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INTERVIEWED BY: Susie Citrin

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Edythe Jackier

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MS. CITRIN: This is Susie Citrin, and I'm conducting an oral history interview with Edythe Jackier, here at the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, on November the 12th, 2003. And Edythe, do we have your permission to use your words and thoughts in the future for educational and historical research and documentation?

MS. JACKIER: You certainly may use it.

MS. CITRIN: Thank you.

Well, start telling us a little bit about yourself. Where were you born? I know you're not from this community.

MS. JACKIER: No, I'm not originally. I was born in Bayonne, New Jersey. I was the youngest. I had two brothers and two sisters and they were a lot older than I. My father passed away when I was two years old, so I never knew my father, which I was lucky that I had two older brothers. One was 17 years older, one was 13 years older. One sister was nine years older and the one next to me, six. So I was really the baby of the family. There was a great benefit derived from being the baby. Everybody was concerned about me, et cetera.

I had lots of friends as I was growing up. Despite the fact there was no father, we had a wonderful family life and we were very close. I think sometimes that happens. Now when you lose a parent, I think the children become even closer sometimes, which is what happened in my family.

MS. CITRIN: Were you involved in the Jewish community in Bayonne?

MS. JACKIER: My oldest brother, in fact I just found a newspaper article about him. I come by this honestly. He was president of the temple. He was president of the Jewish communities. In fact, he started the building of it with a couple of other people. He was president of almost every organization there.

I remember my mother belonged to the Ladies Aid Society. And I remember her leaving. They would have a ball, which they called a ball, you know, every year. I remember watching her get dressed for the ball and seeing her leave. I was brought up in that kind of atmosphere, that we were very involved with the Jewish community. So it was natural for me. Not something that was strange at all.

I graduated high school at 15, almost 16, and I decided I would like to go to the University of Michigan, because I had heard about it from a cousin of mine who had completed one year and he thought it was great. There were a couple of my friends who said they thought they would go to

Michigan, too. One of the boys wanted to go into dental school, eventually, et cetera.

I had applied first at Cornell University because my oldest brother had gone to Cornell, but they refused me. They said I was too young. I was 15 at the time. Then my sister who one next to me had gone to NYU and she knew a someone whose brother was in the medical school at Michigan and whose sister had just completed her freshman year. They lived in Newark, New Jersey. My family invited them to come over and visit us at our home. They came. My family really gave them the third degree. They wanted to know all about it, because they were concerned about my age and so forth. But they were very positive about it. I was the first girl from Bayonne, New Jersey, to go to the University of Michigan. I loved it.

I remember when I went, it was from Newark by train. My whole family came to see me off. My sister saw these couple of fellows who she knew at NYU and they were in the medical school. She went over to them. She said, my kid sister is going. Keep -- I was so embarrassed. Keep an eye on her or something like that. When it was lunch time, one of them came to find me. He said, we're going to have lunch in the diner, would you like to go? I said, yes, I would. I was having lunch with these young men and one of them said to me, how old are you? I thought I was a pretty hot shot, you know. I graduated high school young and all that. I said, 16. Oh,

my god, don't tell anybody. I said, why? Because none of the fellows are going to want to date you if you tell them you're 16. They'll think you're a big baby and they won't want to date you. I said, oh. I didn't say, but I'm not going to lie about my age.

I lived at Mosher-Jordan, which was a new dorm at the time. I lived on the Jordan side. I remember when I got off the train in Ann Arbor and I had to take a cab by myself. I'll never forget the feeling I had when I saw that dormitory. It was just like something you read about in books. The tennis courts there and that, it was just thrilling for me. I just loved Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan from the start.

About a month after I was at school, one of the girls who was a junior, her name was Hannah Kaplan. She had a real gorgeous southern accent, 'honey chil', and she had a phone call from a young man who was in the medical school. His name was Joe Kline. He wanted to date any nice freshman. Yeah, she knew one. He said, well, I have a friend from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, who's a freshman in the law school. So we could have a double date. So Hannah was with my Joe and I was with this Joe Kline.

