

Mary Catherine Bussey Boice McGready

Interview Session One: April 29, 2016

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Chapter 00A

Interview Identifier

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:00:00.0

All right. We are now recording. And the time is 25 after 2:00. It is April 29th, 2016, and I'm at the home -- and I'll have to read all these names, OK? (laughs) Mary Catherine Bussey -- is it...

Mrs. McGready

0:00:19.4

Bussey.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:00:19.8

Bussey. Mary Catherine Bussey Boice McGready. And you also go by the name Katie. So I'm at Mrs. McGready's home today, in Houston, Texas. And we are conducting an interview for the Making Cancer History Voices Oral History Project, run by the Research Medical Library at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Mrs. McGready came to MD Anderson in 1943 to fill the position of medical librarian, and she was with the institution until August of that year. I guess you started in January, isn't that correct? You'll tell me that story. She spent most of her later career at the Texas Medical Center, and formally retired in 1980. So thanks so much for agreeing to be interviewed for the project.

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Mrs. McGready
0:01:06.5
My pleasure.

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Chapter 01

A Medical Family

A: Personal Background;

Codes

- A: Character, Values, Beliefs, Talents;
- A: Personal Background;
- A: Inspirations to Practice Science/Medicine;
- A: Influences from People and Life Experiences;
- A: Experiences Related to Gender, Race, Ethnicity;

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:01:07.6

Well, I wanted to start and ask you to tell me where you were born and when and tell me a little about your family.

Mrs. McGready

0:01:14.8

I was born in Timpson, T-I-M-P-S-O-N, Texas, which is in east Texas. And I was born on February the 7th, 1921, to Maude and Frank Bussey, B-U-S-S-E-Y. I had four brothers, three of whom became medical doctors. The other brother was a career officer and one of the first field artillery to arrive in Europe -- in Germany. He was one of the first ones into Berlin. His platoon was one of the first in Berlin.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:01:52.6

And let me also just say for the record, I neglected to say this at the beginning, that also present at this interview today is Cathy Bacon, one of Mrs. McGready's daughters. OK. So you were telling me about your brothers. And also, now, what did your father do for a living?

Mrs. McGready

0:02:08.4

He was a pharmacist.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:02:09.5

OK. And was he also an MD?

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Mrs. McGready
0:02:11.5
No.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD
0:02:12.1
OK.

Cathy Bacon
0:02:12.9
His father was.

Mrs. McGready
0:02:14.4
Not -- my father was not a doctor.

Cathy Bacon
0:02:16.4
His father.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD
0:02:17.2
Your grandfather was an MD?

Mrs. McGready
0:02:18.6
Oh yes. My grandfather was.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD
0:02:20.3
So, you know, part of what I'm seeing is that you actually grew up in a medical family.

Mrs. McGready
0:02:25.4
Yes, I did.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD
0:02:26.2
Yes. Now tell me about that. Did that inspire you?

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Mrs. McGready

0:02:29.4

Well, I knew my grandfather very well, because he died when he was 95, and I was 11 at that time. And my cousin [] John Bussey Byrn -- B-Y-R-N -- and I played marbles in his bedroom because the carpet had a circular flower pattern. No one ever told us to be careful with the marbles, but we spent hours -- and I regret that we didn't have enough sense to talk to him more then, but we just did...

Cathy Bacon

0:03:01.8

Because he had been a doctor and a surgeon at Manassas, in the Civil War.

Mrs. McGready

0:03:06.2

Yes. [When?] he was in the Civil War.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:03:08.6

And what was your grandfather's name?

Cathy Bacon

0:03:10.2

Pappy. (laughter)

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:03:12.0

Pappy. (laughter)

Mrs. McGready

0:03:14.6

Oh my gosh.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:03:16.1

John Burgamy Bussey?

Mrs. McGready

0:03:18.6

Thank you! (laughter) I -- couldn't you just put Pappy? You know, I had no idea. I thought Pappy -- that we had the only Pappy in the world. I had no idea that it was a common name for grandfathers.

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T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:03:32.3

So I read in that family history that you and all of your brothers also worked in the pharmacy. Is that true?

Mrs. McGready

0:03:38.3

As we grew up, yes, we did.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:03:40.2

What did you do?

Mrs. McGready

0:03:40.9

Well, I worked in the soda fountain. In fact, they all started in the soda fountain. And before I was working in the soda fountain, in the summer I could work at the ice cream counter, because I could dip ice cream cones. And at that time, segregation -- none of the -- how do you refer to blacks now? African Americans, to be politically correct? -- only came as far as the back door where you could see them. And my daddy...

Cathy Bacon

0:04:08.3

To get their medicine and anything else they wanted.

Mrs. McGready

0:04:11.0

But Daddy's -- I can hear him now, saying to me, "Always watch the back door, sister. Watch the back door, and serve them in their turn." And I did that one day, and a woman just got irate. "Well, well, we're waiting right here!" I said, "Yes, but they were waiting first. And Daddy said to serve them first." She says, "Oh. OK." And I never had any trouble after that.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:04:35.6

Wow.

