

2020

Interview with Mary Zinkin

Mary Zinkin
Portland State University

Stephanie Vallance
Portland State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/conflict_oralhist



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#), and the [Theory and Philosophy Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Zinkin, Mary and Vallance, Stephanie, "Interview with Mary Zinkin" (2020). *Conflict Resolution Oral Histories*. 5.

https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/conflict_oralhist/5

This Interview is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Conflict Resolution Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

Mary Zinkin

Name of Narrator	Mary Zinkin (MZ)
Name of Interviewer	Stephanie Vallance (SV)
Date and location of interview	6 May 2020, Portland OR
Date range of events described in interview	1982-2000s
Length of interview	Approx. 50 minutes
Name of Transcriber	Stephanie Vallance
Date of Transcription	12-22 May 2020
Also participating in interview	Liza Schade (LS); Lady J (LJ)
Audited by/date of audit	Carolee Harrison, October 2020
Project key words	peace; war; conflict; anti-war; nonviolence; resolution; activism; Persian Gulf War; Iraq War; Vietnam War
Specific key words	mediation; professionalism; Urban Studies; interdisciplinary studies; peace studies; conflict avoidance; mindfulness
Proper names mentioned	George Mason University, Antioch University, Carl Abbott, Patrick Feeney, Marylhurst, Rob Gould, Catalyst Group, Marvin Kaiser, Judith Ramaley, Barb Tint, Harry Anastasiou
Headnote	Mary Zinkin describes her own self-designed interdisciplinary graduate degrees in Conflict Resolution at Portland State and her influence in the creation of those degree programs at PSU. She discusses her own professional work in the field of Conflict Resolution and

Mary Zinkin

	<p>mediation and her view of the need for a professional, skills-based degree that blended theory and practice. She describes the logistics of getting the program off the ground, noting the development of curriculum, number of students, and the conversation around the naming of the degree. She discusses her perception of the limitations of peace studies, and her focus on helping people to lead more peaceful lives and effect peace in the world. She describes her relationship with Rob Gould, co-founder of the Conflict Resolution program, and the different backgrounds they drew upon to design and teach their courses. She ends with her hopes for the future of the field and the graduate program.</p>
--	---

[begins at 03:45]

SV: Hi Mary. Okay so, let's dive in. To just ground us in where we are and what we're doing today, it is May 6th, I believe. I am Stephanie Vallance and I am here with Mary Zinkin to discuss the Conflict Resolution / public history program, so thank you so much for being here and answering our questions.

MZ: Thank you, certainly.

SV: So, let's kind of just dive right in. We've talked a bit before and from some communication I've had with Patricia, I've gleaned that the Conflict Resolution program was in part, at the beginning, your idea. So, if you would, what was your personal path that led you to that idea?

MZ: Right, so... yeah, personal path. I could go way back to the very beginning and I won't do that. I'll just go to my own graduate work. It was in the early 80s, and I was doing my master's in Urban Studies at Portland State, and happened to see a mediation training come up that was in Seattle. So I did that, and then I came back and I was like, "Okay, that really seems like work I'd really like to do in this world." And then I continued on to the Ph.D. in Urban Studies, and through my work in my own Ph.D. program, and

Mary Zinkin

because of the creative license of the faculty that were on my committee, I created my own Ph.D. in Conflict Resolution. At the time, there was only one in the country, at George Mason; and there was only one master's program in Conflict Resolution in the country, and that was at George Mason as well. So, then I completed my Ph.D. and had this brilliant idea—so, this was in 1987...

SV: This is when you graduated? In 1987, with a Ph.D.?

MZ: Correct, correct. And I really had this vision that there should be a graduate program in Conflict Resolution that created the discipline and focus, the study of the theory of conflict, because at that point, again, there was only one academic program. Most of the people who were involved in doing mediation or Conflict Resolution either were coming from social work or law, and I had created this interdisciplinary degree in Conflict Resolution, and really saw and believed that it was viable and important for people to study and create a profession in Conflict Resolution. So I went around in 1988 after I graduated, '87-'88, to all the universities in the Portland metro area: Pacific University, Lewis and Clark, PSU (Carl Abbott was the chair of the department at that time), and said: wouldn't it be great to have a graduate program in Conflict Resolution? And I can help create this for you. I went to Marylhurst and all those doors just shut, like "What are you talking about?" It was like an idea whose time had not come.