Nobody had ever asked me my age until Joe Jackier asked me to dance. We were at the Union. You know, you went either to the Union or the League for dates then. Joe said to

me, how old are you? So I gulped. I said, 17. Oh, okay. On my 19th birthday Joe sent me a telegram congratulating me on entering the 20s and I decided it was time that I told him the truth. He did not know how old I really was.

I had a wonderful four years at Michigan. I made Phi Beta Kappa. It was a good time for me.

MS. CITRIN: Did you date Joe the whole time you were there?

MS. JACKIER: Yeah. I did. He belonged to Tau

Epsilon Rho, the legal fraternity. He invited me when they
had their parties. I was his date. I used to write Mrs.

Joseph Jackier on -- you know, I just really fell for him and
vice versa, I guess. I dated other fellows.

And I had some wonderful girlfriends. Jean Frankel, who was Jean Grosberg then, was a year ahead of me and a few years older than I am. But she was in our group. My roommate who just passed away not long ago was from New Jersey. Her name was Lee Korn. That was her maiden name. We had a marvelous relationship. I was a sophomore when we became roommates. My first roommate left school. She was just there one year and she smoked constantly. I was really glad that she wasn't coming back.

MS. CITRIN: After you graduated from U of M did you come to Detroit right after --

MS. JACKIER: No. I went back home and went to NYU

to get a masters. I had some boyfriends, one from Newark, boys that I'd met. We had a place at Bradley Beach, New Jersey, and we had gone to camp when I was really young. When I was 7 was my first summer at camp. I threatened to walk home if my mother didn't send my oldest sister up. I was lonesome at 7, you know. She did, she sent my sister Essie up, whom I adored. So I enjoyed camp, too.

But when I was in my teens we had a place and I celebrated my sweet 16 birthday there. One summer, Joe came from Wilkes-Barre with his brother, Leonard, who was in medical school at Columbia. We gradually decided that we were for each other. His parents came to Bayonne to meet my family and then they asked us to come to Wilkes-Barre. So we were eventually married and we had a good marriage.

MS. CITRIN: As I said to you before, it's amazing to me, because not too many women of your age went to college.

MS. JACKIER: That's true.

MS. CITRIN: You always were in the forefront.

MS. JACKIER: In fact, Susie, I wanted to go to law school and they looked at me like I was out of my cotton picking mind. What? A girl in law school? No way. But I really would have liked to. They discouraged me at school. Then later on I was really upset because somebody I knew, a couple years later, was accepted. It was too late for me already.

MS. CITRIN: I know you were the president of Jewish Family Service. I don't want to get ahead of ourselves, but you did a lot of things before your time.

MS. JACKIER: I don't know. That's how it worked out.

MS. CITRIN: How did you come to be in Detroit and get involved in the Jewish community?

MS. JACKIER: Joe and I were married. When young men graduated from law school, the top men were coifed, and Joe was, were offered jobs as a clerk to one of the Supreme Court justices. He was offered the job with Judge Henry Butzel. Of course he accepted it and as it happened over the years, we became very close friends. I happened to know Ellie, Judge Butzel's daughter, who was on the campus when I was. This is how we wound up. Before we were married, Joe's dad wanted him to come back to Wilkes-Barre. They were in the shoe business in a town outside of Wilkes-Barre. A town called Nantako, Pennsylvania. He offered Joe and me a store, we could have it, et cetera. Fortunately, we did not go back to Wilkes-Barre. It would have been difficult for me.

MS. CITRIN: What was the Jewish community like when you came here? Was it hard to get involved, or was it easy?

MS. JACKIER: I don't remember it as being hard to get involved at all. I became involved with the women's division. Celia Baruch and I became very close. I'll never

forget when we made our first million campaign. It was so thrilling and exciting when we actually made \$1 million.

