



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK  
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

---

**Interview with Donna Scheeder**

**Interview Date:** February 7, 2009  
**Interviewer:** Stephanie Deutsch  
**Transcriber:** Nancy Lazear

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

**DEUTSCH:** I'm with Donna Scheeder at my house on East Capitol Street and it is the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 2009. Donna, why don't you start off by telling me where are you from.

**SCHEEDER:** I am originally from Buffalo, NY, the City of Good Neighbors.

**DEUTSCH:** Is that what it's called?

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, that's the nickname. It's true. It reminds me a lot of Capitol Hill because everybody knows each other and takes care of each other and looks out for each other.

**DEUTSCH:** Do you think that is because of the horrible winter weather?

**SCHEEDER:** Yes, that's part of it but it's, I think it's also the houses and the porches and the church-based, you know, the parish and all of that stuff. Everybody's kids went to the same school, all the parents knew each other.

**DEUTSCH:** Yep that is part of what makes it, makes it all work.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. Yep.

**DEUTSCH:** So were you from a big family or ...

**SCHEEDER:** No, I'm an only child and my parents were originally from Philadelphia and they moved to Buffalo after the war when Westinghouse opened up a plant there so I was an only child and we had no relatives in Buffalo.

**DEUTSCH:** So you needed those neighbors.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, except my grandmother lived with us.

**DEUTSCH:** Uh huh. So your father worked for Westinghouse.

**SCHEEDER:** Westinghouse for over 50 years. He started out actually when he was still in school.

**DEUTSCH:** Uh huh. What kind of work did he do?

**SCHEEDER:** Well by the time I showed up, he was a customer service manager but the Buffalo plant made large defense-related engines and like they built the engine for the nuclear submarine the Nautilus. I remember that.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah.

**SCHEEDER:** Shipments and stuff like that. So he was, he was always the interface between people who were wondering where their stuff was. [Laughs] ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... important skills.

**SCHEEDER:** ... and they made sure that the things moved along, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**DEUTSCH:** So you grew up there and you went to high school.

**SCHEEDER:** I went to Mount St. Joseph Academy.

**DEUTSCH:** Private.

**SCHEEDER:** Private, yes. And actually, it was across the street from Canisius College and my major activity in high school was debating and we were actually championship debaters. We actually got to go to the Nationals, national finals so that was a lot of fun because we'd get to go on to the debate trips out of town ... The harder we worked and the better we were, the more often we got to go out of town for the weekend. [Laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** That's quite an incentive.

**SCHEEDER:** It was a great incentive, yes. [Laughing]

**DEUTSCH:** Do you remember any of the topics you debated?

**SCHEEDER:** Oh yes, well because there's two, the national topic is the same so nuclear weapons should be controlled by an international organization was one, and then the other one was about Medicare and Social Security and I don't remember exactly how [it was worded].

**DEUTSCH:** Plus c'est change. [Laughing]

**SCHEEDER:** Pardon?

**DEUTSCH:** It hasn't changed much.

**SCHEEDER:** Right. Exactly.

**DEUTSCH:** And where was the Nationals?

**SCHEEDER:** New York City.

**DEUTSCH:** That must have been exciting.

**SCHEEDER:** It was. [Laughing]

**DEUTSCH:** And, I—dare I ask did you win?

**SCHEEDER:** And the World's Fair was going on at the same time I think, too.

**DEUTSCH:** '65? Or ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah. Yep. That would be right.

**DEUTSCH:** So did you win?

**SCHEEDER:** No. [Laughs] Well, we lasted, we lasted two rounds and it was like about a five round tournament. I mean, it was pretty, you know, it was pretty intense but it was interesting ... I mean, a lot of the people, some of the best debate teams in the country were in the New York City, New York State area so the New York State Championships were pretty competitive in themselves.

**DEUTSCH:** Yep, so you represented New York State?

**SCHEEDER:** Us and the top three teams got to go.

**DEUTSCH:** Uh huh. [Pause] What got you interested in debate?

**SCHEEDER:** The nuns. [Laughter] The nuns thought that I should be debating. I don't know if it was because I argued with them or what. [Laughing]

**DEUTSCH:** I heard Tim Russert speak once, and he said that when he was in his Catholic middle school a nun kind of said to him, "Timothy, you're going to do journalism," and he said "Yes, Sister." [Laughter] [Pause] So, after high school?

**SCHEEDER:** Well then, I wanted to go to, I wanted to go to the Georgetown School of Foreign Service, and it was, at the time I had decided that I wanted to be, for a while I was in a Clare Booth Luce period. I wanted to be like Clare Booth Luce. Why, I don't know, but it ... so I was going to go to Foreign Service School, and actually a lot of the reasons too were the courses were all history, government, and economics, the kinds of things I was interested in and I could stop taking science and math, for example. So, but they only let 25 women in a class of the Foreign Service School, so this was, this was going to be pretty difficult, and ... but fortunately, the priest from Canisius who was ...

**DEUTSCH:** How do you spell Canisius?

**SCHEEDER:** C-A-N-I-S-I-U-S. It's one of the, it's the Jesuit College in Buffalo.

**DEUTSCH:** C-A-N-I ...

**SCHEEDER:** S-I-U-S.

**DEUTSCH:** Canisius.

**SCHEEDER:** Canisius. Yeah. So, Father Mooney had been the roommate through the Seminary with the priest who was now the Head of Admissions at Georgetown. So he wrote a recommendation for me and that helped. I mean, it turned out that out of 25 of us, somebody had, somebody had something that got them to ...

**DEUTSCH:** Some kind of contact?

**SCHEEDER:** Contact. Yeah, yeah.

**DEUTSCH:** So you got in?

**SCHEEDER:** So I got in! Yes, I did. And then of course, though, the rude awakening was the first time the State Department came to recruit our class, and it was our freshman year, and so all of, all of us went and we are sitting, you know, as girls are wont to do, we are sitting right up in the front but they came and they looked and they said “Gentlemen this, Gentlemen that” and we are all looking around going this doesn’t look like, this doesn’t sound like they are really interesting in having us in the Foreign Service. But I did take the test because I wanted to see if my educ—what, what, if this education had actually prepared me to do anything and I passed the written and I took the orals, but by the time it was getting around to maybe like offering me a job, it was also clear that it was, it was going to be difficult and it really wasn’t until the Carter administration that they started, that the Foreign Service started ...

**DEUTSCH:** Welcoming women.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah. So instead I went to the Library of Congress. [Laughing]

**DEUTSCH:** OK, so you did Georgetown and that was what brought you to Washington.

**SCHEEDER:** Yes. And I never left. I mean, I remember my freshman year my Congressman had, the first time I came to Capitol Hill was to sign Christmas cards and address them in my Congressman’s Office, which was in the Longworth Building and I thought at the time this is the most exciting thing. [Laughs] Because I have always loved politics and so being here, being here and then getting this job in the Congressional Research Service, it was sort of the like the, like a bit of a dream come true.

**DEUTSCH:** So your first job was at the Congressional Research Service ...

**SCHEEDER:** ... Research Service and I stayed there 'til about five years ago when I got recruited to be the Director of the Law Library Services at the Law Library.

**DEUTSCH:** So you didn't actually ever go to library school?

**SCHEEDER:** No, and I'll tell you why. Because library school at the time was very traditional librarianship and it was, I don't think I was there a year when we got our first computers and databases and stuff and so, and CRS, being what it was, we were able to get resources to do new things all the time. So we were pretty much on the cutting edge of what was going on and my boss who, bosses who are professional librarians, said I don't really think you are going to get anything out of this and going at this point. Now, in the last 10, maybe 10 to 15 years, library schools have really modernized. They have ... As a matter of fact, library schools now, it's more, it's more like, it's information schools, rather than schools of library science but they're focused on the content as opposed to the processes of cataloguing and it's taken another step and so I say to people I talk to, I go to talk to graduating library students all the time because I became active in my professional association and I am a past President of SLA. As a matter of fact—this is my year for awards—about a week after I talked to Steve and Tommy and they told me about the award, I got a call from the current President who said in June the convention is here in Washington and I am going to be inducted into the Special Libraries Hall of Fame. [Laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** I'm not sure what that entails, but ...

**SCHEEDER:** It's a lifetime achievement award kind of thing so, I'm ...

**DEUTSCH:** And the SLA is the ...

**SCHEEDER:** Special Libraries Association. Special libraries are services for a specific clientele. For example, a law library is a special library in that it serves the legal profession and its collections and everything center around the law. The Washington Post has a news library. There's a whole news division.

