Interviewee: Leonard Krawcheck
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Interviewer: April Wood (HCF)
Videographer: Leigh Moring (HCF)
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BEGIN INTERVIEW

April Wood: This is April Wood, and I'm with Mr. Lenny Krawcheck. Today is November 1st [2018], and we are at Mr. Krawcheck's office at 9 State Street. And I'll go ahead with some really basic questions, and then we'll move into interview questions. The first is biological information. Would you please say and spell your full name?

Leonard Krawcheck: My name is Leonard Krawcheck, L-E-O-N-A-R-D K-R-A-W-C-H-E-C-K. Everybody calls me Lenny, L-E-N-N-Y.

AW: And when and where were you born?

LK: I was born here in Charleston in January of 1941.

AW: What were your parents' names and your siblings?

LK: My father was Jack Krawcheck, my mother was Esther Bielsky Krawcheck, my brother was Saul Krawcheck. I had two sisters as well, Claire Nussbaum and Myra Read. And all three of my siblings are deceased as well as my parents, of course.

AW: Do you know how long ago your family settled here?

LK: My father's family, I think originally came here, and we don't know exactly, but around 1880 or '85. His father's brother moved here to South Carolina. In about 1901 or '02, he sent for his brother, my grandfather, and his family. And that's when my father's family came here, was around 1902. My mother's family came here a bit later. A little bit after 1910 as best we know. And my father's family settled here immediately. My mother's family did not come to Charleston immediately, but shortly after they came to this country, they came here.

AW: What country did they come from?

LK: They came from Poland, near Russia. I understood it was near the Russian border.

AW: What houses did you live in during your lifetime? Was that the house where your parents lived?

LK: Yeah. I've lived at 3 Colonial Street, which was purchased by my parents in 1927. And I've lived there all my life. I still live there. And other than the time that I was away at school, I've lived at 3 Colonial Street. The other house that I've lived in was also my parents' house. I'm very lucky to have both of these houses, very lucky. The second home is on Sullivan's Island at 2519 Ion Avenue. And I'm not sure exactly when they acquired the Sullivan's Island house, but sometime in the early 1930s would be a fair guess.

AW: Is your house different now, the one on Colonial Street, than it was when you were growing up in it?

LK: It is a bit different. It's still the basic house. After Hugo, it flooded during Hugo. It's the only time that the house flooded, was during Hurricane Hugo. And we had a foot and a half of water downstairs. The house is actually about 4 1/2 feet off the ground, but nonetheless, the Hugo water did a lot of damage. And the floors warped and shrunk and warped, and we had to replace all that. While we were doing that, we converted the back porch to a part of the kitchen. So, we enlarged the kitchen and removed the back porch with BZA [Board of Zoning Appeals] approval, I might add. But otherwise, the house is pretty much the same. Garage is different, but it's pretty much the same house that I grew up in.

AW: Did you have plumbing and water and everything in your house?

LK: Yeah. We've had problems with the duct work under the house. Since then Hugo and Matthew and Irma and the other storms that we've had recently, we have had to replace the duct work.

AW: Did you have to share a room with any of your siblings?

LK: No. My brother, Saul, actually was a good bit older than I was. I was born right during World War II, and he was in the Army Air Corps and was training to be a pilot. And so, he left the house early on. My sisters did share the front bedroom, and I had the back bedroom. So, I didn't share with anyone.

AW: Did you share a bathroom?

LK: We all shared the same bathroom. The bathrooms in the Colonial Street houses are one big bathroom upstairs and a half bath downstairs. And all of the houses on Colonial Street are similar in that respect. The houses on Colonial Street are interesting. I look at them. There's a duplicate of every house. They were built around 1913 or '14 by the owner of a lumberyard. So, they were built out of really good material, and they've done well over time. But the porches are a little bit different. But the basic layout of the houses is the same. And if you know that and go

looking, you can tell which house is the duplicate. They're random. There's no method to that madness.

AW: So, the next section is about life ways. Can you define your neighborhood and what the boundaries are for your neighborhood?

LK: Well, certainly, Colonial Street itself is the neighborhood. It's a one-block street that lies at the foot of Colonial Lake. It's in between and parallel to Rutledge and Ashley Avenues and runs from Broad to Tradd Street, one block. But the neighborhood's bigger than that. The neighborhood is a portion of Broad Street. It's Ashley Avenue and Rutledge Avenue on either side. It's downtown Charleston, the western portion of downtown Charleston. It involves Colonial Lake. It runs to the Battery, into the harbor.

AW: Are you considered in Charlestown Neighborhood Association?

LK: Yes. We're in the Charlestown Neighborhood Association.

