

**Bernadette Thompson Oral History Interview**  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Bernadette Thompson  
**Interviewer:** Wendy McLaughlin  
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**Biographical Note**

Bernadette (Bunny) Spanuello Thompson served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Colombia from 1965 to 1967 on an educational television project.

**Access**

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Oral History Interview

with

Bernadette Thompson

July 11, 2009  
Lawrenceville, Georgia

By Wendy McLaughlin

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection  
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:00:02] So today, this is Wendy McLaughlin, I'm interviewing Bernadette Thompson, and it's July 11th. So Bernadette, you were in Colombia?

THOMPSON: [00:00:14] I was.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:00:15] And what were the dates again?

THOMPSON: [00:00:17] We were in a Columbia ETV project from February 1965 to January 1967.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:00:25] Okay. So can you tell me a little bit about what your, you know, a little bit about your present day? You know, your family, where you currently reside, any interests you have?

THOMPSON: [00:00:40] All right. Sure, I'd be glad to. I live in Lawrenceville, Georgia, which is outside of Atlanta, Georgia. Although I am certainly not a Georgian, I'm a New Yorker raised in Chicago. I met my husband in the Peace Corps. We were in the same project, worked together for two years and married after we got home a couple of months later. We now have, of course, it's 42 years later and we now have two children and four grandchildren, three granddaughters in Boston and one lovely little grandson here in Georgia with us. It's wonderful having a local grandchild. And I've had a checkered past in my career. I taught school for about 13 years and I had my own interior decorating business for about 13 years, and I did a lot of volunteer work and then the rest of my career years were spent in different kinds of offices, different kinds of office management. I was always on the office machines and learned the computer when we lived in Vienna, Virginia, and I worked for a manufacturing corporation and I worked. My latest job, I'm 73 years old now and I retired about, or I didn't really retire, my job disappeared out from under me. I was working for a criminal defense attorney right here in Lawrenceville, and that was a fascinating job. Absolutely fascinating.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:02:11] Wow.

THOMPSON: [00:02:11] It's very nice. It was very nice. But they were, you know, they were expanding and they wanted all younger people doing everything, you know, so.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:02:22] So thinking back to the year before you went into the Peace Corps, tell us a little bit about your childhood and your education and just other experiences. The year before.

THOMPSON: [00:02:36] The year before I went in the Peace Corps, well, I was 29 years old. Or the years before?

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:02:40] Yeah.

THOMPSON: [00:02:43] OK. I was, as I said, I was born in New York City and we shortly moved to, you know, that was 1936 right after the depression.

And my father was an Italian, first generation Italian and my mother, first generation Irish. And he took a job with a corporation. He was very ambitious man, finished high school, never college, and he moved from New York to Chicago area. And I was a little girl, a baby, I think. And we lived in Springfield, Delaware County, right outside of, no, that's not right. We moved to Philadelphia first and then to Chicago. He was with a large oil company with the Pure Oil Company. He was a wonderful salesman, then a merchandizing manager. And that company was bought eventually by Union Oil of California from where he retired. He retired in 1970, I think.

THOMPSON: [00:03:43] That's a funny story. He graduated from high school at 15, so when he got his first job with the Pure Oil Company, he had to lie about his age and say he was 16. So come many, many years later, at that time there was a mandatory retirement age of 65 years old. So they came to him and said, Leo, it's time for you to retire. And he said, what do you mean time for, I am not 65, I'm 64. Well, it says here you started blah blah blah in 1923. He said, while I was off, I was only 15 years old. I lied about it. So I don't know. I seriously doubt they ever had a birth certificate. But the man did work full time at the Pure Oil Company, Union Oil Company California, until he was 65 years old. And then he was so ambitious he had three or four consulting jobs after that.

THOMPSON: [00:04:38] So we lived in Chicago when I joined the Peace Corps, my parents did, and then I went to Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. And I started working there in the summers when I was finished and I worked for a Brother Ryan, Brother Ryan. I can't think of his first name. He was running a Peace Corps training outfit at Marquette University in Milwaukee in 1963, '64. Of course, right after it started. And I became very interested. I was the secretary and the office person there. And by this time, I had taught school in Catholic schools in Milwaukee for about, oh, I don't know, I was 29 years old, so I must have done about six years or about five years at that time. And so I became very interested in Brother Ryan's project and they were going to Mato Grosso in Brazil. And I became very interested and I worked for a psychologist. Of course, these Peace Corps training

groups always had a myriad of psychologists working for them, trying to figure out who would make it and who wouldn't.

THOMPSON: [00:06:01] And Nick J. Topetsis, Doctor Topetsis at Marquette University, was one of them, one of the psychologists and I worked in his office and it was wonderful. It was a wonderful, wonderful experience knowing all these young people that were in the group starting to go to preparing to go to Mato Grosso, to go to Brazil. So that's when I got the bug. And so after that, after they left, you know, they came and went, these programs, as they do, about three month periods at the time, this was in the early '60s. And so I applied, I applied. I was finished teaching school, I was a little bit tired of it, and I did want to travel.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:06:47] Did you finish your degree?

THOMPSON: [00:06:49] I did not. I had enough hours. I had 120 hours, but I did not get a diploma. So I was able to teach and I went to school full time for three years. And then I went part time for 10 years and I never pulled it all together. So I was able to teach school because they were crying for teachers in the Catholic school. And I was a good teacher. I was a very good teacher. I think that comes quite close to being the toughest job you'll ever love, was teaching school. And so I really, first, I was going to school through all this, part time at night. So I signed up. And of course, all my girlfriends were getting married and I had done the wedding shower and the bridal shower and the bridesmaids. I was in six weddings and I did the baby showers and I did them all. I was the hostess with the mostest. And I was truly ready for something different. And I was an excellent seamstress, a superb seamstress, a tailor, almost. And I was really very willing to teach people how to do that. Little did I know that people in developing countries do that a whole lot better than I did.

