

Sally K. Goodwin
Oral History Transcript
Interviewed by Virginia Macro
October 23, 2014

MACRO: **0:00:01.4** All right now. I won't see that. Oh it is. It's okay, we're recording. That's good. This is Ginny Macro. I am interviewing Sally Goodwin in her former home now lived in by her daughter at 588 Main Street in South Windsor. And the date today is October 23, 2014. So Sally, where were you?

GOODWIN: Well I was born on Long Island and lived there till I was fourteen, and then my father's job was changed and we went to Rhode Island, and I stayed there for six, seven years. Met my husband at University of Rhode Island. He was drafted by the Celtics, and then he was farmed out to the Hartford Hurricanes, and we came down to Hartford. We just about got here—and this is in 1950—and he was—he got orders to go to Fort Dix, and I did not see him the rest of '50, '51, and '52. In the spring he came back from Korea. So I got a job teaching school in Portland, Connecticut, down near Middletown. We had a dog, springer spaniel, and the wonderful woman who was head of the school board's children had left and said, "You can have the second floor," and we loved dogs, and they had an extra garage. So I was a tennis coach, and I had a bowling team, and I assisted in field hockey. I didn't have a husband to come home to. I'd just come home, let the dog out, and go back to school because it was just down the street a little bit. And then he came home from Korea and we went to Fort Dix, and he was the officer in charge of Fort Dix's basketball team. We had temporary duty at all these different forts, and his team beat everybody. So then we went down to San Antonio, where they had the All-Army basketball tournament. Teams came from all around the world, and they did not win. They came in something like third. But it was exciting to be down in San Antonio in March, April. May got to be warm, and we were glad to leave that area.

So then we came back to Connecticut, and Pratt & Whitney and Hamilton found out he was in the area, and they asked him to please run their industrial basketball team. He did that all summer, and he was an expediter between two purchasing agents. He'd always made it in business in high school and in college. But he decided he really didn't want to be a nine-to-five person. He'd rather be a coach. So he quit and went to Springfield College to get his master's. That was the day our son was born, [laughs] and I couldn't teach school for six months. He said, "Oh, that's all right. We've got three thousand dollars in the bank." Big deal! [laughs] But **0:03:28.7** (???) (inaudible). A board of ed member—I then was teaching in Stafford because he was at Springfield College. It was a lot closer than Portland. And again, he had a lovely home, and they let us live in part of it. They didn't mind the dog, and they had an extra garage. It was on North Main Street in Stafford up the hill. It was great, and the gal next door was a grandma, and she was taking care of her two-year-old granddaughter. So she said, "Oh, I can take care of your baby when you teach school." So I taught school in Stafford for two years, because it took

him two years to get a master's. Since he'd taken all business subjects, he'd never taken all these sciences like histology and kinesiology and so forth. And he got that. Then when he graduated, he got a job in Springfield, Vermont, where four of our five children were born in four years. He was a recreation director, and he liked it very much, but they didn't pay for a master's and pretty soon—for two years he didn't get a raise. So he thought we better—we were six years there—move, and he put out applications and became athletic director in Litchfield, Connecticut. That's where I really fell in love with the historic district and the old homes. Harriet Beecher Stowe's father was the minister there at one time. They had the law school. It was just—and we lived in an 1803 house that we rented and then we bought and fixed it all up—got some feel for fixing things up, the proper ear. Then the Shepards had this house for sale, because my husband got a job here at East Hartford as the same thing—athletic director, coach of baseball and basketball, and they paid more than they did. Of course, you know, with five children, where the money is where you go. We didn't want to live in East Hartford, and his brother was in Rotary here and introduced Ken to Red Shepard who owned this house. Then we moved here and my husband became a Rotarian. The Rotarians really in the future years took Wood Library somewhat under their wing.