Cathy Bacon

0:04:36.3

Well, your father was very respected. And people followed his lead.

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Mrs. McGready

0:04:41.9

Well, Daddy and -- was on the school board, which covered both schools, the black and white, African American and white. And he and Mother were the first ones that had ever gone to graduation services and things over there. And Mother said it was almost embarrassing because they were so thrilled to have them both. They were so appreciative. It impressed me because when she told me about how wonderful it was.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:10.8

So how did that attitude in your family affect you later?

Mrs. McGready

0:05:15.5

Oh, always. I've had friends in strange places, and interesting people that I would never have known if I hadn't conversed with them and gotten to know them.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:26.8

So it was a real sense of openness to people that you got?

Mrs. McGready

0:05:30.2

And that was unusual, back in the...

Cathy Bacon

0:05:33.2

It was in east Texas.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:34.8

Yeah. That's because...

Mrs. McGready

0:05:35.4

In east Texas, in the 19 and...

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:38.5

Nineteen thirties.

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Cathy Bacon

0:05:38.9

Twenties and '30s.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:39.8

Twenties and '30s. Yeah, absolutely. Wow. Well, kudos to your parents for having that openness.

Mrs. McGready

0:05:45.7

Oh, very much.

Chapter 02

Becoming a Medical Librarian

A: Professional Path;

Codes

D: On Texas and Texans;

A: Personal Background;

A: Professional Path;

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:47.8

Yeah. Yeah, amazing. Well, I'm wondering if your experience at the pharmacy and growing up in this kind of medical family kind of, you know, convinced you at an early age to go into something that was related to the sciences. Is that the case? How did you get interested in medical lib-- medical archiving?

Mrs. McGready

0:06:06.9

My brother was living in Galveston. He was in medical school. And he and his wife, Margaret, invited me to come for the summer. And he said, "I will get you a job -- not a paying job, but I've talked to the librarian, Miss Elizabeth Runge, R-U-N-G-E, and she said yes, she'd be happy to have you." So for that summer I lived with him, and when time came to go back to college, I didn't want to go back to college. I had two years, and I said, "This is what I want to do." Daddy says, "No, you get your degree." And I said, "Daddy, I know what I want to be." And he finally agreed to one year. And at the end of that one year, he was convinced that I -- was satisfied. Because Mother and Daddy both were under the illusion you had to have four years in college.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:06:57.6

Did your mom work?

Mrs. McGready

0:06:59.2

Well, she was a schoolteacher.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:07:00.5

Oh, OK. OK.

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Mrs. McGready

0:07:01.7

But no, she never worked after they were married. With five children...

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:07:05.3

Right. (laughter) I mean, she worked, but... (laughter)

Mrs. McGready

0:07:09.8

[With?] my four brothers and I.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:07:10.9

Sure. Absolutely. But you know, I've talked to women who are much younger than you, a different generation, and their parents didn't necessarily think, "Oh, our daughter has to go to college." So I think, "Wow, that's pretty amazing," that your parents wanted -- they thought it was really important for their daughter to get an education.

Mrs. McGready

0:07:33.0

Well, they think -- they think -- my daddy had a physi-- was a pharmacist, and my mother had been a schoolteacher. They knew the advantage. And then with the boys, they knew early that it was just essential to have good education.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:07:46.8

Now what were you doing at Galveston that got you so interested in becoming a librarian?

Mrs. McGready

0:07:54.0

Well, I worked for Miss Elizabeth Runge.

Cathy Bacon

0:07:56.7

But before that, you were telling me a story -- it was someplace outside of Waco, there was somebody you were exposed to who was a medical records --

Mrs. McGready

0:08:06.8

I got it.

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Cathy Bacon

0:08:07.1

-- librarian. Is that true, (inaudible)?

Mrs. McGready

0:08:09.3

It was -- it was at North Texas College.

Cathy Bacon

0:08:11.4

And you went there after Baylor.

Mrs. McGready

0:08:13.3

I did.

Cathy Bacon

0:08:13.8

You were at Baylor your first year, and then at North Texas.

Mrs. McGready

0:08:17.2

Because it was a state school, cheaper. In fact, I had a scholarship to Baylor.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:08:21.4

Oh, you -- oh, you did? Where did -- where did you get your scholarship from?

Mrs. McGready

0:08:24.3

I gave it to myself.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:08:26.0

(laughs) Oh, you did?

Mrs. McGready

0:08:27.8

I did.

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T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:08:28.3

You did?

Mrs. McGready

0:08:29.0

I had developed a style of writing -- my handwriting was horrible, and a high school teacher made me print the alphabet in about that much space on everything I turned in. Every page. And I just developed a style of writing. It was not Spencerian. It was more of a print.

Cathy Bacon

0:08:46.6

And so you were asked to write everybody's graduation things and the scholarship things. And you decided on the extra form, to fill herself in. And I think because of the --

Mrs. McGready

0:08:56.9

I had one extra.