SV: What was the response that you got, just "no"?

MZ: "No." (laughs)

SV: Okay. (laughs)

MZ: Just a big old no. I subsequently went into a deep depression. I was just like, "Dang!" But at the same time, one of the places I had gone to was Marylhurst, and because of that contact, I got called back to teach a year-long course in a certificate program in Conflict Resolution, Negotiation, and Mediation. So, that was three terms. Fall, winter, spring.

SV: Okay.

MZ: And I did that for several years. And then I'm not exactly sure how I got to Extended Studies, except that the students at Marylhurst and the faculty were just like, "This should be"—this is, again, in the early 90s, and there was just more and more interest in mediation particularly and for people to learn mediation skills—again, other than lawyers and other than counselors. And so, I did go to Portland State Extended Studies.

Mary Zinkin

Patrick Feeney was there at the time. And we created a 55-hour, 6-day-long mediation training.

SV: So that's like a non-credit...

MZ: Non-credit. We did that for several years; it was very successful. Rob Gould happened to take that in 1993, and at the same time, Antioch University in Ohio had just created a master's program in Conflict Resolution. So now there were two master's programs. Actually, I'm not sure George Mason had a master's, they may have. Anyway, I don't remember exactly, but there were just two academic programs in the country: Antioch and George Mason. So Rob and I, on one afternoon sitting on his porch after he took the training, I said,

"Don't you think it would be great for there to be a graduate program in Conflict Resolution?" and he was like "Yes!" and I think he had already started talking; this is where you'll get the rest of the history from him. It's foggy for me, but through our conversation, I think he had already started meeting with Catalyst and there was interest in creating a...

SV: Catalyst Group, right?

MZ: ...a joint program between U of O and PSU, because he got his Ph.D. from U of O and I got mine from PSU. So, he said, "Why don't you start coming to those meetings, and you know, let's see what we can do." So, then, as I told you, I did participate in those meetings for a period of time, but I wanted to do the work, I was just like on fire. I had started my own consulting business, and so I became an organizational consultant and mediator and literally said to Rob, "Good luck, I hope this really happens, but I can't do these meetings anymore." So, he said, "Don't worry, I'll keep on." And then I think it was maybe a year later, again I don't know, but some period later he called and said, "Okay, PSU is ready to go." He had really worked whatever the system was needed to get the wheels in motion for Portland State to have a graduate program in Conflict Resolution. It started in, I believe, with the Communication master's. The initial students that we admitted were going to receive a graduate degree in Communication, if the CR graduate program didn't get accredited by the time they were graduating.

SV: Right.

MZ: But as it turned out, nobody did graduate until it was accredited.

Mary Zinkin

SV: Okay.

MZ: In those first few years, Rob was the director, I was the assistant director. We developed the curriculum, we taught all the classes, except for I think Richard Powers taught, and it's possible that some of the Catalyst members were some of the adjunct teachers in the program.

SV: Oh, okay.

MZ: I think. I think that Barry maybe taught psychology. I think Mel might have done international, Richard probably did something in... I think he did games, as I recall. But mostly Rob and I taught the students, and we had a wonderful core of grad students who were brave and courageous, and some of them I'm still friends with, some are colleagues...

SV: That first class was in 1996? The first admitted class?

MZ: Is that right? I thought it was '94, but it could be '96.

SV: We can check.

MZ: You know, maybe you're right, maybe that makes sense.

SV: I think the first admitted students were admitted in 1996.

MZ: Okay that makes sense, because Rob did that training with me in '93, then we started Catalyst, I left for a year... yeah, it was probably '96.

SV: Yeah, it took a few years? Okay. Well, that was a really vast question and you answered it so succinctly and well. But there's a few little spots that I'd like to go back to, if you don't mind. And then we can continue where you just left off. But you mentioned initially getting your Conflict Resolution master's and Ph.D. at Portland State, and building those together from a mediation training that you took in Seattle. Was there anything else that went into that? Had you had any background in Conflict Resolution that made you do that?