THOMPSON: [00:08:07] So they put, when I did join the Peace Corps, they put me where my experience would show. I had been teaching school for many years by then, quite successfully. A grade school I taught at that time. I taught second, third and fourth grade, and then I was team

teaching. It was a new experiment, this team teaching, in seventh and eighth grade. I was, um, I taught language arts, creative writing and literature and reading to sixth, seventh and eighth grade. But I taught self-contained classrooms, and I never taught first grade, and second, third and fourth grade. And why it never happened, but I never taught fifth grade. And I taught sixth, seventh and eighth. So that's where I was when I joined the Peace Corps. I was living alone in a rooming house in Milwaukee with a very, very nice family. And I had a vast circle of friends and I have a brother and a sister who are younger than I. And my parents in Chicago at the time. And it was my father and my stepmother.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:09:27] So it sounds like I heard you say you got the bug, what was the bug for you?

THOMPSON: [00:09:33] Well, I wanted to travel. I was always doing nice things for nice people and I was working very, very hard. I was, you know, I would teach a fourth grade class. And at that time we had 54 students in a class. At one time, I had 36 boys. Thirty six 10 year old boys, and the rest were girls who made up 54. And then at three o'clock, I would have a Brownie troop. So and I loved it. I was never even tired. I loved it. And I was just thought, well, I would love to go these places that I saw the other people going and there was something I had never done, and my family had never done. You know, I was only second generation off the boat at Ellis Island, and I just really wanted to do something. I really, I was really ready to do something else.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:10:33] Mm hmm. So tell us a little bit about, um, how old were you at the time that you decided to go into the Peace Corps?

THOMPSON: [00:10:40] Twenty nine.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:10:40] You were 29. What was the reaction of your family and friends when you told them that you were going into the Peace Corps for two years?

THOMPSON: [00:10:49] Oh, they loved it.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:10:51] Yeah?

THOMPSON: [00:10:51] Oh, they loved it. They were all coming to visit and they wanted this. They had big parties. They loved it. Nobody tried to talk me out of it. Nobody. And my father, I'm sure he didn't know what to make of it. But you know, he really couldn't say anything, I'm sure, because his mother had left her country to go to this one, you know, I mean, they had no legs to stand on, any immigrants who want to go from country to country to find something better for somebody else, you know. I mean, I had a wonderful life. I was, but I had enough money to live, had a wonderful circle of friends. I wasn't running away from anything. I was just looking for something new to do, really, really. And nobody had any trepidation. My aunts adored me. I mean, I really suffer from over adoration.

THOMPSON: [00:11:50] My mother passed away when I was 11, and my mother had five sisters and they adored lovely little Bernadette. You know, I got all the attention. And of course, they were all over. They were in New York. We were in Chicago, and Daddy had three children and no wife and I was the oldest. So I was, uh, I never thought two things about washing and ironing and cooking and cleaning and getting up for school and coming home with the key with my brother and sister waiting on a stoop for me because they weren't allowed in the house by themselves. And of course, I was only a year older than my brother. But, you know, because of all that, because their sisters had died and I was, you know, doing all this so unassumingly. And so, you know, as an adult now, I can see how that would just warm their hearts. And they were loving people, these six women were the six most loving sisters that ever walked the face of the Earth.

THOMPSON: [00:13:00] They would get together at the drop of a hat. They married, only three of them married, and they married men of all different income possibilities. And so one of them was very poor. And, you know, I was a big grown up, all full-blown grown up, before I knew that uncle didn't have anything. Before I knew that we had any more or and we just had any more than the other one did. We never knew. Never,

ever, ever knew. He was a moving man. He moved furniture and the other two husbands were businessmen who worked for large corporations. And so these were wonderful women and they adored me, and my dad was a little bit of a grizzly bear, you know, and still very Italian. And he did remarry, married my mother's sister.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:13:58] Is he still alive?

THOMPSON: [00:13:58] No, no, no. He was born in 1906, died in 1994. And he married my mother's sister, who was a tad older than he, as was my mother. One year and three years. And she saved my life. If he hadn't married by the time. See, we were alone and I was doing the house for my whole teenage years from seventh grade to junior in high school. And if he hadn't have married, I would have been the little Italian girl staying home, you know, with a mustache taking care of her father, you know? It would have been rough.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:14:39] Would you have been able to go into the Peace Corps?

THOMPSON: [00:14:41] Oh, I wouldn't have been able to go to college. I wouldn't have gone. I wouldn't have gotten away from home, you know. I'm sure I'm sure I wouldn't have. I'm sure I wouldn't have. So and I probably would not have, you know, the mentality of that. I wouldn't have wanted to. I might have wanted to, but I wouldn't have thought it was my place to, you know. I was, you know, I did go to Catholic schools all the time. And when you're brought up with the nuns, you do what you're told, you know. That's something you can't break away from. So I don't think I would have done it to him and left him alone. So it was wonderful. It was wonderful.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:15:24] Can you tell me a little bit more about the project that you said Brother Ryan had at Marquette University? What was it? What kind of preparation for Peace Corps was it?

THOMPSON: [00:15:36] Oh, it was fierce.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:15:40] Was it just preparing people for that one country?



THOMPSON: [00:15:42] They were. They were preparing Peace Corps people for one group to go, as we were, one group to go together to one country. Now in Brazil, they were going to several places. I remember some, Mato Grosso stands out in my mind. Now we're talking 45 years ago, so it's. And I remember they were mostly health people. They were doing things for health. They were like pasteurizing milk. And, you know, the kinds of things that keep people from dying young. You know, which is, of course, the purpose of most of this, is to keep people alive long enough to do something. So he had, he ran a good tight ship. We had the classes. We had the psychological evaluations and the kids, then the kids were young. Now I was probably at that time, I was not much older than they, but maybe four or five years. And because they were 22, I was probably 26. And most of them, they had been, they. See, it wasn't necessary to be a college graduate at that time. So we had a lot of younger people and it was really very good.

THOMPSON: [00:17:09] Brother Ryan was a dynamo. He was a Christian brother. And of course, Marquette is a Jesuit school. So they had that there and we were busy. Those kids were busy as we were. And I think, uh, of course, my own training is more vivid in my mind. But they had, we had a lot of nice times where the staff would socialize with these volunteers, these future volunteers. So and Marquette did that several times, I don't know. And at the time. At that time, I think there's been a change. At that time they went right from Milwaukee right into their sites. Yeah, yeah.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:18:00] I wonder how they did their language training.

