

Oral History of: Nancy Jacobson
Interviewed by: Faye Wolf
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Location of Interview: Max M. Fisher Federation Building
Subject Matter: Women's Philanthropy Dept. of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit

Faye Wolf: 00:01 My name is Faye Wolf, and today is 09/26/18. I am interviewing Nancy Jacobson at the Max M. Fisher Federation Building in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. This interview is being recorded as part of the Women in Leadership oral history project. Do you give permission to the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives to publish, duplicate, or otherwise use this recording for educational purposes and for use as deemed appropriately by the archives?

Nancy Jacobson: 00:29 Yes, I do.

Faye Wolf: 00:31 Okay. The Women's Philanthropy Department of the Jewish Federation had several names throughout its history, including Women's Division and Women's Campaign and Education Department. For the purposes of this interview, the questions will refer to it by its current name, Women's Philanthropy, but you may use whatever name you are comfortable with.

Okay, let's start with basic questions about you. When and where were you born?

Nancy Jacobson: 00:56 Well I was born in Benton Harbor, which is in the southwestern part of the state, and I grew up there, and it was a lovely childhood, I will say that, but you had to work very hard to be Jewish, because it was such a small Jewish community, and being Jewish, Jewishness meant a great deal to me.

Faye Wolf: 01:21 Where did you go to school?

Nancy Jacobson: 01:22 I went to Benton Harbor High School, graduated, and then went on to Michigan State. It was a wonderful experience there. I loved my college years. After I went, well actually while I was there, I majored in English literature, and then once I graduated and was married, I was in Pittsburgh, and taught high school

junior and senior English at a school in Pittsburgh, and then after my husband graduated, we came back to Detroit, and I taught for two years at Dondero High School.

Faye Wolf: 02:05 Which is in Royal Oak, correct?

Nancy Jacobson: 02:07 Which is in Royal Oak. Correct.

Faye Wolf: 02:07 Or was in Royal Oak. Okay.

As a child, how was religion observed in your household? Especially related to being such a small community. Jewish community.

Nancy Jacobson: 02:16 Well Judaism and Jewishness was very important. There's no question about it. My father had come from Liverpool. In fact, he came along with Ben [Berry 00:02:29], who was the younger brother of one of our local philanthropists and financier Lou Berry. Maybe some of you know that name. Anyway, my father came to Detroit and could not get a job. He was a designing engineer, and actually changed our name from Greenberg to Jacobson. And ... I mean, pardon me, to Davis, and then he was able to get a job in Benton Harbor where he became the chief engineer at Ross Carrier Company, a company that became Clark Equipment. A big company now today on the New York Stock Exchange.

But when I grew up, he ... And my parents married in Benton Harbor, and so to relate back to the question, we had a very Jewish home. My father, mother, and six other couples started a Reform temple, so we were very active in that Reform temple. It was, obviously, the whole community had maybe 100 families, so out of that there were a number who joined the temple, and my parents were very active there, so it meant a lot to me.

Faye Wolf: 03:44 And why did your father change his name from Greenberg to Davis?

Nancy Jacobson: 03:47 In order to get a job.

Faye Wolf: 03:48 So because of anti-Semitism?

Nancy Jacobson: 03:50 Because of antisemitism, yeah.

Faye Wolf: 03:52 And how old were you?

Nancy Jacobson: 03:53 Well-

Faye Wolf: 03:53 Do you [inaudible 00:03:54] or were you [inaudible 00:03:56]?

Nancy Jacobson: 03:55 Well, when he did that, he changed his name before my parents were married.

Faye Wolf: 04:01 I see. Okay.

Nancy Jacobson: 04:01 Yeah. Yeah.

Faye Wolf: 04:02 Okay. Was philanthropy important to your family?

Nancy Jacobson: 04:07 It was very important. My mother was active in Hadassah and the Temple Sisterhood, and really one thing that always caught my attention was that my father was more on the sidelines, but because he was involved with the steam shovels which he designed that I still see on the road, incidentally, but when he was involved with that, he and one of the local Benton Harbor financiers sponsored a steam shovel to be sent to Israel, and to be sent to one of the Kibbutzim, so it was a very exciting time. I remember the newspaper articles about it, and it was very meaningful to all of our family.

I think that ... Well, one little anecdote that goes along with that is that my husband has a cousin Benjamin, and Benjamin said that he was sure that that steam shovel landed in his Kibbutz, so a little bit of family folklore.

Faye Wolf: 05:13 Were you active in any organizations besides Federation?

