Pat Schroeder: Hello?

Marianne Schnall: Hi, Pat. It's Marianne. How are you?

PS: Well, Marianne, it's good to hear your voice. How are you?

MS: I am good. It's wonderful to finally be able to talk to you.

PS: I finally got my suitcase at 10:30 last night. And so I'm feeling like, well, maybe we're all here.

MS: Okay. Well, thank you in your jet lag period for taking the time to talk to me.

PS: Sure.

MS: And I have a huge admiration for you and your work. So it's a real pleasure to speak to you.

PS: You're kind.

MS: And I also just wanted to remind you that I will be taping this interview as we will be sharing this audio.

PS: Sure.

MS: As you know, we're hoping to capture the voices of the small group of esteemed women who can share their first- hand experience about running for this country's highest office—at this exciting time in history to both address the importance of a female president as well as potential challenges that may be faced by female candidates in the 2016 race. So, thank you so much for talking to me.

PS: Sure.

MS: So just to start there, do you think the political climate has changed for women and women candidates since you ran for president?

PS: I think it's incrementally better but I still think it's hard. We still have stereotypes that sometimes we're not even aware of that hang around

women candidates and are hard to cast off. I think, for example, we still have this Old West idea of, you know, you've to be tough and you've got

to be powerful and you've got to do that. Somehow it's very hard for women to convey that. If you put on some kind of a uniform and climbed into a tank, you'd look like a comic or—the opportunities for showing a woman being able to be something other than a mother image, which is wonderful. I mean you would like the mother image but we also want the tough cowboy image. And that's the hard part the women have.

MS: Do you have any thoughts on what we can do to help to change some of those stereotypes and perceptions?

PS: Well, I remember counseling one woman. This is quite a while ago. Her opponent had run an ad against her. And the ad was a male lion roaring. And the message was something like is she ready for the roar of the den? And I said, "What you've got to do is go out and say, 'Wait a minute. The lioness is the one that does, (a) the hunting, (b) the mothering, (c)—does all of it. When have you been to a zoo and seen a male lion awake? Make fun of it.'"

So if you have something that is that easy, whether play directly, it is much easier to offset. I always thought that one of the big problems that we've had in this country is that other countries have had queens. And we've never had one. And some of their strongest kings have been queens in other countries. I mean the ones that you remember, like Elizabeth and Victoria and Catherine the Great and on and on.

And when you think about Hawaii, that's the only state we have that has had a queen. And they have been very good about putting women in power, which is interesting. I think when you have seen women in power at the top level, then you just get used to it. But we haven't really had TV shows for very long with women in power as a president. And we still are just very uncomfortable with it. When you think of what TV shows have done to break down the gay and lesbian prejudice, how I wish we had more that had Madam President types.

You know, the one thing—I believe it was Barbie dolls, which I've never been a fan of, but if you remember, the came out with a Madam President doll. It was really all about dress and all of this kind of thing. We're like, no. No. No. We need to see them in roles where they are very strong and making decisions. And that's very important.

MS: And would you consider it a measure of progress to now have three women currently running for president?

PS: Yes. I think that (a) they seem to be able to get funding so much easier than they could before. (B), I do think there has been a lot of breakthrough. Many states have elected women to the Senate or to the House. And so they are seeing women in those roles. I think we've had three, successive Secretaries of State as women, which I think was another huge breakthrough an Attorney General. We've never has one as Secretary of Defense, which I always thought would be another real breakthrough that we haven't had yet.

But no, I think people are now thinking that it's more possible and I'm glad they are raising funds the way they can. They seem more credible to the general public. So as I say, there has been progress, there is absolutely no question about it.

MS: And for you, personally, what event in your life sparked you to first get involved in politics?

PS: [Laughter] Oh, the feminists hate it when I say this. This is not—literally my husband was on a committee looking for somebody to run in 1972. And that was clearly a Republican landslide year if you remember. I think McGovern carried one state, Massachusetts. We had a Republican incumbent. They had just redrawn the lines. The district was more Republican than before. Everybody that they talked to about being a candidate said, "Are you kidding? Not this year. This is crazy. I don't want to be a sacrificial lamb."

So he literally came home one night and said, "Guess whose name came up?" And I said, "I don't know." He said, "Yours." I said, "Mine? I haven't even run for a bus. What are you talking about?" And he said, "Well, you'll never win but it's just very important to have somebody articulate the issues. And you are teaching over in the college, telling young people that's what they should do," and yadda, yadda, yadda. So that's how it all started.