THOMPSON: [00:18:02] Oh, they did that. There was a lot of it. There was a lot of it. Of course, it was Portuguese. It was a lot of it, as it was for us. We had six hours a day. And I imagine they did too. Imagine they did too. And I would do the typing and, you know, I would do the office work for them.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:18:20] So tell us a little bit about the program that you were invited to. Well, before you went into the Peace Corps, was it pretty easy for you to prepare yourself? And where did you do your training?

THOMPSON: [00:18:34] Yes, it was very easy to prepare myself. I, you know, in those days, things were not such big deals, you know. You just made a decision and you did it. You know, we didn't have any. I had nothing to get rid of. I didn't have any debts. My father liked my car. He took my little Corvair. I had a '64, a little red car. And he took over the payments on that. And I was renting a room with a family in Milwaukee and I applied. The Peace Corps applications were all over. And I applied. And because I was a teacher, that's what they wanted me for, was for teaching. And of course you go, you went where you went. And I had a good record of teaching and I had good references. And of course, I worked in Dr. Topetsis' office. So my references all came from these PhDs in psychology. So I probably looked good on paper. But I was, um, I've always been a little bit short for my weight and, you know, they wanted to trim and slim there. And so they asked you how much you weighed. And I, uh, I'm trying to think. I put down. I think I weighed 165. I put down 150, and they wrote back and said, you have to lose 20 pounds.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:20:08] Oh no. You're taking after your father.

THOMPSON: [00:20:14] Yeah, that's right. Exactly. So I did not think long and hard about it. I did not. I quit my teaching job on purpose because they, um, you had to be ready to go and I didn't want to leave a school in the middle, you know, in the lurch. Because it was hard to get teachers for Catholic schools then, they didn't pay as much. And I, you know, I always love my class and my students. I didn't want to get all involved and then have to leave. So I worked at this college because that would have been easy to, uh, to leave. So that's what happened. I was living in a rooming house with Celeste Gass and her family who were, um, she was an artist, a painter, a beautiful artist. I still have some of the things. And they were very, they had three teenage kids at the time, and I had a room on their third floor, a big old house on the east side of Milwaukee. And I was very interested in going to, you know, to a foreign country to help people shape up, you know, do something with themselves, you know? And so that, it was no problem at all. It was no problem.

THOMPSON: [00:21:39] I don't remember the details. I know I was accepted. They sent around, one funny thing. They sent, oh, the FBI check people around for me. And I had been dating a young man, believe it or not, his name was Grover Cleveland. And he was a co-teacher at the Catholic school and the FBI people would go around to all my friends, you know, they ask for your references. Well, of course, Milwaukee is not that big. And we all lived in the same section more or less. So they call me, the office. Bunny, Bunny, he was here, he was here, this guy was just here. He was just here. He's going over to see Arlene. So that was fine. A little later. Bunny, Bunny, he was just here. He was just here, he's going over to see Betty. Bunny, Bunny, he was just here. He was just here. So then he gets to Grover. And Grover, of course, is very proper, and he's a former seminarian. And evidently this FBI person had the temerity to ask Grover if Miss Spagnuolo and he had ever, um.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:22:55] No way.

THOMPSON: [00:22:56] Yes. And Grover was, Grover was so insulted.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:23:05] Oh my God, I can't believe they would even ask.

THOMPSON: [00:23:09] Oh they did.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:23:09] Maybe because they were thinking about the commitment that the two of you had.

THOMPSON: [00:23:12] I doubt it. But this was 1965 this was, this was probably '64. So poor Grover, he never got over that. So that was funny, when they started asking questions about you right in the neighborhood, you know. And then you got the paper that, uh, and you know, you really just had to believe this paperwork. You couldn't get on the phone and talk to anybody, you know? So we were all, it was all set that I would go, so they give you a list of what to bring. And we bought a trunk and I gave up my room at the boarding, you know, at the Gass' house, Celeste Gass. And I guess I came home. But my mother was not one

for, um. First of all, they had a little house and they didn't have a basement, and there wasn't much for storage, storing things. And so, you know, she didn't want my boots there. So I moved away with just everything I owned with me and I gave. I was living in an apartment. That's not true that I left at. I was living in an apartment alone in Menominee Falls, Wisconsin, where I was teaching. That's true, I guess. And I did have to give some furniture away. I gave some beautiful tables I had to a girlfriend of mine to keep for me till I got back. And that was a little tacky, but she didn't want them back.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:24:54] Of course not.

THOMPSON: [00:24:58] But that was the preparation for it. And then later, I met this good friend of mine, who we're still dear friends, when I was, we were talking. I said, no, I don't have anything stored at my mother's house. And of course, he says, what did you do with your gowns? And I said, what gowns? Your prom gowns and your bridesmaids gowns? And aren't your gowns at your mother's house? No, no, I don't know what happened to my gowns. I was in six weddings before then. So I don't know what happened to those dresses, but those are things you never wear again.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:25:40] So tell me what program you were invited to join and what your job duties were.

THOMPSON: [00:25:48] OK.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:25:49] And oh, where you went to training?

THOMPSON: [00:25:52] OK. They put me where I would be best suited naturally. I was not sent to the jungle to teach people how to sew, which is where I thought I'd end up. I was put in an educational television program, which was really for experienced teachers to teach teachers in Colombia how to teach with television. There were very few books available, textbooks available, to teachers in Colombia at that time. And we were told that the Colombian teachers themselves, although they're on a higher rank in society than many, they really do not have

more than a sixth grade education. So they had a bunch of former teachers or professional teachers who would go out in the field and work in the classrooms with television programs that a different section of our group.

THOMPSON: [00:26:58] They recruited in the same group of ETV people, a cadre of, um. And you know, the number escapes me, I think was 16 or 18, producer directors. Men who had, young men who had behind them, some television experience, which was unusual, you know. This was a really a very, very unique group. It was a group of very, very, very talented people, many of whom went on to fame and success and success without fame in the motion picture industry and in the television industry and in the theater industry. So these men were educated all over the country, in the film and television departments of different universities. And many of them, including the man I married, had worked in a real, bona fide television station. Like, he worked at WGBH in Boston. So he had all that under his belt. He knew his way around a television studio.