**DEUTSCH:** Right, and that's a special library.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah. So that's as opposed to public libraries or academic research libraries. So I was the President of the Special Libraries Association. [Laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** So what were you doing at the Congressional Research Center when you started?

**SCHEEDER:** Well, when I started I was a GS-5 library assistant. Basically, we answered a lot of requests because when I first started there were no computers. So if you had somebody, a Member would

say I need a list of all the bills in the Congress on health insurance and the summary of them. So there was a printed publication that the Service did. So you would get a shopping cart and a lot of bookmarks and you would roll over to the shelf and you'd get the index out and you would stand there and put the bookmarks in the thing. Then you would take it to the world's slowest photocopy machine and you had to, I mean, I weighed pretty much the same as what I weigh now so you had to ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... which is not much ...

**SCHEEDER:** ... crack open the spine [laughs] and press down on it and then this thing would go ding, ding, ding, ding, dong, and it would take hours on something like health insurance where there was a lot of bills. So one day they said we are going to show you something new now. We have started this, it was SCORPIO System, and I forget what SCORPIO was the acronym of but they said now you can put in a subject and it will give you the list of bills out with the summary if you want them. So we tried it out and it's not as fast as it would be now but instead of two hours to do this, five minutes, you had your ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... it's like magic.

**SCHEEDER:** [laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** So SCORPIO was a very, very early computer?

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. It was the first automated bill tracking system, legislative information system. And we, so we would do things like that, or a Member would giving a speech and they would want background information on something so you would go and compile articles and some material.

**DEUTSCH:** How big was the staff of the Congressional Research Center at that point?

**SCHEEDER:** When I first started, it was 300 or so, 350. And then in 1970, they passed the Legislative Reorganization Act and so what happened was they, Congress decided that it should also, we should also be doing research and analysis and they said that we could more than double the staff. So over the next five-six years, there was a lot of hiring going on which in some ways was really great for me because the people who were already there were the experienced people and so we were being given more difficult and complex things to do and other people were coming at entry level. So in some ways I had a meteoric rise [laughs] at the Congressional Research Service. So I became the Coordinator of Congressional Information Services by the late 70's and that involved taking in all these questions ... we organized into teams around subject areas, taking in these requests, assigning them, reviewing responses and then trying to build resources because the demand was always so high that if we didn't anticipate what the issues were going to be and what we were going to be asked we would never be able to do the work. But at the

same time, we had the first New York Times information bank which is what the precursor of LEXIS/NEXIS is and it was so big, this computer thing [laughs], it looked like one of the ... ever see that computer, ever see the movie "Desk Set" with Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn? Well, she's the librarian and he comes in and he's convinced that he's going to be able to get rid of all these librarians and they were all worried ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... and just use machines?

**SCHEEDER:** And just use the machine. But it looked like this set piece from this earlier movie and we had to build a closet because it was so loud so you went into the closet to do your computer search [laughs]. But, again, it was amazing, I think we had the first one, we had one of the very first ones that was sold to anybody, at CRS. So that's why I say when people said to me there's no sense in you going to library school, it's because we were using stuff that nobody else had.

**DEUTSCH:** You were already ahead of the curve.

**SCHEEDER:** Yes.

**DEUTSCH:** So did you move to the Hill when you got your job at CRS?

**SCHEEDER:** Actually, moved to the Hill in 1971 because at the time I was married to Louis Scheeder and Louis ...

**DEUTSCH:** L-O-U-I-S?

**SCHEEDER:** Yes. ... was hired by Richmond Crinkley to be the Director at the Folger Theatre Group. This was the first theatre at the Folger Theatre. And Richmond lived at number 10 Third Street in the house and we moved into the apartment at number 12 Third Street and so that's how we ended up moving to Capitol Hill. Because we lived from '69 to January of '71 out in, right across the bridge in ... not Rosslyn because Rosslyn ...

**DEUTSCH:** Columbia Village?

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah, up in that area.

**DEUTSCH:** I lived there too.

**SCHEEDER:** Well then you know what it used to be like there [laughs].

**DEUTSCH:** Actually, I loved it. I loved Columbia Village because of all the trees and for \$100/month I had a really nice apartment.

**SCHEEDER:** Did you used to go to that old movie theater that was on Wilson Boulevard?

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah, yeah. OK, so 1971, you're living on Third Street, and did you just love it ...

**SCHEEDER:** And that was like the little Third Street commune. There were probably ... it was a lot of fun. We would have, sometimes we would go out to the AV a lot. You'd come home from work and people, whoever was around, you might do something that night or not and then, of course, we always had actors around at the house.

**DEUTSCH:** Did the Folger own the house on that block at that time?

**SCHEEDER:** Yes, they owned just about the whole block. They owned those houses, O.B. Hardison who was the Director of the Library lived in the house that they had bought for him and his family. So it was kind of ... neat ... and then Margot Kelly was great also. She was always a great supporter of things going on because she lived, she still ...

**DEUTSCH:** She lives right there ... so that whole block that was kind of a ...

**SCHEEDER:** And then we decided we wanted to buy a house so we started looking for houses. That was a very interesting process because at the time the Hill was, you were in an urban area but there was more crime than is going on now.

**DEUTSCH:** It was an issue in a way that it isn't now.

**SCHEEDER:** ... isn't now. So we were looking and then of course we didn't want to be too far from the Theatre, so we looked up on Eighth Street, was the eastern boundary, Maryland Avenue was the northern boundary, and I think maybe South Carolina or down that way, so it was kind of like a much, we considered the Hill to be a much narrower, more narrowly defined place than it certainly is now. And Barbara Held ... so we started looking at open houses and stuff, and then we saw a house on Seventh Street SE we kind of liked, but I forget why it didn't work out. But a couple months later this real estate agent called and said I don't know if you remember me, but you looked at this house on Seventh Street, I have another one very much like it. And so we went and we looked. And it was strange because it didn't have a lot of furniture in it and I opened up the cupboards, there were a couple of wine glasses in there. It was a lovely house and it had been ... We go up to the master bedroom and there is a four cornered, lovely Colonial-like four cornered poster bed, but the wrapping paper was still on the bed posters and there was a folding chair next to the bed and it had a half-drunk drink with a cigarette put out in it. And I thought well this is really interesting [laughs] because I notice stuff, so I'm saying who owns the house ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... does someone live here?

**SCHEEDER:** ... who owns the house? And they said well all we can tell you is it's S & O Corporation in Neptune, New Jersey. So I go back to the Library and I begin my research. I go out to the main reading room, I'm getting out the directories, I'm trying and thinking that maybe it's Standard Oil ... So anyway, a couple of days later there is an article in the *New York Times*, and this is all during Watergate, you remember Watergate had gone on. So, Joseph [J. Maraziti], it's a picture of the house, and it's a story about he had a woman living in this house making all of this money on his Congressional payroll, so this is who had been in the house. And the *New York Times* had called his office to ask for her and nobody knew who she was [laughs].

**DEUTSCH:** Oops.

**SCHEEDER:** So we knew that we could probably, that it was probably a buyer's market for that house. [laughs] So the house could be on the scandal tour, but not because of me.

**DEUTSCH:** So you bought the house? Seventh Street SE?

**SCHEEDER:** North Carolina Avenue SE, right across from Brent School. It's funny because I remember looking at the house long before, remember when we had the gas crisis and we all had to get in line ...

**DEUTSCH:** Yes I sure do.

**SCHEEDER:** Well, I used to get in line just about in front of the house because the line went up North Carolina Avenue, down Third Street, and then turned the corner at C and into the Exxon Station. So I spent some time in front of that house in a car. [laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** And you liked it?

**SCHEEDER:** Yes, it was a nice block. It is a nice block because the houses are set back off from the street. And then the little park is right over there. Folger Park. But at the time, the American, how the neighborhood changes. The American Legion used to be a mystery because no, when we first moved there ...

**DEUTSCH:** That was right on the corner?

**SCHEEDER:** Uh huh. It was all dark, nobody knew anybody that was in there, nobody knew anything about it. But it's interesting, over time, the Vietnam Veterans have taken over from the older people that were there. And they're, and it's interesting, for example, Ted Gay was ... but he was one of the first black people to ever go in the Legion because the Legion was not exactly integrated in the beginning, or it didn't appear to be. So over time it's great, they're very, they do all this volunteer work and raise money

for community things so it's totally renovated, the building, and they are great neighbors. But when I first moved there, it was strange ...