MS: So you really had to learn as you went.

PS: Oh, yes. Yes. I had never thought about it, to be perfectly honest. And I had not run for other things. And really, there was a minority leader in our Senate that was also running. So it was a primary, too. And I think everybody thought, look, I was the stalking horse for the progressive side of the party and I'd never get through the primary. In fact, that's what I thought, too. I never quit my job, can you believe that, as I ran for office. So, yeah.

MS: That's a great story. Now Colorado currently has the highest percentage of females in state legislative offices in the country. And given that you were the first woman elected to Congress from Colorado, do you think you served as a symbol or a beacon to those that followed in your footsteps? And did you provide any specific mentorship or helping hand to these women?

PS: Oh, I tried to in every way I could. I think that by my being young, you know, was 31, and having two young children, and then being able to do it, I think gave an awful lot of people, well, you know, "If she could do it, why couldn't I do it," right? There is something about that. I will never forget, one of my very favorite phone calls after I won, and I must say my husband was in shock—I was in shock. We were like, "Oh, my gosh! What have we done to our lives?"

I got a call from Bella Abzug who I'd never met. And I thought, "Oh, this is going to be great," because everybody else had been saying to me, "How the hell are you going to do this?" And I thought, "This is going to be a woman who is just going to say, 'Great. This is wonderful.'" So she called, "This is Bella." "Yeah?" "Well, I hear you won, you know? Well, that's—but you have two kids." I said, "Yes, I do. They are two and six." She said, "I don't think you can do it." [Laughter] I thought, "Oh, my God. There is no hope. What have I done?"

And so there we were.

MS: And it is. It's early examples of showing that you can manage to balance all those roles. The more women we have showing that, the better.

PS: Right. I mean. Since I never thought I was going to win, I was always so very open it—my primary opponent who had, I think six kids or something, when we would debate he would show up and his wife would be there looking at him endearing, adoringly. And he would say something like, "Well, aren't you sad you are not home with your children?" And I would say, "Well, who is home with your children. My husband is at least home with his, with our children."

But, you know—so I tried to be a little feisty about it. And when about the 15th—it ended up on the front page of the paper. My mother almost died. When about the 15th press person said to me, "How can you be a Congresswoman and a mother?" And I said, "I have a brain. I have a

uterus and they both work." I ate that for many years. But I think other women said, "Oh, yeah. That works."

MS: And are there specific challenges that you think, you know, other than sexist questions like that, are there specific challenges that you think women candidates face?

PS: Clothe. The men have a uniform. You and I could be a consultant for all candidates because we know what it is. If you want to look like you're working, you either loosen your tie or you take it off or you loosen your collar. You can roll up your sleeves. You put a cell phone in your ear. You run downstairs." We still, for women, don't have any kind of a uniform like that. You either look like a Vogue model or an unmade bed. I mean it's a hard—how does a woman—what is the equivalent collar and the rolled up shirtsleeves?

We really just don't have that. And that is the classic photograph that is always on the brochures and posters and everything else. And we don't quite have anything that is an equivalent. We either look too formal or stiff or we look too casual.

MS: And probably some of that is beholden to the media to not cover it as much.

PS: That's exactly right. Yeah. I mean they tend to—I remember one reporter saying, "Schroeder couldn't make it to this event. Her plaid dress was at the cleaners." You know, you just—you are kind of like, really? Is this what to write about? But that's what they did.

MS: In addition to the challenges that candidates face, in general politics can seem like a very dysfunctional system from the outside. What words of motivation or encouragement would you offer about pursuing a career in public service?

PS: Oh, I would say do it. I mean I just—I think we have so lost our bearings. I am so frightened by the cynicism that is rising up everywhere. And we've just got to have people who are really concerned about public service and the future of this country and not there as gameshow hosts and selling themselves to the highest bidder and all of that. And so I think for women it's an incredible opportunity because if you're bored there you are brain dead. I mean there is so much going on and so many places

where you can interact and make a difference. So I really do encourage women to do it.

We here in Florida have this thing called Ruth's List, which is hard to say because it sounds like ruthless. So we're trying to get as many women running for the state and local offices as possible. We did very well in the county that I live in and it just absolutely turned it around in 2014. So we're kind of using that as a model.