THOMPSON: [00:28:15] And in the capital city of Colombia, Bogota, they had a television studio in 1965. And it was, you can imagine, the difficulty being in the Andes Mountains. So they wanted to have, and the only thing they had on this television was a couple of little local things and then tapes of films of American films. So they were getting together a, and it was when you think of it, a gargantuan undertaking. They were getting together an education, a PBS, an educational television set up for the country of Colombia.

THOMPSON: [00:28:58] So there were 42 or so of us teachers, and we all went to training together. We had some. We had language classes. First of all, I should tell you, we were at the State University of California. No, we were at California State University at Los Angeles. Cal State, Los Angeles. They have very definitive names out there that sound the same. And of course, it was right in the city. And we stayed, men and women, stayed. They took over an entire motel as far as I know, one of these motels that were in a horseshoe shape with a swimming pool in the middle and two stories. And we all had roommates and that's

where we all stayed, and I think we were the only ones there. It was a hotel called the Diablo Terrace, which is the terrace of the devil. So that's where we stayed, and the two girls I roomed with have become lifetime friends. So we would walk actually quite a distance, probably a mile or more, and believe it or not, I did it some days in high heels, to the campus.

THOMPSON: [00:30:24] Early on, we were busy all day from morning to night. We had six hours a day of language. Then we had cultural studies, I think, and everything we had to know, you know. God, they even showed us a childbirth movie. And we had gym class and of course, I was no good at that. But the language was the big thing. The language was the big thing. And then we had dental. They really did a ridiculous thing. They pulled out all our fillings in our teeth. Every one of us who had fillings, and I had many because I did not grow up with fluoride. And my husband had none. He grew up in Texas with fluoride, and his teeth were perfect. I had a lot of cavities with big fillings because they were being ripped off. Some Seventh Day Adventists who were dentists who would work on Sundays would do the dental work for us on Sundays. So they would send in all these kids unknowing and we just let them do it.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:31:44] Dental students?

THOMPSON: [00:31:44] No, these were dentists. They would send us all of us, all the volunteers in who had fillings, and they'd take them out and redo them.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:31:55] So they'd redo them.

THOMPSON: [00:31:56] Yeah, they take out your fillings and redo them. So 20 years later, the enamel on my teeth all fell off and I had to have crowns. Eight hundred dollars crowns they started at, and now there are seventeen hundred dollars and I feel like billing the government for those because they really were the cause of the problem. So on some days we went to the dentist. And then of course, we got all the shots, gamma globulin, and we got all of that, according to weight, how much we

weighed. And we really had a wonderful time. We had a wonderful, wonderful time.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:32:36] How long was that?

THOMPSON: [00:32:37] It was three months, it was three months. It was from January, February, March and April. And then we went a fourth month in Puerto Rico. Utilization went to Puerto Rico. The teachers went to Puerto Rico to work with the school system. And it was, the whole thing was a wonderful experience, we met marvelous people, we made good friends. The, uh, you know, there were a couple of black people. There were a lot of Jews because, you know, they're all interested in this thing. And of course, Vietnam was looming and there were a couple of draft people in there. But uh, they were all wonderful people.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:33:33] People who wanted to dodge the draft?

THOMPSON: [00:33:35] Well, yeah, either dodge it or prolong it, you know?

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:33:39] Yeah. Wow. So you were in Puerto Rico for a month learning about the school system and obviously using your Spanish?

THOMPSON: [00:33:49] Oh, sure, we lived with. Peggy and I, whom I see all the time, and Corky. Oh, was Corky with us? No, Peggy and I were there. We lived with two other girls, but it was two American girls who were doing some other kind of missionary work there, some kind of missionary work. But we worked with the school board and the school teachers, and we did our practice run really there and we made friends with the Department of Education, you know?

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:34:22] Yeah.

THOMPSON: [00:34:27] But we had our practice run there. That's where we got. And then on the 31st of May, we flew out of Puerto Rico into. Oh no, no, you know what we did? We, um, you know, I don't remember. We got a home leave in there. I think maybe after Puerto Rico, we went home.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:34:46] Mm hmm. For how long?

THOMPSON: [00:34:48] I don't know, maybe a week. What's that, your phone?

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:34:52] Yeah.

THOMPSON: [00:34:54] We went home to pack, you know, to get our trunk ready and put our sneakers in. And, you know, we were told what we would need.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:35:02] You didn't take that to Los Angeles with you?

THOMPSON: [00:35:05] Oh, no, no, no. We just took what we needed for three months.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:35:07] So it was like homely for roughly about a week.

THOMPSON: [00:35:11] A week, yeah. And to say goodbye to people and everything.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:35:17] Was there anybody who didn't go after they went home?

THOMPSON: [00:35:20] No.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:35:22] Oh, OK.

THOMPSON: [00:35:22] I don't remember that.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:35:22] So tell us a little bit about specifically what you did. Where were you located in Colombia and what was your specific job? What would you do on a daily basis?

THOMPSON: [00:35:40] We arrived in, God, I remember arriving in Bogota and we all went to the Cortiana Hotel. And the boys went down before we did, the technicians. We had several technicians to work on these TV sets, which were donated, by the way, by AID. All the television sets in the schools, because the students had no books, they had only pencils



and notebooks. So AID donated the television sets and the technicians worked on them. Fell through a few roofs here and there, but they worked on them. And so we had male technicians and all the producer directors were men and we had one or two who were liberal arts graduates who worked as the teachers of the utilization people. We were called utilization. And in fact, one of our utilization mentors is the man I told you that lives now in Berkeley and works on very famous movies and has won an Oscar.

THOMPSON: [00:36:41] So we all went to the hotel, the Cortiana Hotel, and of course, it was the first time I had ever seen a hotel lobby filled with luggage. You couldn't walk anywhere. Didn't know where your suitcase was. I mean, all this was a new experience to most of us. So we stayed in Bogota for X number of days and we had meetings in the *gobernación* and were assigned our cities. And it was the thirty, we made a song about it. So I know it was the 31st of May that we arrived in Ibagué. So that's where I was. Corky, Peggy, and I were sent to Ibagué and we were the three New Yorkers. We were the three captains. We were the three older women. We were 27, 28 and 29. And the others were all, you know, kids. And we were the teachers. We were the ones who had all this teaching under our belt. Well, we couldn't, we couldn't speak Spanish to save ourselves. So it was really, you know, they're New Yorkers and Peggy was going to Bogoter, Colombier, you know? I mean, it was really, it was really kind of funny.