0:05:52.6 Anyway, at that point our son Kenny went to fourth grade up there in Ellsworth. It was the only fourth grade. And then we had seventh and eighth, because they were going to build a new middle school, junior high, whatever they call it. My son Tom was in second grade, and I was elected head of the PTA. So when I went down to Ellsworth, they had a library but no librarian. My mother was a librarian, and I worked in a library in college. The teachers down there, when they took their classes in Ellsworth to the library, they were the librarian. They taught the—but at Union we had nothing. I talked to Mrs. Martin, the head teacher, and she thought, “We have a big storage closet that we can turn into a little library.” It had shelves, and she put a desk in there, and I had all these PTO names of the people in the Union/Ellsworth area. So I started calling up, like Mrs. Lawton and Peterson, Shirley Peterson, and Nancy Caffyn. Well anyway, there was a little nucleus of us that took turns doing Union School Library. Then the board of ed gave me these purchasing papers, and I'd go to the library bookhouse in Springfield with my station wagon, and each class—there was only one first grade, one second grade. Anyway, they would give me what books they'd like to have for our little library, and I'd have this list. The board of ed always paid for the books. I brought them back, and of course we put them in the—we categorized them and showed the students. We couldn't take a whole class in our little—so the teacher would send them five by five by five first grade, then second grade. And they loved it because somebody donated the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and at least they had it in a central place.

0:08:02.1 Well that was going on, and then the darned decision by the town to close Wood was a real shock. Mrs. Burnham, who lived down the street, was our librarian, but she worked for the town. So then they took her away, and we had no—and they were going to close it. It seemed silly when they had a trust fund that could pay for the utilities and the upkeep of the library. We just needed a librarian. So nice Mrs. Vibert [Edith Vibert] said she'd do it because she lived only a couple houses away, and she was wonderful. She came in, and we needed volunteers. So by that time, I was president of the whole town PT—oh, some schools like Eli Terry and Orchard Hill did not want PTA. They don't want to send any of their money to a

national headquarters. They want to keep all their money. So they had a big vote, and I think Union and Pleasant Valley were the only ones that said keep PTA. The others all want—so I was president of the PTO. And I had all these names of volunteers, which I spent hours on the phone getting them to work on Monday and Thursday, some once a month, some twice a month, some two hours, some four hours. That was fine. By this time, the twins were now in first grade, I believe, and third and fifth. Tommy is the only one who went all through Union School from first grade through sixth whereas when the twins were in fourth grade, Pleasant Valley opened up for this area, and Janie. But she went to Little Red Schoolhouse, which isn't red now. It's white. I paid money for kindergarten. And the twins, I had them down at the Mason hall down here. They had a nursery school, and they went there till noon with their cousin that I picked up and brought—but then I was offered a job in Glastonbury to teach school, and my son by this time was in tenth grade. I would have three or four in college at the same time, and I thought, well, I better go back and teach. So what was I going to do about the volunteers? So I asked Nancy Caffyn take over, and she was delighted to do so, and she did a marvelous job. She was really an organized person. As people know, she became mayor later on and so forth.

So it was—and I met so many people in town. It was wonderful. Kenny joined the Rotary in 1972, I think—I think it was '72—and he met the Mitchells and the Kellys and the ones who—Charbinots, with the place that we have down here in Wood Library, we keep all the old papers. In fact, the town started putting some of their old documents in there, and thanks to those Rotarian men, we have a wonderful room down there. So that was—and then I became a trustee of the library, and I worked some Mondays, some Thursdays, wherever Nancy wanted to stick me after four o'clock, because I had to teach school some nights. It worked out really well, and the library was chugging along beautifully.

