Interview with the Reverend Ann Robb Smith by William W. Cutler, Church of the Advocate, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 5, 2014. Minor edits for clarification purposes are in brackets. Some footnotes provide corrected information about people and dates.

WILLIAM W. CUTLER: So Ann, we're here at the Church of the Advocate, and we're going to do a little reminiscing about your life, your career, as an Episcopalian, both as a layperson, and as an ordained priest. I'd like to start with the personal information. Can you tell me when and where you were born, and a little bit about your parents?

ANN ROBB SMITH: I was born March 9th, 1928, in Philadelphia. My parents, Harry Robb, Henry B. Robb, Junior, officially—Harry—my mother, Gertrude Graham Robb. They were conservative people. My father was a Republican, a very firm Republican. We lived in Chestnut Hill when I was a child, a young, young child. Then they moved to Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, just before I was six years old. My father's mother, my grandmother Robb, gave them a gift to build a house there, and Walter Durham, who was a famous architect at that time, designed it. And at that time, it was on Righter's Mill Road in Gladwyne, and Righter's Mill Road was simply a dirt road that went as far as our driveway. And there was nothing but woods around us for many, many years, and when I started Shipley School, people said, "Where is Gladwyne?" And I would have to say, "Well, it's not near Ardmore. It's not near Narberth." But certainly now it's well-known.

So I started Shipley in first grade, and I went all the way through and graduated. I would have liked to have gone away to boarding school; many of my friends did. But my parents believed

that I would do better home, under their wing, though I did cause some rumpus, because I had an absolutely marvelous current events teacher at Shipley. Alegra Woodworth was her name, or Woodward—Woodworth, I think. She thought that Franklin D. Roosevelt was the best thing that had ever happened, and I thought she was the smartest women I'd ever met. So I would come home from school; we'd have family dinners together. And I would begin to quote Alegra Woodruff, and my father would have a conniption fit. "Gay!"—was what they called me mother—"You've got to take her out of this school!" Well, thank heavens my mother did not take me out of that school, because I loved it.

So I won on that case, but I didn't go to boarding school. I didn't go to camp, which I wanted to do. And I wanted to go to Vassar, and I was accepted at Vassar, but my parents wanted me to be home, and so I ended up going to the University of Pennsylvania. I was raised to be a debutante, and to go to the parties, and marry a man like Kaighn Smith, my husband, and be a good wife, and a good mother, and a gracious hostess.

WC: Did you come out?

AS: Yes.

WC: Did you have a debutante party?

AS: Yes, I did. Mm-hm, at the Barclay.

WC: At the Barclay Hotel.

AS: And Meyer Davis was playing. And I had a lot of fun, and enjoyed it tremendously.

WC: Those days are gone, for the most part, aren't they?

AS: They certainly are. It's another world.

WC: Another world, yeah. Your parents were Episcopalians, were they?

AS: My mother was a Presbyterian until she married my father, and then she became an Episcopalian.

WC: Hm.

AS: It was convenient, I guess. And they took us—I have two younger brothers, Harry, who is deceased, and my younger brother Ted, Edwin—and we were left off at Sunday school, and then my parents would go back and read the paper. And they'd come back when they knew the time had come to pick us up.

WC: What church was this?

AS: Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr. And eventually, they became very, very faithful churchgoers. As a friend of the family's—he never darkened the door of a church; this was in Maine—and suddenly he started going to church. So somebody said, "How come you're in church all the time now?" "Well," he said, "The shadows are lengthening." [Laughs] And I think that probably influenced my parents, and they became very faithful churchgoers.

WC: Your dad died, my research tells me, in 1973? Is that right?

AS: That's right, mm-hm.

WC: But your mother lived a lot longer?

AS: She died on her 91st birthday, and she had been saying that she was ready to leave the campus, was the way she put it for a while before she died. Most of her friends had gone, and she was ready to go. And she had a fall and dislocated her hip, and they took her to the hospital, and she did not want to eat anything, and she had been very uncomfortable. And her physician agreed that that was all right, and she died within a week, with my two daughters by her side.

WC: So, were you a faithful churchgoer as a child?

AS: Yes. Yes, I was. And I took the children to church, Sunday school. And I ended up being President of the ECW at the Church of the Redeemer. It was really interesting times. The diocese began to have some problems with some of their radical clergy. I'll go back quickly to say that my husband's a physician. We were married right smack out of college. So I went through medical school with him, and then he was an intern, and a four-year residency, I believe it was—three-year residency in OB/GYN. We had three children in the process, two daughters and a son. And then he went in the Navy, because he had been accepted—he was in the National Guard, and he was accepted to go to medical school, and then did his service, and he served in the Navy. We were stationed in Pensacola, and it was wonderful! He was home all the time. He was only on duty one night a week, or one—yeah, one night a week, and one weekend a month, so.

WC: This would have been the sixties?

AS: We went down there right after he graduated, so it was '58, and we were there from '58 to '60. And then came back to Philadelphia after that, and he was in practice for a while at HUP, and then came out to Lankenau, and became the Chair of OB/GYN at Lankenau, until he retired.

WC: My first child was born at Lankenau.

AS: Really?

WC: 1969, so we might have passed in the halls.

AS: Surely. Do you remember who was her doctor?

WC: No. My wife would, but I don't.

AS: [Laughs] Well, he was there then.