Nancy Jacobson: 05:18 Yes. I was active in JARC, oh, years and years ago. Michael Feldman who was the incoming president of JARC asked me if I would serve on the board, because they were in the midst of making the organization, turning it from a family organization to a community organization, and he wanted community people, not just family members. So I was involved with that, and I served as the concert chair for two years, which was quite an experience. We raised over a half a million dollars, and that was quite an exciting time for JARC.

And then after that, I became vice president of JARC, and I didn't continue because I felt the issues were so complex that they really needed an attorney as president, so I stopped right there. Then I was involved with Weizmann Institute, and if you're familiar, if anybody's familiar with Weizmann, it is the academy in Israel. Very, very prestigious, and I was very thrilled

to ... My husband was involved in the early years, and then later on I became the mid-west chair of Weizmann, and that was an interesting thing to me, because at that time we had, oh, we'd have fundraisers, we'd have scientists coming in, we'd honor people who were committed to the organization, and it was lovely.

Subsequent to that, the issues changed. In other words, Weizmann is a very successful organization worldwide. It's a ... I mean the research that's done is phenomenal, but I think that they found that they really didn't need to have all these programs, and so they just solicit the very wealthy with intentions of having major and receiving major gifts. And when I contrast that to Federation, I love the approach of Federation where everyone's involved, everyone has a place. There's ... To me, that's the beauty, and that's what keeps it alive, and I think for me that I really made a decision that I think that Federation is so important, and what it does and achieves is just incredible.

Faye Wolf:	07:44	Perfect segue, but let's just go back for a little bit of a timeline for me.
Nancy Jacobson:	07:44	Okay.
Faye Wolf:	07:47	When did you start with JARC? Do you have an idea?
Nancy Jacobson:	07:51	Oh, that was in the seventies.
Faye Wolf:	07:51	Okay.
Nancy Jacobson:	07:53	You know, I had been active.
Faye Wolf:	07:53	Okay, okay. And then from-
Nancy Jacobson:	07:54	Then I went on to Israel Bonds. Oh my gosh, I've been involved with Israel Bonds and love that always, and was honored by Israel Bonds.
Faye Wolf:	08:02	Was that before or after the Weizmann Institute?
Nancy Jacobson:	08:06	Well, actually before, but pretty much simultaneously.
Faye Wolf:	08:09	Okay.
Nancy Jacobson:	08:10	And then I was several of the boards, the Federation boards. The Jewish Family Service and the Fresh Air Society and Jewish Home for the Aged. Now I know that's Senior Living. It's

changed now, but it was a wonderful time. I worked with Carol Rosenberg, and that was quite something.

- Faye Wolf: 08:30 So when did you first become involved with Federation?
- Nancy Jacobson: 08:35 I first became involved with Federation ... My son is 52 now, and I was pregnant with him, and I remember getting phone calls from one of the gals, in fact her name was Diane [Schechter 00:08:51], and Diane Schechter moved and made Aliyah to Israel, but she would call me and pretty much drag me off the couch to go to communities.
- Faye Wolf: 09:04 What was her position in Women's Philanthropy?
- Nancy Jacobson: 09:06 I don't know that she ... She might have been vice president. She had a position, but she was an activist, no question about it, and I would go to these, they were little teas in the afternoon where they would have leadership talk about all the things that Federation is doing, and I was very excited and impressed with it, and ...
- Faye Wolf: 09:25 Do you remember the type of activities that influenced you that they were doing?
- Nancy Jacobson: 09:29 Well, the first was the, we call it the communities, and that was the little afternoon get-togethers for the women. You know, there were shared experiences and shared goals, and it was a lovely time. There was Institute and there was a leadership program. There was just no end to the activities. I mean you could really get involved.
- Faye Wolf: 09:53 And that was your son ... That was when your son was young?
- Nancy Jacobson: 09:57 Was young. It started when I was young.
- Faye Wolf: 09:59 So was he your firstborn?
- Nancy Jacobson: 10:01 I have two. I have two sons.
- Faye Wolf: 10:03 Okay.
- Nancy Jacobson: 10:03 The second son two years later, David.
- Faye Wolf: 10:05 Okay. So was your husband involved in Federation also?
- Nancy Jacobson: 10:08 Yes. Yeah, my husband was chair of the dental division at that early time. I think that we shared so many wonderful

experiences, and I feel that I just wanted to take a minute to talk about some of the missions and some of the experiences that we had, because we went on the first Miracle Mission, and that was under the leadership of David Hermelin, and it was such a wonderful, enlightening experiences. So much information and such a bonding with Israel. I remember marching in the streets of Israel carrying placards that we are with you. We are one. That was a great time.