MZ: Yeah, so, you mean personally before I went into the grad program?

Mary Zinkin

SV: I guess, yeah, thinking about being in Urban Studies and creating that master's program out of the Urban Studies program, where did that impetus come from? Was it really just that mediation training or was there more?

MZ: So, the master's I got in Urban Studies was actually specializing in organizational behavior. And what I did in the master's program—and this is the way Urban Studies worked back then—is that there was a core curriculum and then there were the electives that you could select from. So I started the grad program in Urban Studies in '82 and had taken that mediation training winter '83—so, early on into my master's program—and so from that point forward every single thing that I did in the master's program, I just studied Conflict Resolution. So if I was taking a psychology class, I studied the psychology of Conflict Resolution; if I was taking organizational theory, I looked at organizational conflict. So I started to develop a theoretical base in Conflict Resolution by just pulling from different disciplines into my master's program. And the way Urban Studies was set up at the time, by the time you finished your master's program of study, you had one more term of academic classes and then the rest of the Ph.D. was your dissertation. So essentially I just followed what was existing in terms of the literature and research at the time and built the interdisciplinary study of Conflict Resolution. And that was then the basis from which Rob and I created the curriculum for the grad program. And I could see what George Mason... like George Mason had a very international focus and Antioch did not; Antioch was more practitioner, interpersonal, organizational; so I also looked at the curriculum of other degrees and kind of based off of that too.

SV: Where was your experience on that spectrum, of international and interpersonal?

MZ: Interpersonal, organizational, since my master's was in organizational and group and family. I had a lot of psychology in my undergrad... I mean in my master's degree.

SV: Okay.

MZ: In terms of the electives. Yeah. So, the historical impetus is that I was born into a family very filled with violence and conflict, and so I kind of got the role of mediator from birth. It was just in the cells of my body to develop in this way.

SV: Wonderful, so it was coming from who you are, building an academic program around it and then here you are and there's no other—or very few—academic programs around the country that spoke to that.

Mary Zinkin

MZ: Correct.

SV: So you're identifying a need that you're seeing that there's no academic program, and you mentioned that many people sort of came to mediation through either law or social work. What is missing that is found in the Conflict Resolution? If students were coming to mediation just from one of those two aspects, what would be missing?

MZ: Well, what was really missing from actually both of those was being able to have a core foundation, a theoretical base. So I mean that in the early days of mediation and Conflict Resolution there was a lot of controversy in the field around [the questions]: Is conflict just a bunch of skills and techniques or is there really a discipline? Is it really a field? Is it really a profession? There may be some people today that even still would talk in that way. That was certainly the way it was in the beginning. And I really wanted to be a part of creating the profession and having it be recognized; and very much needing to be interdisciplinary, drawing from psychology, drawing from sociology, drawing from political science, drawing from history, drawing from economics. I mean it was interesting, right? Because my own experience in the grad program in Urban Studies was a template that I really brought into the program that we developed at Portland State. Originally, I don't know what it's like now, but originally, the CR degree was exactly that. We had a core curriculum that was interdisciplinary, theoretically based along with practical skills, and then electives. And students could pick how they wanted to specialize their Conflict Resolution degree, and then we also had practicum.

SV: Do you know, do you remember what those options would have been to specialize?

MZ: [laughs] We did not have any in the early days, and that's been developing over the last 10 years. I don't know. We really didn't design it to have specific tracks. The original design was core curriculum, practicum, and then just a whole lot of creativity and ability to build your electives based on your interests, including what we might offer, and what the university offers. Again, that was my experience. Urban Studies offers some things, but they recognized social work had, you know, other departments, psychology, systems science was around at the time, so recognized that that was a way that you really build a rich degree.

SV: And as more programs, I'm assuming I guess a bit, that more programs have popped up, since that time?

MZ: Oh yeah.