Cathy Bacon

0:08:57.5

-- family and -- and you were the fourth of the five children, it kind of led to her getting the scholarship --

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:09:04.9

I see.

Cathy Bacon

0:09:05.1

-- for a year at Baylor.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:09:05.9

I see.

Mrs. McGready

0:09:07.5

Yeah, but I also, when...

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Cathy Bacon

0:09:09.

I don't think we want to tell all, Mom. (laughter)

Mrs. McGready

0:09:11.4

OK. That's enough.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:09:13.2

So you were telling me about what it was you found so interesting about the work in the library. You know, why did you -- that make you decide...

Mrs. McGready

0:09:21.0

Well, my whole family was in medicine. My three brothers -- my grandfather Willis was a pharmacist. My grandfather Bussey was a doctor, an MD. And my four brothers -- my three brothers.

Cathy Bacon

0:09:40.5

Was it -- I know you couldn't have been a nurse, because any time any of us even got a skinned knee, we ran next door to Miss Jurek, the nurse, to administer it to us. But was it a way for you to stay -- to go into the medical field in some way in that day and time, when -- to go into medical library science?

Mrs. McGready

0:10:05.5

And I wanted to live in Galveston, to...

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:10:08.3

Oh, you did? (laughter) Why is that?

Mrs. McGready

0:10:10.8

To live in Galveston? I'd move down there now if I could.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:10:14.7

Oh, really?

Mrs. McGready

0:10:15.4

I loved it.

Cathy Bacon

0:10:16.3

Well, it was a pretty hopping place, back in the '40s, early '40s.

Mrs. McGready

0:10:20.9

The medical school there was a fun place. I can tell you all about the dances every Saturday night. Every fraternity had a row. There were six fraternities, five and then the Jewish fraternity, who did not include the -- so the five. Five, and then the sixth was the Jewish. And every Saturday night, there was a formal dinner dance at their fraternity house. You got an invitation. You got a dance program. I guess that was the thing of it. So on Saturday night, everyone would dress in long dresses and go into the party.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:11:18.0

It sounds like a wonderful place for a young woman to be.

Mrs. McGready

0:11:20.6

Oh, (laughs) it was fantastic.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:11:21.9

Yeah. Yeah. So tell me more about your working situation. What did you do, and -- in your internship? What were you learning about library science?

Mrs. McGready

0:11:38.7

I learned to do a little bit of cataloguing, but where I really got my training was in Galveston, under Lily Runge, Miss Runge. And that's when I went down for the summer and didn't want to go home. And they finally agreed I could stay one year. That was it. But I got it extended. So I had two years in college, and I did that.

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Chapter 03

Working as the First Medical Librarian at MD Anderson

B: MD Anderson Past;

Codes

A: Joining MD Anderson;

B: MD Anderson History;

A: Personal Background;

C: Portraits;

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:12:03.4

So tell me how -- tell me how MD Anderson came about.

Mrs. McGready

0:12:08.1

Doctor -- now, that's all in my story.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:12:10.6

Yeah, but I want to hear you tell me. (laughs)

Mrs. McGready

0:12:14.6

I've got to get it in brief myself.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:12:17.2

No, it's all right. Just tell it as -- tell it in your natural way.

Mrs. McGready

0:12:21.8

Well, I was working at MD Anderson...

Cathy Bacon

0:12:26.3

No. You were working for Miss Runge, and she's the one who recommended -- who called Mrs. Runge. And when you were working for Miss Runge, then -- and you'd worked for her for a

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while -- someone called her and said they needed a medical librarian, and she recommended you.¹

Mrs. McGready

0:12:51.0

I've forgotten.

Cathy Bacon

0:12:52.9

That's what you've always told me. And so who was that? I know you're tired today.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:13:00.7

Can you tell me about Dr. Bertner? I've...

Mrs. McGready

0:13:03.6

Oh, he's a wonderful man. Very handsome. His wife was beautiful. And they had a chauffeur, and that impressed me greatly. I would go to his office.

His office was downtown, on Main Street. And we only had one car -- MD Anderson only had one car. It was a Ford station wagon. And I had some papers to go downtown to Dr. Bertner. And they said, "You've got a driver's license, don't you?" And I said, "Oh, sure. I've been driving since I was 14." Well, in east Texas, you didn't need one. And so I had to go to take one test, and so I had to drive around the block and parallel park. I knocked down the post in the front, and I backed up and knocked down the post in the back. He said, "Well, let's circle the block, and let's try it again." Same thing happened the second time. And the third, he said, "I pass. You're fine. (laughs) You can go."

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:14:10.3+

[Redacted] So you were telling me about going to Dr. Bertner's office with those papers.

Mrs. McGready

0:14:17.1

Yes. He had to sign so much stuff. And so no red lights downtown at that time. A policeman in the middle of the street going this way and this way.