**DEUTSCH:** So you're still in that house?

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. Oh, yeah. I'm very glad about the Capitol Hill Village people. I figure if I join that I'll be able to stay in the ... [laughs] ... stay in the house.

**DEUTSCH:** So when did you start getting involved with the Market? How did that get started?

**SCHEEDER:** Well let me tell you a little bit, I got involved with the Market later because of Sharon, but the reason, what I started getting involved in ... Ted Gay was on the DC Commission on the Arts with Louis, and so we became very good friends and Ted was getting the, he was trying to get the Democratic Party more organized locally. So they were starting the Ward 6 Democrats. So he encouraged me to go to this meeting and it was real interesting. They said we are going to have this caucus and actually it was a big meeting and we were all supposed to go off by precincts. So I found out I was in Precinct 89. So I go off and there's like seven people there and the instructions were among you, you decide who is going to convene the thing and how you are going to work this stuff. So we go over and this guy takes charge right away. He says you, you will do this, you will do that, and it was kind of like the two people he knew. So this was, I am the kind of person that, if you keep me from volunteering or doing something, or if you tell me I can't do something, that's when I'm going to do it. [laughs] So I decided that I was going to run for Precinct Captain and I was telling the story in the Hawk 'n' Dove to some friends and they said, well that wasn't right ... so we'll help you. So it turned out that I had 40 people at this meeting, and the meeting was set up for about eight people because that's what they thought ... [laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** Because nobody ever comes.

**SCHEEDER:** Right. So that was my first foray into elected politics, winning this Precinct Captain thing, and so Ted and I ...

**DEUTSCH:** So what year, that would have been like ...

**SCHEEDER:** That was in the 70's. Late 70's. Somewhere in the 70's. And I started working on people's campaigns and stuff too and ...

**DEUTSCH:** That was about the time Marion Barry was elected.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. For example, Ted had gotten me to volunteer after I left work, took a little leave from work, and I went up ... This is the kind of the way you used to run campaigns. People would go

inside, you knew who your voters were supposed to be, they would be checking off, so that by 4:00 you had people who hadn't shown up yet. So then there would be a phone bank in a real estate office and the volunteers like me would go in and then we would call all the numbers and remind the people to vote, remind them that they really needed to be there, etcetera, and it was really interesting because you identified your voters, you made sure they got there, and you figured out what the number was that you needed to win based on past ... Now there wasn't too much past election history in the 70's because we didn't ...

**DEUTSCH:** Right.

**SCHEEDER:** I mean I think I voted in the first election here that we were allowed to vote for city, I remember voting for Betty Ann Kane for School Board and I was very excited that I got to vote for something for the District of Columbia. [laughs] But Nadine Winter was our councilperson. Were you around?

**DEUTSCH:** I remember Nadine.

**SCHEEDER:** And that was, I think the people of Capitol Hill did not feel Nadine was responsive to our needs so part of what everything was going on was trying to position people to run against, someone good to run against her and win. For a while I thought Ted was going to run, but he decided not to do that. So, but the next step was, there was a Democratic State Committee seat open and it was going to be a special election. So this was, so it was decided that I was going to run for this Democratic State Committee which I did. And it was another one of these things, I mean people worked really, really hard at identifying voters and getting them there. And Nadine had a candidate and I think that, I forget what the final totals were, but it was like for every one vote she had, I had three. So this was kind of a, this was a signal to Nadine that things were not going well, changing. So with the Market I remember the Market wars, which I used to try to stay away from because it never seemed like ... I remember the first, going to a meeting where we called it the "Rouse-ification" because they unveiled these plans and there were all these little cutesy kiosks and stuff and I think everybody sensibly looked at the Georgetown Market and what had happened, what was happening to that, where it had gone from more of a market to a tourist attraction ...

**DEUTSCH:** Like the Dean and Deluca?

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah, that we didn't want that. And then what I refer to as "Ye Olde" as opposed to being old [laughs].

**DEUTSCH:** Right. Ye Olde Market.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah. [laughs] So but that, as you recall, there were several, then there was the thing about Marion Barry and Harold [Brazil] wanted to put the grocery store in there, and there was all this stuff that went on, and arguing and so I ...

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

**SCHEEDER:** Market wars ... The Market wars.

**DEUTSCH:** The Market wars ... the late 70's?

**SCHEEDER:** Well, and it extended for ... until Sharon. When Sharon became the Council member, she wisely said ...

**DEUTSCH:** That would be Sharon Ambrose.

**SCHEEDER:** Yes. She said OK, I've had it. [laughs] I mean, the place is going to fall down if we don't find some way to figure this out. So she brokered the deal and she managed to get all the stakeholders to the table and craft legislation that—there are people now who ask me all the time what is this “right of first refusal,” for example, why can people stay there. And I say because that's what it took, part of the fear was that people were going to be thrown out, and that's what ...

**DEUTSCH:** Part of the fear was from the merchants ...

**SCHEEDER:** Right. The merchants and some of the community too because the merchants had, particularly the—I'd say, particularly the indoor merchants and the farmers who tend to be there all the time and the flea market, half of it is stable, the other half people kind of come and go.

**DEUTSCH:** And the flea market didn't exist ...

**SCHEEDER:** The flea market started up in ... it existed during the wars. It was just starting to come around but it wasn't anything like it is today. But it's been there for quite a long time. Part of why the Market works is they're beloved by their customers. There's that great ability they have to garner public support because they have personal relationships with their customers.

**DEUTSCH:** ... and that's why we all like shopping there ...

**SCHEEDER:** And that's why we like it. That's why we love it so much. So, anyway, she managed to get the legislation passed, which one of the very key factors of it was this Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee. The legislation is very detailed and very prescriptive and the reason that it is that

it is a product of the lack of trust that existed between all the parties by that point. And so when people don't trust each other everything has to be written down and that's exactly what happened. So then things seem to have calmed down; after that and they got things going you weren't picking the *Hill Rag* every day, every month, and finding something else about what people didn't like about the Market. At least this was my perception of it. So when Sharon asked me if I would be her—this was a couple maybe years had gone by—if I would be her appointee, I said yes that I would.

**DEUTSCH:** Did Sharon have one appointee on the Committee?

**SCHEEDER:** Yes. And the mayor has one appointee, and then it's the Advisory Neighborhood Commission has an appointee, Stanton Park, Capitol Hill Restoration Society, EMPDC, which was the Eastern Market Preservation and Development Committee, which was Mary Farrell and those folks, and then each of the three merchant groups. And then there's a community representative, the independent community member who was Tom Kuchenberg.

**DEUTSCH:** And how was he chosen?

**SCHEEDER:** He is chosen, people expressed their interest and then the rest of the EMCAC members elect from among those people who have expressed an interest in being the independent community member. So when I got there Ellen Opper-Weiner was the Chair and she was the mayor's representative as well. And so ...

**DEUTSCH:** And what were you charged with doing?

**SCHEEDER:** I was charged with representing ...

**DEUTSCH:** I mean, what was the EMCAC ...

**SCHEEDER:** Oh, EMCAC is, it's got two major things it does. It is to advise the city and review, for example, all contracts, etc. on renovation and historic ... any major capital improvements that are going to be done there. So before I got there, there had been all kinds of studies and things trying to get the city to put ... when are we going to be ready to get the money to put out a contract to do the renovations, but one of the overriding concerns too was trying to get a situation where we could get everything done at one time because we didn't want to keep tearing the Market up because it's really hard to conduct business if you are tearing the place up all the time. So it was getting the major lists of things that were going to be part of the Request for Proposal of what we wanted to have done. And I must say that one of the people, probably Monte Edwards, who is the representative from Stanton Park Neighborhood Association, he chairs the capital improvement subcommittee, and it is amazing to me the kind of care and attention to

detail and everything else that goes into the work of him and his committee. They had already done quite a bit and part of the problem by the point that I got there with the Market is that, different administrations and even sometimes within the same administration, the heads of the Office of Property Management turn over, and so nobody knows where these studies go to, the studies that have been done ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... they are lingering on someone's desk but the person is ...

**SCHEEDER:** ... in a file folder somewhere in a cabinet drawer that nobody ... and because they weren't giving to them, nobody thinks to take them out, like maybe I better study before I start working on this. In the library world, one of the big areas of study is called knowledge management and it's about taking both your tangible assets like studies and things but also the intangible stuff that is in people's head and trying to organize the knowledge so you've got a smarter organization. One of the things I have discovered that the District government really could do some work [laughs] in the knowledge management area, but that's another story.