AW: How would you describe your neighborhood to someone who's never been there before?

LK: Quiet, residential, very desirable place to live, always has had a lot of children, a lot of young children. To this day there are lots of children. You can still park. Neighbors are courteous. One of the things that I love about Colonial Street, there's been an unwritten rule since I can remember. Nobody parks in front of the neighbor's house. You don't dare do that. And the curious thing about that is nobody ever talks about that. It's just something that people do. And so, I can pull up to my house, night or day, unless a visitor is parked, of course. But you would never find one of your neighbors parked in front of your house, and you would never dare park in front of their house. It makes for a very nice neighborhood, very nice neighbors.

AW: And define downtown. When you were a child, what were your boundaries of where your parents would let you go?

LK: My earliest recollection is they wouldn't let me cross the street. And it was a big event when I was allowed to just cross the street, cross Colonial Street. But we could go up to Broad Street and to Tradd. And, of course, as I got older, that expanded, and we could go to the Battery and perhaps up to Beaufain Street and out to New Street or maybe Logan. Wouldn't go beyond that. As I got older, I rode everywhere on my bicycle. And, of course, at that point, we went all over town, all over town.

AW: Even up to the Upper Peninsula?

LK: I played Little League baseball, which was – they played at Hampton Park. Even though we were close to Moultrie Playground, the older boys played Pony League baseball at Moultrie, and Hampton Park was Little League. And I'd ride my bike right on up Ashley Avenue and right on back down Rutledge. So, yeah, I was ten years old, ten or 11 years old, and would do that.

AW: I guess your parents felt okay with that. It was safe up there?

LK: Yeah. They had no problem with me doing that.

AW: Were those one-way then, when you were a kid?

LK: They were one-way, yes. They changed around a couple of times during that period, but as best I can remember, I think they were both one-way.

AW: When you were growing up, what landmarks were in your neighborhood or in your close-by area that are still there? Like stores or schools or social buildings that were really important?

LK: Well, the Coast Guard base was there. The municipal marina changed locations, but the original marina is where the lake is, just to the south of the Ashley House. That lake was a part of the original marina. It was there. The Battery hadn't changed any. The Fort Sumter House condominiums was a hotel. The High Battery and White Point Gardens hadn't changed. The Carolina Yacht Club has expanded since those days, but it was in place. And then, coming around, the Exchange building and the churches, Saint Michael's, St. Philip's, the Catholic church on Broad Street, Colonial Lake, Moultrie Playground, the Horse Lot, which is in front of the Chisolm Street condominiums. Chisolm Street condominiums was Murray Vocational School. So, a lot of the same... The Berkeley Court apartments was there and is still there now. Actually, after my parents were married, they rented an apartment at the Berkeley. That was the first place that they lived. And right after that, they bought Colonial Street.

AW: You would have seen the Lockwood Boulevard then.

LK: Lockwood Boulevard was not there. Actually, the Sergeant Jasper was not there. The playground was there. And then, what became the Sergeant Jasper, which has recently been torn down, that was pretty marshy, boggy land. My friends and I, we would throw cast nets in there and go fishing and crabbing to a lesser extent but some. And that was a part of the Ashley River. So, the river kind of came up behind the Coast Guard base. And then, they must have filled, and I don't remember this particularly, but they filled a lot of that land.

AW: Do you remember when it was a landfill area in that area?

LK: Vaguely. Vaguely. I remember the debate that happened when they were planning to build the Sergeant Jasper apartment building, similar in a way to the debate that we've just had concerning the new development on that property. A lot of opposition to it, a lot of conversation. Even though I was a little boy, I remember the conversation about whether it was a good idea, whether it was going to hurt the breeze coming in off of the river, what it was going to look like. And the neighborhood elders talked about that a good bit. I remember that very well. And they built it. [chuckles]

AW: Where did you go to school?

LK: I went to Miss Watt's School. It was a small private school on the north side of Broad Street just in the middle of the block west of Franklin Street. It was basically a one-room schoolhouse, although there was a little room in the back as well. There were two teachers: Miss