¹ Margaret Boice, Mrs. McGready's daughter, reports: "Mom says that Miss Runge heard Dr. Bertner planning to hire a librarian when he was in her office and she suggested that he contact Mrs. McGready."

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T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:14:25.9

Oh, directing traffic, yeah.

Mrs. McGready

0:14:27.0

And he was a boy from Timpson, Texas. And so I would call to him that I was going up to Dr. Bertner's. It was right on [] Main Street. And he was the officer out there. And I'd wave to him, and I said, "I got to go to Dr. Bertner's." And he said, "OK, Mary Catherine. Leave it there." In '42 you could do that kind of thing.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:14:47.1

So what was your job? What did Dr. Bertner hire you to do?

Mrs. McGready

0:14:50.9

Well, by that time -- help me, Cathy. I've gotten into (inaudible).

Cathy Bacon

0:14:54.3

You used to tell me that you would come up to Houston, or go down to Galveston, and you would get a lot of books and bring them back. You were compiling a lot of the library. Donated books, and --

Mrs. McGready

0:15:10.9

Oh, why I was --

Cathy Bacon

0:15:11.6

-- you would take them on the...

Mrs. McGready

0:15:11.9

-- why I was taking the station wagon back and forth to Galveston?

Cathy Bacon

0:15:16.8

You were -- you always said you would go and get books --

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Mrs. McGready

0:15:20.8

Duplicates, and have them bound.

Cathy Bacon

0:15:21.8

-- duplicate books, and have them bound, and get them starting to compile the books that they wanted to have. And there were duplicates, and it was during the war, and there was a lot of shortages. Was there a trolley or something you sometimes...

Mrs. McGready

0:15:37.3

No.

Cathy Bacon

0:15:38.0

That was later.

Mrs. McGready

0:15:38.4

The trolley was in town, but it didn't go to (inaudible).

Cathy Bacon

0:15:41.7

But you would get the duplicates from the medical school down in Galveston...

Mrs. McGready

0:15:45.8

Then I'd have to take a bus back to Houston. And the bus driver hated me because he had to load and unload all those things.

Cathy Bacon

0:15:54.8

Yeah. Because you didn't usually have the car. It was --

Mrs. McGready

0:15:57.6

Oh no.

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Cathy Bacon

0:15:58.4

-- the bus.

Mrs. McGready

0:15:58.5

I couldn't get the car every time.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:16:00.4

Now did you work at the Baker estate? Was that where you were loca--

Mrs. McGready

0:16:03.6

Yes.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:16:0.8

OK. So tell me about the Baker estate.

Mrs. McGready

0:16:06.5

Well, when it first opened, there were five people there. It was Zuma Krum, was a nurse -- my friend, my good friend...

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:16:16.1

OK. We're just recording for record. We took a quick break, and it is five minutes of 3:00, and we've decided to have another interview session on another day that would be a little bit better. So I'm terminating the interview at five minutes of 3:00.

Mary Catherine Bussey Boice McGready

Interview Session Two: May 19, 2016

Interview Identifier Chapter 00B

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:00:00.0

OK. It is 20 minutes after 1:00, and today is May 19th, 2016. And I'm at the home of -- and I'm going to read all your names again -- Mary Catherine Bussey Boice McGready, also known as Katie, in [redacted] Houston, Texas. And thank you very much for inviting me back for our second session together.

Mrs. McGready

0:00:25.9

My pleasure.

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Chapter 04

An Opportunity to Work at the New Cancer Hospital, MD Anderson

A: Joining MD Anderson/Coming to Texas;

Codes

A: Joining MD Anderson;

A: Personal Background;

B: MD Anderson History;

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:00:27.2

So, I wanted to ask you -- first of all, tell me how you ended up getting connected with MD Anderson.

Mrs. McGready

0:00:36.6

Well, it [MD Anderson] had just come into Houston. And I was working for Elizabeth Runge, a medical librarian -- and I don't mean regular librarian, but medical. And I knew that that's what I wanted to do.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:00:53.8

Now, can I ask you why -- you just said not a regular librarian, but a medical librarian. What's the difference? Why is medical librarian special?

Mrs. McGready

0:01:03.0

Well, a general library would have books, novels, that kind of thing. But this is strictly medical. One hundred percent medical.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:01:14.7

Now, why did you know you wanted to be a medical librarian and not a general librarian?

Mrs. McGready

0:01:20.9

Because when I was in Galveston I met Elizabeth Runge. And that's where I knew that that's what I wanted to do. And I just had two years in college, and I told Daddy I didn't want to go back. And he said no. "You get a degree, and then we will talk about it." And I said, "But Daddy, this is what I really know I want, and I can do it now." Well, he had three boys in school

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at the same time. And I don't think it took too long to convince him that -- as he said, "We will do this. We will do it for one year, and then you'll go back to school." At the end of one year, I said, "Daddy, this is what I want to do." "No, you need a degree." "Give me one more year." And he agreed. I think having four boys -- three boys -- in college, he was -- of course, they all worked, but still, they -- he was still buying them white shirts. So...