THOMPSON: [00:38:03] But the Colombian people were so nice to us. And I really wish I had done this interview a lot sooner because I really forget how we made our first contact with, like, the Department of Education, you know, and how we insinuated ourselves into the system. They must have been waiting for us because they were all very, very, very lovely. But what we did was, we would go out. We lived in Ibagué, and there were plenty of schools around we could walk to, but we would often get on a bus and go out on the campo and the barrios. And God, you'd be welcomed like a rock star. You know, the kids would come running to the bus, you know? And by this time we were speaking Spanish. So we would then coordinate. We would have, the boys had been in Bogota, in the television studio with their counterparts, their Colombian

counterparts, who were also producers and directors, comfortable around television equipment, producing shows, making shows in mathematics, Spanish, music. Several others, I forget. Science.

THOMPSON: [00:39:32] They had very nice shows that we would help, the teachers would help the boys come up with ideas, fairly primitive ideas. We'd help the teachers and the men come up with pretty, pretty, you know, ideas how to how to teach fractions by lining up the Coca Cola bottle caps, you know, and you know, the banana leaves. And we just we did with what we had. And then what we did when we went out in the schools, when these shows were in the can and they could play them on a television set over and over again. There was a schedule which more or less, a television schedule, which more or less worked. And then we would go into the classroom and help the teachers. We would have a little manual. I know my husband wrote a manual himself in Spanish on lighting, on television lighting, but that's not what we needed. We needed the manual on mathematics. We needed the manual on music. We needed the manual on science. And there would be just one for the teacher.

THOMPSON: [00:40:42] And we would teach her how to engage the class with the screen using the manual she had. And that was our mostly everyday work and we had a schedule of places we went. Now to do this is not like you would do it here. You go to a school at eight or nine in the morning or 10 and you have to, press the flesh and do all the cultural things that are important. You have to have an aguardiente, which may have accounted for my ulcers 40 years later, but you would have a drink or a *tinto* or a coffee. I mean, you would socialize with the principal and the teachers. Then you would go into the school. And this is not something you would try to avoid. This was not something you would try to dismiss, or it was an enormous insult, and it was the ugly American taking over. So we would go in and then I would teach the class and I was good at it.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:41:51] You'd model it for them?

THOMPSON: [00:41:52] I would model it for them, and I'd have the kids screaming and standing up and raising their hands. And then they would do it and they would be good too. They would get it with the program. You know, it's contagious. If you give your enthusiasm, it's very, very contagious. So God knows what happened when I left. But that was a part I loved. I really loved that. And the teachers were very respectful of us. I mean, more so than we deserved. But they were, you know, we were Americans. We were Catholic, we were Kennedy, you know, at that time, you know, we were the nicest thing that ever happened there. So that was the day to day thing.

THOMPSON: [00:42:37] Then every now and then we would have an extravaganza, an *exposición*. We would take the top room in the *gobernación*, the government building, and we'd have a free day for the students. I mean, they took off all the time. And the teachers would come for a teacher seminar, and I had the unmitigated gall to give lectures in Spanish and they were wonderful. The teachers were so nice to me. And they knew that I would struggle with the language and of course I would. I would laugh about it and they would help me and I would always get my point across. And then again, we did a whole lot and I've got pictures. I asked Bill if you wanted those, but he said, that's a whole other project. But we have pictures of us and we would be dressed to the nines now. This is not Peace Corps attire.

THOMPSON: [00:43:33] I had a couple of wool suits made for me because I'm so hard to fit. And although I've been taken for Colombian a couple of times, I mean a lot down there. I would have nice power suits, business suits, made for me. So we looked very nice and we had high heels. The men always wore ties, white shirts and ties in the studio. But now I wouldn't dress like that too much when I went out in the campo because we were in mud a lot. So you dressed with the suit but not the shoes, because the teachers dressed that way, always. And in these seminars we gave, we always, they dressed with their best clothes, and so did we.

THOMPSON: [00:44:16] And we would have, it was like a teachers' convention. Peggy and I would make a map and remember the product maps you

made in sixth grade? We'd put the cotton here and a coffee there and the potatoes there. And you know, we did, we pulled upon everything we had ever used in a classroom. And I was the luckiest one because I knew the most. The other two had taught high school, and I had all this young child experience in the classroom, and I was somewhat of a crackpot and would do, you know, things that worked and that were fun. So we all did it together. And then, there are a lot of male teachers in Colombia for small children, more than we had, more than we were used to in the United States. So that was another interaction we had, with the men, and they were very, very, oh, I'd never had. I never had a teacher there act as though she wasn't thrilled to see me. It was just a wonderful, wonderful reception. And that was when we lived in Ibagué.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:45:35] Ibagué, was that a suburb of Bogota?

THOMPSON: [00:45:36] No, no. Ibagué is a town 4,000 feet down the mountain, four hours down the mountain from Bogota, and I just went there two years ago. Bogota is about 8,000 or 8,700 feet high. Ibagué is 3,700 or 4,700, I think it's three thousand feet lower. So it's a long way. It's half a day's drive. So at the halfway point we were, and I don't know how this happened, I forget the logistics or the hierarchy. I don't know how we would be assigned. They were very nice to us. We may have asked. I would really like to go to the big city. I was born in New York and raised in Chicago, and I had had, you know, I'd loved my work in Ibagué, but why not do something else?

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:46:28] How big was Ibagué?

THOMPSON: [00:46:29] I can't answer that. I don't know. It was small, but I'll tell you today it is big. Forty years later, every place I went last two years ago in Colombia.

THOMPSON: [00:46:45] Go on, we could talk forever.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:46:48] So you were talking a little bit about Ibagué.