Watt, who became Ms. Elliott, and Miss Hague. And they taught three classes. There were three grades. How they did it, I can't remember because it had first, second, and third grades in the same room. And they managed to teach all of those classes at pretty much the same time. They were wonderful teachers and wonderful women. Ms. Watt was the mother of Berkeley Grimball, who had acquired the Gaud School, which is presently merged into Porter-Gaud. And Mr. Grimball conducted Gaud School right there in the main house on Broad Street when I was at Miss Watt's. He moved the school over to East Bay Street. And after I finished the third grade at Miss Watt's, I went to Gaud School. The first year that I went to Gaud School, it was on the northwest corner of East Bay and Tradd, which is now residential condominiums. It was there for my first year. The next year, it moved across the street to the corner of East Bay and Adgers Wharf. And there were multiple rooms in that building. I went to Gaud School through the tenth grade in that building. And Gaud School did not go beyond the tenth grade. And I transferred to Charleston High School, which is on Rutledge Avenue above Calhoun Street - it's the building that says "Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve" - and spent a couple of really good years at Charleston High School. I went to Duke University for three semesters. I transferred and graduated from the College of Charleston, transferred to and graduated. And I went to law school at Tulane University in New Orleans. I got married to my wife, Townie, and we moved to New Orleans. We had two of our four children, Kenny and Sallie, when we were in New Orleans. And Johnny and Elizabeth were born after we moved back to Charleston and started practicing law.

AW: And did you start in this building?

LK: No. I started at 53 Broad Street, which was with a lawyer named Julian Toporek, and shared office space with Julian. It was in the Stoney's building. Stoney and Stoney was upstairs, and we were there for a couple of years. I then became partners with a lawyer named Charles Mack Gibson and another named Coming Ball Gibbs. Both are deceased, both great lawyers. And the name of our firm was, Gibson, Gibbs & Krawcheck, and we practiced at 63 Broad Street, which was above Legare, Hare & Smith, for a short time. And we moved to this building, where I've been ever since – since, oh, about 1968.

AW: And when you were younger, when you were going to school, did you ride a bike to Miss Watt's School or the Gaud School?

LK: Usually my parents would either drop me off or walk over there with me. I think perhaps the third year, I was able to walk by myself. I don't think I rode a bike very much to Miss Watt's, but I did ride my bike to Gaud School. And I spent many a cold morning riding from Colonial Street to East Bay Street, down Tradd, and many a hot afternoon coming back up Tradd the wrong way. But it all worked, and there wasn't a lot of traffic. It was very easy to ride your bike in the City in those days. But I definitely rode my bike almost every day.

AW: You didn't ride a bus when you were [00:20:47 unintelligible]?

LK: Yeah. I did ride a bus. I would sometimes ride the bus to Hampton Park. Or if we were going to King Street, we would ride the bus. We had – today, you would call her a nanny. In those days, she was a cook, but she was really more like a second mother to me. Her name was Agnes Jenkins. She was an African American, wonderful, wonderful woman, who raised all of

us, all the Krawcheck kids. And Aggie, as we called her, would take us to King Street from time to time, especially on Saturday afternoon, when we were young. She would take us on the bus to King Street and let us go through the ten-cent stores and look at the toys. And she would drop us off at my father's store, which was Jack Krawcheck's. It was a men's clothing store, and it was located at 313 King Street. And Aggie would leave us off there. And we'd almost always ride the bus to do that. And we did that very often.

AW: Where did your family shop for clothes and groceries or for the hardware store?

LK: Well, there weren't many hardware stores. I think there was a hardware store near MacIntosh's seed store, which was on the east side of King Street south of Wentworth. But I've thought about that, and I can't really remember many hardware stores in Charleston. There were a lot of grocery stores, and as a young kid, I would go grocery shopping with my mother. And there were a number of them. They were interesting. One of the grocery stores that I remember was on Meeting Street at either the corner of Water or Atlantic [probably refers to Ohlandt's Grocery]. And the name has escaped me right now, Charleston family. And it was an active store. I remember going into that store, and they would take the groceries, and, instead of put them in a paper bag, which they do now, they would tear off a piece of paper. They had a roll of paper, and they would tear off the paper, put the various groceries on the paper, wrap the paper up. And then they had string. And the string was on a roller, and it was in little thimbles that were on the walls and ceiling. And the string would travel around, and it would come back to the counter. And he would tear off a piece of string and cut it and then wrap the paper up with the string. And then, you would leave the store with the groceries in this wrapping. It made an impression me. And I'll think of the name of that grocery store in a minute. The main shopping that my mother did was at the A&P grocery store. It was up King Street, and it was a supermarket, one of the early supermarkets. It was pretty large, the way I remember it. And she would go there every Friday and shop for groceries, sort of once a week. And then, she'd fill in with visits to other grocery stores. Interesting, there was an A&P on the corner of Wentworth and Rutledge. It was a tiny, little store, but it was an A&P early. It had to have been either during the war or shortly thereafter, but I remember it, and I know it was an A&P grocery store. We shopped at Burbage's a lot, and I remember when Burbage's went into business. The original grocery store downtown was run by a man named Doc Howard, and it was on the north side of Tradd Street in between Rutledge and New Streets. And Mr. Burbage, I think, bought out Doc Howard. And that was the first Burbage's grocery store. And he moved just down the street to the corner of New and Tradd and was there for quite a while. There was another grocery store across the street. I think the lady's name was Costanzas. I think it was Costanzas's Grocery. We didn't go there as much. We went to Burbage's a lot with my friends almost every afternoon. We'd be playing on Colonial Street or at the playground or the Horse Lot, and we would go to Mr. Burbage's and get a soft drink - I think they were a nickel – and maybe potato chips or a candy bar. Mr. Burbage was a wonderful man, and he made you toe the line. You didn't cut up in there. And kids knew that he was a no-nonsense person. He was a very nice man. And eventually Mr. Burbage's moved to the corner of Savage and Broad, which is where it is now. The original grocery store in that building was Lutjen's. They were two brothers. One of them, I remember was quite crippled, but the Lutjens, they weren't very friendly. But the store had the best smell. It was hard to get candy during the war and after the war. And they had popsicles. Nobody else, I think, had popsicles except Lutjen's. And they had banana popsicles, and they were delicious. I