So there was that going on, but the other thing was the management, because the biggest areas of complaint when I got there was about the management at the Market. One of the first things I was given was the business plan and I read it, because they were required when they were hired, part of the application process was to present a business plan, and the business plan was part of what they were going to be supposedly evaluated on. But they weren't doing any of it.

**DEUTSCH:** The managers.

**SCHEEDER:** Yes. And the problem was, the problem with the managers was that they took a property management approach to it. In other words, we collect the rent, we pay the utility bills, although they didn't always do that. You know, you do the managing the property part but it's a business so all the business ...

**DEUTSCH:** Sort of status-quo oriented rather than how can we do better.

**SCHEEDER:** Yes. And how can we take this business and promote it, and find other ways to bring new customers in and to do all the kinds of things that you do if you're looking at it as a business, which they had in their business plan but they ignored. [laughs] And the city wasn't paying any attention to what they were doing; the city's response and this was—their attitude was as long as there is somebody there, sort of like as long as the seat is warm, we're happy because we have other stuff to do. And in some ways I can understand this because the Office of Property Management is nowhere big enough to deal with all of the stuff that it has to deal with. I mean, when I've gone to Robin Eve Jasper's office now and I see this

map with the pin things on it of everything they are responsible for—property—you think no human being on God's earth could ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... could actually do that ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. It's a very hard job. But she's the best; I've been through three. She's the third Director of OPM that I've dealt with. She is excellent; she is really, really good.

**DEUTSCH:** And what is her name?

**SCHEEDER:** Robin Eve Jasper.

**DEUTSCH:** Robin ...

**SCHEEDER:** ... Eve Jasper. She's the first person that is concerned about the quality of what goes on at Eastern Market and it's wonderful. And she works with us to try to find ways to make the right thing happen. So I can't say enough good about her; it's been a huge change for the good. So I wasn't there very long and usually we'd go out after our monthly meetings, EMCAC meetings ... So EMCAC does two things: it's to advise the Market management on the operations of the Market. We also have an Application Advisory Review Committee because part of what we're charged to do is to maintain the character of the Market which includes keeping the balance between the activities and so we have an Application Advisory Review Committee to advise new people who want to come sell, so that's part of it. And then of course one of the things, because the city wasn't doing it at the time, was we decided that we would look at, we would give the Market manager some objectives. Because part of what was happening was people were in the weeds, they were complaining about individual things, and we needed to take a bigger picture, so we formed the Market Operations Committee and what we did was EMCAC consulted and we all agreed on, I think it was like six objectives, and we made the market manager report [laughs]. I sort of treated this like I treat managing stuff at the library.

**DEUTSCH:** Well, the subject matter is different but the process ...

**SCHEEDER:** ... the process is the same. So that helped bring some structure to what we were doing which I think was important because it didn't have that. So, anyway, we were working on those kinds of things and I don't think I was there a full year and the elections were coming up at EMCAC and so we always go out after our meetings to Tunncliff's, a bunch of us. So we were at Tunncliff's.

**DEUTSCH:** Where did you have the meetings?

**SCHEEDER:** We used to have them in the Natatorium room. But we never know what we were going to find [laughs]. So we have moved to the old Naval Hospital but now pretty soon we are going to have to move out of the old Naval Hospital and we'll either go back ... Actually what I would like to be able to do is once the Market is open is have our meetings in the North Hall because now that the Market is under unified management ... See, that's the other thing ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... the split ...

**SCHEEDER:** It became very important to us to try to realize the vision that was in the legislation that hadn't been realized because of the ... Before I came on to the Market, of course, there was all this business with Market 5 Gallery suing the city, and the court settlement.

**DEUTSCH:** So Market 5 sued the city ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yes.

**DEUTSCH:** Early 70's?

**SCHEEDER:** No, no, no. The 90's, this was over the, when the city was taking over the Market, new management was coming and stuff.

**DEUTSCH:** And they wanted to get it under unified management ...

**SCHEEDER:** Right.

**DEUTSCH:** Then Market 5 sued ...

**SCHEEDER:** Right. So there was a settlement.

**DEUTSCH:** And they retained management of the North Hall.

**SCHEEDER:** They retained management of the North Hall and the outside space out there, the plaza as well. The space that the flea market at the Market is in. And John [ed: Harrod] had that space on Saturdays and then Tom Rall had it on Sundays and Carol Wright has the school [ed: Hine Junior High School playground] on Saturdays, I think. It's all very complicated; it was never really, really clear. But what didn't happen was that any of the revenue, I mean one of the issues was there was back rent owed all the time. So for us, what we wanted, and again, this was part of the push of saying we wanted to put the ... not only was it the performance of EMV but the real push behind wanting to get a new RFP for management was to try to realize the vision of the unified management so that was the first and foremost reason to do this. And because I always said that if EMV wants to apply ...

**DEUTSCH:** EMV?

**SCHEEDER:** Eastern Market Ventures which was the name of their company [ed: the company managing Eastern Market]. Because it says in the legislation that it has to be a not-for-profit, but what happens usually is profits form a not-for-profit if they get the RFP and that's what they did. Now EMV, this is another whole thing to the history, but at the same time this was going on, they went ... After I was Chair, we saw a thing in the paper where Annapolis was going out and was considering them to manage the Annapolis market and they called it Annapolis Market Ventures or something Company. So, I thought, well, maybe I ought to give Ellen Moyer a call and just tell her that they work for us and that she might be interested in doing some reference checking [laughs] because I could fill her in on some things about how things were working with us. I was trying to be diplomatic. So I called the office and I left this message and I said "I think you want to tell her she really does want to talk to me." Never called me.

**DEUTSCH:** This is the person at the Annapolis ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yes. She is the mayor of Annapolis. Never called me. Well now the place ... they are suing the city, I mean it's a mess and the place is totally fallen apart. I think they have one tenant left in it. You know, and they just ran it into the ground. And I really think that for the grace of God, you know, the legislation and the fact that there is this group that is responsible to provide ... We don't have, we provide advice to the city, so we don't really have any authority of our own, but there is a group there that's locally based that's providing oversight, and that's what it is and it's oversight of the building and it's oversight of the things that go on it because I've always said that the Market is too ... You could have a building and you wouldn't have the Market. You could have the people, the building is important, but without the activities and the people that are part of this, it wouldn't be that. And so we're charged with maintaining the Market experience which is both of those things, and if you need an object lesson in how that plays out, you look at Annapolis and you see if you ... [laughs]. They've got a building ...

**DEUTSCH:** It did not work.

**SCHEEDER:** ... but they don't have a Market.

**DEUTSCH:** So you're the Chair of EMCAC ...

**SCHEEDER:** Right.

**DEUTSCH:** ... and then the fire happens.

**SCHEEDER:** Yes. As a matter of fact, I had been—at the time, I was also on the Board of Directors of this International Library Association and I had been in The Hague for our meeting and I came back that

Sunday and I had my window, it was beautiful out, and I thought it smells smoky around here. And I woke up very early in the morning, put on Channel 28, and I go oh my God, the Market ... threw on my clothes and went up to the Market. I happened to get there just as the mayor was there and all the merchants were standing outside, I remember seeing Bill and he was—I mean the gallows humor, I remember Bill Glasgow saying I guess I'll be having specials on smoked meat. [laughs] And Tommy [Wells] was there, of course. So, it was like okay, what's going to happen. We had at that point gotten, EMCAC had done the whole review process, I mean, we basically picked, because the city picked who we recommended. We basically picked the architects. And then we were going through, you know you go through a 30, 65, and 90 percent drawings review of stuff. So we were at between the 65 and 90 percent, we were just about to get the 90 percent drawings. So from a standpoint of being ready to renovate, we were in good shape that way, although ...

**DEUTSCH:** You already had the drawings, you mean ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yes, the architect had already done all this work. Had to go back to the drawing board for some stuff, though, because the fire destroyed more than we were going to replace. But in some ways, I mean in some ways the fire was a blessing in disguise because I don't know how we ever would have been able to ... the plan was going to be to phase, to do a phased renovation so that we could keep the people in business.