Raised that much at that time, that was fantastic. Celia became very sick. When I was president, I had the additional responsibility to go to the hospital every day and tell her what was happening. She would suggest things to me as to what should be done, that kind of thing. It was a very rough and sad time. She was unmarried and then she had met Ted Baruch. They were married and it was wonderful, and then she got sick. She passed away. That was sad for me. Really sad for me.

The Jewish Family Service, Minah Bargman, who did a great deal in the Jewish community, was affiliated with the Jewish Family Service. She said, Edythe, I want to put you on a committee there, and she was the one who really initiated me and got me interested in the Jewish Family Service. It was a natural thing for me. I took a lot of sociology at school, a lot of psych. I loved psychology. My professor was marvelous. It was natural for me. I've been a people person. Growing up with five of us. It was just a natural for me.

MS. CITRIN: Besides the presidency at Jewish Family Service, are there any other highlights you'd like to tell us about in your involvement in the Jewish community?

MS. JACKIER: Well, there was one thing I feel was a real achievement and which was difficult. You may remember it, Susie. It was setting up the volunteer committee. I had

a lot of negative reaction that I had to deal with. The feeling was, I'd like to set up a volunteer service, I think we need it, and so forth. Well, they're going to take away from the role of the professional. I said, the opposite. They're going to do things that the professionals can't do, that they don't have time to do. So I really had to work. There was a lot of opposition, mainly from the top people. Do you remember that?

MS. CITRIN: Yes. And you had to stand up for what you really believed in.

MS. JACKIER: I really did.

MS. CITRIN: That was a hard thing to do.

MS. JACKIER: It was very hard. I hated to fight about it, but I did. I stood up for it and I just felt it was a very necessary thing that we needed for that agency.

MS. CITRIN: Well, just the Jewish Family Service itself has changed so much over the years. What kind of changes have you seen over the years in our Jewish community?

MS. JACKIER: Well, that's hard to -- the role of the volunteer, of course, has become much more significant and I feel good about the fact that I was involved with that. The role of women.

I'd like to go back and tell you a little bit about my mother. Is it okay?

MS. CITRIN: Yes.

MS. JACKIER: Because she was a woman who came to the United States and to America when she was 15 years old. She came alone. Her family gave her a pair of sterling silver candlesticks which I inherited later, just in case she needed extra money and so forth. She worked in a blouse factory. I don't know if it was Brooklyn, but in that area. She met a couple of young women around her age. Their name was Turtletaub (ph. sp.), her name was Obler. My mother's name was Tillie Obler.

The Turtletaubs were sisters. One was Fannie, who became very close to my mother and I loved my Aunt Fannie.

When I came to Ann Arbor, she came and she had a steamer trunk that she packed for me and then unpacked in the dorm. This is how my mother met my father. It was their brother. They loved my mother, so they introduced her to their brother and that's how they married.

It became very difficult for her. My father had cancer. I never really knew him. I have -- and I don't know whether I made it up or not -- like a picture of him lying in their big bed. It was big and dark wood. I don't know whether I really did or not.

But my mother was a very special woman. I can't get over the fact that she did certain things. For instance, apparently when she took me to the dentist he said I should have orthodontal work, which was very unusual in those days.

She somehow got information about a doctor in Newark, who was not too far. His name was Bull. I didn't like him. I said to her when we left, I said, I don't like him, Ma. I said, he's really like his name. She says, I don't like him either. That's how she was. She was marvelous. She didn't try to push me.

Then she made further inquiries, apparently, and found out about a Dr. Julius Goldberg, who lived on Central Park West, New York, and was the head of the dental clinic at NYU. You know, NYU is New York University. She managed. Smart woman. She learned how to write English. She went to night school when she first came to this country.