0:11:34.6 So of course then we moved. [laughs] My mother and father had a house in Florida, and my brothers didn't want it, and my husband and I—it was time—he retired in 1979, but I kept teaching school. So he said, “You've got to quit. We're going to retire.” So we'd go six and six and six and six. So I only worked in the library when I was up here in the summer, and then in the winter, of course— But there were other things when I was here, like I worked in the booster club for the Little League, and I was on the Republican town committee and helped with the auction and the Strawberry Festival, which is still going beautifully. My children were all in the athletic events, and we have a tennis court. So of course, four of them played on the tennis team, and Tommy was All-State in basketball. We had a basketball court on the driveway and also in the barn, so if it was raining or snowing or whatever, [laughs] the kids could still play basketball. So they were all sports-oriented actually because their father was an athletic director, and he was a golf coach for South Windsor. Even though he taught in East Hartford and coached in East Hartford, every spring he would—he finally gave up baseball so he could be the golf coach for South Windsor. It was amazing, Billy Mann and Norma—what's his name?—Barrero—I forget his first name—well anyway, the won the state championship, and the Barrero fellow got a full ride to University of Miami—no, Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and Billy Mann got almost a full ride at University of Hartford where he met Jerry Kelly who's still on the tour. University of Hartford has a wonderful golf program. And now my granddaughter Chandler is on the volleyball team at University of Hartford. So we've kept in touch with the area. I think that's about it. Are there any other questions? [laughs]

MACRO: **0:13:56.9** Yes, no—I mean—you’ve given some wonderful history. So you were—were you ever on the Historic District—?

GOODWIN: Oh yeah, that’s true. I was in the Historical Society and the Historic District Commission and met often with Muriel Mahr and her daughter and Doug Leonard and Myrtle Odlum and Doris Bergdorf. They gave a nucleus of five of us. It was Doris and Brad and Myrtle and two more.

MACRO: Martin? Was he on it?

GOODWIN: Who? Oh yes, Mr. Martin. And one more. Name another woman. Anyway, we voted—the whole street, which is about six miles long—who wanted a Historic District, and this is what it would entail. Well, the end near the Bissell Bridge said—you had to have seventy-five percent or more. They said yes. And the northern part up by the post office and so forth said yes. And in the center, they said, “They’re not going to tell me what color to paint my house and what to do. No.” So we had to choose north or south, and the north had so many lovely homes. Even though they weren’t as old as some of the ones down near the Bissell Bridge, they were beautiful and we decided that should be our—and Ellsworth School and the seminary and all that. So we chose that, and it became a historic district. Then Muriel Mahr said, “We’ve got to get this whole street in the historical. So we all got little plaques for our houses if we qualified. I think you had to be 1850 or older. And Vern Peterson got wooden plaques put on every house, which was wonderful. Many of them have disintegrated, or the people have put others that didn’t match, but they put their own because their own fell off the house or something.

MACRO: **0:16:04.4** Was that for the Bicentennial that that was done?

GOODWIN: It could have been. My house—our house—was on a tour for the Bicentennial. I have an autograph book in there. People came from—I couldn’t believe—Australia and England and all over to go up and down this street. Now I don’t know if it’s because they read about what John Adams wrote in his diary, [laughs] or it was just—but they could see so many old houses and where the slaves came in and out and the ferry used to be and of course Chapin Furniture and Eli Terry and all the different artisans that were up and down the street.

MACRO: Yeah.

GOODWIN: I think that really interested a lot of people. At my house here, they filled it with antiques that were not mine. [laughs] The Shepards had a tobacco display on their back porch and patio, and I thought, oh if somebody goes—which is not a very nice thing to thing—but if somebody comes—they were in costume and they had spinning wheels. If somebody thinks they’re going to come in here and steal all the antiques, they’ll be gone by

tomorrow. [laughter] We'll be back to my Happy Halloween. It really looked lovely, but they weren't mine. [laughs]

MACRO: Really?

GOODWIN: **0:17:24.4** So yeah, that was quite an experience. And then Jane, my daughter, put hers on the Christmas walk, this same house.

MACRO: Yeah.

GOODWIN: So yes, it's been on two tours that I know of. This house used to have a center chimney, as a lot of the old houses did. You came in the front door, and there was a little stairway that went upstairs and only the two rooms. And then if you wanted to get to the back part, you had to go downstairs, through the north and south parlor, into the keeping room, and then up the back stairs to get to the back bedrooms. So this woman was an opera singer, and Janie knows her name. I don't. She decided she wanted a center hall, so she took out the center chimney, and Mr. Case showed me this. He said, "Come up in your attic, and you can see beams and they don't go any further. That's where the fat chimney was." And she put in two side chimneys. We always had the back chimney in the back L. That's the oldest part. So it was really—and the flooring in most of it is this big wide bit, but if you go in the hall where she put—it's 1900 or something—the boards aren't as wide.