Mary Zinkin

- SV: How common is that? That the degree is interdisciplinary or set up in the same way?
- MZ: It's pretty common. I mean I have not looked at it lately, but when I was there and we were looking at making some changes, I looked at several of the graduate programs that exist in the country and interdisciplinary is pretty common. They vary some in terms of what kind of track, or what kind of focus, whether or not they have a practicum. Our degree had a higher number of hours for practicum than many other universities. And then whether or not it was a thesis or an exam, it varied on that.
- SV: Okay so to go back a little bit again. You mentioned that Rob took—Rob Gould, who we'll speak to in this course—took a mediation training.
- MZ: He took a 55-hour training from me.
- SV: Okay. And had you known Rob before that, prior to that?
- MZ: I did actually. Rob and I have known each other a long time. We go back a long way, as just friends.
- SV: Okay, in the idea of the Conflict Resolution program being as you said, sort of single-minded, it sounds like you were pretty intent on finding a home for a program you saw a need for. Was that something in Rob's mind before the mediation training, or was that something you came up with?
- MZ: I don't know if... I think he'll say that his orientation was more from the peace studies. I think his interest was more around peace studies, and after he took the mediation training and as we were talking and looking at what Antioch was doing and thinking about how to create a degree here, at the time he was aligned with peace studies. I was very strong about I don't want this to be called Peace Studies, I really wanted it to be Conflict Resolution to really have a way of confronting the conflict avoidance that still exists. And to help shift the perspective, the experience that conflict is not bad, it's a reality, it exists and whether or not it's destructive or productive depends on how it's responded to. This program was to help you develop the understanding and the ground and the practice to be able to respond to it well, and help other people to respond to it well.
- SV: Okay. It sounds like that was a conversation at the time, about what to call it. What were the other options that it would have been called?

Mary Zinkin

MZ: Rob would probably know; I don't really know. It was probably Peace and Conflict Studies. He would remember those, I was not paying any attention because I was adamant that it was going to be a program in Conflict Resolution, and I wasn't actually going to negotiate on that. You know, some things are negotiable, some things are not and that for me, at the time, was not negotiable.

SV: And in this course, you know, we've talked a bit about peace memorialization and Peace Studies. Would you say more about why you wouldn't want the Peace Studies part of the title or really the focus? Or even how they relate?

MZ: My own experience at the time was that Peace Studies was very theoretical. And I was a practitioner as well as an academic, and really wanted the program to be called and be framed around and created from that lens. And so, I really was interested in developing a program that created... was just much more practitioner-oriented. Like Public Administration as opposed to even Urban Studies. There was that difference in that graduate program.

SV: Okay, so what you were saying as being missing from maybe other types of mediation is the theory paired with the practice that is the skills-based part.

[34:15}

MZ: Yeah. You know, it has been my truth in my career as well as in my teaching that in order to really be, for quality, in terms of being able to mediate or intervene in a system, facilitate in difficult situations, it's more than skills and techniques. To be able to understand conflict theory, psychological theory, to understand all those theoretical bases and integrate them in how you do your work was... yeah.

SV: Key.

MZ: I mean, that hasn't been the way the field has developed, unfortunately, but that's out of my control.

SV: How has it developed differently?

MZ: Well, lawyers have really decided that they know how to mediate, whether or not they've had any mediation training. And they mediate differently. And, I mean one of the things that I used to teach, and it is true, is that: What interests are being satisfied by whatever the application looks like? Whether it's the Better Business Bureau, or

Mary Zinkin

small claims court, or neighborhood, or within a corporation, you really need to be looking at what the needs are that are being satisfied by the program, so I wanted students to have that level of analysis as well.

SV: I'm glad you mentioned that was the need. I think you and I kind of talked about this in our pre-interview, but to put it bluntly, what was the need? In another way: if the Conflict Resolution program was the answer, what then was the question?

MZ: Yeah, so my lens, my perspective on that was that conflict exists. The ability to not avoid it and not escalate it, to be able actually intervene productively, requires skill, understanding. And wanting to develop that expertise... so, a very basic need, the need was, "How do we shift our institutions, our culture, our organizations, our families, our neighborhoods, away from conflict avoidance which is the general operating principle?" And so both to be able to impart information and skills to everybody, so that people can be dealing with their own conflict—awesome—and certainly there are times when a third party is essential. And to get away from I guess the other main problem, right? [Which] was that our only Conflict Resolution intervention primarily at the time was the legal system, the judicial system; and that's costly and not all that effective. So to shift from knowing that everybody has their day in court to "How else could we be dealing with the conflicts that we're experiencing in so many ways?"