WC: Yeah.

AS: That was about the time, I think, he came out from Penn.

WC: Did you buy a house in Bryn Mawr?

AS: We had a succession of houses. We rented, when we were first married, on a little unit, a semi-circle of houses in near Ardrossan. And in those days, they still had a limit on the cost of housing. We had an adorable house, very small—living room, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms and a bath—and paid $69 a month, or something! [Laughs] Or some incredible sum.

WC: That was the mortgage payment?

AS: We rented. That was our rent.

WC: Oh, you were renting?

AS: That was our rent. And then we bought a house over off Bryn Mawr Avenue, Newton Square, and that was a wonderful house, on the edge of a hillside. We had five acres. We paid 28,000 for that, and that was the year our second daughter was born, in 1954. Isn't that incredible?

WC: Yes.

AS: [Laughs]

WC: Real estate has changed a lot in 60 years, 70 years.

AS: Amazing. So that was the first house we had. And then when my husband—he was at that point still going in to HUP, and then when he came to Lankenau, we bought a house on Summit Road in Penn Valley, Narberth, and we were there for—

WC: Now, you were worshipping at—?

AS: The Redeemer.

WC: At Redeemer, all the time you were living in these various places?

AS: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

WC: You said, as we got into this part of the conversation, that some things were happening in the diocese when you became more active, at Redeemer, Bryn Mawr? To what were you referring?

AS: I'm thinking back to when the controversy arose over Girard College. The clergy were marching, saying that it wasn't right; it wasn't fair that it was for white orphan boys only. It should be desegregated—integrated.

WC: Right.

AS: And I'll back up a little bit before that, because it's really interesting to me, as I'm 86, [to] look back on events. The diocese at that point was still in a wonderful old house on Rittenhouse Square. And they were asking for volunteers to come in and help with some mailing, so I went in with some of the ladies from out of the suburban churches—a couple of us, I think. And the day that we were in there was the day that Bishop Armstrong died. And I remember that the church house was just distraught!

WC: 1964.

AS: You remember the year. So people were weeping, and they called for a service in the chapel, which as I remember was down—maybe it was even below ground; maybe it was like a basement area. But it was nicely furnished. And Bishop DeWitt, who was the—what do they call them?

WC: Coadjutor.

AS: Coadjutor, that's right, was sitting in a great—you know, he was a small man, physically—a great, big, enormous oak chair, this little fellow, this little man, just looking absolutely stunned and stricken.

And everybody was weeping, and everybody was praying. And I—I had no idea at that time that that was such a tremendous event, to be there! So to jump on, the tension between city and suburbs was intense, and the people that I grew up with and knew were simply horrified that any consideration could be given to breaking a will! Steven Girard had this will made that this school was specifically for white orphan boys, and that that's what it was! And they couldn't understand how these clergy are out there marching in front of the college, and carrying on. So one of the things that the bishop did is to send out—

WC: You're talking about DeWitt?

AS: Bishop DeWitt.

WC: Bob DeWitt.

AS: This was after he's become—which I guess was pretty quickly after. To send out a—there was an urban missioner. David Gracie was his name. It was time there was a suburban missioner, and Suzanne Hiatt was appointed by Bishop DeWitt to come out to the Main Line, primarily, and try to help see this other point of view surrounding the issue of justice. And so [laughs], Sue came out, and the Redeemer was one of the places that she was, as a deacon, and she had led a Bible class. And there were about six or eight of us in the Bible class. And under Sue, who was our teacher, our eyes began to open to some of these things that—you know, this is my brother. And it comes to—I'm tired, as you can imagine, now—but certainly good Biblical reckoning for all human beings. So we kind of began to stir up a little thing, a few things. One of them was the fact that there were no women on the vestry.

WC: At Redeemer?

AS: At Redeemer. I don't think there were women on many vestries at that time, at all. And in fact, the fact of a woman deacon, with a collar on, did not go over very well. The Church was very conservative. A couple, Marjorie and Ned Thomas, had a son who had gone down on some of the marches, freedom marches. There was just recently a marvelous thing about the freedom march on the television. And her son—

WC: He'd gone south, too.

AS: He'd gone south. He was a student at Harvard.

WC: To [unclear].

AS: To join in. And he was put in jail, and he was beaten up. And he never was the same again. And people at the church would say to her, "Serves him right." So, [sighs] anyway, we were also focusing—we learned, by seeing what was happening with black/white, began to also relate to male/female. And Tim Pickering was the rector at that point.

WC: Of?

AS: Of the Redeemer. And he was not pleased with all these things coming under Bible study, and the fact Jesus said, "Women, followers," and so forth. So he said, "Sorry, this Bible class is coming to an end. You're not going to meet here anymore. It's closed. It's done." That wasn't going to stop us! We started meeting among our houses, at our homes. [Laughs] The upshot of this behind-the-scenes stuff is that we'd been pressing for a woman on the vestry, and I was the president of the women's association at that time.

WC: Of the church?

AS: Yeah, ECW. So I talked—Tim was the rector then; this was before he got to mad at us all—that I thought it would be very helpful if they would consider a women going on the vestry, because we really did an awful lot for the church. The bazaar every year raised a heck of a lot of money! So, I said, could I—it would be a good way to improve communication between the ECW and the vestry, and the Church, if I could attend the vestry meetings. So he thought about it, and he said all right! So I made up my mind before going to the first vestry meeting, I was not going to say anything! So I attended all the vestry meetings, and I took my notes, and everybody was very polite, looked at me a little bit. [Laughs] And I just kept my mouth shut.