MS: Yeah, that's great. Why did you originally decided to run for the presidency?

PS: Oh, this is again another one of those not real rational decisions. I had been Gary Hart's campaign manager. And he had called me and asked me to change my schedule for that weekend and go to all the things that he was supposed to be at. I think it was Orange County, California and something in Dayton, Ohio and someplace out in New York. So I did and I was running around covering all these things so he could do something else that he said had come up and was very important. Of course, it was the Donna Rice weekend, the monkey business.

I was so angry. [Laughter] And I thought. Oh, hell! I've been running around doing all this stuff, why don't I just announce. It was not a great decision. But it was an interesting summer shall we say.

MS: And was there one moment of your campaign that was most vivid for you?

PS: Oh, there were many. There were many but I think I was in the South and the Chairman of the Democratic Party introduced me. And I'm sitting there thinking, you know, this just might be possible. He was going on, "I like this woman. She's a fine woman. This woman knows more about armed services than all those other guys put together," on and on and on. So I'm thinking, "Really. Hmm." And then he says, "However, I do not want a man for First Lady." And I thought, "Oh, crap. [00:17:47]." So there you go.

MS: That's really funny. Did you have a difficult time finding a campaign staff that understood the unique challenge of supporting a woman?

PS: No. Because basically I had—it's not like I had a lot of time to put something together. These were all really good friends who had been through this thing with me from day one. And, you know, when I announced in Denver, the two papers didn't even put my name in. It was "Denver Housewife Announces for Congress." So they had lived through all this and seen it close up and personal.

MS: And, you know, all along, one of the things I hear from many of the people I've interviewed is you can't do this alone. Did you have any important mentors or supporters that helped guide you or shaped your outlook?

PS: Well, not really. I mean at that time it was pretty much alone. As I say, we didn't even have a woman on the City Council or on the School Board in Denver.

So many were saying that I was way out of my mind. Actually, I have been a member of the National Women's Political Caucus. Do you remember that?

MS: Hm-hmm.

PS: And that was this bipartisan group and so forth and so on. And they endorsed my opponent because they said it was too early for a woman to run. [Laughter] So my close friends who—they had been through hell and back with me and there was no real mentor around. Everyone that I thought might be a mentor was all appalled [?].

MS: Well, then, I mean, in listening to your story, I'm just taken by how much self-determination and you know confidence and courage it must have taken to do what you have done. Where does that come from in you? What is the source of the energy and strength do you think?

PS: That's a good question. I suppose—I would only say going to Harvard Law School was probably a great training ground for me because—look I grew up a little differently in that I had my pilot's license when I was 16. My father encouraged me to fly, do whatever. I went to Minnesota. I got through school in three years. I went to Harvard Law School and then suddenly it was the first time I had ever been in a total male environment, almost. I think there were 15 women in our class. And

you deal with it either one or two ways. You get very upset about it or you just think it's the funniest thing you've ever seen.

I thought it was hysterical. All these guys would get up and change their seats saying things like, "I've never sat next to a woman in my entire educational career and I'm not going to do it now." And I'd think, "Wow! Have you got a problem?" So I think it's how you look at everything. You remember those masks of the theater where half the face is smiling and half the face is sad. And I think you can approach anything that way.

And I suppose part of it was I never thought of myself as a career in this area. So it wasn't like, "Gee! If I lose this is—what will I do? It will be on my record and oh, my gosh." I just assumed I was going to lose because everybody told me I was going to lose." The Democratic Congressional campaign wouldn't even meet with me they were so sure I would lose. You know, I'm out there saying, "Well, look. This is a chance to say what I want to say and do what I want to do and think this all through. And the real shock was I didn't lose.

MS: And if you had the ear of, you know, a young woman considering running for office today, what words of wisdom or advice would you offer?

PS: I would say stay away from consultants. Don't let people tell you how to change yourself. Be yourself. People can see through—whenever you are trying to fake something or put on some airs, they know. They know right away. And not be afraid to say you don't know something if you don't know it. You say, "I'll try and find out." I mean you don't have to—so many people get into so much trouble be boasting and bragging about stuff they really haven't done and they say they've don't it. And then they get caught.

