

Interviewee: Catherine Smith (Catherine Smith is considering taking the name of her partner now that they are expecting a child in order to reflect more of a family unit. She feels no attachment to her maiden name because her father's family has rejected her relationship)

Interviewer: Sawyer Schweitzer

[consent script and agreement] *So Rebecca told me that you were considering changing your last name to that of your partner's, so I was wondering if you could just tell me a little bit about that story, and why you would make that decision and what has been your hesitation in making that decision?* Sure. So we had a commitment ceremony about two and a half years ago and at the time we both decided to keep our maiden last names. And I guess with consideration that if we had a family we would revisit. And Mandy is now eight months pregnant, and I'll be a parent soon so it has definitely caused the conversation to resurface. And willingly, I mean it's something that I have considered for the last two and a half years. And so, we haven't officially made any decisions but we wanted to revisit the last names because clearly we have to decide what the baby's last name will be, and then any subsequent changes to our last name, to reflect more of a family unit. And so my last name is Smith, obviously, and it's very common, very generic, and I hold no attachment to it. For a lot of reasons. For the purposes of your project, it's important to know that I also feel slightly disconnected from my last name because my father's parents and his side of the family are not supportive of my relationship with Mandy, and our family. And so, that also complicates things. And whereas Mandy I think has a great last name, I joke and say I have last name envy, her last name is Steponowski, it's definitely a mouthful but she has strong relationship to her heritage, to her background, and to her last name. And that's kind of how we've got to our current place.

*So that is why you would choose to take her name instead of the other way around?* So yes we've discussed that Mandy really likes her name and she does not want to change her name, I don't feel an attachment to my name and we both are a little bit hesitant to support a last name that doesn't necessarily support us, meaning my family. So if I were to change my name, yes, I would change my name to Steponowski, because the other sort of compromises, quote on quote, you know, hyphens or combining last names into a new last name, just, we have decided don't work for us. Her name is so long. If we change it, if I change it, it will be to the full Steponowski.

*So you plan on naming your child Steponowski instead of a hyphenated name, or a combination?* Um, that's a good question. We are still working on it. I do think that is how it will turn out. We have talked about potentially giving the child two middle names, so that her second middle name would be Smith, um, so I guess we have talked to people who have done that. So then she has the tie to the name, the family, and the history, but you know, not use it in every sort of documentation or paper work and that sort of thing. I don't think that is as likely as the child just having Steponowski as a last name, and me also changing my name.

*So just on the fact of you potentially changing your name, has your immediate family had any sort of reaction to that?* Yeah that's a good question, I talked to my parent's, because they clearly decided to give me this name, and I wanted to get their feedback and opinions. And they were supportive, I mean I think they understand that my dad's side of the family, even though my dad is very supportive now, his siblings and parents are not, and so he has, over the last few years, started to separate from them as well, and not because of me exclusively but for a number of

reasons. And so, he is supportive of me changing my name. And I think he also realizes that if I had married a man there is a high likelihood that I would have taken that partner's last name. So it's not an issue, my mom also has a hard time with my dad's family, so she is supportive of me changing my name as well. [end of interview, thank you's]