Anyway, she took me to Dr. Goldberg. It was 74th Street and Central Park West, and he was a doll. He arranged it so that she didn't have to pay for it all at once. She was a widow. He was just fantastic. The interesting thing is, I feel, when I was 12 years old I started going to Dr. Goldberg. I went by myself after a while. I went to Jersey City. Nobody worried about something happening to me. It wasn't that my family didn't care. They cared a lot. So at 12 years old I would go to Dr. Goldberg on Central Park West and we became good friends.

Sometimes on the way home I would stop at S Kline -you've heard of S Kline -- and I was a kid -- I went there -wore braces until I went to University of Michigan. Four

years. I would stop at S Kline and sometimes I'd see a dress that I think would be nice for my mother, and I would get it.

MS. CITRIN: Obviously, she gave you the independence and the confidence to go out into the world.

MS. JACKIER: She was a fabulous woman, my mother. She was an outstanding woman.

MS. CITRIN: You were going to comment on the role of woman as it changed in this Jewish community, especially.

MS. JACKIER: Yeah.

MS. CITRIN: You're one of the few women Butzel award winners.

MS. JACKIER: Joe and I, together.

MS. CITRIN: I know, but it doesn't come easy to woman sometimes in this community.

MS. JACKIER: No. That's true.

The Jewish Family Service had a woman president before I was president. Minah Bargman was chairperson of a committee. Later I'll think of the name of the woman who preceded me. It was not usual for women to be presidents of an agency. This had to develop. They had the women's division. They asked me to become president of the Jewish Family Service at the same time that I was supposed to be president of the women's division. I had to make a decision. I told them that I felt that I just had to do this first. I had to be president of the women's division first, because it

was the women. And I felt this is what I should do. I remember it was a decision I had to make. That was, I think, in '72. Then after I served my three-year term I became president of the Jewish Family Service. I enjoyed that, too.

MS. CITRIN: You're still active today.

MS. JACKIER: Oh, yeah.

MS. CITRIN: Board of Governors, Jewish Family Service.

MS. JACKIER: The Jewish Family Service, we just had a fund-raising for a new building and I was chairperson of it. They talked me into it and I did it because I thought it was important. Thank goodness the money was raised. I made my contribution and I feel good about that.

MS. CITRIN: Well, it's good that you're still involved in the community. You've done so many really incredible things.

MS. JACKIER: I don't know how incredible they are, but I'll tell you something, it's been very enriching for me. Now I've come to know the new executive director. I think he's wonderful. I've met his wife. This enriches your life instead of just going along a narrow path. I feel very fortunate. And I'm very happy that my son has become so involved. He comes by it honestly, you know. I think I'm very proud of him and very happy that he's done and doing what he's doing.

MS. CITRIN: We didn't talk at all about Israel and I know that has a special place for you in your heart.

MS. JACKIER: Oh, absolutely.

MS. CITRIN: You've helped so many universities over there and have done such wonderful things. I just want to get your comments. You were 30 years old when the state was founded.

MS. JACKIER: My first trip to Israel was in 1960 and it was a national Hadassah mission. I was very anxious to go but I felt funny about leaving Joe and my children. Joe said, go, I know how you feel about it, how important it is to you. I was supposed to be president of Hadassah. I had had different positions and I became pregnant. I remember Leta Eisenburg, who I was supposed to succeed. She said, oh my God, Edythe, how could you do such a thing.

Anyway, I was very active in Hadassah and I loved Israel from the very beginning. I'll never forget when we landed and they had the dedication of the Hadassah Medical Center at Ein Kerem. There were a number of husbands who went, too. Joe was at home. When we got off the bus, the doctor said to each one of us, mazel tov.