THOMPSON: [00:46:50] Ibagué, yes. Today Ibagué is for me, and of course, I'm no expert, the most changed city in the 40 years I was gone. Ibagué has exploded. We could not even find our old neighborhood. But the *gobernación* building is still there. We stayed in a hotel directly across the street. It was very, very much *deja vu*. And at the time we were there two years ago, was when the kidnappings, FARC had kidnapped all those people. There was a banner the size they hang at the Kennedy Center. The banner must have been 50 feet by 20 feet, hanging down with pictures of these hostages. And, you know, just after that, that lady was released. You know that, I forget the name, it begins with a B, I'll think of it. So it was, you know, the political situation is still very iffy.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:47:53] So when you were talking about the in-services that you would do for teachers, that was in Ibagué?

THOMPSON: [00:47:59] That was in Ibagué. Now, so we changed in midstream, half a year, I mean, at one-year point. The three of us were split up. I think they thought we were having too much fun because everybody was, all the men were coming to Ibagué for the parties and *Folclórico* and all that stuff. And we had an apartment and we had a lot of room. We had a roof that became quite popular.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:48:27] So you lived in a house with two other women from Peace Corps as well.

THOMPSON: [00:48:32] In Ibagué. And then we split up. Peggy, who was the most, uh, let me say the most heartfelt do-gooder among us, she wanted to dig ditches. She wanted to be in the earth and helping the world. So she goes to [E] Espinal, which is the hottest place on God's green earth, on the Magdalena River, and she raises rabbits and that, she's in her element. The other girl goes to Medellin, which is a nice big city, since become the drug capital of the whole world. But she went there and these were with other people. You know, we didn't go alone. And I went to Bogota. I went to the big city. And in the big city, all I did was rent a room from a Colombian family, La Dona. And she had an

unmarried daughter who was delighted with all the young men that came around.

THOMPSON: [00:49:38] And in Bogota, our job was very much the same. But we would simply start out in a bigger city because that's what it was. But we would, we did some Bogota schools. And I really should have told Peggy about this. We did some big Bogota schools, but most of the time we took a bus out to the neighborhoods, the barrios or the campo somewhere, and we'd do our same thing out there. And then we would eat better, of course, in Bogota, the restaurants, you know, it's an intercontinental city. It's a wonderful city. And there are a lot of Italians there, a lot of Italian restaurants. And we were able to afford to eat out now and then. In fact, actually, when I think about it, I had to eat out every day because I lived with this family and they didn't feed me.

THOMPSON: [00:50:46] But my parents came down to visit and the La Dona put on the dog, oy vey! Everything, all the china, the crystal, the to do came out of the woodwork. The poor little maid Rosario was cooking up a storm. And of course, my father loved it. He's just first generation. He speaks Italian as well as he speaks English, and they were going on in Spanish and Italian and trying to communicate, you know. It was really a pleasure to see them. And of course, La Dona invited Bill and Bill, who are still my dearest friends. One is my husband and one is another man who's never married, and our dear dear friend, was the best man in our wedding, and at our 40th anniversary gave a second toast. And so Bill and Bill and Bunny were the threesome that were invited from when his parents came. And La Dona had, Rogeras was their name, had a little bit of money, and the son was a little successful, so he belonged to the country club. And he invited us plus Bill, he invited all of us to the country club. And we had shrimp *langostinos*, which I think is shrimp or lobster.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:52:12] Lobster.

THOMPSON: [00:52:13] And I mean, they really, really, really put on the dog. And then, of course, I was very flattering. And oh, we had a thing and my parents brought gifts, thank God. And it was all very European.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:52:28] Gift exchanging.

THOMPSON: [00:52:30] So my folks saw what was going on and we went to visit several places when they were here. Another young couple in our group who had married each other were house sitting in a oh-la-la decorated with original artwork from God knows where. They had a little party for my folks. And so my folks saw some very, very nice parts of Bogota, and they stayed at the Tequendama Hotel, which was the nicest hotel there. And then my father came a second time by himself. And we were, we only took cold showers. We never got hot water and we only had cold showers. And, well, maybe that's not true. We only had cold water in Puerto Rico. My face all broke out. I couldn't imagine why, just hadn't had any hot water, forgot about it. And my father would let my girlfriends come over to his hotel room and take a hot bath. So we had hot baths at this hotel Tequendama. But in Bogota. Oh, so then Daddy and I and I don't know, maybe Bill. Anyway, we took a taxicab down the mountains to Ibagué, and that was an eye opener. That was an eye opener.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:53:52] Yeah.

THOMPSON: [00:53:53] He couldn't, he could not really believe that I, that we were doing that well. Now, he was a maybe 55 year old man who was, you know, the son of immigrants, and he knew what life was about like this. And I have always said, always said, and I maintain it to this day, that living in the Bronx was the best preparation I could have had for the Peace Corps, better than any training I had. Better than any lectures I had. Better than anything that happened to me there. Living in the Bronx was a slice of the world. The way people live, you know, the peeing in the street and the hiding behind the thing and the da da da da da. I mean, and the raw meat hanging and all that stuff and cars that break down and the flying off the mountain and sick people dying. I mean, that didn't faze me the way it did a whole lot of very sheltered people.

THOMPSON: [00:54:54] So, but my father, as I said, was in the oil business, but that was also in tires, batteries, and accessories. So he was a tire man. And we had a flat tire in the cab on the way down the mountain. Well, the guy gets out and he starts changing this tire with a rubber mallet. Well, tires hadn't been changed with rubber mallets in the United States since the '20s. And you can see, you should have seen my father. He just couldn't believe it. He thought he was on a time capsule. So that was very nice, to be able to show all that to my parents, that was very, very nice. Very nice.

THOMPSON: [00:55:39] So I enjoyed the whole thing and the job in Bogota. Our replacements came in a little bit early. Let's see. Bill and Bill shared an apartment up on the hill, and we did go there two years ago, went to the very apartment. It's now occupied by some other do-gooding type people. It's almost an artist colony now, and there was a missionary living up there, the third floor walkup. But our replacements came in a little before we were, you know, our time was up. So they asked us if we wanted to go home a month early and we did. We went home in January instead of February. So any more questions?

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:56:26] Yeah. So you when you were there, you didn't travel home. Other people came to see you.