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:02:21.5

It's an expense.

Mrs. McGready

0:02:22.6

Yeah. And so that's -- I -- now my brother was in medical school at the time, and he knew Elizabeth Runge, and he told her that his little sister was very interested in this. So I had an unpaid internship for the first summer.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:02:43.8

What year was that? Was it '44 or '43?

Mrs. McGready

0:02:49.2

Forty-two.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:02:50.2

Forty-two! Wow.

Mrs. McGready

0:02:54.5

So I finally convinced Daddy that I knew that's what I wanted to do. Well, I loved Elizabeth Runge -- named my first child from her. So we stayed close.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:03:07.9

So how did she connect you with MD Anderson? What -- how did that happen?

Mrs. McGready

0:03:11.4

MD Anderson had just come into Texas, and they were housed in the old Baker estate. And the Bakers left a gardener and a houseboy on duty to take care of -- maintain the place. And Dr.

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Bertner was acting physician (inaudible), and so all the things came through him, and he signed everything. So the MD Anderson Hospital had one car, a Ford station wagon. And they said, "Do you have a license?" I said, "I've been driving since I was 14." "Do you have a license?" "Do I need a license?" "You need a license."

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:04:03.1

That's funny. But that was when you got employed there. How did you get the job there?

Mrs. McGready

0:04:08.6

Because I wanted to stay in Galveston because I was in love with a medical student. And that's how I would -- that's how I was going to arrange it.

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Chapter 05

One of Five Employees at the New MD Anderson

B: MD Anderson Past;

Codes

A: Personal Background;
B: MD Anderson History;
C: Funny Stories;

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:04:19.0

So when did you start at MD Anderson?

Mrs. McGready

0:04:22.0

In 1940 -- when it started.² I was one of the first five employees. And it was in the old Baker estate. And over there, they left two people. They left a -- well, he was not a -- two men, a gardener and a houseboy.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:04:43.0

Who were the other employees who were hired with you at the time?

Mrs. McGready

0:04:47.1

Dr. Coogle was a research doctor. John Musgrove was the business manager. His secretary was Zuma Krum. Then [Florence] Hanselman was a nurse. I think that's the staff.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:03.0

What can you tell me about those people? You must have gotten to know them pretty well.

Mrs. McGready

0:05:06.5

Oh, it was wonderful fun. Yes. We had no place to eat. About two blocks away there was a greasy spoon, and sometimes we'd go down there. But most of the time everybody brought their peanut-butter sandwiches, and we ate there.

² Mrs. McGready's employment started in 1943.

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T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:22.8

So you ate in the Baker estate?

Mrs. McGready

0:05:24.8

Yes. We -- and the library was in what would have been their old dining room, paneled room.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:32.9

You know, I actually interviewed James Baker, and he has -- he tells about playing in that dining room when he was a little boy.

Mrs. McGready

0:05:40.8

Is that right?

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:41.4

Yeah.

Mrs. McGready

0:05:41.9

Is he living?

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:05:42.9

He's still living, yeah. Yeah, I have an audio clip of him talking about, I guess, the grandf-- his grandfather -- his grandfather would get all the grandchildren together, and he would say whoever could be brave enough to go in the library when it was all dark, he'd give him a nickel.

Mrs. McGready

0:05:58.1

Well, there was nothing in it. It was just a paneled room.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:06:01.1

Sure. So what was Dr. Coogler like? What did he do?

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Mrs. McGready

0:06:05.6

He was research doctor, and I have no idea. I know that he got a lot of fertile eggs from out on Harrisburg Boulevard. And that's when they said that we had one station wagon.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:06:22.0

So you never knew what Dr. Coogle did? Did you ever help him out at all?

Mrs. McGready

0:06:25.1

No. And I don't think he did much. (laughs) He's not in history.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:06:31.0

So you never got him books or articles or anything like that?

Mrs. McGready

0:06:35.5

No. If a doctor came in and wanted something, we used interlibrary loans.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:06:39.8

Oh, OK.

Mrs. McGready

0:06:41.4

And then I became acquainted with the librarian from Baylor. And Baylor was just then combining with University of Texas. They were two separate libraries, but they merged them.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:06:55.9

So what did you do? I mean, you were -- there's you and this big empty room. What was your job?

Mrs. McGready

0:07:01.2

Well, the first set of books that I had to put in were priceless ones in the glass case with air conditioning. Virchow. It's the basis of medicine. And that was the first set that entered into the books.

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T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:07:21.6

So where did you get those? Where did MD Anderson get those?

Mrs. McGready

0:07:24.8

They bought them from New York. Dr. Bertner was acquainted with a very well-known New York medical. And so he knew what to order.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:07:37.1

What other -- what were your other roles?

Mrs. McGready

0:07:39.1

Well, at that time, we didn't have enough of a library. We used a lot of interlibrary loan. A young man would come in mornings (inaudible). I could get it through interlibrary loan.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:07:50.7

OK.