**DEUTSCH:** ... which would have been much more difficult.

**SCHEEDER:** Very difficult, and I'm not sure we would have ever been able to figure out how to do it. So when this opportunity came along and the mayor and Tommy were wonderful, they said we are going to get a temporary building, we are going to rebuild. And then the [Capitol Hill] Community Foundation was wonderful because they jumped in right away and started raising money and working with the merchants so that the refrigerator trucks ... I mean, the next weekend there was activity at the Market, and I think that made, for a week or more, people would walk up and they would—I watched this go on—they would stare at it with the look that people have on their face when they are at a wake of that kind of mourning, it was mourning, just quietly standing there with the same look that they have in a funeral home. So when the activity came back so fast, and the city was great because they put up, remember they put up a barrier so people could look in at it and take pictures and stuff.

**DEUTSCH:** It was wonderful.

**SCHEEDER:** And it was interesting cause with anything in the community, there is always going to be something around, that the issues are around. So, the people on Eighth Street were worried about the

traffic and where were we, couldn't we put it, the temporary market, ... There were three different possibilities and they wanted it over by the Eastern Market Metro, and the people over there didn't want the traffic, and that didn't make any sense to put it over there anyway. But for about one week, there was a discussion, again I thought oh no, we are not going back to this kind of behavior, I hope. There was this discussion about where to put it, but that was the best place for it. And then DDOT was put in charge of putting it up. And the mayor, it is interesting to me because I pointed out to somebody at the time, I said he has said that this is going to be done, and actually we are pretty much on track. I think he said 18 months to two years. It will probably be maybe only two months, two to three months over two years. I thought well, he is starting to get worried about reelection so this is a good sign because he is serious, he is making promises, and this is something that people are going to point to see ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... can he get done what he says he'll get done.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah.

**DEUTSCH:** One of the things Dan Tangherlini said that I thought was so interesting was he said, I guess he called the mayor in the middle of the night when he found out about the fire, and he said the mayor instantly totally got it about what a big deal this was.

**SCHEEDER:** Yes.

**DEUTSCH:** This wasn't just a fire in a public facility, this was hugely both sort of symbolically and practically important.

**SCHEEDER:** And at the same time around there, somebody in the Office of Property Management had decided that they were going to apply ... It was the first one, America's Best Neighborhoods, and part of what they had to do and we kind of helped where everybody was gathering up data about the economics importance of the Market. And the Market area, and there are a number of people who have started outside who are now in storefronts. I mean, it's a little business generator, the same thing with some of the flea market people and artists, so it's important to us because it is the center of our community, but from an economic standpoint, it's also extremely important, and it's the ... I do a blog alert in trying to figure out who is saying what about the Market and who is going there and that, I have a Google blog alert on it. It is interesting to me because people talk about going to Eastern Market and sometimes they are talking about Barracks Row ... then when they say they had lunch at this place. But Eastern Market is the brand for everything that goes on in that business corridor, the Seventh/Eighth Street business corridor, Capitol Hill. So anything that disrupts that is detrimental to all of the business. So, yes, the fire happened and then everybody jumped to ... so then we had to, then the things with the drawings and

getting all of that finished. The roof, the trusses on the roof, which are historic. Adolf Cluss, the year before the fire, that previous summer, was Adolf Cluss's—there is a Goethe Institute here, and so I think it was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, probably. Death or birth, I don't know.

**DEUTSCH:** Birth, maybe. Because it would be 1807, or whatever it was.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah. Right, right. It is birth.

**DEUTSCH:** I remember going to the Market one day and there was Bruce Brennan dressed as Thomas Jefferson ...

**SCHEEDER:** Oh yeah, that was our big thing and we got the plaque done and we got little plaques made, that was all exciting.

**DEUTSCH:** Probably the bicentennial of his birth.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah. You know the trusses,

**DEUTSCH:** What's his first name? Adolf? Adolf Cluss?

**SCHEEDER:** And he is an interesting story unto himself. He came to the United States, part of what he was, a literary representative, he was a great friend of Karl Marx, but when he got over here and saw the benefits of capitalism, he became [laughs] ...

**DEUTSCH:** Forget that. [laughs] That's a great story.

**SCHEEDER:** So the trusses were part of the signature of his architecture, and so they were very weakened because they were made out of iron. And everyone is going well how the fire go ... Well, it was like your mother's frying pan, you had all this conducting of heat and so the trusses probably actually helped to spread the fire, but the ends were melting. So what they ended up doing was, they got a company to manufacture out of a different material, and I forget, Monte could tell you what this, some kind of steel stuff, but to manufacture ones that would hold twice the weight. So they replaced every other truss, so every other truss is an original truss, and the new ones are carrying a lot of the weight load. We were able to get, I'm not sure that we were going to be able to get the basement done, but because of the fire we were able to get the basement renovated ... the floor ....

**DEUTSCH:** What is going to be in the basement?

**SCHEEDER:** The pottery studio and storage area and stuff. But see, the basement used to be, the D.C. National Guard in the 1880's used to drill down there. There was a refectory down there at one point, like for the workers.

**DEUTSCH:** Sounds really big.

**SCHEEDER:** Yes, it's the whole ... and its arch, it has those stone arch things.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

**SCHEEDER:** One of the reasons now they are on overtime to get finished is reinforcing the floor became ... the floor was more damaged than it was originally thought to be. But there was this thing called the Hearey Study which one of the sets of engineers that had gone in there, and I remember from that that there was some major concern about what that was going to be. And we're going to have heating and air-conditioning finally in the Market.

**DEUTSCH:** Yep, which will be nice for Mrs. Calomiris.

**SCHEEDER:** Now it's also interesting about some of the things that ended up contentious about the reconstruction and it took us, it takes a long time to get this resolved. One was they're putting in these skylights and our architect is convinced that there were supposed to be skylights there.

**DEUTSCH:** That was part of the original concept?

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. And the light in the Market, lighting in the Market I've learned is really important to the food presentation. Now even though everyone loves the brightness of the temporary building, the meat merchants particularly are concerned because it washes out the color of the meat.

**DEUTSCH:** I have heard that.

**SCHEEDER:** And I mean, if you look you can see it.

**DEUTSCH:** It doesn't look as pretty.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. So all of sudden when they said they were going to put skylights and then again it was about what the glass that was going to be in the side windows and stuff as well. So, there was a lot of discussion about that until 'til we came to some resolution and actually it was nice that, as you recall, and the city has done some nice things. For example, they actually installed different kinds of glass ...

**DEUTSCH:** I remember that.

**SCHEEDER:** ... in different parts of the building, and people could come in and look ...

**DEUTSCH:** And I think you went in and you voted.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah. And we're about to do that. Now the other thing that was happening at the same time, back in 2005 we started on this, the city is redoing the streetscape, which means all the sidewalks, the trees, sort of like they did on Eighth Street. And DDOT has been great to work with. And they have done, but back in 2005, we finally came to this memorandum of understanding because this was another thing about scheduling this, and making sure that the work is done in such a way that there is a least disruption to the business as possible because EMCAC wanted to be sure that, this is one of our responsibilities, that the people doing the work understand that the streetscape is rentable space [laughs] that is important to the economy of the Market and to the pocketbooks of all the people who sell there. So Monte and I spent a number of hours meeting at different times to get this memorandum of understanding between the Office of Property Management, the Department of Transportation, and EMCAC on how all of this, all the communications that was going to go on, and how it was going to be phased, and we didn't want, we wanted the streetscape to be done in conjunction with the rehabilitation of the Market. Because we figured why tear the thing up twice because, for example, sewers and drains coming out of the Market had to be redone anyway into the street so we were going to have to tear up the sidewalk to do the Market so we might as well if we're going to tear it up, tear it up once. And this is the kind of, to give you an idea of the kinds of things that EMCAC gets concerned about that nobody, it's too much information for anybody else [laughs].

**DEUTSCH:** Very detail oriented.

**SCHEEDER:** So back in 2005, we had this, and we didn't want the construction done in June and July, the nice weather when everybody is out there, we wanted it done ...

**DEUTSCH:** In the winter.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. So that had all been ironed out, so then when once the fire happened, then it was back to DDOT again about saying okay, how is this going to be done in conjunction. So then there were more, Said Cherifi, who was the original person we negotiated with was gone, so then we had to drag out all the old documentation again [laughs], but it was all fine and now we are having, we had monthly meetings with DDOT and meetings with OPM to coordinate the construction. Since Barry has taken over as Market manager, he is involved in all of this too, plus the tenants, there is a Tenants' Council as well

that also had not been, it was something that was in the law that had not been done and when I became Chair I said ...