Then I remember, well, a couple years after that. In the very early nineties, our sons were in high school, and there was a small group. Several families from Detroit. It was the [Bormans 00:11:10] and the ... Let's see. Partridges and the Shermans, and we went as part of the society for the big, the major campaign, and we went to all the sites, and it was really a leadership. We met with the prime minister, and we met with all of the leading diplomats, and I was very touched with that experience, and I think the thing that was so important to me was not just my husband, but with our children, because they were there, and the last evening they made their pledges, and I think my husband and I just looked at each other, awestruck that our kids were doing this. And we had a telephone call about a month later that someone from the national office wanted to video tape them and put them in one of the videos for the national publication, so that was very sweet, but I think that our whole family felt that.

One of the things I wanted to talk about, 'cause I think that missions are just the most important thing for a sense of togetherness and commitment to Israel and to the community, it was so, they were so important to me, but we had the experience of going to Czechoslovakia, and going to Czechoslovakia we were under the auspices of Elie Wiesel, and Elie Wiesel, and we had a man by the name of Mark Talisman who organized the entire trip. And when we were there, we of course visited Terezín, and that's heart wrenching as it is, and then we went on to go into one of the synagogues which Hitler had turned into a museum for the dead Jewish race. That's what he called it. The extinct Jewish race. And while we were in this museum, we walked around, and there were bushel baskets. Just bushel baskets filled with Torah pointers and Kippahs and Mezuzahs and Seder plates. These were all things that Hitler was going to put on exhibition, because he had conquered the Jewish people.

And it was very much of a mixed bag, because you felt as if you felt the sadness of it, and yet the triumph of having survived that. So to me, I mean it's like it was just a moment in time. So

we went on from that. We came home, and one little thing that happened I'll never forget. I was at the ... My husband and I were at the airport in New York changing flights, and Henry Kissinger was there. I guess he'd just written a book on China, and there were four or five Asian boys who were standing waiting for a chance to get his autograph, and of course Joey and Nancy Kissinger were off getting the suitcases, and there I was talking to Henry Kissinger. Well once I said that I was part of the exhibition, and having gone as part of the Precious Legacy, he had a million questions for me, so I think that that was a moment in time when when does Henry Kissinger ask you questions kind of thing. And he was so interested, because once he heard the name Elie Wiesel, he wanted to know all about it.

- Faye Wolf: 14:50 And when was that mission?
- Nancy Jacobson: 14:52 That was in the early nineties. That mission was in the ...
- Faye Wolf: 14:56 [inaudible 00:14:56]
- Nancy Jacobson: 14:55 But with that mission, and it turned into something else, because with that mission, the articles were put on display, and we had a very, very wonderful exhibition. It was called the Precious Legacy. It was a Federation event that was very ... It was a whole community event, and it was really quite amazing.
- Faye Wolf: 15:16 So-
- Nancy Jacobson: 15:16 Oh, I just wanted to add one thing. Then after that, our synagogue, Beth Ahm, had burned to the ground. I don't know if you're familiar with that, but it had burned, and we as part of the Precious Legacy, my husband and I with our boys had gone to England to the Westminster Synagogue, and at the Westminster Synagogue, they housed all the holocaust Torahs. So we selected a Torah, and actually with the scribes worked on it and could not make it holy, because there were just too ... It had been just too desecrated from the holocaust.
- So we brought that back, and as the synagogue was out of the flames, so was the Torah, so both had survived, so it was very meaningful, and that was in addition to the [inaudible 00:16:07] community event that my husband and I shared that we brought that Torah back, and the synagogue survived and we had a wonderful cantata and just a beautiful evening, so those were highlights in the community.
- Faye Wolf: 16:20 And is that the Torah that's on display in the sanctuary?

Nancy Jacobson: 16:24 Yes it is. Yes it is. Are you a member of that [inaudible 00:16:28]?

Faye Wolf: 16:28 I am. I'm on the board. I'm a board member.

Nancy Jacobson: 16:29 Oh, I see. Well then you know about it. You know, how meaningful it was to us.

Faye Wolf: 16:34 So clearly your family was very supportive of your work in-

Nancy Jacobson: 16:39 Absolutely, yeah.

Faye Wolf: 16:39 ... in Federation, so there was never a conflict, never a time ... I mean, it can be very time-consuming.

Nancy Jacobson: 16:44 No. In fact, I was on the board of governors for a number of years, and for a period of time, my younger son David was on the board at the same time, so I thought that was pretty wonderful.

Faye Wolf: 16:55 That's actually the first person I've heard that made it a family event.