THOMPSON: [00:56:33] Oh yeah. No, we weren't allowed to go home. People snuck home. You know what? They went to Miami because it was close, you know, and I had no interest in going to Miami. But you weren't supposed to go home. Well, a few people left, a few people left, you know, they decided they didn't like it or they missed the boyfriend or they fell in love and wanted to not be married down here. They went home together. You know, that does happen.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:57:00] Right. So you and Bill, though, like, did you start dating in Peace Corps or how did that work?

THOMPSON: [00:57:06] Well, that's still a mystery. I'm not quite sure how that worked. The three of us hung around together, Bill, Bill and me. All the time. And we were fairly, um, I guess we were considered the square-



ist of the bunch. I'm not sure, but that's what it was. Because whenever one of the men, one of the young men, one of the other men would try to would get serious with a girl. He'd ask if he could, if they could come to the movies with us or could we have dinner. Like, could Janet and I have dinner with you guys tonight? Well, sure, fine. So people would ask me, Bunny.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:57:49] Keeping up appearances.

THOMPSON: [00:57:51] Evidently.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:57:51] Yeah.

THOMPSON: [00:57:51] Bunny, and I was a little bit unaware of this when it was happening, which one of them are you dating? And I said, I don't know. I really don't know. And I didn't.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:58:06] That's so funny.

THOMPSON: [00:58:08] I didn't know. So we had decided, the three of us, to have a little business when we got home, a little export and import business. And we bought several, we bought a lot of inventory from the craftsman, the artisans. And so we had my dad who was in advertising with his company, do a, you know, a lookout for three cities where we were from, Dallas, Chicago, and New York, where the three of us were from. And it turned out that Dallas was the best place to open that kind of a shot. So we were going to do that, and we had all that stuff shipped home and then we couldn't get a loan. The three of us went to the banks to try to get a loan in Dallas. And none of us had a job.

MCLAUGHLIN: [00:59:00] So what did you do with all this stuff?

THOMPSON: [00:59:03] Oh, we still have it. A lot of it, a lot of it. We still have it. And we did give some of it away. We donated some of it. The rugs we still have. My kids grew up with them. And the artwork. And so when it was clear that, and we had a few shows. Bill's mother who was a go getter, she organized an art show in Dallas for us at a lovely gallery and that

went over very well. But we didn't sell enough stuff you know to, and we really did not know what we were doing. We just had guts. And by that time, I was 31 years old and the two boys were a little younger, so it became clear that we were not going to, uh. So we were home. I still didn't know who I was dating. So we came home and we were staying. It was clear that the show was over in Dallas. The store was not going to go. The other guy was going back to graduate school and I was going back to teach in Milwaukee. And Bill asked me if I could spend the rest of his life with him. And I had to say, well, do you love me? You know, the subject never came up. So he said, he told me once and if he changes his mind, he'll let me know.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:00:27] Oh, wow. Cute.

THOMPSON: [01:00:31] So that's how. So no, we didn't date, you wouldn't dare do a thing. All the kids who were sleeping together, they're the ones who wanted to come have dinner with us when they got serious, you know. They thought, well.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:00:48] They have a good alibi.

THOMPSON: [01:00:49] Yeah, right.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:00:52] That's so funny. So how long after you came back did you get married?

THOMPSON: [01:00:55] Well, we came back. It was Lent, you know, and we were Catholic at the time, and you couldn't get married in the Catholic Church during Lent, which is stupid. But I think they've changed that. But anyway, this happened in, I think, late January when we came home and we got married April 1st, April Fool's Day, was the first Saturday after Lent, so.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:01:23] That's so cute, so that's your anniversary.

THOMPSON: [01:01:24] That's our anniversary, yes. We can always get out of it. April Fool's.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:01:31] That's so funny. Well, when you think about, what would you say is probably your biggest thing that you're most, you feel was your biggest accomplishment while you were overseas? And the pluses and minuses.

THOMPSON: [01:01:46] Well, I think bringing goodwill to people, I think making people. My biggest accomplishment was making a lot of those people feel good about themselves. You know, I think that was the the biggest thing. And then the overall picture. That's what I did personally. But the overall picture of what we all did together as our group, we brought an enormous amount of education to those people.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:02:12] Yeah.

THOMPSON: [01:02:12] And that was the goal. We trained people. See, these in-house seminars we were doing was to train counterparts to take our place. And I think we did that. I think we did that effectively. So that was, it was a successful project. It was a very successful project. There were a lot of dumb things that happened and we made mistakes. And you know, a lot of those kids were awfully young and do what young people do. But overall, I think, it was worth every cent that the American people put into it. And I think what we've gotten out of it is, you know, you return people to the United States who have a much, much greater understanding of humanity, you know, of what makes the world go round.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:03:08] Yeah.

THOMPSON: [01:03:08] I think that so. I personally don't think I made any enormous accomplishment, but I did make a lot of people feel good. And they all liked me and I taught them how to do some things for themselves. And it was very good. I made some lifetime friends for myself, but I really think we got as much, if not more, out of that than we gave.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:03:32] That's a pretty common answer that I hear from people too.

THOMPSON: [01:03:36] Yes, yes, I'll bet.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:03:37] So you and Bill, your husband. Tell us about your involvement since Peace Corps, because you have been back to Colombia.

THOMPSON: [01:03:45] We have, but only that once and only recently. You get bogged down in your own life. Now when you come back, immediately everybody wants to hear about it. So I forget what he did, frankly. But I can remember doing slide shows for groups who wanted to hear about it. And I don't know if anybody ever went in the Peace Corps because of my speech, but I had a lot of nice slides and gave a very upbeat and kind of in-depth explanation of what the whole thing was. And of course, you know, when you do this for little kids, they ask all the wrong dumb questions, you know, so you try to gear them toward the important things, you know, and not how much mud did you step in, you know, and all that stuff. But I did a lot of that when I first came back. And I taught school again for many years after I got back, in a couple of cities, and I always integrated it into that. And then, you know, we decorated our house with a lot of the artifacts we had. But I'll tell you, our children had no interest, no interest. But we've always been, you know, very willing to help wherever it's needed and to help foreign people, especially.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:05:15] Didn't you guys adopt some kids too?