SV: And that need at that time... you had mentioned that your particular focus on those more interpersonal or interorganizational conflicts. How much in those early days was the program taking into account international conflict, or how much was that a part of those early conversations about the creation of the program?

MZ: Early, not so much. I mean the international focus came a little bit with the addition of people. Like Barb Tint brought in some of the international focus, and actually when Harry was hired, I was actually leaving so I didn't overlap with Harry, but certainly when Harry was hired.

SV: Who's Harry?

MZ: He was the chair before Patricia.

SV: Okay, for the sake of the recording, can you tell me his last name?

MZ: Yeah, I wish...

Mary Zinkin

SV: We can fill it in later.

MZ: You know, I don't even know how to pronounce it. It's Anastasia?

SV: We will fill it in.¹

MZ: So, saying all that, I would also say that the way the international got integrated into what we—what Rob and I—were doing was that I had attended an international association of Conflict Resolution conference, which I did attend early on in the beginning. And I went to this presentation by a South African man who said, "The problem in my village is that people don't talk to each other when they're in conflict." So there was also this way of not denying the international and the systemic approaches as necessary and it's also true that if people talk to each other in their villages, things would be different. So there's also literature, and focus that says that what happens at the international level, if it were approached more with the personal and the human connection, we might see a different world.

SV: Okay. So, then to go back—jump around a bit—back to that creation, the early days... and you had mentioned the Catalyst group. We've done a bit of research in looking at the Catalyst group, minute meetings and a little bit of background on the goings-on of that group of people. I think you mentioned earlier that their initial goal was different than the creation of a Conflict Resolution program per se. Can you just speak to what your relation was to the Catalyst group? You mentioned a little bit about it. Just how they played a part in the origin story?

MZ: I have a feeling that they played more of a part than I know about, because I left. I attended the Catalyst group meetings for a while, and then I got frustrated and impatient on some level, and the frustration and impatience was connected to really wanting to do the work and spend the time and energy that I had, offering and providing Conflict Resolution in the community and in the organizations. And so I stopped going to the meetings. Again, Rob and maybe others will be able to definitely fill in these blanks. They, I believe, were instrumental in the negotiations with Marvin Kaiser, the dean, and whoever else was needed. Oh! It must have been the chair of Communication, since they agreed to be the academic home until we were accredited.

¹ Harry Anastasiou, Ph.D.

Mary Zinkin

SV: Okay, so you're going to those meetings, that was through the connection with Rob? And then, how long were you attending those meetings? Do you know?

MZ: I don't know, maybe a year?

SV: Okay, and then that impatience and frustration of wanting to provide and offer those skills. From our research, there's been a bit of conversation about the shift in focus of the Catalyst group from maybe an interdisciplinary or maybe a peace center to that program and it sounds like for some of that process, you were not there or not a part of the Catalyst group, at least.

MZ: I think that I was part of that shift. So I think that when Rob asked me to come into the group and then the conversation... while I was there, the conversation was about developing a grad program.

SV: Okay.

MZ: Yeah.

SV: Okay. And so those other people in the room, in that conversation, is your sense that they had the same goal as you? Or were there different reasons for wanting to create that program?

MZ: Probably there were different reasons, but there was enough of a base of agreement to move it forward in that way.

SV: Okay. Great. So, you get called back by Rob at the stage after having left the Catalyst group and then being brought back in those negotiations. And then you and Rob are really the co-founders of that program. And that's housed within Communication?

MZ: Correct.

SV: And I know you mentioned that there were some other adjunct faculty, can you speak about how those early days looked, in actually setting the program up and getting it off the ground?

MZ: Yeah, you know, I don't remember; I don't think we had too many adjuncts in the beginning. I really remember, we had like 8 or 10 students and it was just Rob and me and we taught some classes, we co-taught some classes together, we each taught our

Mary Zinkin

own classes separately. We must have brought in some adjuncts, because I don't remember us teaching psychology per se. I know he did philosophy, did the core negotiation and mediation. So yeah, I don't remember, but we must have brought in some adjuncts.

SV: And were you creating those... the curriculum from the courses you had put together for yourself in your own graduate programs, or were you each individually creating the curriculums for the classes you were teaching, or were you doing that as a collaborative endeavor?