Nancy Jacobson: 16:59 Right.

Faye Wolf: 16:59 Family, yeah. Okay. Just to get a little bit of a timeline, I'm not sure if you were involved in this or not, but traditionally, Women's Philanthropy had programs aimed at educating women and training them to be leaders. Was that there during the time that you were active with the Federation-

Nancy Jacobson: 16:59 Yeah.

Faye Wolf: 17:18 ... and did you participate?

Nancy Jacobson: 17:19 Oh, sure. There were always leadership training. We had ... Well, there were different things, but we had, as part of the campaign we would have mock solicitations, and we would, just to create a comfort zone for the women, we would let them go through the whole experience of a solicitation, because I think that that is something that's, you know, that would make the women ... It would give them a comfort zone.

Faye Wolf: 17:53 In Women's Philanthropy, what positions did you hold, and do you remember when? Because [crosstalk 00:18:00].

Nancy Jacobson:	17:59	I don't know. I'm gonna tell you I do not remember the years, because it was a continuum. The first thing I ever did was publicity for Institute. I was very involved in Institute, and I remember one experience, and I think that you can learn a lot from a negative experience, because the chair who was a wonderful, wonderful woman had asked me to do so many different things for the publicity, and I called radio stations, and I put announcements in store windows, and I sent information to the synagogue, so I felt I had just done the job, and she kept asking me to do more and more, and I realized at that time I had to stop. But it taught me a lesson. It said that when you do ask for your leadership to do things, you have to just know when to stop and let them act on their own and do the best job they can, because I think otherwise it can turn into a negative all too easily.
Faye Wolf:	19:00	Okay. So tell me more about the positions that you had, because you ... And it is-
Nancy Jacobson:	19:03	Oh, okay. Then I, yes, then I went on. I mean, I chaired so many different things in terms of long-range planning and endowments. I was active in that, and then through the years, when I got into ... And it was a simultaneous thing, because you would work in education, and at the same time work in campaign, and I started out ... There's kind of a pyramid. First you'd be a worker, and then you might be asked to become a vice chair, and then after that, that would mean you would be overseeing the workers, and I served that purpose, and then I was campaign chair for the major gifts, and I worked with a woman, Babs [Lowenstein 00:19:48], who was just delightful, and I thought "Okay, she's older and she's known in the community, and I'll do the grunt work," and it turned out that we just developed a wonderful friendship, and she was right there doing the work right along with me, so we accomplished a lot.
		Then later on, I once again chaired the Lion of Judah, I chaired that twice as the ...
Faye Wolf:	20:12	Explain what the Lion of Judah is.
Nancy Jacobson:	20:14	Okay, I'll tell you about the Lion of Judah, because I think it's really an important thing. Years ago, I think it was in the early, very early nineties, my close friend who was the national president for the Women's National Federation, and she happened to be telling me all about the Lion of Judah pin, and that it was such a successful thing, and in Baltimore where she was from, they had raised more dollars than she ever expected

to raise, because women were anxious to join the Lion of Judah. So it was time, and the announcements were coming out about it, and Diane Klein and I felt that we thought this was then a very important program to Institute for our women. And we had a meeting, and surprisingly, there were a number of women who did not want the pin. So not that this was a fight, but it was an education, because they felt it was ostentatious.

It was like you were wearing a dollar bill sign on your shoulder, and so we had to convince them. So because of that, Federation was not ... Our Federation was not the first Lion of Judah, but eventually all the women accepted the idea, and it did. It worked wonders. The level increased. The level of giving just increased dramatically because of the lion pin.

- Faye Wolf: 21:43 So the pin was awarded to women who raised a certain amount of money or who gave a certain amount of money?
- Nancy Jacobson: 21:51 No, that would be who gave a certain amount of money.
- Faye Wolf: 21:51 I see.
- Nancy Jacobson: 21:52 Yeah. And there are divisions. There's like a ... There's the lion, which is 5000, and the ruby which is 10, and the emerald which is 25. And one time I had, my husband and I had gone to Argentina on a mission, and that's a whole other story which I'd like to relate. But in the meantime, when we were there, there was a woman with a white gold pin, and I thought "Oh, gee. I think I'd like that white gold pin instead." And then I found out that was \$100,000. So that was a little out of budget. But in the meantime.
- Faye Wolf: 22:29 But I'm sure you would have liked to have given it if you could.
- Nancy Jacobson: 22:29 Yes. Well you know, you say that because one of the first meetings that I attended I remember, and it was a meeting where I was giving \$100, and I was just thrilled to be doing that. And there was kind of a shill at that meeting, and all these memories are just coming flooding back to me, but I remember that Jean [Frankel 00:22:50], and she was a well, you know, she and her husband were well-known community people, and she was giving a very large pledge, and this ... And she talked about it. And I remember some of the girls were saying "Oh, how could they do that? That makes us feel so badly that we're giving so little." And I felt just the opposite. I felt subliminally this was like a goal. Maybe I wouldn't be able to do that, but I would sure like to be able to give the best gift that I could. So

for me, it was a positive, and I was glad that Federation had her do that.