remember what they taste like. But you'd go into Lutjen's, and it had this wonderful smell. It never lost it during all those years. I don't know why, but it was just a certain aroma that it kept. But those are basically the places where my mother shopped. There were also some delis. Harold's Cabin was up President Street, I think on the corner of Huger or Moultrie, one or the other. There were a couple of delis on King Street. Al's was one of them. Mazo's had a deli further down King. And Harold's Cabin was a grocery store/deli. It eventually moved to Wentworth Street just to the east of St. Philip. And it was quite a big store. It's a yellow brick front. I think the yellow brick still may be there. But it was quite a nice grocery store, and it had a lunch counter upstairs on the second floor. It was a wonderful store. It in turn moved to the Piggly Wiggly up on Spring and Meeting eventually. And my mother shopped there, at Harold's Cabin, a lot. Also she shopped at the automatic grocery store, which was on Broad Street near the corner of King. And it was a supermarket, sort of a big store, and was there early on and stayed there for a long, long time; eventually became one of the Piggly Wigglys in more recent time. And it's sort the end of Harold's Cabin. They moved down to the Broad Street Piggly Wiggly.

AW: Is this where there's a parking lot now?

LK: There's a parking lot now. That's correct. But all those stores and some others too, my mother shopped at.

AW: Did they sell everything that they sell now? Like, could you buy meat and vegetables and sodas and...

LK: Yes. I don't think it's really changed, except it's a lot more expensive now. The things were – you know, it's all relative. But, yeah, I think that what they sold is basically what they sell now. It hasn't changed a whole lot. As far as where my family shopped for clothes, my father owned Jack Krawcheck's Men's Store. So, of course, we all got our clothes from Daddy's store. And I think there were a number of ladies' dress shops. Rosalie Meyer's comes to mind. It was on King Street. I know my mother shopped there a lot and some others. There was also eventually a Jack Krawcheck's women's shop, where my mother shopped, of course. She also shopped in New York. My father being in the clothing business, they used to go on buying trips to New York. And I think that that was the way it was back then, that the salesmen didn't come through Charleston. You sort of had to go to them. So, my mother and father would go to New York once or twice a year. And I think my mother did a lot of shopping when they would go to New York. I loved it when they went to New York because they'd always bring me back a toy. So, I remember that vividly.

AW: Did you ever make family vacations out of that?

LK: We did not. I don't recall ever going to New York for a family vacation. We took others, and we went to Florida and the mountains. We spent a lot of time in the mountains. Actually, my mother and father had a house in Flat Rock, North Carolina. So, we would go to Flat Rock in August. It's hot in Charleston. It was a great time, but we'd go to Sullivan's Island really to escape the heat and the polio. Polio was a terrible scourge, and everybody was really scared of it. And you thought, if you would isolate yourself, you could perhaps protect yourself. So, we

would go to Sullivan's Island. There was no air conditioning, no residential air conditioning, no air conditioning in the automobiles. And we would go June and July. And then, in August, it was too hot to stay on Sullivan's Island in August. So, we would go to the mountains. And actually, my father ended up buying a house in the mountains that was called Hilgay. And he renovated it. It had many, many, many Charleston touches. It was the original Grimke estate, and the Reverend Grimke, who was a Charlestonian, lived there. It hadn't been lived in for many, many years when my father bought it and renovated it. And he actually... Mr. Dotterer - Mr. Gilliard Dotterer - was the contractor and renovated Hilgay. But anyway, that's sort of what we did. And it was hot. It was real hot in Charleston in the summertime, still is, but you don't feel it.

AW: When did your house get air conditioning?