Mrs. McGready

0:07:51.4

But we built our library. And as I said, the Virchow's, they're the one that's in the glass cases and the air conditioning. But that was the first thing that was [] entered into the books.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:08:03.7

That's pretty neat. So tell me about John Musgrove. What did he do?

Mrs. McGready

0:08:07.4

He was delightful. He was the business manager. John was very efficient, very good.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:08:14.1

So what sort of things was he doing at the time?

Mrs. McGready

0:08:16.9

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Well, he was the business manager. And he had a secretary named Zuma Krum. And then Dr. Hanselman was the first research. And then the first nurse (inaudible).

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:08:32.2

Oh, was it -- Hanselman was the nurse?

Mrs. McGready

0:08:34.5

[Florence] Hanselman.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:08:35.1

Right. And what was -- what was the nurse like? It was a she, I assume, at that time.

Mrs. McGready

0:08:40.6

Well, she was a very delicate little woman, very precise. One story I like to tell on Florence [Hanselman]. There was another friend I had there that worked for Baylor too, named Lydia Wheeler. Well, her nickname was Pink. Lydia was her real name.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:08:59.5

What was her nickname?

Mrs. McGready

0:09:01.5

Pink.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:09:02.0

Pink.³

Mrs. McGready

0:09:02.7

So at lunch one day -- everybody just brought their own sandwiches, and we were eating lunch together. And [Forence Hanselman] said, "This gives me a slight rhinitis." Pink (inaudible) says, "Really, Florence? It makes my nose drip." (laughter) That was -- I loved that. [Redacted]

³ Mrs. McGready adds: At the time, there was a medication for women called "Lydia Pinkham" so her children and grandchildren nicknamed her "Pink."

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T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:09:28.7

That's really funny.

Mrs. McGready

0:09:30.5

If we ever did go out to lunch, it was to a greasy spoon just a short distance away. And we didn't do that often, because I brought my lunch -- I think it was probably peanut butter, because I was living in a one-bedroom boarding house. But no bills at that place.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:09:48.2

Wow.

Mrs. McGready

0:09:48.6

There was a place that I could get bills, which I eventually joined.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:09:53.4

Tell me about Zuma, Zuma Krum. What was she -- I hear her name all the time, and I've never heard -- met anybody who knew her.

Mrs. McGready

0:09:59.6

[Redacted] She was []his secretary. That's all -- I had no dealings with her.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:10:07.4

You had no dealings with her. OK. So what are your favorite stories to tell about that early MD Anderson, when there were only a few people employed there?

Mrs. McGready

0:10:17.0

Well, I can tell you about the beginning of the library. I had spent some -- a summer in Galveston when my brother was in medical school, at an unpaid internship. And I knew then that I wanted to be a medical librarian. Elizabeth Runge was a librarian. You know, this is difficult to bring it back up -- well, I can tell you about having to go down to Dr. Bertner's office to get [] things signed. And we only had one Ford station wagon. And they said, "Let me have your driver's license." I said, "My what?" I said, "I've been driving since I was 14." "Do you

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have a driver's license?" "No, didn't need one in Timpson, Texas." "OK. You got to get a driver's license." So I went down to get the driver's license. And I tried to park, parallel parking, and I knocked down the post in the front, and I backed up and knocked it down in back. He said, "OK, just go around the block, we'll get it the next time." So the second time I did the same thing, knocked it down in the front, knocked it down in the back. And he said, "Should we go for a third time?" I said, "Well, it's like this: where I came from in east Texas, we just need one post to hitch to." He says, "You pass." (laughter) So he didn't make me go through it again.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:11:40.2

He didn't make you do it again. Boy, things are sure different now. (laughter)

Mrs. McGready

0:11:43.8

Oh, yeah! (laughter)

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Chapter 06

Working for Dr. Bertner and the New MD Anderson

B: MD Anderson Past;

Codes

A: Personal Background;

B: MD Anderson History;

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:11:46.6

So what kind of things would you take down to Dr. Bertner to sign?

Mrs. McGready

0:11:50.2

All the late papers that had to be signed. And that was Zuma Krum's problem [her job] -- and I'd do anything to get -- take the one car, go anywhere. And I would go downtown, where -- he was -- his office was in the Second National Bank, on Main Street -- and that was when we still had policemen out here, (inaudible). And wasn't I lucky, there was a boy from Timpson doing. And I'd say, "Forrest, I got to go up to Dr. Bertner's office!" "OK, Mary Catherine. I'll watch it." So I'd leave it right in a no-parking zone. Well, that was the advantage of coming from a small town.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:12:31.5

Gosh. And a much smaller Houston, too, really tiny. So was his MD Anderson office down in the Second National Bank?

Mrs. McGready

0:12:40.3

That was his private practice. And then the office, though, was at MD Anderson, in the Baker estate. Now the Baker estate was interesting, because they left the two men -- one had been a houseboy and one a gardener -- and they left them to maintain the place. And the gardener brought fresh flowers all the time.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:12:59.2

What was it like working at this brand-new, from-scratch hospital?

