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Day 2

Elaine Bloom

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Interview with HON. Elaine Bloom at Plaza Health Network in Miami, FL on August 2, 2018 at 2:00pm (DAY 2)

DAN ROYLES: [00:00:01] Okay, so-

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: All even here.

DAN ROYLES: We're back, it's August 2nd, 2018 and this is Dan Royles interviewing Elaine Bloom for the FIU Law Libraries, Elaine Bloom Library Project so-

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Which I think is Elaine Bloom and Philip Bloom together, so.

DAN ROYLES: Okay. Okay. So, I wanna start off today by talking about your career in radio.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:00:32] Well, at the time that I was out of office, after I lost the race for the Senate in 1978 the first year I went back to being a volunteer, I did a lot of good projects and I was involved with many different things in the community, things like the Florida Philharmonic. I was the Vice President of that. We did a lot of good things to bring an orchestra here and keep them here for the term and I was very involved also with the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. Then, sometime in late spring of 1979, a man from Coral Gables, whose name escapes me, George something, actually thought that he was Florida's answer to Howard Jarvis. Howard Jarvis was a man in California who conceived of the idea of cutting California's tax base and got something on the ballot called Proposition Thirteen, which devastated California's ability to raise funds for local and state needs. This man and Coral Gables got something on the ballot where he wanted to cut Dade County's ability to charge up to ten mils for your property taxes, a mil being a thousandth of a dollar. When he wrote out his proposed resolution that would go on the ballot, he wrote it out not as four mils which is what he intended, but as zero point four mils, which, as you can understand, would have devastated and devastated, devastation for Dade County. I was involved with the Chamber of Commerce and I was known for being active and being on radio and television as needed. I was called in to a meeting with the leadership of the Chamber of Commerce, along with a prominent attorney by the name of Bill Frates, F-R-A-T-E-S, from the Frates Fay Law Firm. I'd known Bill from other involvements and we were asked to co-chair an operation to get people to vote down this proposed amendment to Dade County's Charter, which would cut the tax base, not to forty percent of what it had been, but to four percent of what it had been. We divided up the county. He was responsible for everything from Flagler Street south and I was responsible for everything from Flagler Street north. Plus, we both did radio and television appearances and we went to community club meetings, where everything might have been, it was a most incredible campaign. Believe it or not, by the end of the summer when the citizens of Dade County voted, they voted down this opportunity to absolutely kill their own taxes, which was a good sign. It meant the people paid attention and understood how bad this was, but meanwhile, I'd been on a particular radio station a number of times and I met the woman who now owned the station. It was W-KAT, an AM radio station, one-three-one-six on the AM dial, and it was based on right off West Avenue in Miami Beach. She was new to Miami and she wanted to meet people and

she asked if I would, number one: host a radio program, give me my own program and if I would also help her meet people from the local community. I thought both opportunities were good and a good fit for me. I actually had nine a.m. drive time programs Monday through Friday and I found it a wonderful way to meet people and to learn about new things and to have an interesting radio experience. It was a call-in radio program and I enjoyed that immensely. During that time we went through the Mariel boatlift, which was a very difficult experience for all of us, but I would get calls from people who were very, very anti-immigrant. I would detect something in their voice that made me think that they might not have been born in the United States and would say, "well, madam, you have a very distinct point. Where were you born?" And then they would tell me and I'd say, "well, don't you have an understanding for the needs of people who must leave their country of origin and seek shelter some place else?" It was wild, it was really wild, but I had a great experience, a great time, and I was able interview people, really all walks of life and people all over the country because it was a call-in show. So, I could schedule appointments of people who had either written books or written an article that attracted my attention, or whatever it might have been. I also built up a group of people, women, representing a whole spectrum of women's organizations and we would come together, not on the radio, but just as a group to discuss what issues we felt needed to be exposed on radio and on programs in general. In order not to have any disagreements, we agreed not to talk about either the Equal Rights Amendment or a woman's right to choose. Once we ignored those two major issues, we cut across all communities, ethnically and in every possible way, and it was wonderful, like a melting pot of leadership women and we took on a lot of issues and exposed them to the area. I also did a similar thing by having a program on Sunday nights with high school kids and I would also have them come in from different high schools and we would have them lead the conversation. I did programs in some of the high schools around the county, setting them up. To this day, there are two people that I can think of, one is a sportscaster and one is in another field, but because of that experience, they were hooked on radio and that became their fields. The other part was that I was able to take my little recorder, a tape recorder, and through the microphone and the use of a little gadget clipping into old handsets from telephones, I could bring people into the radio station from anywhere in the country and it was really amazing. Not just the country, when I even traveled to Israel, I was able to do programs with people there and air them here. Those were called little alligator clips and you would attach them to the handset of the phone. So, radio was a wonderful medium for me. The station changed its format from being an all-talk station in early 1981 and, instead of all talk, it was now the big band sound. Everybody was very gracious to me and said, "we like your programming, but we're gonna switch the format to the big band sound. However, if you would like to, you could do brief editorials." How brief? Well, three minutes each, two of them, and it would be aired twice a day, morning drive time and in evening drive time. I started to do that and what's remarkable is that was probably the hardest job I've ever had. Because writing something that was pithy and interesting and make people wanna continue listening, and two different ones on the same topic, it was a hard job to pull it down to something that you could do in three minutes, and not two minutes and twenty-six seconds, but three minutes it had to be, total. I did that for about six months and then I got the opportunity to yet another career. That's when I became the lobbyist for the Jewish Federations and for something called the United Protestant Appeal, which was a group of Protestant churches here. It sounded like a giant organization, but it wasn't. I