LK: Colonial Street got air conditioning about 30 years ago, I guess. We renovated the house and put in central air conditioning. I think we had some window units and so forth before that. But even the beach house has air conditioning.

AW: Can you tell me a little bit more about your dad's store, Jack Jrawcheck's?

LK: Yeah. My father went into business for himself originally on the corner of King and Vanderhorst Streets. He rented that location from the Church. He was always very appreciative. They treated him really well, and he never forgot it. He was always a supporter of the Church. That store stayed open for quite a while. He moved the location to 313 King Street, I think probably in the late '30s or early '40s. It was a high-quality men's clothing store, very traditional clothes. My brother and brother-in-law, Maurice Nussbaum, and my brother, Saul, became a part of that business. And it was a very successful business for a long, long period of time. I worked in there as a teenager, starting about age 13 or 14, and it was a great experience. And even to this day, I have friends who had first met working in my father's clothing store. And almost every week, I have somebody mention Jack Krawcheck's, and they usually say, "We wish it was still there." And I wish it was still there. In the '50s, one of my favorite things: traditional clothes. Some called it Ivy League, but natural-shoulder clothes became very fashionable. Button-down shirts and flat, plain-front pants and three-button coats. And that traditional sack, full look was the fashion for a long period of time. And I would say that my father's store was one of the leaders not only in Charleston but in the country in that style. And it's, to this day, the clothes that I like. I find it hard to find those clothes, but I try to even to this day. It's all I like, and it's ingrained in me. And that's from working in the store during those years. They were good years. And eventually that business became very difficult. You were competing with Brooks Brothers and the mail order business. And, unfortunately, the retail business became more and more difficult for local people.

AW: When did that close?

LK: It closed – you can't hold me to this but I think about 1985. I think that they were in business for about 65 years. And my father passed away. My brother and brother-in-law were getting older, and they retired. And there was nobody to take over the business. So, it just closed.

AW: Did your family have a car? Did everybody in your family, like both parents had a car?

LK: Yeah. Both my parents had cars, and it stayed that way. My father liked old things. He liked old cars. And he would pretty much drive his car until the wheels fell off. My mother had always had a more modern car. But my father would drive his car for a long period of time. I think he had a Packard at one point that he bought used, that he bought, it seemed like for decades. It was like a tank. But they both had cars, yes.

AW: And then, when you were driving age, did you get a car?

LK: I did not, but my mother shared her car with me. And I didn't know it at the time, but it was a classic. It was a '57 Chevy Bel Air, turquoise. It is what you see in the magazines. And just through sheer luck, that was the car that my mother had. And she would share it with me. And eventually, when I went off to college, I had my own car.

AW: Morton Ellison told me once that he and friends – and I don't know if you were part of this – used to race along in your cars. They used to race along The Battery, driving fast. Are you familiar with that?

LK: I did not do that. Those were the older boys that did that. There was a little bit of a desire to drag race back in the '50s on city streets. It was insanely dangerous, but some of my friends at Charleston High School did that for short spurts. It was a terrible thing to do. But, no, I really never did that.

AW: Where did they usually go when they did that?

LK: Usually, what would happen is... I think it was sort of like Rebel Without a Cause, the movie. But you'd pull up next to somebody on a one-way street. It might be Rutledge Avenue, you know, and they would both take off. They wouldn't go for long distances, but they call that drag racing. It was awful. [chuckles] Morton did that, but Lenny never did that.

[both chuckle]

AW: Can you tell me about the Jewish community in Charleston?

LK: Yeah. There was always a large Jewish community in Charleston. There were basically four synagogues. There was Brith Sholom Synagogue, which was Orthodox, on St. Philip Street. There was Temple Beth Elohim, which is a Reform synagogue, the cradle of Reform Judaism, which is, of course, right where it's always been on Hasell Street. There was a Beth Israel Orthodox synagogue. I don't recall ever going there, but I think it was on St. Philip Street, and it moved eventually over to Rutledge Avenue, which is where the synagogue is at the present time. Brith Sholom and Beth Israel merged. There was also Emanu-El Synagogue, which was a Conservative synagogue, up off of Gordon Street in the northwest section of the City. I think that, in the '50s, a lot of Jewish families lived up in that area up on Grove, St. Margaret, Gordon, Dunnemann Avenue, 5th Avenue, up in that area. And I think that Emanu-El was formed to meet the religious needs of those neighbors. Eventually, the Jewish community tended to move west of the Ashley and South Windermere subdivision and then up around Orange Grove area and up in there. There were also any number of Jewish families who lived downtown. On Colonial

Street, which is a one-block street, my family. And Sam and Hannah Brown had the house about two doors down from us. Willard Hirsch, the sculptor, was on Ashley Avenue right around the corner. Mrs. Zerline Williams was on Rutledge avenue. The Weils were on South Battery. The Wetherhorns were on Council Street. The Berlins, Berlin's Men's Wear, I think they were on The Battery. The Kareshes were on the Battery, and on and on and on. There were a number of Jewish families downtown.