- Faye Wolf: 23:25 So how long from the time that you tried to get the Lion of Judah pin instituted, how long before it was accepted? Because it seems like it was a challenge.
- Nancy Jacobson: 23:33 Oh, it was within the year.
- Faye Wolf: 23:33 Oh.
- Nancy Jacobson: 23:35 And now, I think there's something like 400 women who are Lion of Judahs now.
- Faye Wolf: 23:41 Do they still have that program?
- Nancy Jacobson: 23:42 Oh yes, very actively. In fact, we had a major fundraiser, and it's ... You know, look, women can join for different reasons. Some women just want the pin so they push themselves to raise their pledge to that level, others just feel it in their heart and they can wear their pin. You can wear the pin every day. I mean, there's no question. Frankly, I wear it when I have something official going on for Federation, that's when I wear it, but it means a lot to me, and it means ... Now my daughter-in-laws are Lions, and I think that's, you know, makes it doubly special, and then there's the endowment, there's a little flame on it, which after you've endowed your pin permanently then that goes on as part of the pin.
- Faye Wolf: 24:29 So this is an international design?
- Nancy Jacobson: 24:31 Oh yes. It is.
- Faye Wolf: 24:33 Okay. Okay. So tell me about what inspired you to work your way up to campaign chair, and before we do that, I have a note here that you started out volunteering with teaching Russian immigrants English.
- Nancy Jacobson: 24:50 I did do that for a number of years, yeah, yeah.
- Faye Wolf: 24:52 So is that how you started, or is that ... That was well after?
- Nancy Jacobson: 24:54 No, that was just one facet of it. Yeah, that was one facet.
- Faye Wolf: 24:56 And was that just because it was in need and you had the skills?

Nancy Jacobson: 24:59 Yeah, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it, and it was ... It wasn't ... It was a program that really taught basic conversation to the Russians so that they could learn how to go to the bank, learn how to just function in society. How to go to the grocery store. It was a wonderful program. I mean it, I think, was very helpful to all of the newcomers. That was after the first wave of the Russian immigrants. You know, it worked.

Faye Wolf: 25:27 Okay. So what inspired you to work your way up to campaign chair?

Nancy Jacobson: 25:30 Okay. I know you've asked that question now twice, and I have to tell you very naively that I never felt I was working my way up. I just loved it. I loved being with the women, I loved their concepts of the women that they were, you know, there wasn't any pettiness. I mean everyone, it was as if we had a common goal, and the positions happened, and I'm very appreciated that they happened when I think about it now, it really was just my interest and my life, and it was a shared thing as I've said before with the family, so it was very important to us.

Faye Wolf: 26:05 And what were your duties as campaign chair?

Nancy Jacobson: 26:08 Campaign chair is very diversified. I mean, first of all you wanna bring, you wanna inspire the women. You wanna bring them into campaign, you wanna really set the best example you can, and tell them the job that you want them to do, and then you have to very honestly trust them to do it, and when you're working on campaign, there's so many facets. I mean, you might be planning Super Sunday, you might be planning the Megathons, you might be planning the endowment aspect. I mean, there would be ... There's just so much going on at one time. In fact, I had a great big notebook, because you couldn't possibly put all of the meeting dates and all the information into a telephone date thing. But something interesting happened though. When I became chair, it was 2002, and that was just the time of 9/11, if you remember, and it was a very scary time in terms of contributions, and we had lost our staff at that time, our director, because Federation had to lay off several people. They were very worried, we were very worried about funding, and because of that, we had no specific director, and a lot of the assignments were made to other personnel in different departments of Federation. So Nancy [Grosfeld 00:27:47] who was president at the time, and I just think she is fabulous, she did a wonderful job, and I as campaign chair had to really organize and do a lot of the more menial tasks, so it was really encompassing. It was a very trying year.

Happily, I can report that we increased pledges and we raised almost six million dollars, so I think it was pretty successful all in all, but it was ... Now we have wonderful, wonderful staff people, and I think that that has eased the burden somewhat.

