, and they always laughed at me because their friends would want to call me Mrs. So-and-So and I'd always correct them. And that became a big joke. But I think yeah as far as, it wasn't a terrible thing, the way it has affected them. And then they realize too that women have just as much partnership independence I think.

Did you say that you did give your children your husband's name? Yes, we did. If we would have had any girls I would seriously consider have giving them my last name. I didn't want to burden them with a hyphenated last name. Because that was just too awkward. *Is there any ethnic or history to your name and why you kept it?* Not really, actually I think things would have been, my name [laughs], things would have been a little better if I had changed it because my last name isn't all that great, it's Hunt, and my nickname is Kiki, so really stupid name, Kiki Hunt. But um, I lived with it through elementary school which was a lot of taunting, so I figured o well! [Discussion of my mom]

Did you have any role models for your decision? Not that I recall. *What did you hope for choosing your name, and did that end up working well?* Um I hope to keep my independence and the separate person, and yeah I think it worked well. My husband was very supportive of that you know, I might have some explaining to do but that is fine with me. Kind of raise the awareness of that. And I think my parents had a tough time with it, my dad gave me a check for something soon after I was married with my husband's name on it, and I was like, "This is not my name." [laughs]. And he just looks at me and didn't do anything and I said, "You know this is not my name" and he "Haha" so I said "Well ok" and I tore the check up and I said "If you would like to write another check that'd be great." [laughs].... [inaudible]

Sort of along with that, if there is anymore, have there been any unforeseen consequences or problems or stories of issues that have arisen? I guess my husband is kind of in a higher level position and when they send out invitations from work, it's usually Mr. and Mrs. Blah Blah invite you to dah dah dah. And I did NOT care for that! But the administrator and I talked about it and she said "Well it's so much easier, nobody knows who you are, and it's another person on the

invitation." And I notice now that's because that probably 10 years ago and I just let it go because I figured that's husband's business, I don't really care. But there are a lot more professional couples in higher positions now with two names, so that's good.

And then you sort of eluded to this a little bit with the past couple of questions, are there any other times that you get called by names other than your main last name, such as Mrs. Husband's names, by kid's friends for example? Um it's happening less and less now and uh its funny because my kids are out of the house so. They are, and any people they bring home are much more aware, and handle it better than a small child would. But what's funny is that I often deal with contractors that come to our house and they will call my husband Mr. Hunt all the time [laughs]. So he just kind of looks at them, but doesn't even correct them, so. We always chuckle about that.

Would you make the same decision again if you had to? Most definitely. It's easier now and... it was harder 26 years ago, I would still do that. And what is funny is that, you know, I'm a very independent person and very career minded, but once I had my kids and my husband was working very long hours, I ended up quitting work for quite a long time and uh became a 1950's wife [laughs]. But I still feel that people are equal partners. *What kind of reactions have your family and friends given you, or did they give you in the past, when they realized that your name was not the same as your husband's?* Um... sometimes they ask why or they would respect it, they wouldn't say anything, except that they keep calling me Mrs. Johnson, but you know [couldn't hear]. So it hasn't been bad. Now that you are older and there are a lot of worst couples now and people with their children's name, so a lot more receptive.

How effective do you think your choice in choosing your name for the "feminist" reason that you did, such as women not being erased, how effective do you think your decision has been in doing this? Well, I influenced my sister; I don't know if it has made a statement to anybody else but I feel better about it, I just really didn't want to change my name. I understand the kind of romantic aspect to that and becoming one family, you know they feel more like they are one. But I don't think we have that problem of not feeling that way. *How meaningfully does a woman keeping her father's father's name speak to the feminist's goals?* Ya I think, ya know, I certainly if I had thought it through I might have you know looked back even further, but this was my given name so I think it would have been hard to change it to something four generations ago or something.

What are your thoughts on hyphenating names, you talked about it a little bit but could you talk a little bit more about it? Um I just think, I think it's a good idea, I have a great thought behind it, but I think it's really awkward, and again it's kind of a system, it can get a name that's 5 [laughs], that's 5 names long or something and lots of hyphens and it really kind of jams things up. But it would be nice to have a different solution.