MACRO: I think we have a postcard of her. It was a Mrs.—

GOODWIN: McMillan or something.

MACRO: McKinney.

GOODWIN: Mc-something. It's in the barn in some places. Mc—it's written in—I got a picture in the other room. And then Doris Bergdorf gave us a 1750 house plot. The Travis's lived in here, I understand, before the Shepards. And the Travis's had a cousin that lived down in what I call Nestricks' house. I don't know what anybody calls it now. It's across from Doris Bergdorf. And they had some papers in there after the—when the Nestricks sold. They were related to people that live in there before the Nestricks or the Travis's. And I don't know why they got the papers that showed this house, the lot and everything pre-1750, I think it is. So Doris made a copy for us, and it's hanging in the living room.

MACRO: Oh neat.

GOODWIN: **0:19:39.5** Yeah, it's wonderful. It shows how the house was with a center chimney.

MACRO: So when you were teaching, what were you teaching?

GOODWIN: Well I started teaching home economics, health, and then I taught science and English. In the high school in East Hartford—I taught in Glastonbury seventeen years and then I moved to East Hartford. They paid more. It was a city really instead of a town. I noticed that the business department—for work study, they could go and be a secretary for a little bit or a clerk. And industrial arts, they could work in a garage or something. But there wasn't anything for the science students, so I wrote a grant with a nurse who was a teaching nurse to get homemaker home health aide nursing assistants in the high school. In their junior and senior year, they'd take their four major subject—science and English and history and math—before lunch. And we had this van which East Hartford provided, and we won the grant. We beat University of Hartford and St. Joseph's College and UConn and Manchester Community College at that time because they didn't have as many facilities as East Hartford did. And Manchester fortunately I knew the administrator there. He lived in South Windsor. So he let us bring the students there. They all had to have white jackets, longish, official looking. And that's how they got their hospital experience. There were convalescent homes here. We had two, a mom and pop thing in East Hartford where the wife took care of the husband or the husband took care—I mean, that type—and then they had a strictly convalescent home. This doctor lived next door, and the old East Hartford Hospital was on Main Street, and they turned that into a physical therapy/occupational therapy. So they could go there. Then I knew the fellow—he was a brother of one of the teachers in East Hartford—that ran the district nurse situation. He had been in—not Korea; he was younger than that—well anyway, he had been in a war, and he was a medic. He came back and got his master's, so he let the students come. So they had a broader experience than the other colleges could offer, so we were very pleased that we got that. And it's still going today. You'd be surprised. There are almost as many boys as girls, and some of them think they want to be a nurse and do it and say no, and some want to be a nurse and do it and say yes, or they want to be maybe a physical therapist or—you know—they have this experience. I hired another teaching nurse. They were wonderful. These students, if they had 190 hours, they took our exam. Then they took the state exam, and then they'd be licensed. So when they got out of high school, they could do something. It doesn't mean that they would carry on doing that the rest of their lives, but at least they had this experience. So that was—I was really pleased. When I retired, that was expanded and it's—as I said, it's still in progress at East Hartford High School.

MACRO: **0:23:25.8** Yeah. That's wonderful. Now you mentioned that your husband Ken was on the Celtics team?

GOODWIN: Oh yeah, when he was in—1949, he was third, fifth, and seventh in the country. He was All-American—in scores, points in foul shooting, and percentages. In those days, they didn't keep track of three points, and he made a lot of three pointers, but they just counted those as a regular basket. So he was drafted by the Celtics, and that was out of college. He went there in 19—the winter—late fall of—he graduated in '49—late fall of '49. He played with them until June when he was—well, we got married in June, and he was farmed out to the Hartford Hurricanes. He said, "This is going nowhere." That's why he said yes to

Hamilton, and he had a job and so forth. Then he decided he didn't like that kind of job. [laughs] So that's when he went to Springfield College.