- Faye Wolf: 28:25 So I wanted to ask you about that because it really speaks so much to your skills, but in the middle of a recession and a scary time you increased-
- Nancy Jacobson: 28:38 We increased [inaudible 00:28:39].
- Faye Wolf: 28:38 ... pledges, and how and why do you think that happened?
- Nancy Jacobson: 28:41 You know something, I don't know. I'm thankful.
- Faye Wolf: 28:44 It's quite an accomplishment.
- Nancy Jacobson: 28:44 I'm thankful. I mean, we had wonderful women working for us, and I think everyone was dedicated, and it was. It was a very iffy time. You didn't know what was gonna happen, but it was a successful campaign. I was very happy about that.
- Faye Wolf: 29:00 And each campaign lasts a year?
- Nancy Jacobson: 29:02 Yes. Well actually, I was in office for two years, so I had two campaigns, and then for example, while you're running the 2002 campaign, you still have a major catch up with 2001. You know, the pledges. You have to bring those pledges in too, so it's encompassing. It's a job.
- Faye Wolf: 29:26 So as successful as you have been-
- Nancy Jacobson: 29:29 Yes, happily.
- Faye Wolf: 29:30 ... and why didn't you become president?
- Nancy Jacobson: 29:33 Oh, that's the question.
- Faye Wolf: 29:34 It just seems like a ...
- Nancy Jacobson: 29:36 I thought about this question a lot. My husband and I were going to be spending the winters in Florida, and I honestly didn't feel like I could do the job. You can't be in Florida and run a meeting and expect success, and if you're not there, things can go a different way than maybe you would hope, and then you're kind of left with it, and so I felt I could not continue.

I had second thoughts about it, but every time I had a second thought I came to the same basic conclusion. There were many qualified women of mine who could take over, so it wasn't a question of that, but I think for me because of it I've had regrets, but I did what I could do at the time, and I accept that.

- Faye Wolf: 30:36 You mentioned that Nancy Grosfeld was the president at the time.
- Nancy Jacobson: 30:40 Yes.
- Faye Wolf: 30:40 Were there any other mentors within Women's Philanthropy?
- Nancy Jacobson: 30:45 Well you know I never felt that I was being mentored. I always felt that it was just friendship, and really just women who shared, as I've said before, the same goals, and when I became active it was Edyth [Jackier 00:31:03]. I may neglect to mention a few, but Edyth Jackier or Carolyn ... Shirley Harris, Carolyn Greenberg. Oh, [Dulcie 00:31:15] [Rosenfeld 00:31:16]. They were all leaders who were so inspiring and so lovely to work with, and so encouraging that I didn't feel anyone was directing me. It was just a very common goal sense. No question.
- Faye Wolf: 31:32 Other than the time, the 2001, 2002 time, what were the other challenges that you think you might have faced as campaign ... Or were there any other challenges as campaign chair?
- Nancy Jacobson: 31:47 Well, I think that really it was the monetary. You know, just the fact that it was the recession, and just the aftermath of 9/11. But there were just challenges along the way. There were many, many things to overcome. There were many ... There are problems that exist, and you have to just be there all the time, so it was a ... It's a constant challenge.
- Faye Wolf: 32:13 So this is ... I think this is gonna be a hard question for you to answer, but what were some of your proudest accomplishments?
- Nancy Jacobson: 32:21 I think the fact, the very basic fact that I've alluded to already, that we ran a successful campaign. That it was like I was testing myself, and I felt that I had met the challenge. I think one of the things that I particularly loved in, and I remember the year for this. 2010. I received the American Fundraising Professionals Award, and that to me was very important, because it was almost as if the staff was acknowledging that I had done the job, so to speak.

And I remember that event specifically because I was allowed to have a table of family, and I made sure that I had three of my young granddaughters who were not yet teenagers, and I wanted them to be part of my experience, because they are ... Well first of all, they're just such lovely young ladies, and sometime I think and I laugh about this. I'll tell my husband, I said "Sometime I think that they see me taking them out for lunch, spending time with them now, and going shopping," and I just wanted them to see the other aspect of me, the what's really, really important to me, and so I'm really proud to say that my girls and my granddaughters have become involved with so many. Their mitzvah projects.

One granddaughter, Emma, goes to the home for the aged, and goes to the [inaudible 00:34:00] and meets with some of the women and spends an afternoon with them, and my other granddaughter is so busy. She went to the Ronald McDonald House, and she helps provide meals there for parents of children who are ill, and so they're just doing a lot of wonderful things now, and I think that sometime you can talk about it, but when they're actually there and see what's happening, I think they're more into it. It becomes real for them.