represented their interests and well, Adon Taft of the Miami Herald, who was the religion editor, called me the leader of the God squad, but I represented the interests of these organizations when it came to things that affected health and human services, or affected education, affected civil rights, justice issues. That's how I started going to Tallahassee, as the lobbyist for these organizations. That took from the summer of '81 until the end of 1985, when the opportunity presented itself to run for reelection and then I went back to the Legislature. So, during my period of time out of the Legislature, from November of '78 until March of '86, I had three different careers, and enjoyed all of them.

DAN ROYLES: [00:10:38] When you were doing the short segments, is there anything that stands out from that time, or the kinds of issues that you would address?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:10:46] Well, it was current issues, obviously, and at that time, these were during the early Reagan months. He was inaugurated in January of 1981, so a lot of change was occurring and I think I commented on some of the things that were happening, but unlike today, you had a very active Congress. The House and the Senate were both extremely involved in different kinds of issues and there were local issues, as they came up. Dade County has always had strife and Dade County has always had issues, so a lot of local things as well. I guess I'd have to look through some catalogs of my own stuff. I'll try to find it, and in fact, if I find these editorials, I'll send it over to the FIU Law School.

DAN ROYLES: [00:11:56] That would be fantastic.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: I did keep them.

DAN ROYLES: I'm sure.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: It's a question of finding them.

DAN ROYLES: [00:12:03] Yeah. We talked a little bit after the interview on Tuesday about going to the Democratic National Convention.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Yes, 1980.

DAN ROYLES: Was that the first that you went to?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:12:17] No, I had been at the Democratic National Convention before that. I was was at the 1976 convention and I was originally supposed to be a delegate for Scoop Jackson. When he withdrew, because Jimmy Carter had come in with more votes from the primaries, he turned over his delegates to Jimmy Carter. I was at that convention and that was a very exciting opportunity for me, but going to the 1980 convention, which was in New York, was a fantastic experience. The radio station had an affiliation with, I believe it was at that point, ABC. So, I was welcomed into the ABC arena, in the area where they had the press, the little offices. I had my trusty alligator clips and I did interviews with all kinds of people. I was,

remember, at the radio station at this point and the owner of the radio station had invited somebody she knew from Great Britain, who was a member of the British Parliament, the House of Commons. He was from Perth, in Scotland, and I sort of had the responsibility for squiring him around, showing him, because he was a special guest of the Democratic National Convention, and that was very, very interesting. Years later, 1988, I guess it was, I was in London with my husband and we actually went to visit that gentlemen at the houses of Parliament. That was very nice to have the reciprocity that we had there, but going back to the convention, I remember even doing an interview with...gosh, I'm doing a blank on his name, the person who used to be on CNN, and now does a program for RTV.