MZ: No, we developed the... for whatever classes we taught separately, we were in charge of our own curriculum. For the ones we taught together, which I believe were like thesis prep and... maybe just thesis prep, because actually Rob taught the intro, he taught the philosophy, and I taught the negotiation and the mediation and then the advanced mediation. I'm trying to remember how many classes we had as core classes. I don't... it's been a long time, I don't remember, but there must be documentation of what we were teaching at the time.

SV: Sure. Syllabi and et cetera. Yes, that would be great.

MZ: Well, not syllabi. I don't know if we'll have syllabi, but I have a vision of the curriculum, what it looks like in the catalog.

SV: Yes, hopefully those are things we can get our hands on.

MZ: If you do, I'd love a copy, because I don't remember.

SV: Okay, I'll keep that in mind. Okay, so we talked a bit about this, and we mentioned it a bit, but in terms of the context of what was happening on campus at the time, as connected to activism, what was your sense? Was there a connection between the creation of the Conflict Resolution program and any activism surrounding war, peace? What was that connection like, or what was your sense of that connection?

MZ: So, it's a good question, because that is how Rob and I were connected prior, was that we were both anti-war activists, so we had that grounding of experience in our lives. Personally, I wasn't... that wasn't a big emphasis for me in the grad program. I wasn't connecting it to necessarily offering perspective, grounding theory around activism, and I think Rob was. So he was probably weaving that more into his classes than I was.

Mary Zinkin

[48:22]

SV: Weaving that activism, surrounding war and peace, or peace, or war.

MZ: I'm imagining, yeah. Probably more in Rob's area, for sure, than in mine.

SV: Do you have a sense of what that temperature was on campus at the time?

MZ: I don't remember the campus being particularly... I mean this is the 90s, and we came out of the 70s, so in comparison... Well, okay, there was the Iraq War in '91. So there were protests then for sure, but that was before. So I don't remember it being particularly... I don't remember it being a particularly hot time.

SV: For you, as coming from an anti-war activist in some way in your background, what is the separation? I guess I'm trying to think about how to phrase this question, but I guess the best way to put it is, why is it separated or why was it separated for you?

MZ: Well, so, this is what I would say. The shift for me—and this is true, this shift was coming then, it's certainly stronger now—is that the problem with the peace movement was that people weren't peaceful. So, there's a way of demonstrating, there's a way of being an activist, there's a way of fighting for justice that comes from a ground of compassion and not anger. I am much more personally, professionally, and as a teacher, wanting to help people understand and respond to the war in their own minds and in their own lives as a way of creating more peace in the world.

SV: What would be an example or what do you think of when you think of the peace movement not being peaceful?

MZ: Well, what I think of is demonstrators destroying property and fighting with each other and being violent with each other and just that energy. I'm definitely of the belief and practice in changing what is wrong in the world in a way that doesn't create what we're trying to change.

SV: Well said. Do you feel like at all—if I'm thinking chronologically, biographically for you—and you were a part of anti-war activism in the 70s and then your Conflict Resolution academic studies was in the early 80s, what was the relationship between those two? Was Conflict Resolution an answer to anti-war activism?

Mary Zinkin

MZ: Not for me. It really wasn't. It's related; it's integrated in there, but not really an answer to it, not for me. Other than what I brought to it and what I learned about it, and what I have learned since around helping to contend with the capacity for intentionally bringing more peace into the world by your own actions. The advanced mediation class when I was in the program was a mindfulness class. So that the awareness... and it's very true that in my own practice and in what I hope other practitioners are [practicing]... This actually came up when we were getting accredited: that there was a recognition, and there was at the beginning—there's much more now—but there was the beginning of knowing that the presence of a mediator is critically important to the process; almost even more so, to what the person is doing, is what are they bringing in: “How are they dealing with what's going on in order to create the opportunity for repair of a conflict?” So the advanced mediation class was a mindfulness mediation class, and we were nervous that maybe at the time it wouldn't get recognized as viable and credible and all of that, and actually the people who came to accredit us were like, “This is awesome, I haven't seen this before.” A lot of times when people are doing advanced mediation, they're talking about learning more content about conflict as opposed to going inside and saying, “What does it really take to really do this work, and how do I really bring a presence into a room when people are at war with each other, in order to shift them and change that?” So it was approved as a part of the curriculum, that advanced mediation was a mindful mediation class.