Golda Meir at the time was the foreign minister of Israel. She had a reception at her home for the Hadassah members. This is something you never forget. When we got to her home, as she stood at the door with her aide and her aide

would say, Mrs. Edythe Jackier, she had a cigarette in one hand and the other she shook your hand and said welcome. Then they had a little entertainment by a dance group. Her home was the home of the foreign minister. There was an area shaped like a U. I think it was the Inbal Dancers but whatever group it was did a program. They had served punch and cookies. When I finally got to the area where the dancers were there were no more seats. So I stood up and she came and stood next to me. When she saw crumbs on the floor, she went down and picked them up. I'll never forget that. Golda Meir. I had seen her later on another mission when she was the president of Israel and we had a mission from Detroit.

MS. CITRIN: How many times have you been to Israel?

MS. JACKIER: Twenty-five times. Joe said, go, go,
in 1960. He said, I know how you've been dying to go. Which
I was, but I felt bad to leave him and the children. It
wasn't just Israel. My birthday is August 6th and I had my
birthday at a concert in Europe. I was just very fortunate I
had a husband who understood how I felt and shared that. I
had a very nice woman who worked for me then, so Joe knew that
she would help take care of the children.

MS. CITRIN: Both of you have just given this Jewish community so much of yourselves. You both deserve the Butzel Award.

MS. JACKIER: Well, it was thrilling. We were the

first couple to ever be awarded the Butzel Award. At that point we had some grandchildren that were there. It was wonderful. It was a very significant event in my life and to be able to share it with Joe was really special.

We traveled quite a bit and I loved to go places. I wanted to go to Italy again. I hadn't been to southern Italy. I'd been to Rome. I was in Florida at the time when I heard there was a Hadassah sponsored mission going. And I was very active in Hadassah, positions all along. So I was very active.

I was talking to my son, Marty, I said, you know, there's a great trip going to southern Italy and that's where I'd like to go. But nobody wants to go. I had asked a few of my friends. He said, take one of your grandchildren. I said, that's a great idea. I called his daughter, Tracey, and I said, how would you like to go to Europe with me? She got all excited. You could either start at Milan and finish in Rome or start in Rome and ending in Milan. I had decided that I wanted to start in Milan and finish up in Rome so we'd be flying home from Rome.

They had a couple different dates for these trips.

Tracey was supposed to go to camp as a junior counselor, so we had to make the trip at the time when it was good for her.

I'm telling you this for a reason.

You did your sightseeing like every trip on a bus.

I was concerned when we planned the trip because I thought, gee, are there going to be any young people her age on a trip like this. Well, fortunately, there was a brother and sister from Boston, nice young people. Then there was another man with his grandson. The kids sat in the back of the bus. You know how kids like to do this. Tracey said to me, Grammy, could I sit in the back of the bus with the other kids? I said, sure, go ahead. This gentleman comes over to me and says, may I sit with you? That was Frank Mulover, who became my husband. That's how we met. He was from New Jersey, from Livingston. He wanted to get married and I didn't. I'd always said I had a wonderful marriage. But he talked me into it. My sons, too, felt I should. Mother, why be alone and so forth. He was a very fine man.

MS. CITRIN: He came and joined you in this community.

MS. JACKIER: He was a very fine man and just couldn't do enough for me. He was happy here and I was happy. It was good. My children really cared about him.

Unfortunately, he developed a brain tumor. The last year was awful.

MS. CITRIN: Did you ever go to Israel together, you and Frank?

MS. JACKIER: Yes. When did we go? I don't remember when, but we did go together. He liked to travel.

We went to Australia, New Zealand. When we were planning to go, he said, I'm not going on any trip that's not going to Ayers Rock. I said, what's that? There was only one trip going to Ayers Rock, and that's the one that we took. And it was a fabulous experience.

MS. CITRIN: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about the Jewish community?

MS. JACKIER: Well, I just feel that we have one of the most outstanding Jewish communities in the country. I really do. And I'm not saying it because I was involved at all. There are people like you.

MS. CITRIN: You had a little bit a part of it.

MS. JACKIER: I am, but there are people like you, there are younger people, there are people who have developed as real leaders. We do have an outstanding Jewish community. I'm not saying it because I had been involved, but our professionals, in the tops, really, which is very important in the community. Those of us who have participated, it's been important, I think. We've done some very worthwhile things and have enriched our lives and the lives of other people along the way.