DAN ROYLES: [00:14:53] Larry King?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Larry King, that was who it was. He even invited me to come and visit him in Washington, so you can imagine what that could have been, but I interviewed him for my radio programs. He interviewed me, live, for what he was doing, as an example of somebody who'd been a Florida Legislator, and now here I was, covering a convention.

DAN ROYLES: [0:15:23] So, you went in 1980, not as a delegate, but as a journalist?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Yes, I had press credentials. Yes, lovely. You get to go everywhere.

DAN ROYLES: Yeah.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:15:37] As a matter of fact, I see that's why a lot of people do try to get press credentials for these events, because it's really an open door for everything. So, that was a great experience, I would say, but I did interviews. My husband at the time, Philip, was a member of the law firm based out of New York called Finley, Kumble, Wagner, Hiney, Underberg, Manley and Casey. Although Wagner was the former mayor of New York, Casey was the former governor of New York, and I interviewed both of them with my little alligator clips for the program back home. I interviewed lots and lots of people. In fact, one of the clients of that law firm had an associate whom my husband knew from years earlier. That person, the client, was Roy Cohn, who was not somebody that I particularly wanted to meet, but I did meet him, and interviewed him with my little alligator clips on that phone. When I say the alligator clips, people who are older than sixty-five probably remember, that you used to be able to unscrew the mouthpiece of the telephone. You had two places where you could put these little alligator clips connected to the tape recorder. Through that, you were able to broadcast, believe it or not.

DAN ROYLES: [00:17:08] What was it like to interview Roy Cohn?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:17:12] Well, he was extremely interesting. He was very cordial. He was very bright. If I didn't bring up issues where I knew I would aggravate him, he was very nice. So, that was part of what you had to do, I suppose. I wasn't there to make enemies. It was just a matter of utilizing the ability to interview people in their own setting and broadcast it to the people in Miami. So, I loved radio. In fact, I even have another part of my life, in 1981, while I

was still with the station, there was a high-power FM station that lost its license in Miami. It was right in the middle of the dial, and they were running some kind of a contest, and it turned out that whatever they were promising didn't exist. So, the FCC came and then took their license away. This is a terrible thing that happens, and declare that it was open season, you could make applications. Well, the woman who had been running the radio station, the reason that I had gone to work there, she saw it as an opportunity to perhaps pick up a radio station. Her thought was that if we could bring women in as partners, we could have a leg up to getting recognized for minority status for the radio station. We put a group together, some very fine people, all of whom had an interest in radio, but all active women from this community. By the time we hired a lawyer from Washington, who worked with FCC kinda projects, he told us women don't count, "you're not considered a minority. Therefore, that doesn't give you a leg up." However, at this point, there was not one Hispanic-owned or operated radio station in Miami. That was 1981. So, we put the group together and I approached a friend of my husband and mine, George Feldenkreis, who's a major business person in this community. He was born in Cuba and came here as an adult man with two children, built a business, quite successful, and it turned out that when I mentioned to him, "are you at all interested in radio?," he said, "are you kidding?" He said, "as a youngster, as a teenager, I was on a program every week as part of some project." He loved radio. So I said, "well, we need to have somebody who's fifty percent, plus a little, partner in this venture and we have put together x amount of money. Would you put in?" He said, "yes," and he brought in Frank Solair, who had been the first publisher of El Miami Herald. So, he was somebody who also loved radio, loved, obviously, broadcasting and journalism. So, George and Frank Solair were our majority Hispanic base and I had six or seven women who were our female group. This case progressed and we had to jump through all kinds of hoops. I had to find a commitment for a radio tower, which I did, in the area that's the towers that you see right near the stadium where the Dolphins play football. I don't even remember what name. I think it's Hard Rock Stadium now, I think that's what it's called, but it was Joe Robbie Stadium at the time. We got a commitment that we would be able to build a tower on that particular piece of property that somebody from Hollywood owned. We had all the documentation for that. I mean, it was a big deal, and I was the managing partner. We put all this together. We jumped through all kinds of hoops. Then came the time that we had to, by this time two years or so, three years had passed, we had to go before the actual Federal Communications Commission in Washington to make our presentation to be evaluated before they made their decision. There were about a dozen other groups competing with us. We really had the best presentation, everything. What happened was really funny. George Feldenkreis, his name doesn't sound particularly Cuban or Hispanic. So, one of the other opposing parties had already tried to discredit our group as not being Hispanic. We went to Washington for the meeting, it was the middle of winter, February, I think. George Feldenkreis came in his beautiful, white suit. I'm not joking. He was dressed magnificently, but not exactly the way somebody would walk into the FCC, normally. Somebody started, they called him as the number one person because he was the chairman of the board and they said to him, "state your name please." As soon as he opened his mouth, you could hear his accent, all these other people went like this, **Bloom imitates a shocked expression** you know? They knew that there's no question he was legitimately Hispanic. We won. We actually won in this very disputed process, but then almost all the other companies filed against us, and that's the process. Ultimately, Mr.