And so then when the nominating then came along, that following—I guess in September, we nominated one of our outstanding church women! Owen, Mary Owen, I think was her name. You could probably find it. I'm sure you would find it back in some archives there. And so she was nominated, and elected, so she broke the ice, and was the first female on the vestry. And so that was—we were—

WC: How did you feel about that?

AS: Thrilled! Thrilled.

WC: How did Tim Pickering feel about that?

AS: Wasn't much he could do about it, I guess.

WC: He adjusted?

AS: He adjusted. So then the next step, or maybe they were going on simultaneously—I don't remember the years—Bishop DeWitt thought it would be helpful if some black clergy came out to preach at some of the local churches in the Merion Deanery, particularly. So there was

one Sunday, and he sent out Paul Washington. And I was never the same again. Hearing that man preach changed my life, fundamentally. His lines from the Bible that he used, "To whom much is given, much is"—how does it go? We owe others.

WC: Yes, the sentiment is clear.

AS: Yeah. "To whom much is given, much is required, expected." He blew me away! And that was in the late sixties. And so I said, "I've got to hear more of this!" And so I would go to the Redeemer for the 9:30 service, I guess it was then. My kids were coming along in years. They were getting pretty independent. They'd all been confirmed. Two of them were in boarding school, so I could act independently. My husband never was a churchgoer. He went to Saint Paul's School, and he says he got overdosed there. [Laughs] So the churchgoing was my thing. And so—

WC: Saint Paul's, then Harvard?

AS: How did you guess?

WC: I'm familiar with the routine.

AS: [Laughs] You probably went someplace, and then Yale or Princeton?

WC: No, I went to Harvard, too.

AS: Oh, you went there, too? Well, there weren't [unclear].

WC: From Noble and Greenough School.

AS: Oh, yeah. Oh, yes, very good school in Boston.

WC: Dedham, actually, but yes.

AS: Yeah, Boston suburb.

WC: Right.

AS: So anyway, I'd get in my car after I'd gone to the service at the Redeemer, and I would drive on in to the Church of the Advocate, and began attending services there.

WC: So you would attend two different services?

AS: Mm-hm. And golly, I'm mixed up on the dates of things, because—but it was much later, because Paul was always—spoke so much that God loves you. You're black and you're beautiful, and God loves you. And there was one Sunday that he was talking about how God's love is universal. I suddenly realized, well, by God, he's also speaking to me as a woman! And that was a revelation! [Laughs] It's amazing, how that was ingrained in us, that we were second-class citizens! So then I got elected to be—well actually, it was Bishop DeWitt's appointment—to be the diocesan ECW President, which meant I had an office in there.

WC: In Church House?

AS: At Church House, and I was part of the—that was, if you look up, you'll see that the time—it was during the time when we started out at Church House, and the ladies met in what had been an old stable next to this wonderful, great, big, old-fashioned building. It got torn down, and a high-rise built, and the whole Church House moved into one of those big buildings, I think it was near Market; I've forgotten exactly—stories and stories and stories. We were crammed in a very small area. I shared a room with Charlie Ritchie, who was on the staff at that point. And so, before I was—before the move was made, I felt—I'd been going into Advocate on a regular basis, week after week, month after month—that if I was going to take office as the President of the Episcopal Church Women of the diocese, that I was

no longer representing the Church of the Redeemer, and that I should be a member of where I felt I belonged. So I changed my church membership from the Church of the Redeemer, to the Church of the Advocate. And it did not go over very well.

Passage here to remain closed until July 1, 2050.

I left the Redeemer. Another faithful couple, Mary Jane Baker and her husband Walter Baker—they left. Frances and Hal Kellogg—they left. I'm trying to think if there was anybody else. Some of them joined—there was an experimental church called the Church Without Walls, some of them went to. Marjorie and Ned Thomas were already at the Advocate. And so some went to the—the Thomas's and myself.

My husband: "Do whatever you feel called to do. It's fine." My parents were awfully upset! They never, ever got over it, really. They couldn't understand it.

WC: How did they feel about your traveling into North Philadelphia?

AS: They didn't really know it, because I didn't tell them. So, but they were shocked when I told—I think maybe I said occasionally that I was going in there. But they were very upset when I changed my membership. And there was a lot of gossip, but you know, poor—I can't remember the name of the woman who was the—what was her name? Maybe you could find this out, too—a wonderful woman who was the head of the Shipley School. And she tried an experiment with bringing out some of the inner-city children to classes, and then sending the Shipley School girls into the school to experience what it was like in the city. [Laughs]

I laugh now, because the result was predictable. The parents of the children, the Shipley students, would not dream of letting their kids come in to go to school at any of the schools in Philadelphia; for heavens' sakes! And so she darned near—I think she resigned the next year, and that went nowhere. So those were—a lot of conflict, not just between me and my family, but other families: brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, and so forth. What was interesting is that I wasn't the only white person coming in to the Advocate. There were quite a few other white people coming in to the Advocate, because they had heard Paul at different places, and they were drawn to him, and recognized the justice of what he was talking about. So.