MACRO: Yeah, interesting.

GOODWIN: So he didn't play for them. When he came back from Korea, he played for the Baltimore Bullets for a little bit, and they folded. And he played for the New York Knicks farm team for a little bit, and he said, "This is ridiculous. I'd much rather get my master's and do something constructive." So he did dabble in pro ball.

MACRO: So as members of the Rotary Club—your husband being a member of the Rotary Club—it was quite a social scene.

GOODWIN: Oh yeah, but he was on the Scholarship Committee for at least ten years, and no Rotarian child at that point could get a scholarship. And they would have—oh—fifty students applying every year. They had this committee, and they'd get it down to ten and five, and they'd give more than one scholarship. So he was on that committee. But Rotary does a lot of quiet things, like they sometimes help the Girl Scouts or Little League without this big fanfare. For the district nurse, I remember, they bought some kind of a breathing machine one year. They helped with a new fire truck. They have an auction and they make an awful lot of money. They had three women in there. One was Mrs. Throwe, Jim Throwe's mother. [laughs] She was ninety-something. Because the nationals said you've got to have women. And they had another gal who was a transfer from Indiana. Then they had another gal who was a retired sheriff. So they were there. [laughs] But they really didn't want women, but too bad. The women got so upset because they men were so unorganized. They were going to have this auction in a month, and nobody knew who was on what committee and who was doing what. And they'd finally get a list of whom they were supposed to see in town to ask for donations maybe a week before. [laughs] Admiral Moving was always great about any big item. They'd bring to Maneeley's—I don't know if it was always at Maneeley's. I don't think so. No, it was up at La Renaissance. It was at different places. There were different trucking places in town. Everybody pitched in. the last week it was just a zoo, but it always came together. It was amazing.

MACRO: **0:27:29.2** Great. Well—

GOODWIN: Kate Evans was the gal who came from Indiana.

MACRO: Oh, great.

GOODWIN: She was head of the Chamber of Commerce.

MACRO: Chamber, yes. Yeah. Clearly from your background, in town you were move of the movers. You were a doer.

GOODWIN: Yes, well.

MACRO: You didn't hang back.

GOODWIN: [laughs]

MACRO: And you had the confidence to go out and—

GOODWIN: Well, I think teachers are more relaxed talking in front of people.

MACRO: Yeah, yeah. But I'm kind of curious. In South Windsor, at least there does seem to be—or has historically been—a divide between Main Street and some of the other sections in town. You have a view of Main Street as being—

GOODWIN: **0:28:16.6** Yeah, my brother-in-law lived in the Wapping—and they had their historic—but it wasn't as old.

MACRO: No, but I guess what I'm getting at is just the attitudes about—

GOODWIN: Well, some people over there—some of those neighbors had no idea where Main Street was. They didn't think there was anything but the river passed through 5.

MACRO: Yes.

GOODWIN: It took some educating of the town to realize that we had a Wood Library and a concert series. That was wonderful. It started—oh dear, what's her—?

MACRO: Nancy.

GOODWIN: Nancy. She worked so hard on that. This is not Nancy Caffyn. This is another Nancy.

MACRO: No, right. Nancy Braender.

GOODWIN: You're right. There was all these different people that moved into Birch Hill and so they had no clue.

MACRO: But in the Rotary Club, for example, there was a spread around the town. There were people from Main Street and from—

GOODWIN: Oh yeah.

MACRO: **0:29:18.4** So there wasn't any—

GOODWIN: No, they never—I guess once in a while in the bulletin they'd say, "So-and-so from Old Main Street says—" [laughs]

MACRO: Yeah.

GOODWIN: But they wouldn't say So-and-so from Birch Hill says, you know? [laughs]

MACRO: Yeah, yeah.

GOODWIN: It was supposed to be kind of a joke, the teasing each other.

MACRO: But so, when you were working, how old were the children?

GOODWIN: Well as I said, when we moved here the twins were in nursery school and Janie was in the little grade school. Tommy was in second grade and Kenny was in fourth. So that was 1963. And then he went all through the school system.