Feldenkreis had to make a decision as to whether he would accept an offer that was put on the table by a woman who was a single woman, and remember I said to you that suppose being a woman didn't help. She was a single woman and her husband owned a whole bunch of stations some place in the rest of the country, and she put an amount of money on the table for everybody to divide up. All the worried parties that were left and Mr. Feldenkreis felt that at that point, he needed to put money into his business rather and turned down that offer and tried to buy out everybody else. So, we didn't get the station, but we sure had a lot of fun. I'm sorry that we didn't do it, because it would have been terrific. After this all happened, some of the people from some of the other groups came to me and said, "we were wrong. We shouldn't have fought you. We should have tried to join you," because we did try to make alliances and bring in other of the warring parties, but I learned a lot about that process too. So, that's another kind of opportunity that you would never have thought to have. So, I almost was a radio station manager.

DAN ROYLES: [00:25:23] Almost. After 1980, do you go to like the '84 or '88 convention when you got back into office or were you yet-?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:25:35] No, '84 I was I was doing my work as a lobbyist in Tallahassee. It was called government relations consultant, which is a euphemistic name that makes it sound like you're not doing bad things as a lobbyist. By the way, I do have respect for lobbyists and I was a good one because I knew how to give somebody an amendment where a little phrase, maybe six words if you put it into the right place, would change the effect the bill would have on something that I was concerned about. So, I would write it out on the appropriate form and find a member of a particular committee and say, "would you mind filing this on the bill that's coming up this afternoon?," and because I had good relationships, they would do that, but that's what lobbyists do too. So, you're either in the position to pressure people to vote for or against your particular issue or you try to make things better, "instead of my trying to kill your bill here, let me change one paragraph, so it doesn't hurt my company, my industry, my organization," and that's a more friendly way to do things. So, being a lobbyist was a good field for me too, but in 1984, I was not going to the convention. By the time the next convention came around, '88 and '92, yes, those I went too. So,-

DAN ROYLES: [00:27:04] How were those?

HON, ELAINE BLOOM: [00:27:06] Wonderful, the '92 convention where Bill Clinton and Al Gore won this being the ticket. I turned out to be one of only about twenty-five people who had been polled weeks before because they didn't know who was gonna be named as the vice president and I had said that was my ideal ticket. So, when I came to New York, a lot of the people who were in the media had my name on a list. I was one of the people who had called the perfect pair and I thought it was great. I was very proud to support Bill Clinton. He was the most conservative of all of the democrats who were running at that time and I thought that was where the country really was, that we needed to be able to make a more middle ground the acceptable field. I had been the first female elected official and the second elected official to endorse Bill Clinton back in September of '91 and I met his wife, Hillary, in October of '91. I was already on

the path to becoming the Speaker Pro Tempore and I was invited to a Friday night party for the then speaker's birthday in Tallahassee. Unlike his normal activities, since it wasn't a campaign event, my husband Phillip flew up for the weekend in Tallahassee to stay with me and we both went to this particular party in Tallahassee and Senator Ron Silver brought Hillary Clinton to this party. She was traveling around, trying to rustle up support for her husband. I guess this was the weekend of the FSU, U of M game and there were a lot of people in town, so they came to this big party for Speaker TK Wetherell. Hilary came with Ron Silver and she was meeting people and, after she met everybody, she sat down and my husband sat down. They, both of them, didn't know anybody and they talked to each other about the law and judging for the whole evening and became very good friends. He was never able to see her again in a political environment, because he was a judge. He could only see her outside of Florida and outside of a political activity, but they were good friends, as was I with Hillary and Bill.