AW: What did you do for entertainment when you were younger? Did you ever go... Well, I guess you definitely went to the beach, but did you do other things?

LK: Yeah. We did go to the beach a lot. I actually started sailing when I was about 11 years old, and I started racing sailboats. The first boat that I had was a little single-handed boat called a moth. And we would go down to the City Marina a lot and just sit around. It was great entertainment. And we watched the boats and the characters down there. We'd go fishing Colonial Lake or off of The Battery sometimes. Went to the playground a lot. We played tennis, Moultrie Playground. We played baseball, basketball, football. We would go over to East Bay Playground in the afternoon sometimes. I mentioned Hampton Park. Playgrounds played a heavy part in your life back then. On the weekends, we would go to the movies. Often my family would go out for supper on Saturday night, and we would go to the movies afterwards. The Riviera Theater - the Riviera, Gloria, Garden, American Theater. There was a theater early on called the Majestic, which was between the Garden and Gloria Theaters on King Street on the west side. And on Saturday afternoon, my friends and I, we'd usually go to the American Theater for a double feature. And they'd usually have a serial, which would be eight or ten episodes that would run, one each week. And they'd leave you hanging, and you'd go back to see how the hero got out of his predicament. But we'd often do that. So, it was a good time in Charleston.

AW: It sounds like it. Were there any tourist industries when you...

LK: There was a tour boat to Fort Sumter. It tied up to the dock, which was right across from the Fort Sumter Hotel, now the Fort Sumter House condominiums, on The Battery. And there was a dock with a tour boat. I think it was the Gray Line. And that was definitely touristy. And I remember the Gardens were a big draw in the springtime when the flowers were blooming. I think a lot of people came to Charleston to go to the Gardens. Other than that – and visitors to the beaches: Folly, Sullivan's Island, and to some extent probably the Isle of Palms. Kiawah and Seabrook were privately-owned in those days. But other than that, there wasn't a heavy-duty tourist industry.

AW: If you were sick, what did you do? Did doctors come to your house, or did you -

LK: Yes. Yes. My doctor was Dr. Wythe Rhett. His office was on Rutledge Avenue on the west side between Montagu and Bull Streets. I used to step down to go to his office. But if you got the measles or the mumps or the chicken pox, all of which we had, or anything else, he would pay a house visit. And you'd wait for him to come. He had a big, old, black bag loaded with needles. [laughs] And it was something that... He was a very nice man and, I think, a very fine doctor. And I remember Dr. Rhett very well. Dentists, there were lots of dentists in Charleston. The first dentist that I remember was Dr. Irwin Karesh. Actually, his parents, the

Kareshes, lived in the house on The Battery on the corner of Rutledge and Murray Boulevard, where Buzzy Newton lives there today. And Dr. Karesh died at a young age, fine man. And Dr. Julius Smith was my main dentist during those years. Dr. Smith actually lived on Colonial Street at one point early on. His son and my brother, Saul, were very good friends. Dr. Smith's office was on Smith Street between Beaufain and Wentworth, and he was there for years. He practiced dentistry for a long, long time. The equipment he had was like out of the earlier century, and he used it very effectively. He was an old-fashioned dentist. He was a great dentist. But I went to Dr. Smith for years and years. And he practiced dentistry to a very old age, wonderful man.

AW: This is south of Ben Moise's house at that corner where they're building the new condo building?

LK: Yes. Yes. Yes. Julius Sinclair Smith was his name.

AW: You talked a little bit about Hurricane Hugo, and it sounds like that was pretty traumatic for your house. Do you remember any other disasters that were...

LK: I remember the big fire, the Tidewater Terminals on the waterfront. I actually was sailing that day over in Mount Pleasant, and we could see the smoke. It was a huge fire. We didn't know what it was, but that was a devastating fire that I remember. Otherwise, other than the fire out on – the Super Store fire - I think we've been lucky, knock on wood, in Charleston, fire-wise. We've had lots of storms. Other than Hugo, we've been pretty lucky with those as well.

AW: This section is about race relations. Did you, when you were younger, interact much with people of different races?