MACRO: And you went back to work.

GOODWIN: And I went back to work when Ken was in—Kenny Jr.—was in tenth grade. But I only worked half-time for six years, half day. I just—boy that first year, the twins—that I was working—the twins caught mumps—they already the shot—chicken pox. And then it was a twenty-one-day period, and the next child would get it. And my other would stay home, and then I would stay home, and the oldest son Kenny in tenth grade would stay home. And then we'd start all over again. [laughs] It was a while, so I said, "I don't know if this is worth it." You know, half day and all this sickness. But the next year it was much better. [laughs]

MACRO: **0:30:57.0** Well, that's fascinating.

GOODWIN: Yeah, I think the town maybe—I don't know. I haven't lived here—2009 my husband had his leg amputated, and so we stopped coming six and six. I don't know if there's a division between the other side of town and here.

MACRO: No, I just heard sometimes—and it is joking sometimes—but other times.

GOODWIN: Is it quite serious?

MACRO: Not quite serious, but I mean, there is I think still a residual from years and years ago—long time ago.

GOODWIN: But I think—well, they seem proud that they had a Main Street with a Historic

District and the whole street and the National Registry and so forth. At the library, now, it was a store library—what a pain that was—down by what's now Geissler's. And they had carpeting. They spent all this money on air conditioning. You know, all this money because they want a new library. Well anyway, then they did get this very nice new library. And they seemed to emphasize things from Main Street in the library. They don't ignore us.

MACRO: No, no, they don't.

GOODWIN: And their Friends—they have a Friends of Library too. They do wonderful things. I've been to some of their programs, and they were great.

MACRO: So you were actually involved with—at the very beginning.

GOODWIN: **0:32:31.1** —very beginning. But it wasn't the very, very beginning.

MACRO: No, no, no. But I mean, when the Friends took over—

GOODWIN: Yes.

MACRO: —the operations.

GOODWIN: Yes. And fortunately if it weren't for Mrs. Vibert, I don't know what we were going to do. Shirley Peterson was thinking about it, but she had three kids. Mrs. Vibert's children were grown up at that point, and she was so close. She was wonderful. And her sister who lived down opposite the church. So it was nice.

MACRO: Was it Mrs. Vibert or Arline Bidwell that got the quilters going?

GOODWIN: Arline got the quilters going, yeah. Uh-hunh [affirmative]. And well, then all that. Birds were donated. We got—on the going, more and more people donated things and did things for the library, like the Rotary and the quilters. And the programs have just grown. I was in charge for a little while of reading the stories to the little children in the summer, because I had the summer off. And then somebody else took over, and we got quite a few little children and their moms.

MACRO: Great, well I think the startup was wonderful, having all of those volunteers.

GOODWIN: Bunny Shepard helped me. We had to inventory [laughs] the kitchen. We were always busy with dishes and walls and so forth. And then somebody would put something in the refrigerator. Eeww! We'd have to clean out the refrigerator. We were kidding about that today. We had lunch together. Oh my goodness, where did all the teaspoons go? We had to replace things that were missing, broken, just whatever. [laughs]

MACRO: **0:34:17.0** Yeah, but I think that the era of so many people being available to volunteer has drifted away.

GOODWIN: Yeah, because they weren't all working. They were stay-at-home moms. The whole way of family structure now is different.

MACRO: Yes.

GOODWIN: And you know, they delivered the newspaper. There's so many people who don't take the newspaper anymore. It's just different.

MACRO: Very different. Well, I really appreciate your taking the time to do this. It's very interesting.

GOODWIN: I enjoyed talking to you. I feel a little bit skeptical about my being on tape or whatever. [laughs]

MACRO: No, we've got about seventy interviews now.

GOODWIN: Oh wow!

MACRO: And so it just gives a nice patchwork of information about the community, and that's what we're doing it for.

GOODWIN: That's great.

MACRO: So thank you very much.

GOODWIN: Sure, I was glad to do it.

[0:35:22.3 end of audio]

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