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| Faye Wolf: | 34:32 | Why is Women's Philanthropy important to you? How does it rank among maybe other philanthropic activities that you may be involved in, or maybe you're not involved in any other ones. |
| Nancy Jacobson: | 34:46 | Yeah. Well, I have been as I indicated, but I think you're asking specifically the women's. |
| Faye Wolf: | 34:52 | Mm-hmm (affirmative). |
| Nancy Jacobson: | 34:54 | Well I think that it's- |
| Faye Wolf: | 34:54 | Why is that division so important? |
| Nancy Jacobson: | 34:56 | Oh, okay. I feel there's no question that it is. When I was on the ... When I became campaign chair, I went on the campaign chair's mission, and on that mission there were so many interesting things that happened. One was the fact that several young women who were part of the campaign and on that mission had ... They belonged to communities that had stopped a women's campaign, and they felt, by doing that, the communities felt that they weren't raising as much money. So these women were back starting up their women's campaign, because they definitely felt that more money raised once the |

women, you know, once the women had their own campaign and way of giving.

- Faye Wolf: 35:49 Why do you think that women raised money differently than men?
- Nancy Jacobson: 35:56 I do think that women have a little softer approach. I used to love to listen to my husband solicit, because he always kept it light, and I, and my philosophy when I was campaign chair and for years before was just that. You can talk, you can meet with the person, the woman you're soliciting. You can talk about the issues. You can make them aware of what's going on in the Jewish world and the needs and how great the needs are, but I think that you can set a goal, and if they say no they can't do it, you have to, to me, have to just sit back quietly and accept that, because I think it's very important not to give women or anyone that you solicit an excuse.
- You don't want them to be angry at you and say "Well I'm not supporting the organization. I didn't like the way I was solicited." So to me, you never ever wanna do that. You don't wanna give them an excuse for not giving. I feel that a softer approach ... And maybe with that softer approach next year they'll meet the goal that you have set to them. It might be just subliminally in their mind. I hope. Always hopeful.
- Faye Wolf: 37:14 In your experience, how did the Women's Philanthropy Division interact with the general campaign?
- Nancy Jacobson: 37:21 Well I think in the early years that I was working we would get together for Super Sundays and those major community telethons, and that worked, but I think through the years as really the men have seen how much money women do raise, and that it's such an integral and such an important part of the campaign, I think that we have gained their respect, so to speak. And now particularly since we've had Nancy Grosfeld and Penny Blumenstein and now Beverley [Liss 00:37:55] as presidents, they've all come through the ranks of the Women's Philanthropy, and I think because of that there's no question. Women are totally accepted in terms of the fundraising. No question.
- Faye Wolf: 38:11 Do you think that's taken a long time?
- Nancy Jacobson: 38:13 Taken a long time? Well, it's a process, wouldn't you say?

Faye Wolf: 38:17 Yeah. Yes, that's true. Why do you think it's ... I mean you sort of alluded to this, but maybe if you have something to add. If you don't, just say so, but why do you think that it's important that women have their own campaign?

Nancy Jacobson: 38:32 Oh, I do. I do. I, well first of all, for the additional dollars that are raised, but something else happens. There are many women who ... This Women's Department and Women's Philanthropy gives women a voice, and there are so many times when a woman, if she's at a general meeting, will not speak up. She'll let her husband take over, and I think that the importance of Women's Philanthropy is that it gives women a chance to voice their own views.

Faye Wolf: 39:09 Why for you with everything you've told me and you've reviewed in your life, why for you is philanthropy important?

Nancy Jacobson: 39:18 Well, I think it's the most integral part of Judaism that you could possibly want, isn't it? And sometime I laugh about it, but the author Isaac Bashevis Singer wrote a series of little mysterious short stories, and in one of the short stories he tells about a little bee that buzzes in your ear, and once that happens, you are forever Jewish. So that's the story, and that's me, and philanthropy is just that much a part of me. That's the only way I can answer that question.

Faye Wolf: 39:56 What are your hopes for the Women's Philanthropy division in the future?

Nancy Jacobson: 40:03 Just stay strong and keep moving, you know, moving in the right direction. That's all. The women are terrific, the leadership is strong, and the beauty is that the women, you know, we change every couple years, and I think it's important to do that, and there seems to be ... I mean, I never noticed pettiness. I have never seen that in the organization at all. Everyone wants the best for, you know, to raise the money, to do the job, and I think that's one of the beauties of it that's kept me so closely tied to it, because it's giving new women a chance to experience leadership, and I think that's vital.

Faye Wolf: 40:43 And how often is leadership turned over?