LK: We didn't. We didn't. I knew you were going to ask me that question. I've sort of thought about that, and I realize that we didn't interact with African Americans very much other than Aggie, who... And also we had a maid who helped out at the house. We were very close to them on a private basis. But publicly, in those days we didn't interact very much. I vividly remember the shrimp man and his cart and his chant and the vegetable man that you read about, his cart. And then, later, I think he had a truck. Also the flower ladies were on the corner of Broad and Meeting Streets, and they were always there during the daytime. Also the flower ladies came around door-to-door on Saturday. There was this one flower lady in particular. She had a beautiful smile. She would come to our house, and she'd come up on the porch and ring the bell. And my mother always bought flowers from her. And I remember I was quite sick at one point when I was young. And the flower lady learned that, I think from Aggie. But after that, she would always give me flowers when she would visit. And it made an impression on me. It sort of set me apart, but she would always make a point of giving me a small bunch of flowers. But otherwise, we did have a young man - his name was Junior - who would play basketball at the Jewish Community Center, which was on St. Philip Street. And I went to learn Hebrew, and the classes were in a building next door, actually between or near the Jewish Community Center, called Daughters of Israel Hall. But we'd go early, and we'd always go in the backyard and play basketball. And there was a young man named Junior, African American, easily the best basketball player. But he would always play basketball, always was there. But I played basketball at Charleston High School and in college as well. And there were no... It was just

separate. We never played the black teams, the African American teams, never even heard about them. You know, they didn't put anything in the newspaper about them that I remember. And so, other than those contacts, it just wasn't a lot. It was pretty separate, pretty separate.

AW: Did you ever go into the primarily African American communities for anything? Or was it uncomfortable? Or was it just the way it was?

LK: No, it wasn't uncomfortable at all. And I did. I used to take Aggie home. She lived first on President Street. I didn't take her home there because I was too young. But she eventually bought a house on Sumter Street, and I took here there a lot. And I went to her house a lot. I was in that neighborhood a pretty good bit. I did know her neighbors. They were really nice people, fine people. And, no, it was perfectly comfortable doing that. But other than that, you didn't have much occasion to mix with the black community.

AW: Was there any tension, did you ever feel like?

LK: No. No. It just didn't happen. Now, later in the integration era, yeah, with the demonstrations and the sit-ins, definitely a lot of tension there. But before that, not really.

AW: This section's about working life. When did you first decide you were going to be a lawyer? And how has it changed over the years, the profession?

LK: Well, I was a history major at the College of Charleston, and I was kind of running out of time. I was either going to go to Officer's Candidate School and, hopefully, become an officer in the Navy. It would've been my choice. Or else, sort of by default, I would go to law school. And the College of Charleston was very kind to me and arranged for me to get a regional scholarship to Tulane Law School. And it kind of made up my mind. So, it was almost by default that I went to law school. And I'm very lucky that it was the right thing for me to do. But I sort of fell into that. I was lucky.

AW: Do you feel like the practice of law has changed a lot since you started?

LK: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I started practicing law in 1965. There were very few law firms. I want to say five, maybe there were ten. There were 80 lawyers, 80 members of the Charleston County Bar Association. I knew every one of them after six months. Now today, there are probably 2,000. Law firms are everywhere. The biggest law firm was probably Young, Clement, Rivers. It had, like, four lawyers. And maybe Sinkler, Gibbons, Simmons, they had four lawyers. And I couldn't get a job out of law school, and there was no... You know, law firms really weren't hiring. They would take in their relatives or their close friends. So, I started practicing law by myself. There were no women lawyers to speak of. There were two. They were great lawyers. Mary Allen was with Legal Aid, and Ruthie Williams Kopp was practicing law. And Ruthie actually taught me how to check a title and probably was the biggest reason that I became a real estate lawyer. But two. Maybe there was one other woman lawyer, but there were virtually none. There were no African American lawyers to speak of. The ones that were practicing law were really fine lawyers: Judge Richard Fields and Judge Bernard Fielding. And there were a few other African American lawyers but very, very few. So, it's changed. Today, I'd bet 50% of

the lawyers coming out of law school are women, a great number of African American lawyers. When I started, this was in the ancient times, but most law offices didn't have copying machines. We used to use carbon paper. And if you make a mistake, you have to type the whole thing over again. And gradually, shortly after I started, most offices had Xerox machines, certainly no computers. No such thing. And the most important implement in the office was probably the telephone. The receptionist presented the face of your office. Now, today, everything's on the email. The phone rings very little. It's all computerized. It's very, very different. Eventually a real estate closing, that I've been lucky enough to do many of, it's going to become electronic. And it's changed a lot. It's highly regulated now, as it should be. It wasn't back then. I thought the other day about the OCRM, which is the Office of Coastal Resource Management, that manages the waters and the marshland. And it's a huge organization. They had one person in charge of that when I started - his name was Ed Latimer in the Attorney General's Office - for the whole State of South Carolina. And it was a long time ago. That was 1965. So, it's been over 50 years. But, yes, it's changed.