WC: That's interesting, because of course there was a time when Advocate was a white congregation.

AS: Yes.

WC: But by the time Paul Washington was a rector there, some of the people who had been—white people who had been parishioners there had begun to move away. Perhaps some of them came back for a while, but many of them then joined suburban congregations.

AS: Yeah.

WC: What you're telling me is just as those people were headed out—

AS: There were some coming in.

WC: —there were some progressive Episcopalians who were coming in. What proportion of the congregation—

AS: It was very small.

WC: —in the early seventies was white?

AS: Oh, very small. I don't think there were any white members. There were white people like myself coming in, because—

WC: But you became a member?

AS: Oh, yes. I did. And as the years went by, the others kind of drifted away, which I never did. But it was a tumultuous time. There's just no question about it. I joined in 1970, and in those early days of the seventies, it was a big congregation. But the city was changing, drastically. And the jobs were—were moving out, the big companies, the industrial companies, were. You had, on city streets, which were all black, you had black doctors, black lawyers, black laborers, people working in the factories, and that began to change as the jobs moved out. And people at the church would tell me that—I'm thinking

particularly of Meriel,[1] who'd been the secretary here, that when she lived here—

WC: Meriel? Do you remember her name? It's not important. Go ahead.

AS: I just saw her here today.

WC: It'll come to you.

AS: But the children on the block had to behave, because there were enough stay-at-home mothers that if you did something wrong, she'd discipline you, and then your parents would discipline you, so that it held the neighborhoods together. But as the situation got worse, the fathers, who could no longer bring home the bread, the bacon, would drift away, and so you had a deteriorating neighborhood of single mothers.

WC: Right.

AS: And the poverty level went down, and that was one of the things that led to ACDC, the Advocate [Community] Development Corporation. That's an interesting story, which Paul told often. He was a new minister here. I've forgotten what year he came, but it was in the sixties.

WC: Right.

AS: And people would come for help from the church. And this woman came one day to see him, and she didn't have any money, and she didn't have a job, and she didn't know how she was going to maintain her rent, and there was nothing she could afford. And Paul says that he said, "Well now, just have faith. Don't worry so much. God loves you." And she exploded in fury! "How can you say God loves me?

[1] Meriel Jackson

You could say God loves you. Look at you! You've got a big house, and a wife and children, and you're a minister. You can say that. You can't say that to me!" And she stomps out the door. "I don't have any place to live!"

WC: This is the church secretary?

AS: No, no. No, this was the story Paul himself told.

WC: About a woman [unclear].

AS: About a woman who came off the streets, needing help. I'm sorry. Got on the wrong track. [Sighs] So Paul went home to Christine, and told her this story.

WC: His wife.

AS: Christine, his wife. And she said, "Well, let's find that woman, and we'll let her stay here for a while, and help her get on her feet." Which they did. But that was the start of ACDC. She said, "We have got to get some affordable housing for these people!" Because there were a lot, lots of homeless people around. So she gathered up a couple of members of the Church of the Advocate, these ladies, Margaret—oh, I just saw these! Loretta—when you're 86, you do have trouble with names!

WC: I totally appreciate that.

AS: Margaret McMullen! McMullen. Who was absolutely one of the stalwarts of this church, and she has about eight kids, and all of them are church members. Margaret McMullen. She was one of the original women on the board. They didn't know anything! They were just novices.

WC: This is on the board of ACDC?

AS: ACDC. She got members from the church, a congregation that had no experience at all. And they managed over on one of the local, small streets, twisting people's arms, and they managed to get about six or eight houses, very low-income houses, built. And then people began to notice her, and she increased the board, and invited me to be on the board. And it just—it just took off, and she was very, very successful.

WC: Now, this would have been in the seventies, or later?

AS: I think seventies, or later.

WC: Okay.

AS: Because I went to divinity school, I think, in '85, '84 or '85, and it was going strong. And they were—they did the whole row of houses on Diamond Street, between 18th and 19th, and a number of other places, a garden that's across, catty-corner across the street. They did that. By that time I was going to seminary, so I wasn't as active as I had been. [Knock on door, interruption]

WC: In this neighborhood, the elephant in the room is Temple University.

AS: Mm.

WC: How did people here regard Temple?

AS: I don't think they paid any attention.

WC: Really?

AS: It's not a factor.

WC: Not an issue?

AS: No. No. Lately, Temple students—I think Renee could give you more on that. This was all black, during my active years here.

WC: This neighborhood?

AS: Yeah. And the congregation, most of them could walk here.

WC: Temple was beginning to expand into the neighborhood. There were some restrictions placed on that, so there was some friction between Temple and the neighborhoods immediately contiguous, particularly down around Moore and Columbia Avenues.

AS: Mm-hm.

WC: So that's why I asked the question.

AS: Mm-hm.

WC: So let me back up just a little bit. When you were President of the diocesan ECW, were your concerns about racism, about social justice, shared by others? Did you attempt to bring these concerns of yours to a wider audience?

AS: Well, I had opportunities, of course, to talk. One church—and I luckily can't remember it, because I was asked to preach some places. [Laughs] The lesson that he picked to read was something about false prophets, be wary of false prophets that come wearing beautiful clothes, or whatever. And I just totally ignored it, and went on [with] what I wanted to say. But I don't remember—because of DeWitt's group, I might not have been asked to the more conservative churches, so I don't remember that—that was the one that stood out as being uncomfortable. But I didn't encounter a lot of hostility.