**DEUTSCH:** What's Barry's last name?

**SCHEEDER:** Margeson. M-A-R-G-E-S-O-N.

**DEUTSCH:** And what is going to happen to the North Hall now?

**SCHEEDER:** North Hall is going to be an event space, arts, we're hoping too that it will contribute to the economy of the Market by renting it out to groups for parties, etc. I'm assuming the Tango people will be back and the ... and also, I mean we've talked for a long time about some of the promotional things that we want to do for the Market. For example, we thought, well we could get local chefs in to come in and do cooking demonstrations using products that are sold in the Market. We could have different ethnic festival days, so we are looking at the North Hall also as a place where we can do events tied into the Market that help promote the businesses and the things that are there. And then, of course, the other big thing that's happening is the Hine site.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah.

**SCHEEDER:** So, I have been involved ...

**DEUTSCH:** Has anything ... you have been involved ...

**SCHEEDER:** I have been involved in sort of representing the Market about, for us parking, there is a huge parking problem in that area, and especially, another big issue is the street going to remain closed or is it going to be reopened ...

**DEUTSCH:** Hot. Hotly debated by ...

**SCHEEDER:** A very hot issue. Yes, yeah. So it would be easier for example to keep the street closed if that's what people wanted to do, and again this is one of those, sometimes I think I'm able to do my thing of being Chair of the Market because there's some things where I don't have strongly held opinions of my own but my opinion is to try to listen to everybody and help them craft what the best ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... like then the street closing is maybe one of those.

**SCHEEDER:** That's one of those things for me, yeah, yeah.

**DEUTSCH:** It's nice when it's closed; it's fine when it's open.

**SCHEEDER:** ... it's open. What's the best for the economy of the area. And we also have to be concerned about our neighbor merchants, not just the Eastern Market, but the Seventh Market Row folks, and Ken and his people that are in that organization and we've become, meeting with them more regularly and stuff. So that's part of what I've met with now two different developers that are thinking of putting in proposals and we've talked about various things. What I would like to see for the future ...

Let me talk about Tommy for a minute. He's been great as well, and he has first of all, he has, he and Linda O'Brien his staff person who I deal with on a weekly, some weeks daily, basis [laughs].

**DEUTSCH:** Yes.

**SCHEEDER:** They are committed to doing whatever needs to be done in order to help move things forward and then before Robin Eve came a lot of it had to do with OPM like Tommy would be very good about dragging the appropriate people into his office when we were not getting ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... the action you needed.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah. And making things happen and putting people down at the table and not being happy until something, some action plan was developed. So he has been incredibly helpful. But we have talked about the future of the Market and some of the problems that I have mentioned that have to do with the consulting versus—the advising versus having some kind of authority and I know that back when the legislation was introduced, there was a debate over whether there should, if you go to, I've been out to Pike's Place Market in Seattle. They have a market authority that is sort of like a quasi-governmental agency that runs, that basically is responsible for running that, and it includes people from the city agencies and political appointees. I mean, it is the same kind of thing but they're more like a Board of Directors and then you take the 500 foot view of what I call that business area—the Spokes—it's Pennsylvania Avenue, it goes up to our Hill Center now, and that's the other thing in talking about, for example, Hine and that people, I also want to be sure that people know about this wonderful thing that's going on.

**DEUTSCH:** That the Hill Center is coming along.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, and that that's kind of like, to me that's the east anchor of the town square and the Market is the north anchor and the Barracks and Eighth Street is the south end of it and then west, it's down to, it's that 600 Block of Pennsylvania Avenue which doesn't seem to be organized as a business. They are not as organized as Barracks Row or Market Row is, for example. So what there needs to be is a broader look at our business civic area because that's what that is in planning for the future. And, of course, whatever goes in the Hine thing is going to be incredibly important, and if it's designed properly,

instead of presenting that little Berlin Wall that you get when you ... [laughs] ... it can open up and be inviting.

**DEUTSCH:** Yep. It is such a key location.

**SCHEEDER:** And then all of these sort of, these individual kind of business interests, we need to find a way to come together and work together as a sort of a Chamber of Commerce for the area or whatever, but to try take a bigger approach to things and work together more. So, I kind of see that maybe some of the Market governance will change in the future, the way it's positioned.

**DEUTSCH:** The Market governance will change in the future? Is that what you're saying?

**SCHEEDER:** I'd like to see it go to more of a Board of Directors than EMCAC and get it an expanded skill set in terms of getting some other professional expertise attached to it and looking at some of these other market models in other places and then also trying to do something to kind of unite the, to have a body that sees the business/civic nature of that area to tie it together more. That's what I think are some of the next steps.

**DEUTSCH:** You must have spent a lot of time in meetings over the last few years.

**SCHEEDER:** Yes. [laughs] One of the things, I've said to people that I think, I mean I have worked in a lot of organizations and have done a lot of things. What we haven't talked about is that I was the Vice Chair and then Acting Chair of a while of the DC Democratic State Committee and then at the same time, all of the State Chairs have an association in the Democratic Party, so I was the Vice President of the Association of State Democratic Chairs ... which I thought was really kind of neat actually [laughs]. I'm not quite, you know sometimes how you end up doing something and you're not quite sure and people say well we would really like you to be ...

**DEUTSCH:** President of the ...

**SCHEEDER:** ... of this thing, and you go oh ... becoming Vice Chair of the party was hard and I had to defeat Barbara Lett-Simmons in order to do it and that was another one of those things where it was phone call after phone call, vote counting, vote counting, vote counting, and it took five ballots, and again that was another thing where Ted ... because he had chaired the DC Democratic State Committee and he was also, he had also been an officer, I don't know if it was Chair or Vice-Chair of the State Chairs Association or something.

**DEUTSCH:** So it took five ballots when you were running for President of the ...

**SCHEEDER:** When I was running for Vice-Chair of the Democratic State Committee in the District. There I'll tell you another story about that because this is, to me, this says something about ... Remember I told you if I'm told I can't do something, I'm going to do it and win if I can. So I was thinking about running as Vice Chair and so I started calling up a number of the people I had worked closely with ... had gone, I mean you go into other wards to help people do other things. So I called up this one guy from Ward 1 and I said I'm thinking of running and he said oh, he said "You know, Donna, you woke up wrong." And I said "What? What do you mean I woke up wrong?" He said, "Well, you know you are a white person."

**DEUTSCH:** I'm not going to write this down.

**SCHEEDER:** No. And I said, "Jerry, just because I woke up wrong doesn't mean I'm not getting out of bed" and it was then and there. But see that's why it took five ballots [laughs].

**DEUTSCH:** Because there was a changeover going on in the DC party.

**SCHEEDER:** And I joked about this but in some ways, I mean, the District politics for a long time, not so much anymore, but for a very long time was complicated by race constantly but the reverse so I think that I was the first person, white person, elected to be either Vice Chair or Chair of the State Committee by my peers in the city wide, the State Committees members elect you. So in a sense I thought well, I'm talking about the hard things I've done. But the Eastern Market has taken every lesson I've ever learned about everything from running meetings, motivating people, conflict resolution [laughs], persuasiveness, building a case, managing people. It's the hardest thing I've ever done and keeping people focused because there are so many good ideas and so many concerns that people have and you can't do everything at one time, we're not that big. There's only, there's not that many of us and so we had to, I kept saying to people we have to decide what are the things that are the most important and we're not going to deal with the other things cause if we start trying to deal with that, we'll never get anything done.

**DEUTSCH:** I can imagine that it's been quite a ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. But the people, I mean, people are great. Like Bill, the kind of advice, the merchants give great advice. I think there were people that were, from what I've been told, worried about having the merchants involved. Well, we wouldn't be half as smart as we are about what we are doing without their insight and input and advice. I mean, they have been incredible and it's the same thing, Monte and his expertise and what he is doing and his dedication. Tom Kuchenberg who took on the Market Operations Committee and is another person who is very, he works at HHS, and I think people who have worked for the government and managed the government also have a good perspective on dealing with the city

government because there are certain things that you, if you work in a bureaucracy, then you understand that there are certain things that that's the way things have to be.

**DEUTSCH:** That's the way they're done.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. And knowing that, then you know how to work with it. So, there's been a, the people on EMCAC are stellar.

**DEUTSCH:** Does your term, do you have a specific length of term or is this a lifetime appointment ...

**SCHEEDER:** I serve at the pleasure of the Council person so when Sharon, when Tommy took over, he asked me to stay. And I said I'd be happy to ...

**DEUTSCH:** Until you are so beaten into the ground that you can't ...

**SCHEEDER:** Well, there is a little part of me that I've said that getting the new management and getting the building open again. I kind of laugh, I say I'm going to take, when we have both those things in place, I'm going to take two victory laps around the Market [laughs].