AW: Can you share a little bit about your role as the chair of the Board of Zoning Appeals? What were some of the major changes since you've been on it and some of the biggest threats to the City that you've seen?

LK: Yeah. There are a number of threats to the City: parking, traffic, hotels, tourism. It all needs to be managed very carefully. In my opinion, short-term rentals are going to make it very difficult for the residents to live in their residences. And on and on. It's grown tremendously, obviously. The City's very successful. The impetus for that is preservation, in my opinion. It's sort of like, are we going to kill the goose that laid the golden egg? The hotel thing really troubles me. The Board of Zoning Appeals approves all the hotels, but under the City Zoning Ordinance, there's virtually no way to turn down these proposals. And so, it's almost carte blanche, very little discretion involved in that. So, I'm concerned with those areas in particular. It's been an honor to serve on the Board of Zoning Appeals for as long as I have, and I've truly enjoyed it. And I'm still able to do it.

AW: Why do you think it's important for cities to have robust zoning laws? You mentioned the hotels. And I guess mostly to make you guys have stronger positions?

LK: Yeah. It's human nature to want to maximize the use of your property, whether it's commercial or residential. People want to add rooms for their mother-in-laws. People want to increase their income. It's a part of this country. It's the way it should be. And this has a tendency and very definitely will infringe on the rights of the neighbors and the rights of others in the community. So, it's essential that we have zoning. What I like about... I don't like regulation. That may seem odd from somebody's who's Chairman of the BZA, but the truth is that the BZA is a safety valve. If something doesn't fit the cookie cutter, then you can ask for relief. So, it has the ability to aid private property rights. A lot of people think zoning "variance" is a dirty word. It's anything but. That's an emotional reaction to allowing somebody to do something that they should be allowed to do. I get a charge out of that when I see that reaction. You see it all over, all over the County and especially out on the islands. The islands think that zoning variances are terrible things – unless they need one. And then they think it's the greatest thing since sliced bread.

AW: You are famous, and I've watched you. You have a very well-ordered and respectful meeting. And I think that's appreciated by everyone.

LK: Thank you.

AW: What's the most important thing as chairman for that role?

LK: I think that you have to make sure that you give everyone a fair hearing, not just a hearing but a fair hearing. I think you've got to hear them out, and I think you absolutely have to call it the way you see it. You cannot allow a private view or bias to get in the way. If somebody leaves one of our Board of Zoning Appeals meetings and they don't feel like they've been treated fairly, then I think that I, as chairman, and/or the board has not done its job. Somebody's going to win, and somebody's going to lose in a contested matter, and that's just a given. But you can live with it if you feel like you've been treated fairly. And so, what I would say to... And I'm very proud of the board members, the present board members and those in the past, because I will say without reservation that I don't know of anybody who's served with me on the Board of Zoning Appeals who's had any agenda. It's some pure democracy. I think that there's a search there for the right decision to do the best they can. You can't always make the right decision. You make mistakes. You just do. It's human nature. But you've just got to give it your best shot. One of the things that I've used that whoever's going to take my place and the future members of the Board of Zoning Appeals - one of the tests that I hit upon many years ago is whether I can call it either way. If I look at something and I know in my heart that I can only vote one way – if it's my brother or my client or my friend or my neighbor or somebody who I just can't vote against them – I'll recuse myself every time. And I think it's important to recognize that and just get out of there, leave the room, and not hear it. And you have to be careful. It's a small community. You know a lot of these people. I know a lot of lawyers in Charleston. Just as a blanket thing, I can vote against a lawyer who's representing a client. I might not be able to vote against that lawyer if he's there on his own house. There's a difference. But if you can only vote one way, then you shouldn't vote at all. That's kind of the advice that I would leave the next guy or the next lady.

AW: How long have you been the chair? When did you start?

LK: I think it's about 40 years.

AW: Then, you're going to keep on doing it?

LK: For the foreseeable future, anyway. As long as the mayor reappoints me, I guess.

AW: Good.

LK: Thanks.

AW: I think that's about as much... We went over the time, unfortunately. Well, I'm glad that you could [keep going?] this extra time, but is there anything that I missed that you wanted to share on the video?

LK: I think we've pretty much covered it. Obviously, I love living in Charleston. I'm very lucky to have been able to do what I've done and be here all my life. So, it's the greatest city in the world.

AW: I agree. And Charleston is lucky to have you.

LK: Thanks.

AW: Thank you so much for taking the time to do this.

LK: My pleasure. Thank you.

END OF RECORDING