Or they say then know something and it turns out they really didn't and they make a big mistake. They just throw platitudes out there. Who was it, Tom Friedman who said if you taxed clichés that politicians used we would balance the budget. People have heard those clichés over and over and over again. I used to always talk about it as political pollution. And I kept saying, "There is no way I'm going to run as a political polluter. You ask me where I stand, I won't tell you. And if you don't like it, tell me why you don't like it. It will teach me something and maybe I'll change my position. Who knows? But I'm not going to play little games."

And I think people found that refreshing. What we have is we built up this whole consultant infrastructure where you have to have all this money to pay all these high-paid consultants to come and tell you what to wear and what to do and how to phrase things and on and on and on. And I think people just get lost in it.

MS: That is so true. Now do you think—is America ready for a female president? And what do you think it would mean for women, politics and our culture to reach that milestone?

PS: Well, I think it's the ultimate tree house. And if we can break into that tree house I think it will help in many different areas. Obviously, the business community has been awful. And I'll never forget going, as a minority stockholder going to one of these meetings where we were trying to raise a little trouble in asking why they didn't have any women on the board. And the guy very nicely looked me in the eye and said, "You know what? We get points for having minorities on the board but we lose points when we put women on the board." Holy mackerel. But he said the truth. You know, I appreciate it. That's how he viewed it.

And so you look at corporations today. You take grocery stores and all these things that are trying to appeal to women and what do they do? They turn around and they don't have any women on their boards or they have very few women. And the same with CEOs and everything. I was just reading my *New Yorker*. There's a wonderful cartoon in there of these young guys in a start-up in Silicon Valley. And one is saying to the other, "I'm going to do what everybody else does. Get this thing going and the minute we have to hire a woman, I'm going to sell it." Silicon Valley. Yes. I think it would help a lot.

MS: And do you think we are ready? Do you think that our consciousness is--?

PS: I can't speak for everybody else but I certainly am.

MS: I am as well. And in general, what do you think we can do to encourage more women to run for office and into the political pipeline?

PS: Well, I think women have to—almost—even how the micro lending thing works, where you get a few women together and one woman gets that loan and then the others help her. And if it all works then the next woman gets a loan. And, you know, you work as a team. I think women, when they see one of their own be a good candidate—we can just walk

up and look them in the eye and say, "You should learn. You should get out there. I will help you. I will find friends who will help you." They should be encouraged. That's what guys do.

And women have hesitated to do that I think. We tend to want to be in the bleachers and watch the action rather than be cheering for one of own down on the stage. I think that's what we—we all need to be much more encouraging. There was a report out a couple of years ago, "Girls just don't want to run." I don't know if you saw it, from American University. And it was horrifying. Girls in college have no more interest in running than they did years and years ago. And part of it is because, "It looks so awful. It looks so terrible. My God." And I keep saying, "That's the reason you want to run. I mean for crying out loud. What's wrong with you?"

I don't know what happened to that spirit where America used to say, "Hey, we don't like what's going on in the Vietnam War so we're going to run peace candidates." "We don't like what's happening in Civil Rights or there's not enough going on in Civil Rights so we are going to run people that will move it." Instead we are just—"It's so awful we wouldn't want anything to do with it." And I keep saying, "It has an awful lot to do with your life. And if you're not really interested—

The other thing that used to happen is when I decided to retire I would have young women say, "You can't retire. This is terrible." And I would say, "Well, why don't you think about running and I'll help you." "Oh, I'd never do that with my life." And I'd say, "Well, what do you think I did with my life that was so horrible?" [Laughter]

MS: In talking about all of the, you know, challenges—and we talked before about how dysfunctional it can seem in Washington these days. What are the rewards? What type of fulfillment do you get from, you know, serving in public office? Or what were the rewards and benefits to you?

PS: Well, the rewards—if you want to talk about how bad you think Washington is, let's look. How did we finally get the government back on track when they stopped it? It was the women in the Senate. The women in the Senate—it used to be the women in the House until Gingrich kind of blew up the whole women's caucus. We women in the House worked across party lines. We got all sorts of things done. And there is absolutely no reason the women in the House can't go back in there and change those rules that he put in and say, "We want to work together. Thank you

very much. You guys can go ahead and do whatever you want to do but we've got a lot of things we need to do."