**DEUTSCH:** Are there any other things on the Hill that you're, I mean I doubt that this would leave you time to do anything else on the Hill, but ...

**SCHEEDER:** Well, you know there's the Hill Center that I'm working on ...

**DEUTSCH:** The Hill Center. Yeah, you were founding board member ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yes, yeah. I mean that's another thing that is, countries have been born in a shorter period of time [laughs] ...

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah.

**SCHEEDER:** ... than it's taken to get this, actually get the building, but see this is what I like about Capitol Hill is that, I mean there are a lot of things, but I like the idea that when people see something that needs to be done, they're willing to pour their heart and soul in it and show up at a meeting at 8:00 in the morning once a week and go to community meetings and talk to other people and do whatever it takes in order to take a community asset and make it productive for all of the people that live here. And that's part of why we got that, I think, community award as I had started to talk about a little bit earlier. So we did get this "Best Neighborhood" award.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah, who gave that? I remember turning on "All Things Considered" one night and hearing Capitol Hill is the best neighborhood in the country ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, it's an association, kind of quasi-governmental thing. You know what I'm going to do, I'm going to have look up the exact name. [ed: in 2007, the American Planning Association included the "Eastern Market" neighborhood among its "Great Neighborhoods".]

**DEUTSCH:** It actually didn't get that much publicity, I didn't feel, it sort of got lost.

**SCHEEDER:** It got a lot of web publicity, but it didn't get a lot of local publicity. But I told them, so they gave the mayor this plaque and we were at the Market and he was kind of, he's just looking at it, and he says "What am I going to do with this?" I said, "Well, Mr. Mayor, the day that we open the Market back up you're going to bring it back and we're going to hang it in a very prominent place in Eastern Market." He said, "Oh good idea! That's great, that's what we'll do." And I have a back-up one in case he's lost it [laughs].

**DEUTSCH:** There speaks the voice of experience.

**SCHEEDER:** But we'll put it up in the Market, we will.

**DEUTSCH:** And what's your best guess of when the Market is going to open?

**SCHEEDER:** I think late June.

**DEUTSCH:** Um hmm. Which is pretty much ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. Soon, soon. You know it's interesting, I think probably what I'll do, I did take some pictures the day of the fire, it's like one of those things where ... and I'm very happy about the, we wanted to have the oral histories done and I'm really excited about the fact that we've got this Eastern Market project now because there, it was a seminal event, I think, and it's a symbol of everyone's commitment again to do whatever it takes to maintain the fabric of this community and it was really impressive, the way people came, I mean that first couple of weeks, the fundraisers, you couldn't get in, the first one was at Marty's, you could hardly get in the door there.

**DEUTSCH:** Right. Yeah. Do you shop at the Eastern Market?

**SCHEEDER:** Oh, absolutely. Yeah. I have dishes and things I make, one of my favorite things is the turkey line. [laughs] Actually, I have a, there's a bunch of people that live on Capitol Hill that I've gotten to know over the years and we're sort of like a chosen family, we say we're the family we, so I started this tradition of the friends' Thanksgiving dinner and it's the Sunday before Thanksgiving, and we kind of laugh and say it's the people you'd like to spend Thanksgiving with, as opposed to the people you have to spend Thanksgiving with. [laughs] And a lot of the people are like me now, their parents are passed away

and they may, are living by themselves and stuff, and everybody makes something, but we smoke turkey breast and so I get the turkey breast from Mel and then I get a full turkey cause I go up to my cousin's in Philadelphia and so I bring the, I mean once you've had an Eastern Market turkey, there's no going back.  
[laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** And actually I've found, like this year I didn't cook Thanksgiving, so I didn't have to go to the turkey line, I felt really left out.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah. People talk to each other, it's a social event, it's great. But last year was interesting, the first time, not this last Thanksgiving but the one before the first time it was in the Market, the line was getting, they couldn't quite figure out how to make it go, so now we have the police ...  
[laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** The policeman, yep.

**SCHEEDER:** That was new.

**DEUTSCH:** So are you ...

**SCHEEDER:** And I love cheese, I get cheese just about every week.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah, and you can have your lunch just standing there sampling all the different cheeses.

**SCHEEDER:** Cheeses, yeah. And of course my crab cake sandwich, I love crab cake sandwiches so Market Lunch is another ... And of course I shop farmers because I like fresh stuff. I like to cook and ...

**DEUTSCH:** If you like to cook, the Market's kind of, you need the Market.

**SCHEEDER:** Yep, you need the Market. Yeah, you need the Market. Now I know there are people, we are getting feedback about having more organic produce and so one of the things that we're going to start is a weekday farmers' market and we'll give ...

**DEUTSCH:** And it will be different people from the weekend.

**SCHEEDER:** Well, we're going to give them the right of first refusal, but we won't have the flea market, we'll have more space, and we can add people. And I'm also thinking that some of the growers may not want to come in that often, weekend growers and farmers may not have the time to come in during the week and we can bring in, but we will be able to bring in some other people without causing any problems. So we're going to start that. We're going to look into keeping the Market open seven days a week because I don't know of any other food store that isn't open seven days a week. And I was very

happy when they decided, they decided, the merchants decided to do the later hours. So I think we're looking at different things to do to make sure that we keep, not keep our customers but attract the new people that are coming into the neighborhood. Because the food thing is the anchor, I mean that's the heart of the Eastern Market experience. I mean the six day a week Market is extremely important and hopefully the seven day a week Market, and the outdoor activities are great but it's a destination because there's a constant presence there.

**DEUTSCH:** Anything else you think it's important to have about the Market?

**SCHEEDER:** I like, the Market has many more fans writing about it, the blogging that goes on is really interesting and that's a group of people that are just out there and they're some of our greatest publicity. You know another place that's been very helpful ... Karen ...

END OF TAPE 2/SIDE 1

TAPE 2/SIDE 2

**SCHEEDER:** ... before the fire.

**DEUTSCH:** And before the fire?

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, and getting a logo. And we worked with Edge Advertising to come up with our logo. Oh, this is cool. You know with the streetscape, Ken Golding was in Lubovna, some Eastern European place and noticed custom manhole covers and took pictures of them and so we got the city to pay for this and we're going to have custom manhole covers with the Eastern Market logo on it. There's like 56 manhole covers or something around there. So, but we had to go to each of the utility companies and get them to [laughs] ...

**DEUTSCH:** That must have been time consuming.

**SCHEEDER:** ... agree to this, and they all did, so we're having custom manhole covers and then the DC Commission on the Arts was great because they had a contest, that's another thing, they of course, all of the art that's up there, they organized those little competitions. But they also had a contest for custom bicycle racks so we're going to have these really cool bicycle racks that have been designed by local artists that are like animals and stuff.

**DEUTSCH:** Oh great.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah.

**DEUTSCH:** Can't wait to see that.

**SCHEEDER:** There's going to be a lot of really neat touches to things that, so there's also been a lot of creativity involved in the renovation and also I think the art did a lot to pick up people's spirits when they looked at the building. You know when they first put those things up.

**DEUTSCH:** And the Eastern Market music.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. And we're going to do the music again, I just talked to Nicky [Cymrot] so they're going to sponsor the music again this summer. And I can't think of anything else now about the Market. [laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** Okay, tell me about your career as a dancer and a choreographer.

**SCHEEDER:** Well, I started, I wanted to go to dancing school and I started when I was four, and I guess I should have known, my parents bought a house when I going to be six years old and starting school, and they were fixing it up. So they said to me, and we had an apartment in the house. And so there was this man by the name of Wally Gluck who was the first tenant, and he was a talent agent. So he would have these people, every once in a while there would be people singing in our living room or something, kind of auditioning and I remember this woman singing was a soprano. One time I came home from school and Wally was down and my mother was listening to this woman singing "This Is My Beloved," you know "dawn's promising skies ..." [laughs]. And he booked talent for the night club, the Town Casino. So my parents said to me "We're sorry we're not going to be able to have a birthday party this year but we'd like to do something you'd like to do, and so what would you like to do?" I said "I want to go to a nightclub." [laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** And you're six? [laughs]

**SCHEEDER:** Because they'd had these people in the living room.

**DEUTSCH:** You were probably one of the few six year olds who'd ever heard of a nightclub.

**SCHEEDER:** So they took me to the Town Casino, and of course the MC was one of Wally's clients, I guess, so in the middle of all of this, I remember this well, I have my pink lady, my ginger ale and my cherry juice and cherry in it, and the MC says "Now we're celebrating something very special tonight, it's little Donna Wills' birthday." So a little spotlight comes over and says "Now I understand, would you like to come up here and dance?" and as my mother tells the story, "Before we could grab you and hold you down in the seat, you were out of it and running up to the stage." [laughs] So there was a live orchestra, and he said "Oh so you want to, will you tap dance for us?" I said "Oh yes, I will."