WC: So were you still in charge of ECW when Lyman Ogilby became the Bishop, the Diocesan?

AS: Yes. My term was three years. I'm sorry not to remember, but I think I was—I think my term ended maybe shortly after the ordination of women.

WC: So it would be '74 or '75?

AS: '75, somewheres in there.

WC: By then, Lyman, of course, was the Diocesan.

AS: That's right, yeah. I can tell you some details about my experiences in that whole process.

WC: By all means.

AS: I was President of the Church Women, and so at a graduation from Philadelphia Divinity School—that was still functioning—I was asked to be there. Maybe I read a prayer, or said something, and I was in the procession. And so, the Dean of the Philadelphia Divinity School, in his sermon—I think his name was Harris; his last name was Harris. You could find that out, too.[2] His sermon was, "It's time to ordain women now!" This was after it had been—at General Convention, it had come up at least twice before, so probably about six years. And the vote would be, "We're going to study it some more. We're going to get another study done. We need a new committee." So he just laid it flat out: it's time.

So he was seated next to me after he'd come back from his sermon, and I remember saying, "Wow!" [Laughs] After this, some of us were invited back to one of the people from All Saint's—let me see. Wynnewood? It was not the conservative one. It's awful when you can't remember things. Anyway, we went back to someone's house in Bala Cynwyd, and Sue Hiatt, and Bishop DeWitt, and Dean Harris got together in the kitchen, [and] said, "We're going to do this." This had been in June.

WC: This would have been—?

AS: '74.

[2] Rev. Edward Harris

WC: Okay.

AS: And, "We're going to do it." Paul, I think, was there, and Paul offered to have the—he said, "I will have to take this to my vestry." But he said, "I believe my vestry will agree." So right there in the kitchen, they hatched this thing. And they gathered a group of people of the same conviction, and we met out at—Bishop DeWitt had a farm out in Ambler. And we met out there in early July, and Bishop Ogilby was there, and Carter Heyward was there, and Christine Washington was there, and Sue Hiatt, of course. I would say there were fifteen, twenty people there. And there were a couple of other bishops, whose—again, these names go away. One was the father of one of the first women; he was a bishop.

So, okay, let's pick a date, a Saint's Day. There's a Feast of Saint Mary? What is that feast day out there, the end of July? I should know. Anyway, that was to be the day, and it was to be at the Church of the Advocate, if the congregation agreed. And that next Sunday—anyway, Paul called, I think, an emergency meeting of the vestry and presented this—unanimous approval: "Go ahead and do it," and announced it in church on Sunday, and said, "This is open for conversation, and if there's opposition, or support, we want to share." And there was no opposition.

So that was settled; it was to be at the Advocate. A small nucleus of us met every single day between that date, which was early July, until the 29th of July. And I was one of Sue Hiatt's presenters. And we were nervous. We had what I'd call a secret service, women primarily, around, watching out for any kind of violence.

WC: These were women Episcopalians, or people from the Police Department?

AS: They were kind of Amazons. [Laughs]

WC: Locals?

AS: Locals, who were tough, and you're not going to mess with me.

WC: Strong presence.

AS: That's right. That's right. So we were back in the sacristy, and back behind the altar, and places. And there were eleven, of course, and each one had at least one presenter, and the bishops were there. [Laughs] And they were trying to have somebody do the signatures for the ordination—the date, the time, the place. And I ended up doing half of them, because they were all shaking and nervous, and I have pretty clear handwriting.

WC: Shipley education?

AS: Of course! [Laughs] Never learned cursive writing. So they came out, and the place was wall to wall! People were screaming, and laughing, and shouting, and clapping!

WC: These were the people in the sanctuary?

AS: In the sanctuary. It was unbelievable! We were still quite concerned there might be violence, and I sat behind Sue. I said, "Nothing or nobody is going to get near Sue Hiatt." It went off beautifully. George Rutler made his speech, about how badly we smelled! [Laughs] And it happened. It happened. Sorry I won't be here for the fortieth celebration.

WC: What are your memories of Sue Hiatt? Any good stories about Sue Hiatt? You knew her well.

AS: I did know her well, and I just loved her dearly. She was an inspiration, a wonderful, wonderful, gentle person. But there's not, at the moment, a specific time that—well, I haven't shared this with too many people, but if you wait a long time, it's all right. It's okay. It's okay. My husband and I were like this.

WC: You were at odds?

AS: At odds. I'd become a raving radical. He married a nice debutante, somebody who was a housewife. I did work at the hospital, and all the things that went into it. And he's busy with a full OB/GYN practice, and going his way. And all of a sudden, who's this wild woman? And so our marriage was really rocky there—really rocky, and I was ready to leave. And Sue said to me, "Kaighn is really trying." And that changed my whole understanding, immediately. So I owe our marriage to Sue. I really do. I think I would have left.

WC: Well, every marriage that lasts as long as yours goes through—

AS: They do. You do. It's not all wine and roses.

WC: No, it's not.

AS: That's true. So, I owe her a great, great deal. Yeah, we've got—we just had our 64th wedding anniversary.

WC: That's impressive.

AS: It's lucky.

WC: Yeah, that's true, because people don't live that long, necessarily.

