

Interviewee: Jean Scandlyn (Kept last name for career and feminist reasons.)

Interviewer: Katy Stetson

[Info & consent] *Can we begin with your last name story?* I got married in 19 - oh dear, my husband's going to be really, ha, laugh at me - 76. We got married in 1976. But we had been living together for a while before that. And, yeah, I had just decided all along, from the minute that we were talking about getting married that I would keep my own name. And maybe even before that. So, it was a decision I made prior to having the real possibility of marriage right in front of me - that I wanted to keep my own name. And so, it was a decision I'd made in college, probably I think, or maybe late high school. And out of real feminist principles. My mother was a physician, and she did take my father's name, but was very strong and independent. And so I'd heard a lot of her stories about discrimination against women, and also, I think that was part of what effected my decision. So from the very beginning that was always my choice, and I've never wavered that really. And getting ready for this interview, I even feel like, I'm really glad I made this decision. *And you are still married, yes?* Well married, yeah. I've been married for gosh, well you can do the math.

*Do you have children?* I have two children. I have two boys. One is 27, and one is 25, and they both have my husband's last name. And again, now that was interesting because I'd thought so much about my own name, but I didn't really ever think that they wouldn't take my husband's name. And they don't have a hyphenated, you know, each of them has - you know, my older son is Andrew Cannon Eppler. Eppler is my husband's last name. And my younger son is Alex Vaughn Eppler, so they don't have my name in there at all. So it really wasn't me so much about carrying on my family name, it was just wanting to have my own identity. You know.

*Did you find that problematic? In terms of pros and cons of keeping your own name, and having a different name from your children - was that problematic at any point? Whether in schools or with your children's friends calling you a different name? How has that worked and affected you?* Okay, well let me go back just one step. The only time that having my own name became problematic just in terms of marriage was in 1983. We didn't have children yet, we lived a year in Indonesia. Indonesia is basically a Muslim country, and we had to provide proof of marriage even to go there. Which was fine, you know I didn't mind having my marriage certificate. But while I was there, although I never changed my name legally or anything, I used my husband's last name, Eppler, because it was just easier. It was just expediently easier. The only time it ever was a problem in terms of the kids was, oh I'm trying to remember what year it was, anyway, they were say 10 and 12, and we traveled to Europe. I took them by myself and then joined my husband in Paris. We went to Italy first. And all of a sudden I realized that we had no documents that tied each other, that I had no documents that tied me to my children. So everything that I had was in my own name, and everything they had - they had their own passports at this stage - was all Eppler. And I thought, what happens if you know we get separated, there's an emergency, someone in immigration says, "how are you connected to these children?" I realized I had no way to really prove that because I didn't have my marriage certificate with me. Which would have linked us, at least through my husband. That was the only time, and nothing happened, but it did make me think about it.

*Would you make the same choice again?* Hm. Yes, I think I would. I guess I might consider putting my middle name as the, or my last name as the children's middle name. To have a link

there. You know, if I knew what I know now, I would probably just take my marriage license with me, you know marriage certificate, you know just a photo copy. But yeah, I would make the same decision.

*Were there any reactions you got, positive or negative, from either your husband's family or your family, in terms of the decision to keep your name? How was that received?* I'm trying to remember. I think initially maybe my mother-in-law was sort of like, you know she's quite traditional and felt that was pretty strange, but she didn't make a big deal out of it, and you know, it's never come up again - ever. Ah, and then was it my sister or my father? When my mother died he had an insurance policy on my, or my mother had an insurance policy on him that transferred to my sister and myself. My sister's never married so she's always been Scandlyn, and um, my dad put it in my married name. You know, as if I had a married name. Which I've never have had. I don't know why he did that. Really funny. And so socially, I never get offended if people call me Jean Eppler or Mrs. Eppler. You know, to me it's not a big deal. It's not like I get mad or anything. My husband gets mail to my name sometimes too.

*In terms of this project as a whole and feminism, and the future, and what your choice means, how effective do you think your choice is in intervening in women being erased?* That's an interesting question, and I guess I would say if you look at the statistics it hasn't been very effective. I mean, I was really surprised when [the professor] started working on this project, that, I think it's what 7% or something - of women who don't change their name? Anyway, of married women it's a very small percentage. And in my circle of friends and acquaintances it's pretty common that women did not change their name. So I have lots of friends who you know, have different last names. So I don't know how effective it's been in the long run if, you know, if most people are still adopting their husband's last name. Um, I don't know. I think, maybe professionally it might have made more of an impact, because certainly within our discipline there are a lot of women who haven't changed their names. In Anthropology. I don't know what the percentage is though, you know.

*How meaningful- does a woman keeping her father's name speak to feminist goals?* Um, well, I did feel like it really helped me maintain a sense of myself, within the marriage - that I had a professional life and a professional identity and a public identity that was my own, that was separate from my husband. And I really appreciated that. So yes, I think from a feminist standpoint it does make a difference. One of the areas that I was concerned about was publications for example. That people not confuse me with my husband. And so that was really, that was important to me. So yeah, I feel like it made kind of a small feminist stance.

SKYPE message: December 12, 2012. 10:11 AM: I thought of one more point about making a feminist stance. Since I have two boys, I think it has been important for them to see me identify myself outside of marriage and having my own name has contributed to that. At least when people get married I hope they think about what the decision to change a last name or not change it means both to them and to society at large. Jean.