MS. CITRIN: When you think about 1967, that was really kind of a watershed year in Detroit, when people moved more towards the suburbs and we had the riots, the war and everything. So I think for this Jewish community, it seemed

like a very important year for us.

MS. JACKIER: I think it was probably important for any Jewish community at the time, really. I think we're great, frankly. I do.

MS. CITRIN: Any thoughts for the future?

MS. JACKIER: Well, I just feel so good about the fact that our young people, participating the way they are, and I think it will always be so. I think if we let them do what they can, who are certainly very capable and knowledgeable and want to do this, we should absolutely let them. It's wonderful. We have some outstanding young people. Middle aged, and all along the way.

I will always be supportive of this community. As far as participating to the extent I did in the past, I did it. There are others in this community who have done it, are doing it and will. I think we're kind of special.

MS. CITRIN: Yeah, I do, too.

MS. JACKIER: I'm glad you agree.

MS. CITRIN: Thank you very much. This was wonderful.

MS. JACKIER: It's a great compliment that you asked
me. I feel that way.

MS. CITRIN: As I said, you're my role model.

MS. JACKIER: Well, Susie, if I've been your role model, I did a good job on you because you're a wonderful

young woman.

MS. CITRIN: Well, I look to you because you've accomplished so much. You continue to accomplish things.

MS. JACKIER: I'm really not conscious of it, to tell you the truth. You know what, it's a way of life.

At first when they asked me for instance to be the chairperson of the fund-raising for the new Jewish Family Service Building, they asked me to lunch at Morel's, and I knew right away. I said, what do you want? This has happened before, you know. I said, what would you like? They laughed. We need you, we want you, et cetera.

MS. CITRIN: Let's face it, you're a fixture in this community.

MS. JACKIER: Well, it's an old fixture. It's getting to be an antique fixture. Of course, those can be very valuable, too, antiques. You're a dear. You've always been one of my favorite young people.

MS. CITRIN: Yeah, we have a mutual admiration society.

MS. JACKIER: Which is great. When I hear your voice on the phone, I'm happy. You've paid me a real compliment asking me to do this, and I hope that I have done what you were hoping I would do.

MS. CITRIN: Absolutely. Any last minute thoughts?

MS. JACKIER: Minah Bargman was a very interesting

woman. I remember when we went together on a mission. She was cute. She says, Edythe, I want you to handle my money, I can't do it. She was very bright, in business with her husband, but she didn't want to be bothered. I always laughed because I knew very well she was more than capable. Very bright lady. I think she was one person who wasn't appreciated the way she should have been. She made a great contribution. Not just monetary, which she did. She was a real leader, I felt, and she's the one who pushed me a little.

MS. CITRIN: Well, each of us have our role models that we look up to and fashion our life after.

MS. JACKIER: She was a role model. A bright lady.

As it happened, she had the financial means to make an additional contribution to the community. Her husband, Ted, was a fine, fine man.

MS. CITRIN: One thing you mentioned about the campaign dollars, when you reached a million. It was a very interesting point because I think in the old days they used to think that women's financial contributions were just a little extra. But it's not extra.

MS. JACKIER: That was so exciting for us, that first time we reached a million dollars. She was in the hospital. I told her, we raised a million dollars. That was very thrilling.

MS. CITRIN: Well, thank you again.

1	MS. JACKIER: Oh, honey, thank you for asking me to
2	do this. It's been nice for me, too, because I've been
3	digging back a little.
4	MS. CITRIN: That's good. Any more digs before we
5	
6	MS. JACKIER: Any more digging? Not that I can
7	think of. I'll think of it when I'm home.
8	MS. CITRIN: That's all right. You can come back.
9	MS. JACKIER: I've talked quite a bit.
10	MS. CITRIN: That's what we wanted.