AS: No. We don't have—particularly Kaighn's friends. Most of them are gone.

WC: Barbara Harris. She's someone that you—

AS: Oh, what a hero! [Laughs]

WC: —have had lots of interactions with [her] over the years. What can you tell me about her?

AS: Oh, she's got the most radical sense of humor! [Laughs] She's told about how she'd gone up in an elevator. She was going to make a speech, or something. And she was in kind of her robes, there. And so he looked at her. He said, "What are you doing?" She said, "I'm Little Bo Peep." [Laughs] But I can't off the top of my head, but she's always got an incredibly great sense of humor. And she went through a rough period in her time, and this church was a great, great support for her.

WC: She started here as a parishioner.

AS: Yeah.

WC: And eventually worked her way into the ministry, and ultimately into being the bishop.

AS: A bishop, yeah.

WC: So that's a long and impressive route.

AS: Yeah, yeah.

WC: Did you maintain contact with her, over the course of her career?

AS: Yeah. Yeah, she's incredibly busy. She's been up with Ike and Rose Miller once or twice, to visit us in Northeast Harbor, Maine, and always a delight to be with. Still travels all over the place, giving sermons and speeches, and she's active and wonderful.

WC: So tell me about your road to professional status as a priest. How did you ultimately decide to do that, and what did it entail?

AS: [Sighs] I thought you'd ask me that, because I had absolutely no idea. I stopped drinking. I'm a recovering alcoholic. I've got about 30 years. And one of my daughters spoke to me that I wasn't

remembering things, which I knew. And at that time I had a couple of very small grandchildren. And I said, "I don't want to be a drunken grandmother for my grandchildren." So one of my daughters was married to a recovering alcoholic. So I called her on the phone, and I said, "What am I going to do? How can I stop?" And she said, "Go to an AA meeting." I said, "I don't know how to do that, or where to do, or what." So she said, "Well, they're in the phonebook. Call up AA in the phonebook, and find out where a meeting is."

So I did. This was—I've gone through this overnight. And so I went to the phonebook, and looked up AA, and called them up. And this nice, cheery young voice said, "Hello! You got AA! You got Alcoholics Anonymous. How can I help you?" So I told her my name, and that I recognized I was an alcoholic, and I needed help. And she said, "Oh, hi! My name's Judy, and I'm an alcoholic. Come see us! We have a clubhouse, and it's over Talone's Store, in Ardmore." If you remember back that far. So she said, "Come on around. Park in the back, and go up the fire escape, and we're right up there. And I'll be watching for you." Her name was Judy. So I'm thinking, this is the end of the world. I'm not going to be able to stop. What am I going to do? So I get in the car, and I drive there. [Noise]

WC: My transcriber's very good!

AS: Okay. So I park, and I look at this iron staircase going up there, and oh, my Lord! Here we go. So I go up, and knock on the door, and I open up the door. And this cute, young woman comes bouncing up to me, and she says, "Hi, I'm Judy. I'm a recovering alcoholic." I said, "I'm Ann." And she said, "Come on in! Have a cup of coffee!" So I looked in the room, and it was just what you would imagine it would

be. It was filled with cigarette smoke, and a couple of tables and chairs, and these men sitting here like this, with their head in their hands! [Laughs]

WC: Oh, how intimidating.

AS: Absolutely the worst! Oh! So, I went in, sat down at a table with her, and had a cup of coffee with her. So she said, "Well now, you must come to a meeting with me this afternoon. It's over at the Catholic Church in Narberth." And we were living at—I guess we were off Summit Road at that point, so I knew Narberth well. So she said, "Come. I think it's [at] 12:30, and it lasts an hour. So come a little bit ahead, if you can." So, [sighs] again, trembling and shaking with fear, I went over, and she was outside waiting for me. And I had procrastinated, so I was a little bit late. So she says, "Come on! Hurry up. Hurry up." So we went in.

The room was—people were sitting around, and they hadn't quite started. And there were two people there that I knew, that I never dreamt were alcoholics! And they came running over to me, threw their arms around me! "So glad you're here. Welcome, welcome. Call us anytime." And that began what I would say was about eight years of meetings, and going through a lot of counseling, pulling in my family to do some co-counseling. It took a lot of hard work. But I had been sober, if you could call it that, after a year, and I just was compelled to go into the ministry. Absolutely, just, I didn't have any choice about it.

WC: So one salvation led to another, so to speak?

AS: Yes.

WC: And you began your preparation by doing what?

AS: Getting into seminary.

WC: Did you talk to any priests about this?

AS: Oh, yes. The first person I came to see was Paul. I said, "Paul, why did the first miracle that Jesus wrought in Galilee have to be turnning water into wine?" [Laughs]

WC: [Laughs] Very funny.

AS: And he said, "Well, in a way, I'm not surprised that you're here. It took you a long time."

WC: He encouraged you?

AS: Yes. Yes. He was very encouraging. And then you go through all kinds of visits to psychiatrists, and you know. I don't remember, luckily, the process, but I think it was about a year later that I started seminary, so that I'd been sober for a year.

WC: This would have been sometime in the eighties?

AS: Yeah, yeah. I think it was '84 or '85. I know it was '84, because I just had my 30th in May, 30th.[3] I think that's right.

WC: Thirty years since you began studying—?

AS: Since I got sober.

WC: Oh, okay.