THOMPSON: [01:05:15] Yeah, we do. Korita's coming over but not until about 3:00. Yeah, we have one adopted daughter. We have a son of our own. And Korita is a native of South Korea, and she now has one child.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:05:32] And I figured that from the picture on the end.

THOMPSON: [01:05:34] Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And uh, so yes. And Peggy, the girl I mentioned, has remained single, but she adopted a girl from Nepal. Peggy went back into the Peace Corps as a director, and she became the director of, oh shoot, Nepal.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:05:59] Was she ever from New Jersey?

THOMPSON: [01:06:01] She was from Queens, New York. Peggy Smith.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:06:04] It's funny because my father in law, who is from, um, what did I say, Jersey City. He was dating a woman that went into the Peace Corps, and they used to call her Peggy Peace Corps.

THOMPSON: [01:06:17] Oh, really?

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:06:17] Yeah. Cause she left to go into the Peace Corps.

THOMPSON: [01:06:20] I don't think it was she. She was a teacher before she went in, and then she got her master's degree in guidance. All of them got master's degrees except me. And Hetzer, who's just who retired a couple of years ago from UNICEF, he got his master's degree and Bill got his. Peggy went into guidance and counseling and then adopted this baby from Nepal and couldn't make enough money teaching to raise her the way she wanted to. She's never married, and so she went into business with DuPont and did better, is now retired from there and is now teaching. And she's 70 years old. She's teaching in junior colleges in Delaware.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:07:08] Wow.

THOMPSON: [01:07:08] So we all keep going. Yeah, we all keep going. Yeah, I worked until I was 70, and Bill was 69. He'll be working well past 70. Of course, I don't know that we all planned to do that.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:07:24] Well, obviously you've enjoyed what you've done.

THOMPSON: [01:07:27] Yes, we have. We have. We have. After I finished teaching, I opened a, I studied interior decorating and I did that for 13 years. I had my own business and I guess I said that. Uh, but Corky used to say, so that those kinds of things show up early. When I did go in the Peace Corps, my very best friend had already had five children. She had five children in seven years, and I'm picking up the pieces of that

now. They're all in their fifties and she's gone and they're all screwed up. But one of them's my god child whom I truly worry about, so that should not happen. But at any rate, uh. I used to, they were my kids. I loved these kids. I was the old maid schoolteacher. So and their last name was Kirby. So my one roommate said, anything you bring in this place, anything, Bunny's going to either put flowers in it, hang it on the wall, or send it to the Kirby kids. So don't bring anything in this house.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:08:34] Was this a friend of yours from the neighborhood or was this a Peace Corps friend?

THOMPSON: [01:08:37] This is the Peace Corps neighborhood. This was our apartment in Ibagué. Yeah, yeah, she's going to put flowers in it, hang it on the wall, or so. I was decorating a long time.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:08:48] So she had her kids when she came back from Peace Corps.

THOMPSON: [01:08:50] Yeah, she had one. The friend that said that had married a man 20 years older than she. So she's a widow now, and she had one child. But the third girl, Peggy, never married anybody and her daughter that she adopted from Nepal, is married and was teaching for a long time, was teaching English literature, Victorian literature, to gifted and talented high school kids, believe it or not. This girl from Nepal is speaking in English, teaching literature.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:09:25] It truly is an international world.

THOMPSON: [01:09:28] It's amazing. It's amazing. So she's changed jobs now. But um, they've all been successful as far as I know. We've lost a few. I mean, some of, of course, we're getting old. Some of us have died, but some of them went off the deep end and, you know, won't keep in touch and, you know, are not interested in the reunions and things. There's quite a cadre of them that do and keep in touch.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:09:57] Well, is there anything from your interview that you feel like you want to add or any other?

THOMPSON: [01:10:04] Well, you know, the minute you go I'll think of it. You know, what do we do with, tell me what we do with any kind of pictures or photographs or letters or documents?

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:10:14] This actually, well let me just thank you first and then we can talk about it. But thank you so much for taking the time and giving your interview. I'm sure you know, generations to come will really enjoy this interview.

THOMPSON: [01:10:27] Well, I hope so. I want them to know that we did have a wonderful time and there was nothing, nothing terrible about it.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:10:34] It's just neat too to see how Peace Corps has evolved over the years and how things were done when you were in service.

THOMPSON: [01:10:41] Well, that's right. I'm sure it's very much changed.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:10:44] It has.

THOMPSON: [01:10:44] Very much changed. I'd be interested to know what they're doing now.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:10:47] Although, you know, the three goals of Peace Corps are the same, you know, the basic things are still the same.

THOMPSON: [01:10:55] You know, what I think has stayed with us innately is flexibility. They always said in training, and I had never heard that word too much, until I was 29 years old. But they always said, you've got to be flexible. Flexibility, flexibility. You've got to be able to change plans in the middle of the stream. You got to be able to go with the flow, you've got to be. And we are the two, the oldest people we know who can really do anything at any time and change plans. Don't bring this, bring that. Don't come at 3:00, come at 4:00. Don't do this, don't do that. Even my daughter is so rigid. They're so rigid. They change their minds. I said, just don't worry, Daddy and I'll do whatever you want. You know, whatever you want, you want a Thanksgiving in Paris, we'll

be in Paris. You want to come late, we'll be late. You want, you know, just, you know. So that did stay with us because that was not always a trait of mine. Bill might have been a little more flexible, but not. Although he's a musician and that's precise and he was a television director for that. You know, when you fade to black, it's got to go. Bingo. It's, you know, things are timed in television and in organ playing, they're timed perfectly. But aside from that, he's incredibly flexible. So that's good.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:12:23] Flexibility.

THOMPSON: [01:12:23] Yeah. You know, I changed my mind about this. Well, what do you think? You know, it's important and gets you through a lot.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:12:31] It sure does.

THOMPSON: [01:12:32] So and my daughter hasn't learned that yet.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:12:35] You know, she has a young baby so.

THOMPSON: [01:12:39] Yes. Oh, she has gotten so relaxed. I can't believe it.

MCLAUGHLIN: [01:12:43] Thank you so much.

THOMPSON: [01:12:44] You're very welcome, Wendy. I was glad to do it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]