DAN ROYLES: [00:30:14] Do you wanna tell me more about your relationship with them or your impressions of them?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:30:23] Well, I never condoned some of the things that he was involved in and I told him that, but I also thought that he was remarkably bright, remarkably capable and I think he did a lot of great things for this country. My son, David, has a favorite memory. I may have mentioned it, Tuesday, that in the December of 1994, my husband and David and I were invited to the White House for the one of these annual Christmas parties which was not a political event, so my husband could go. My son was living in New York at that time and he flew in, and we went, and it was really lovely. At one point in the evening, the President was wandering around and he came over to where we were, put his hand on my shoulder, and he said to this group of people who were standing there that , “[he] only hopes that [he] can do for children's healthcare what Elaine had already done in Florida.” I think I told you this. So, that's the kind of memory I have of being part of the Clinton team and I was very foolish to be a part of it. From very early on in the Clinton administration, Hillary was a polarizing figure and drew a lot of attention from other politicians and from the media. How did you look at that and look at her as somebody who would have been a kind of trailblazer, in a way, for women in state politics. She was a trailblazer every day of her life and I think that part of the problem was the she was the very first professional woman to find herself in the position of First Lady. I'm not gonna go into how people treated her during the campaign. That's political, but when she found herself in the position in Washington of having talent, capability, and the President said to her she was, if it had been a male friend rather than a female, people probably wouldn't have gotten all choked up about it. The fact that he turned over the quote, “healthcare issues” to her made a lot of people very antsy. First of all, a woman, I mean she was still fighting that and one of the biggest issues in Florida, we have everything out in the sunshine. She knew, and the people who were working with her knew that, if you examined all these issues surrounding healthcare in the open. None of the people who had to come to the table and give up something would be able to do that, whether it was the pharmaceutical industry or the medical or the doctors or the hospitals. There were so many different issues to consider that they were sort of forced to do it in the shade, behind closed doors. Then, that meant that the people who were opposed to it had more that they could pick on, and it's unfortunate. I don't remember what the actual details were

of the plan that they proposed, but I know that Dr. Pedro Greer from Miami was one of the people who participated in that. I was given the opportunity to be part of it, but I turned it down because I was Speaker Pro Tempore at that time in 1993. I couldn't leave Tallahassee, obviously. By the time the session was over in 1993, they had pretty much done their work and you couldn't jump in at the end or even in the middle. You had to be there really from the beginning. Dr. Greer was one of the people who participated and he's been associated with Camillus House and with care for the indigent for many, many, many years. A wonderful human being, a caring human being. He was one of the people who worked hardest on that whole episode. So, I'm sorry I wasn't able to be part of it, but I'm also sorry it wasn't able to be successful. When people talk about healthcare, which is still a very important issue to me, there are those who say they want Medicare for all. Well, it's a nice thing to say, but there are people who have other approaches. So, I remember part of the Affordable Care Act when Barack Obama spoke about it, loosely. He talked about if you like your current policy you can stay, but no policy was gonna remain as it was because there were so many things that the Affordable Care Act added to it, whether it was pre-existing conditions or no caps on the total. So, therefore, nobody really had the same policy they can say, "I had last year and now it's the same." The opposition team made mincemeat of them, unjustifiably, but that's what they did. I would look for making sure that everybody has access to care that they can afford, and if they can't afford it, that we should be able to provide it in some manner. Do I think everything should be free? No, I do believe that, two things: I believe that people should be asked to pay something if they can. It's only the people who cannot that I feel we have to take care of. Some way or other, we take care of them in the long run, but I also feel that, wherever possible, people need to have a little bit of skin in the game, even if it's a small copayment. What we have right now is people have enormous copayments, enormous deductibles, and that's a very serious problem, as I see it. So, how many years later are we talking about? Twenty-six years, twenty-five years later, where we've come a long way with the Affordable Care Act, but we're not where we need to be yet? The state of Florida, since I have the chance to talk about it, has done a terrible injustice to the hard working people of the state who work hard every single day, but are low paid. They can't afford to pay for any kind of policy, yet they are people who contribute immensely. I mean, if somebody makes minimum wage and has a family to feed and rent to pay, there is no way they can afford to pay even two-hundred dollars a month for a policy. That's why we should be expanding Medicaid. The Medicaid expansion opportunity is still, and was, a huge bonus. I mean, the federal government picks up for the first few years, I think almost all, and then it's about ten percent that the state has to contribute afterwards. We're talking about the people who are making fifteen thousand a year to twenty-five thousand a year, in that range, maybe a little more. They cannot afford to pay for private health insurance, no matter how many options are offered. So, that's a serious problem which I hope, if the people of Florida are smart enough to see who's for and against them, that they'll vote wisely in this 2018 election.