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Mrs. McGready

0:13:05.3

Well, this beautiful old home. And everything had been cleaned out of it. As I said, we used the dining rooms as the nucleus of the library.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:13:15.9

Now how long were -- did you stay in that job?

Mrs. McGready

0:13:20.1

Well, until my fiancé finished, and he was going off for an internship. And we married, and so that I could go with him. So I think about nine months.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:13:33.9

So did you ever consider staying on in that job? Did they ask you? Or what...

Mrs. McGready

0:13:38.5

Oh, yeah, but I [] made it clear that I was not a career person. But when I came back years later and had five children, and I was looking for a job, I knew Helen Holt, who was a [Harris County Medical Society] librarian. So I told Helen I was looking for a job. She said, "I could use you, fine." So I started working under Helen. They combined two libraries. There was Baylor College of Medicine that they had moved from Dallas -- I believe it was Dallas -- and then the Harris County Medical Society Library. So those were the two that were merged.

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Chapter 07

A Fun Job, But Choosing to Focus on Family

A: Personal Background;

Codes

A: Personal Background;

B: MD Anderson History;

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:14:17.9

So when you look back on those years when you were in that job -- I mean, that was kind of a special job to have. Did you know that at the time?

Mrs. McGready

0:14:27.7

No, I just knew it was fun.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:14:29.6

What were you ha-- why was it so much fun?

Mrs. McGready

0:14:32.9

Well, I'd never had a paycheck before. And I think it might have been \$100. It probably was about \$100 or \$110 or something like that.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:14:46.0

Was that a month? A week? A...

Mrs. McGready

0:14:48.0

(laughs) A month! (laughter) But that was those times, before inflation.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:14:56.1

So what was fun about the job, in addition to getting the paycheck?

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Mrs. McGready

0:14:59.6

Well, I liked the people. And we were all friendly. It was -- and Dr. Coogle was very -- all business. [Redacted]

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:16:30.1+

What were people's attitudes about cancer at this time?

Mrs. McGready

0:16:35.1

Pretty frightening. Didn't know many people (inaudible).

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:16:39.1

Right. So you didn't know anyone who'd ever had cancer?

Mrs. McGready

0:16:41.5

Mm-mm [negative].

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:16:42.0

What did you think about cancer at the time?

Mrs. McGready

0:16:44.9

Well, I just knew it was going to be a good job. (laughter) It didn't frighten me, because they said, "It's not contagious." Well, they found that it could be from the cadavers. And so a lot of changes were made using cadavers at that time.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:17:06.7

The whole idea of cancer's really changed a lot since those days. I mean, it was pretty much really a death sentence at the time.

Mrs. McGready

0:17:14.0

Oh, absolutely it was.

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T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:17:15.3

Did your parents worry about you working at a cancer hospital?

Mrs. McGready

0:17:18.7

No, my brother was a medical student [in Galveston at UTMB]. I have three brothers that are doctors. Grandparents. You know, it was a medical family.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:17:29.5

Right. So what do you think about all the advances that have been made with cancer?

Mrs. McGready

0:17:34.8

Well, I think it's fantastic, what they know now, and what they (inaudible), and how many patients they can save now that they couldn't. As far as I was concerned, it was not as prevalent at that time. But I lived in a small town in east Texas, and I was in a small group of people in Houston. So I did not have world knowledge of it.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:17:59.8

But, you know, talking about you coming from a -- your background, you didn't know anyone -- I didn't know anyone who had cancer either.

Mrs. McGready

0:18:08.2

Oh, no?

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:18:08.4

You know? It was -- it's very different. I mean, now I know a lot of people who have had cancer.

Mrs. McGready

0:18:12.7

Oh, yes.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:18:13.9

Yeah. It is more pre--

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Mrs. McGready

0:18:15.6

But you know more people, too.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:18:16.7

Right. That's true too. Yup. It's more prevalent. You know, when you came back to Houston, what did you think when you compared what MD Anderson was then with what MD Anderson had been when you started your job?

Mrs. McGready

0:18:31.1

It did change a lot. But I was not gone that long, and I was not interested in that part; I was just part of the library [staff].

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:18:40.2

Going back to when you were the librarian at MD Anderson, when you left that job, did you have a sense of having accomplished something there?

Mrs. McGready

0:18:48.4

Well, they kept telling me that I could stay and be a really bigwig. And that was so unimportant to me. I said, "No. This is just a stepping-stone."

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:18:59.8

So you seem like you're pretty happy with your choices that you made.

Mrs. McGready

0:19:02.9

I have never regretted it. But that produced five children.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:19:07.1

There you go. So are there other favorite stories you have about your time at MD Anderson? Any other things that (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)...