Nancy Jacobson: 40:47 Well every, you know-

Faye Wolf: 40:48 Every [inaudible 00:40:49].

Nancy Jacobson: 40:50 ... a lot of thing turn over every year. The campaign, well, the campaign starts out with the associate campaign chair for two years, and then two more years, and then if you go on, most other women have gone on to the presidency. So it is a long process.

Faye Wolf: 41:08 It's a commitment.

Nancy Jacobson: 41:09 It's a commitment, most sure.

Faye Wolf: 41:10 Tell me about Argentina.

Nancy Jacobson: 41:13 Oh, okay. My husband and I went ... We've taken ... These missions are a life highlight, and I think that the fact that we have ... The missions are probably one of the absolutely most important parts of Federation, because it gives such an experience in being with and doing some good.

Well, we went as a Federation group. There were actually ... We went with Shelly and Joel [Tauber 00:41:44], and the four of us went as part of this national mission to find out what was going on in Argentina, and it was a difficult time, because the pesos and the dollars were being flown out of the country very rapidly, and the country was in, it was in crisis, so we tried to come up with some plans to help, and I hope that we did. I think it was better for a while after that, but the thing that struck me about that mission that I think will always be seared into my mind is I remember talking to a very, very nice gentleman, and the people, our Jews were living on the streets. I mean, they were living because they had lost their homes, so you would see men and women in Armani suits dressed to the hilt, and no home, and it was like an experience.

It was like the strangest experience to me, and I remember meeting and talking to one very lovely gentleman who had been ... We had the evening at one of the synagogues, and he had been on the board of the synagogue, and now he was living on the street. So it was a very difficult time for Argentina, and I think many of the people were helped by Federation, and that was a good thing, but it was an experience to witness that. Very sad.

Faye Wolf: 43:12 Are there any other positions that you've held in Federation that you wanna talk about?

Nancy Jacobson: 43:18 Any other positions? Well, I've held quite a few. I mean, I've been happy with them.

Faye Wolf: 43:24 Tell me how long the span of time has been that you've been involved with Federation.

Nancy Jacobson: 43:27 Well, my son was 52 now when I went all the way through to 2004 when I ended my campaign chair position, and now I'm a volunteer. I still make some calls, and in fact I just talked to Amy Neistein this morning. She does a wonderful job, and she is the director for the Women's Philanthropy now, so they have all that support staff which I think is so important. But I hope I've answered your question. I've loved working.

Faye Wolf: 44:05 No, sure, sure, sure. Is there anything-

Nancy Jacobson: 44:07 And I haven't ... Well, very honestly specifically, I've really for the last ... It's been 14 years since I've served as chair, so I keep going to the events and loving these young women taking over.

Faye Wolf: 44:21 Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you would like to say?

Nancy Jacobson: 44:28 I did forget the name of the mission, momentarily. The Prime Minister's Mission, and that was the one I referred to early on when we went to, you know, when I met Kissinger after. That was the one that was very, very ... Oh, pardon me. That was very important, and that was very exciting. We went with our sons.

Faye Wolf: 44:50 Okay. So if this, and it probably will, was to be used as a training video, at least in some part for another campaign chair, is there an wrapped in a bow type of advice you would like to give to them? To that person.

Nancy Jacobson: 45:07 I think just do your best, trust the people. As I've said, trust the people who are working for you. Know that they have the same goals that you do, and just give it your best effort. It is a time-consuming job, but I think it's a labor of love. I think that's how most women feel about it.

I did wanna mention one thing, that I was not involved in this, but two of my grandchildren have been, and it's called the Teen Board, and whoever came up with this idea, I think it's incredible. They have a group of teenagers, high school students, Jewish high school students, and Federation gives them an allotment of money, and with that they can distribute the money, and they have the different agencies. Whatever funds, wherever they wanna allocate funds, they can do that. That is money that they control, and I think it gives the kids such

a beginning in terms of really, in terms of being involved with charities, and being involved with really giving and having money and how important it is, so I'm very, very much into that. Both my granddaughters and my ... And Isabelle now is serving on that committee, so it's very important.

Other than that, I just wanna thank you for the opportunity to speak, and to kind of reminisce. You know, when you have this situation, I haven't thought about some of these memories in too long a time, and it's been heartwarming for me, and I thank you for the opportunity.

Faye Wolf:	46:49	Well, I'm glad they're all good memories.
Nancy Jacobson:	46:51	That is true. Thank you.
Faye Wolf:	46:52	Certainly you've left an impact on Federation and the people who had served, so thank you.
Nancy Jacobson:	46:57	Thank you.