DAN ROYLES: [00:39:15] That gets to another of my questions, which is a big question. Looking at the state of politics today, locally, statewide, nationally, what do you think?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:39:35] I'm scared. The disinformation campaign that is fostered by

this wonderful innovation of technology, called the Internet, scares me because there's so much that's coming across that is, it ranges from the ludicrous to the most evil. I mean, there really are terrible things happening right now. So, that worries me. I am heartened by the fact that there are so many people who over the last year and a half have discovered that they were able to exercise their own spirit of opposition to things or support for things and come out either marching, or sending letters, or running for office. That heartens me very much. I think I'll have a better answer for you second week of November of 2018. I'm really apprehensive about what's gonna happen. I pray that there'll be changes in Washington, significant changes, and changes at the state level. It's urgent. Without being too party-focused, I will tell you that I was not aware of how smartly the Republican party was in the way they made it certain that they would control reapportionment in all the states. That's what they figured out to do for the past, I guess sixteen, seventeen years. They've really been working on it and, obviously, you know that I'm a Democrat. We fell short. We did not recognize how they were going about it in all fifty states. That's why we have so many states that are so ill apportioned, where you have, we call it, talk about it, as gerrymandering. It's really theft of the right to vote. I mean, I saw that, I think in 1992, I was Vice Chairman of Reapportionment and, in those days, we were already using these models on the internet, you know, and computers to figure out how we could group people appropriately. When I saw what was happening in 2001, 2002, they would take a community, let's say of eight-hundred senior citizens, and cut them in half so that you wouldn't have a block vote from these senior citizens. Well, that's the nature, that's gerrymandering, and, at any rate, I'm glad to see that in some states, it's coming to an end. It's not going to end in Florida. Florida has some significant problems still, although we did have the court do the latest revisions. Of course, there was so such a malapportionment. So, if you're asking me how do I feel about the political future, I tend to be an optimist. I worry about things, like the Supreme Court and I've been telling people for twenty-five years that they had to vote as if their life depended on it because they had to think about the Supreme Court, and a lot of people don't. So, that's what really worries me, because that's the long term change. I pray for the good health of Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

DAN ROYLES: [00:44:02] Don't we all? Maybe we can talk about something hopefully more joyous.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:44:13] There's a clip if you search for my husband on the Internet where he was a panel member at Columbia University Law School along with Ruth Bader Ginsburg. I'm gonna sneeze. **Bloom sneezes**

DAN ROYLES: [00:44:38] Bless you.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Then, she sent him a note to tell him about how much she enjoyed his presentation. He loved that. He made a good presentation, but her note. She was in the class five years after Phillip.

DAN ROYLES: Mm-hm. Do you wanna talk more about Philip?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: I'd love to.

DAN ROYLES: I have a profile of the two of you in maybe each magazine or talk about him generally. What was he like as a person?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:45:06] A very kind person, a very intelligent, but not bookish [person]. Most people thought he was very funny. If you asked a group of people who may have observed him as a judge in his courtroom, there were many who would tell you that, to them, he reminded them of, I'm drawing a blank on his name, a comedian, Mel Brooks, because he just was very sharp, very fast and Philip was a very, a good person who cared very, very deeply about the justice system. Every year, when the Dade County Bar Association had their first event for newly sworn in leaders, he would be brought in as a judge, as a person in the community, to talk to them about their life in the law. He would generally tell them, you know, the importance of honesty, and respect for your fellow lawyers, and respect for your judges, and so forth. They would usually end with wishing them the happiness that his career in the law had brought him, that he wished on them too. I run into people, that's seven months since he passed, and all I hear are really glowing stories. So, he was a very special human being. He was born on flag day, which made him very acutely aware of American history. So he was, he won the American history prize in high school. I mean, this was very important to him. He wanted everybody to be knowledgeable about American history and to respect the flag and to honor the flag and to honor our country. So, that was important.