And I think that the women, the kind of friendships we made in the women's caucus were terrific. Olympia Snow and Connie Morello are great friends. And people say, "But they're Republicans." I know but you know what? Between all of us we worked on any number of issues that we got passed. And as I say, nothing has really happened since Gingrich left that great legacy of destroying the caucuses, basically. I mean they are still there but they have to rely on lobbyists to support them and everything, which really corrupts the whole process in that they can't have offices on the Hill and they can't do anything so that they are nearby. So consequently they've really been crippled.

Well, so the women can get together and change the rules. That's exactly what you do. It's like, look, when I got elected to the Armed Services Committee, my chairman was so upset that he made me share a chair with the one African-American because he said both of us were only worth half of the rest of the members of the committee. What did we do? We went out and worked against him and we got him defeated as chairman. So what I don't understand is what happened to this generation that says, "It's awful. I don't want to do it." You say, "Oh, no. This is all the more fun in the room. Look what you've got to work with. Anything that you can come up with is a change. People are going to love it."

MS: And other than just for reasons of parity and equality, why is it more important to have more women there? What—are there qualities that you think women bring?

PS: Well, I think that we are—we haven't seen the scandals, the sex scandals and all of that, which don't help the Congress. We haven't seen the problems with them abusing interns. I think the decorum of women has been on a much higher level overall. Not to say that men have low decorum. They don't. But again, we really haven't seen that kind of thing from women.

We've seen much more willingness for women to work together on almost any issue, whether it was getting the government back working again or whether it was children's issues, all these issues that are not power issues in the view of the men. Power issues are the things that have big money

packs behind them and lobbyists and all of that. Well, there really aren't those kinds of groups on the kinds of issues that we used to work on. But it was so gratifying when you got them done because people really—it affected people's lives. People appreciated the fact that their lives were going to be different because of different things that we were able to pass.

And I think women have an ability to see how it affects them in their everyday life more so than men because we're connected to everyday life. In other words, you can be a great mom and stay at home and everything can be perfect in your little house. But if the water, if you're not able to drink the water, if it is too dangerous to go outside, if you don't have a good school for your kids, if the environment is so bad you don't dare let the children breathe the air, all those kinds of things, you understand why those are important rather than whose got the most money to give you at the moment.

Women are just a little more reality based I would like to say, but it is not necessarily reality. It's real-life based. What it feels like—when we did like family medical leave people were like, "Well, why would you have it for an ill spouse," the guys would say? And I would say, "Well, because if you had a heart attack and your wife had a job, wouldn't you kind of hope she had some time to be able to get off to get you through it?" "Yeah. But I don't know that I could take off." It's an interesting dichotomy.

The other thing, too, which is why I think men and women in power are different, and that was seen in a study a long time ago. But it showed that among the elect official in Washington only one in ten had both spouses working outside the home. Whereas among the public it was only one in ten who didn't have both spouses working outside the home. And we found it made a huge difference. We talked about childcare. A lot of the guys were babysitting, you know, so you could go play tennis or something. They just didn't understand that childcare was about the main sustenance of many families where both were working. So I just think women grasp that a lot easier.

And they also, men don't tend to have women come talk to them about those kinds of issues whereas women's group do talk about those kinds of issues. And so women have kind of a broader scope on it.

PS: Do you know the story of Ruth Owens down here in Florida that we named Ruth's List after?

MS: I don't think I do.

PS: Let me just tell you this story, which I find so absolutely amazing. She was William Jennings Bryant's daughter. She married a guy who was a British officer in the British army. He was injured very severely in World War I. They had four children and lived in Miami. And she decided to run for office in the twenties. Her district went from Miami to Jacksonville, which is a huge spanse. She drove herself around, which was scandalous. Florida hadn't even passed the 19th Amendment allowing women to vote.

This dear thing gets elected. She shows up and the guy won't give up his seat. He says she gave up her citizenship when she married a British guy. She had to go to court. It took her a year to get her seat and on and on and on. So, you know, I feel like I'm not a trailblazer at all when I think about these people.

MS: We need to hear more stories like that.

PS: We do and it makes me very angry that we don't know women's history at all.

MS: That's a great story.

PS: Yeah.

MS: Well, I thank you so much for sharing all of these insights and you perspectives. And it really is due to trailblazers like you that have paved the way for more women and still continue to serve as inspiration and role models and I thank you for that.

PS: Thank you. Let's get this place turned around.

MS: Exactly. Okay. Thank you so much. Have a wonderful day.

PS: Bye.

MS: Okay. Take care. Bye. Bye.

END OF INTERVIEW