SV: Wow. So that early accreditation, were you expecting there to be less... it sounds like you were expecting there to be less acceptance of the program?

MZ: Oh, we were nervous, but we were happy.

SV: That's wonderful. Okay, well, we have just a few minutes left. I wonder if there is anything else you would want to say, if there is anything you would want someone to know about the Conflict Resolution program, the beginnings, or anything else; this would be a great time.

MZ: I don't know, I guess... I would wonder, does it make any sense to ask if there's any questions from these people [that are also on the call]? You and I have already talked, so I feel like we've got it. Is there something missing from anybody that's heard this? I would be open to that. I don't know if that's going against your way.

SV: Sure, if there's anybody who has anything to say. And then I'll let Patricia pop in when she's ready to close us out. But yeah, let's open it up. Liza?

Mary Zinkin

- LS: I just have one question. So it seems like I'm going to be talking to Judith Ramaley. It seems like her background is all biology. And I'm curious, is everyone in the department coming from completely different backgrounds?
- MZ: Well Judith Ramaley wasn't in it, she was the president, so she wasn't in the CR program. She was the president of PSU at the time, so I'm assuming that's why you're talking to her.
- LS: I'm going to have to look at her CV. Because I just kept seeing this biology, biology.
- MZ: She wasn't in the CR program; she was the president of PSU. But to answer your question, yes, everybody did. I mean I was the only one... well, Barb and I. So, Barb got her Ph.D. in Conflict Resolution, but her master's... she was a therapist in psychology. Then Rob was in philosophy and then Les, who was the first, another person that was hired after Barb. He was a lawyer. So yes, very much so, there was a desire to have people... Well, as the program went on, we were really definitely wanting more people to have a firm grounding in Conflict Resolution, to be in the Conflict Resolution program. But that wasn't all that easy to get necessarily. But because it is an interdisciplinary degree, yeah that was part of the design. Let's have people from different disciplines, but not biology.
- LJ: I am curious less from a standpoint of the history of CR and more from the standpoint of someone who works as a professional in it and has a vested interest in how the academic field is moving: what would you like to see?
- MZ: [laughs] Oh, my goodness.
- LJ: If you could just wave your hand and move the path of the Conflict Resolution theoretical field, what would you do?
- MZ: You mean in terms of the program at PSU? Or just the field in general?
- LJ: Either. I'll leave it open-ended, because it's a little political to say, "Where do you think they should go?" But overall.
- MZ: Well, I haven't really shifted away from my original view. So personally, I would be happiest of all if the CR program looked exactly like it did when we started it. I thought we came up with really a great curriculum, a great premise of study and practice, and to have people be able to do either a thesis or project. That change came a little later. I'm

Mary Zinkin

fine with that, the projects were awesome. To keep it interdisciplinary, to keep a practitioner focus. Yeah, I thought it was good.

LJ: Thank you.

MZ: In terms of the field in general, one of the things—and this just happens—it certainly has happened in the mindfulness world. As things get trendy and get more popular, it gets less full of integrity. I have worried about that a long time, about people being able to just take a 32-hour mediation class and put out a shingle. And so that was the other need at the time, there were mediation trainings coming in the community. People were getting certificates of completion and then thinking they were mediators. I was like, *Wait, it takes more than a mediation training to become a Conflict Resolution professional.*

LJ: Thank you.

SV: Thank you so much Mary, we are at time. I appreciate so much your willingness to be here today.

MZ: Thank you for your interest. I wish I could be a fly on the wall for some of the other interviews, because I am sure you're going to hear things that people are going to say, "Mary is like out to lunch, like she has some idea about this, but..." So you're going to see all the parts of the elephant and create the whole.

SV: That's the best part. That's the best part of oral history and public history. Patricia, did you want to say anything? I saw you pop up. She popped back. Okay. Well, we can end it here. Thank you so much again, Mary. I'll be in touch.

MZ: Okay, sounds good. Thank you very much.