**DEUTSCH:** Had you taken tap dancing lessons?

**SCHEEDER:** Uh huh. And he said “And what would you like the orchestra to play?” and I said “Walking My Baby Back Home.” [laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** Donna, I can’t believe you left this for the end of the second hour. [Donna laughs]. What were you wearing? Do you remember?

**SCHEEDER:** A brown organdy dress that my aunt, my mother’s oldest sister was an excellent sewer ...

**DEUTSCH:** And we all wore organdy dresses back then.

**SCHEEDER:** Yes, and it was dark brown and it had this white appliqué thing on the front, and of course the big bow in the back. Yes. I had my little organdy dress on and everybody applauded and I thought that was the greatest thing. So a lot of dancing, being an only child, I used, you find things for yourselves to do, and of course, I loved Broadway. We had a record player and 33rpm records, and all these Broadway albums, “Oklahoma” and “South Pacific” and “Camelot.” So I would entertain myself by pretending that I had all these people that I was the choreographer and I was telling them what to do and I would envision these dances and then at my dancing school we would have these contests, my dancing teacher, and then if you won the contest you got to do a solo. So I won the contest once or twice. So when I went to Georgetown, my parents, oh and I had done theater. Actually I did the tap dancing, this was another, my parents weren’t happy ... I went on my own and auditioned for “Gypsy” to Studio Arena. Studio Arena Theater was the professional theater in Buffalo. And so I got in and my poodle was going to play Chowsie, so my father had to drive my dog and I to the theater every night.

**DEUTSCH:** And what was your poodle’s name?

**SCHEEDER:** Andre. But we called him Andy.

**DEUTSCH:** And what was the name of the part?

**SCHEEDER:** I was playing Dainty June which was Dainty June and her newsboy so the woman who came was June’s sister who was not talented.

**DEUTSCH:** And what was the dog’s part?

**SCHEEDER:** He was the dog, he was Mama Rose’s dog, Chowsie. He played Chowsie. [laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** Well that must have been fun.

**SCHEEDER:** He got his picture on cover, I didn’t. [laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** Now this was high school when you did this?

**SCHEEDER:** I was in high school, yeah. So and the woman who was the choreographer didn't really do a lot of tap dancing, so I got to do the tap choreography for Dainty June and her newsboys. So I got to do that. And then I went off to Georgetown and I was studying away and I was kind of, my parents said this is costing a lot of money to send you to this, and we don't want you running off doing this theater stuff, you better study while you're there, so I was dutifully studying, but it was like my outlet was, I was missing something. So I went and I auditioned, plus I was gaining weight because I was eating all this, I was eating and not exercising ...

**DEUTSCH:** Probably the first time.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. So I went and auditioned for the show, so I got in the chorus.

**DEUTSCH:** And what was the show?

**SCHEEDER:** Our original musical cause we used to write so it was called "One Sleepless Night" and there was a part for twins, ... Joan and I looked quite alike so we were cast as twins, and there were these two guys who were twins so this was the thing ...

**DEUTSCH:** A mix-up with twins.

**SCHEEDER:** We were the twins. So, anyway, and that's where I met Louis.

**DEUTSCH:** He was involved with the theater?

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. And he was playing, the whole thing was this king ... it was sort of a, it was called the kingdom of Gueridon. And the show was "One Sleepless Knight". It had anti-war things in it a little bit. I mean it was kind of interesting, but it was all medieval musical sort of stuff. So he was going to direct, the first student-directed musical, "The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd" and he needed a choreographer and so he asked me to do it. I had a crush on him but I don't think he really, I don't think he was paying attention actually but when we did this musical we worked together and that was kind of ...

**DEUTSCH:** One thing led to another ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. So I choreographed that and then I did the spring musical every year, but then the next year we had gotten at Georgetown the rights to do "Marat Sade" as a first production out of New York City. I don't know how Georgetown Mask & Bauble got the rights to do it, but we did. So, of course, part of the conceit of it is it is a musical, but it's being, everything is ...

**DEUTSCH:** ... in an insane asylum.

**SCHEEDER:** ... being acted out by the inmates and so I had to do a lot of stage movement with people and help them build a character where they had physical issues and deformities and craziness and stuff but still have movement that they were trying to dance and sing as well. So we got this rave review in the *Washington Post* ... Tom Shales was the reviewer for, O. Roy Chalk who had the bus system here, remember him? Before it was public transportation, he had a magazine on the bus and Tom Shales, one of his first jobs was as a reviewer. So he came, the *Post* reviewed it, we got these rave reviews, and I remember Tom Shales said “I was so engrossed in this play” because it was a theater in the round so the people in the first row were actually, it would be like if I was sitting here when the inmates were sitting on the floor watching the stuff that was going on, they’d be at your feet.

**DEUTSCH:** Touching you.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah. So Tom Shales said “I was so engrossed in this that I didn’t notice that one of those little buggers had tied my shoelaces together.” [laughs]

**DEUTSCH:** That’s great.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, and it was funny, Arena Stage did it, either the next year or the year after, the next year, and the *Post* said that actually parts of it weren’t as good as the first thing they saw at Georgetown and that’s how Louis, Louis’s first job was as assistant stage manager at Arena when I started working at the Library.

**DEUTSCH:** And you started working ...

**SCHEEDER:** ... at the Library.

**DEUTSCH:** Right.

**SCHEEDER:** And got to know the Proskys, and they lived on Constitution Avenue at the time, and they had a wonderful tradition, it was so much fun—the Christmas tree hunt. Cause Monday would be the day off at the theater so a couple of weeks before Christmas there would be this big brunch, and Ida and her mother would make all this pastry and there would be champagne, orange juice, and coffee and stuff and then we’d all get in cars and drive out to Maryland and chop down our Christmas trees [laughs].

And the next year Louis went to the Folger with Richmond. And it was, the Folger Theater was Shakespeare and new plays.

**DEUTSCH:** Was that the very beginning of the Folger then?

**SCHEEDER:** Yes, yeah. But the Trustees, O. B. Hardison wanted to open the place up. He was actually a really neat man. But the Trustees of the Folger are the Trustees of Amherst College.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah.

**SCHEEDER:** And they, theaters aren't cheap, and in a small space like that, so after a while, they weren't real happy about the fact that they had this theater. So there were issues over the budget, I think, and that's when Louis decided, at the same time Rogers Stevens, a number of the Folger things had gone to the Kennedy Center and then gone onto New York. "Creeps," one of the early plays, "Creeps," had won an Obie award, I think. It didn't last very long cause again it was another one of these, it was a new play and it was kind of depressing.

**DEUTSCH:** I think I remember "Creeps."

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, yeah. It was about the people in the sheltered, the people with CP in the sheltered workshop. But it had gone off-Broadway, "How I Got That Story," all that stuff that was done then. So that's when he was starting to commute to New York, but then he got an apartment in New York.

**DEUTSCH:** His career took him in a different direction.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, and mine was in, I couldn't find a job in New York. I had the dream job. I didn't want to go and other stuff was going on too, but you know how it goes.

**DEUTSCH:** It all ...

**SCHEEDER:** It all kind of worked out in the end. But we're friends and we talk all the time. New York is a tough place. I wouldn't ...

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah. We have the best of it all here.

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah.

**DEUTSCH:** You can go to New York when you want to go see ...

**SCHEEDER:** Yeah, and come home and have a yard and real people who, there's ... particularly in the theater it's like people aren't necessarily your friends, they're your acquaintances while you're doing well and then they're off to the next thing, and so the kind of solid friendship where you can depend on ... Like this group of friends that I have, any one of us, I had a dancing accident, I tore my knee and I had to have surgery and I mean it was amazing because people, one person brought me coffee in the morning and brought the paper because I was up on my third floor in my bedroom for the first couple days and

then I'd get downstairs and then Patty would come over with dinner food or lunch, but different people were doing different stuff and in the same way I would do that kind of thing for other people if they need it, you can't ...

**DEUTSCH:** It's special.

**SCHEEDER:** You can't buy that.

**DEUTSCH:** That's a nice place to end.

END OF INTERVIEW