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Mrs. McGready

0:19:12.7

Well, occasionally we would go to this smorgasbord. And I couldn't afford that. They knew they had to pay. I would carry my peanut-butter sandwich with me. But they never mentioned it, they just picked up my check. But there was probably about \$1.50, you know. (laughs)

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:19:32.8

What did you think of Dr. Bertner?

Mrs. McGready

0:19:34.6

Oh, I was impressed by him. He would come with his wife and with his chauffeur. That was really impressive to me. And she was beautiful, beautiful girl. And I don't even know if they had children. She would come with him sometimes. And that was impressive, to see his chauffeur. I think it all boiled down to about nine months. And when my fiancé finished medical school, he went for his first internship. And that's when I -- we married. My first post was in St. Louis. And I never looked back. Oh, I might mention that I had a baby, nine months to the day after I was married. To the day.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:20:18.7

It sounds like your children are really important to you.

Mrs. McGready

0:20:22.1

I've been very blessed.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:20:25.3

Well, I've met two of your daughters, and they're both lovely: Peggy and Cathy.

Mrs. McGready

0:20:29.3

Well, the oldest is Betsy, [who] lives in Seattle. And she's a very accomplished artist.
[Redacted] [Added by the Interview Subject: She got her college degree at age 39 after raising her children by her first marriage.]

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T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:21:08.4

So tell me -- can you tell me something that not very many people know about you? Something you really love, or something you're proud of? Or are you just an open book? (laughs)

Mrs. McGready

0:21:19.2

Yes, I am an open book. No, I think the thing that's given me the greatest pleasure is my five children. And I was not a hovering mother, because my daddy taught us to be independent.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:21:38.4

So tell me what your other children are doing. So your oldest daughter's an artist.

Mrs. McGready

0:21:42.8

She is. And...

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:21:44.6

How about the other children?

Mrs. McGready

0:21:46.7

Well, my oldest son was a patent attorney in Atlanta.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:21:51.6

What's his name?

Mrs. McGready

0:21:53.0

William Henry. Nickname is Huck, because he was the second child. Betsy -- we would [] take her to the field where the soldiers were practicing, and they'd say, "Hup, two, three, four. Hup, hup." And so she told everybody we were going to get her baby Huck, a boy.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:22:15.2

Oh, that's funny.

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Mrs. McGready

0:22:15.9

So she thought it was H-U-C-K. Huck. So he remained Huck all of his life. He finally got to be Bill when he (laughter) got away from home.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:22:29.4

(laughs) So what's the next child, in birth order?

Mrs. McGready

0:22:33.9

Well, Betsy was the oldest. Then Huck was next. Then Peggy was next. And...

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:22:41.1

And Peggy does what?

Mrs. McGready

0:22:44.8

Peggy was very small, very delicate, and a little frail. I think we just kind of babied her. And then next was Cathy. And Cathy was a strong personality from the get-go.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:23:02.3

So what does Peggy do now?

Mrs. McGready

0:23:05.2

Works for [Harris County] Judge Emmett. And don't ask me what she does [Health Policy Advisor], but it must be good.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:23:12.4

What about...

Mrs. McGready

0:23:12.5

She was with United Way and retired from them after 27 years. And then went to work for Judge Emmett.

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T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:23:21.7

What does Cathy do?

Mrs. McGready

0:23:23.5

She's been a homemaker, married to an attorney. And she did [volunteer] work and [raised two children] and church work. [She worked in a law office for several years before she quit to have children.]

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:23:43.2

Not that she wasn't working.

Mrs. McGready

0:23:44.5

No. No. (laughter) She was working.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:23:45.9

So --

Mrs. McGready

0:23:46.1

And she still does.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:23:47.1

So there's one more child.

Mrs. McGready

0:23:49.2

We're down to Jim.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:23:50.3

Jim. OK.

Mrs. McGready

0:23:52.0

And Jim was the fifth child. And I said, "Jim, that's when I stopped having babies, because you

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was so perfect, I just didn't want any more." Well, Jim was born with a cleft palate and a harelip. And we all adored him. And he would -- was -- had therapy from the time he could talk. And when he said he in college [] he was going to be an attorney, I said, "Jim, you can be anything you want to. But it might be hard for people to understand you." He says, "They'll have to listen better, won't they?" And I said, "You're right." And he now [has his own law firm]. He's a patent attorney. [] He lives in Austin [].

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:24:45.3

So is there anything else you'd like to tell me today about your experiences at MD Anderson or your family?

Mrs. McGready

0:24:52.7

Well, I've just always been very proud of the fact that I did see the nucleus of it. And then when I went back and saw the Virchows all in this air-conditioned room, that was impressive. I positioned them. Well, I felt very, very lucky to have been in it at that stage. And I went back later and worked for Baylor. And then I worked for the ob-gyn department. And I loved that. I can tell you about that.

T. A. Rosolowski, PhD

0:25:29.8

Well, let me turn off the recorder, and then we'll do that. OK. So I am turning off the recorder at about 1:56, with many thanks.

Mrs. McGready

0:25:41.2

Thank you.

End of interview