AS: Because I think I started—I went to the Lutheran Seminary over there in Germantown.

WC: Mt. Airy

AS: In Mount Airy, right. And one of the comforting things to me was that they had an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in the basement in the church. Lots of churches do that.

[3] It was actually May 10, 1984 according to ARB.

WC: Yes.

AS: And so they met every day. And I never saw a fellow student there but me. I was the only one. It was mostly black people. So that was a stabilizing force for me.

WC: Was your training at the Lutheran Seminary?

AS: Primarily. I went to Episcopal Divinity School for one semester. Sue was there, and Carter Heyward, were both there.

WC: Up in Cambridge?

AS: Up in Cambridge. And so the rest of it was there, and then I did a—they make you do—you're required to spend a summer, maybe six weeks, in a hospital, which I did. And then I knew I wanted to come here, and of course I was talking with Paul frequently. And I thought, if I'm going to have a ministry at the Advocate, I better get some more emergency training. So I took another three semesters at Presbyterian Hospital, which was invaluable.

WC: And you studied, at Presbyterian Hospital—?

AS: I was a chaplain.

WC: Working with people with substance abuse problems?

AS: No, not primarily. It was physical, mental—not so many mental, but emergency room coverage, and that kind of stuff. They had a very good program there, with about four of us in the chaplaincy program, and a wonderful guy, whose name I've forgotten, who was our teacher and lecturer, mentor. It was valuable training. It was really, really helpful. And so then it was, well, where do you want to go? I don't want to go to anyplace except the Advocate. I guess Ike was here.

WC: Ike Miller.

AS: Yeah, I can't remember when Paul retired, because—oh, I know what it was! I said, "Paul, it'll mean that I'm going to be studying, and I have to go to these different churches. And it's going to be awful not to be here." He said, "I'm retiring, so I won't be here." So, that relationship was going to be over. And so, I always considered this my home parish, and then I guess by the time I finished all my stuff—and I knew, I met Ike and I wanted to take this place. I feel so sorry for Renee![4] It is so busy! One person cannot do it! I was here five days a week, non-stop. I was here five days a week, plus—well, you could take a weekday off, and then Sundays, of course. And it's full-time. I did a lot of parish work. Ike was very much involved in community stuff, and we had—

WC: So this is an aided congregation, is it not?

AS: Yes, yes.

WC: So Ike was being paid by the diocese.

AS: By the diocese. I didn't take any salary.

WC: You didn't take any salary?

AS: No. The church insisted upon giving me some money per month, and I just would put it back in the plate.

WC: Mm-hm.

AS: I didn't need it. And goodness knows, they needed it!

WC: Were you part of DCMM? Did you personally participate in DCMM?

AS: I vaguely remember that it was a DCMM congregation at that point, and there were the meetings that I went to. And then they changed the name.

[4] Reverend Renee McKenzie Hayward

WC: Actually, that's the second name. It was something different before that. It was Bishop Turner who changed it to Diocesan Commission on Mission and Ministry.

AS: Right, right.

WC: You remember Frank Turner, I'm sure?

AS: Oh, yes! Very fine man. Very fine.

WC: Did you have any interactions with him?

AS: No, not really. Not really.

WC: So you were here when Charles became Diocesan, Charles Bennison?

AS: Yes.

WC: Do you have any perspective on his time?

AS: I voted for John Midwood, and hoped very much that John would have been elected. I don't want to be negative, so I won't say much about Bennison.

WC: Okay.

AS: Because it was negative from my perspective just about from the beginning.

WC: It was. So, what are the highlights of your time here, in your estimation, as you remember it? There was a lot going on. I read an article this morning in the Inquirer archives about the dedication of the Lovell Apartment Building? Do you remember?

AS: Yeah, yeah. I think that's the one right across the street. It was for homeless people, I believe. [Laughs] This is funny. I can tell you this: when I first started my ministry here, I wanted to do house calls. So that was a good starting point, I thought. So I went over there and rang doorbells, and Reverend Smith, Ann—everybody called me Ann.

"I'd love to come meet you, and tell you something about the church, and maybe you'd be interested in joining us."

So a male voice said, "Come on up, [unclear]." So I go on up, and here's this big, huge, black guy, of course, burly guy, with kind of a tee shirt on, sitting at a table. He said, "Sit down!" I thought, this could not be what I expect. So I said, "I have an appointment that I better—will you come over and meet with me in my office in an hour or so." He never showed up. But that—I thought, oh, I don't think I'm going to do that again! You don't know what you're getting into, unless you know where you're going. So that ended my spontaneous house calls, yeah.

WC: But you worked with a number of people here who did interesting things. Daisy Lacey, with the food cupboard?

AS: Yeah. [Interruption]

[End of Part 1/Begin Part 2]

WC: Okay, we're back after that brief interruption. I asked you about Daisy Lacey, and you told me that she was a bit before your time.

AS: Yeah. So I didn't know her. One of the interesting people here was Dorothy, and I can't remember Dorothy's name. Dorothy had been a member of the choir, and she had a beautiful voice—just magnificent! Over the years, she began to deteriorate mentally, and she became homeless, and she was living on the street. So I was—this was, I guess, my early years—saying, "Paul, she should be in a hospital! She should be in an institution where she can be taken care of." He said, "They won't take her." I said, "Paul, I don't believe that!" Shrugged his shoulders. So here I am, somebody who's used to getting the care that you want, very privileged. So I start going

around to these mental institutions and saying that there is a woman who very much needs to be off the streets and into treatment. Doors closing, doors closing, doors closing!

WC: This was during your ministry here?

AS: Yeah. Actually, I think I was a layperson. I don't think I'd become a minister yet. I think I'll do better after I become a minister. This was in my early days. So finally I said, "Paul, you're absolutely right. There's nothing I can do." He said, "Yeah, I know." [Laughs] It was a good lesson. She would come periodically, and she would sing. She couldn't really stay with the choir and sing with the choir, but she would sometimes come up in front of the altar, and lift up her arms and sing one of the lovely phrases that the choir would sing—beautiful, beautiful voice! And we'd always feed her, and do what we could. And she came very sporadically, and then we heard eventually that she had been in a house fire and had died. But [sighs] it still hurts that our care is so limited, and I don't think it's changed much since then. But that was a sad one to lose; it really was.

Just to go back to my alcoholism, when I was ordained, and I came here and preached my first sermon, I felt that I should tell the congregation of my being in recovery, which I did. And after the sermon was over, one of the congregation, Nate, came up to me and I made a huge difference in his life, because I had spoken of my recovery, the process I was in to recover from alcoholism. And he entered similar recovery, and he ended up working as the chef in the soup kitchen here, while I was here. So that was a great friendship that I had with him, and a great bond in common that we had together.

WC: So while you were here, your particular assignment, or your particular charge, was to work with people at risk in the congregation, or anything like that?

AS: People who were sick or shut in, I would go visit. People—

WC: Take the sacrament.

AS: Yeah, mm-hm. And just developed a lot of good relationships. [Laughs] I had a lot to learn in the beginning, and there was—we used to call them the Parish Popes—a woman named Georgia Thomas, who lived over on one of the—I can't remember their names. I'm sorry I'm not talking to you about ten years ago; I'd do better. And she had a big, big family, and she ran things. So we did a lot in the community, among them Christmas baskets, and there was a food pantry, and people would come who needed a bag of groceries, and we'd give them a bag of groceries. And there was a clothes closet that they could find clothing.

So the people were signing up for the Christmas baskets, and I had a little office across the way, and I was working in there. And I heard this big commotion, and sobs, and Georgia was yelling. So I came out to see what was going on, and a woman—or maybe she came into my office; I don't remember. But anyway, Georgia had refused to let her sign up for a Christmas basket. So I came out and I said, "Georgia, what's wrong? Why can't this woman have a Christmas basket? I think she should get a Christmas basket. You should sign her up right away."

"You're a white woman! You're going to come in here and tell me these kinds of things! Why don't you go back out with the other white women?" So I was just, yikes! I really had put my foot in it.

Muriel was the secretary at the time, so she calls up Ike. So, Ike at that point was living closer to the church than he is now. The next think I know, Ike comes in there. It couldn't have been five minutes! I think Georgia was still yelling. The woman was still sobbing. I was still, "Uh, what do I do now?" And so Ike says, "Georgia, you're going home. You cannot speak to anybody like that. You're out of here." So she leaves, yelling and screaming at Ike. And so [laughs] we got that settled; the woman got her Christmas basket. But Georgia didn't come down and darken the door again. She was simply furious!

WC: That you as a white person were—

AS: In charge, yeah.

WC: Were treading in her territory?

AS: Yeah, into her territory, which she was the power there. And I don't know whether there was a feud, or whether she thought she'd already signed up. I never got to the bottom of it. Well, maybe a month later, I had gone to visit Georgia's sister, who was in one of the hospitals, and was quite ill, which was my routine thing to do. So I was there visiting her sister, and Georgia came in.

WC: This was the woman who had yelled at you?

AS: Georgia, yeah. And she saw me there, and she was surprised. So I spoke to her pleasantly, and she didn't say much. But after that, she started coming back to the church again. So, it was healed, thank goodness! Thank goodness!

WC: Did you retire from your work here by necessity, due to age?

AS: Yeah.

WC: And then you and your husband moved to Maine?

AS: Right, soon after that.

WC: How did you decide to do that? Why Maine?

AS: Because we had a summer house there that we bought about forty years ago, I guess—'65, somewheres in there. And we winterized it years ago, because the kids wanted to go there for Christmas, and we'd go cross country skiing. And we were over in Beaumont, a very comfortable retirement place, and financially it wasn't feasible any longer. And we'd lost so many friends, as I said in the beginning. Kaighn's the only one of his three siblings still alive. I've lost one brother; still have a brother.

One of our daughters lives on the island with her husband, and the grandchildren and great-grandchildren—didn't have any greats at that point—always come in the summer, and everybody used to stay with us. So then our daughter and her husband bought a place, and built a house, or had a house there, and built a house for the kids. And so it was really a no-brainer. And wanted to be in a more multi-generational setting. And it was absolutely the right thing for us to have done.

WC: Good. Is there anything that you'd like to add, that we haven't covered?

AS: I think we've covered a lot! [Laughs]

WC: We have. We've covered a great deal.

AS: And I really have trusted you.

WC: Well, I hope I live up to that trust. When we turn off the tape, I'll explain to you where we go from here. All right?

AS: All right. Thank you.

[End of Interview]