DAN ROYLES: [00:47:16] You mentioned a couple times that there were a lot of things that he couldn't join you at because of his position as a judge, and you were in electoral politics. What was that like to have a kind of divided life?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:47:34] It was strange. I mean, for example, whenever I had an election coming up, campaign, he couldn't even put a toe into the campaign headquarters. He couldn't pick me up at night too. I had to meet him outside. He couldn't come in, literally. There were one or two people in the community who were actually, would always be watching, literally. He didn't object, he didn't find any problem with that, but I'm just telling you, it was awkward. Fortunately, we had many friends who would in effect become surrogate companions, so that I didn't have to go visit, go to meetings or to events alone during those campaigns. Whether they were male or female friends, that was very kind of them to always cover for him. He was just so thrilled to be a judge. He loved it. He was ecstatic. Something that I had done, when he was elected in was 1984, and then he came up for re-election in 1990, by that time, I had been unopposed in 1988. I don't remember now. I was unopposed or had token opposition, but anyway, I always send back my unused campaign funds pro rata share to each contributor. Then, when he was not opposed in 1990 or 1996, he would send back the leftover funds on a pro rata basis the same way. So, this became known as the Bloom Dividend, and he was very proud of that too. I've said, the other day, one of the hardest things about being in politics is asking people to invest in your campaign. It's a very tough thing. I mean, it's different. If you're asking somebody to invest in your business and you say to them, "if I succeed you'll be a shareholder, if I succeed as a candidate, you'll be able to be proud of yourself." That's about all.

He certainly should give them a bonus for coming and supporting you. Phillip was a judge who took his work very, very seriously and he prided himself on covering the most cases, and you would see his reports. He worked at it very hard, and somebody said, "I need a hearing in an emergency." He would say, "we're ready for you tomorrow, seven o'clock in the morning." They would say, "not that fast. You know, I didn't mean seven o' clock, Judge," you know? So, he was always available and he loved it on the occasions when sometimes they ask three judges to become a panel to review things. He would do that. He would love doing that, but he didn't ever have any desire to go into another court. He was very happy as a circuit court judge, kept him close to the community. There was one time when people wanted him to put his name in for a federal judgeship. It was during the Clinton years and he said, "well..." At that point, he was past the age of sixty. He said, "no." He said, "I'd rather they do it with somebody younger, who gets to stay longer." So, he thought of the good of the community. He was a very generous person. If somebody needed help, he was always ready, whether it was a family member or a friend or somebody, always was ready to help somebody. That was a good trade, too. He was an incredible father to our two kids, David and Anne. Anne obviously loved her daddy so much that she wanted to be just like him. She became a lawyer. She's a mediator now and my son, David, was always a businessman, even at the age of seven. That's what [David], he's in business for himself. He was a great grandfather to the two boys that we have, my daughter's children, her stepchildren. He was always ready with advice when they asked it, and very proud of her kids as well. I definitely think that one of my grandsons is going to follow him career-wise, which is good.

DAN ROYLES: [00:53:09] I pulled out some of the awards.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Go ahead.

DAN ROYLES: Just a few, not too many. **Royles pulls out awards from a stack**

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Go ahead.

DAN ROYLES: [00:53:15] So, I'll go through them and you can tell us the stories behind them. The first one is from the National Organization Women, National Organization For Women Dade County Chapter in 1972.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:53:31] Okay. What I recall is that in 1971 we created the Women's Political Caucus. I, somewhere there, was the Chair of the event. It was at a hotel on the beach, maybe like Fortieth Street or so, Forty-second Street, and I believe that, you know, that was 1972. I'd already also been the founding chair of the Dade County Commission on the Status of Women. So, I would naturally have been their heroine because I supported all of their issues and thought very highly of their leaders and their work, and to this day I do.

DAN ROYLES: [00:54:40] The next one is the Role Model of Human Rights from the Greater Homestead-Florida City Chamber of Commerce in 1974.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:54:52] That's a long time. Well, if it was '74, it also had to do with my work on behalf of women, I would say. God, that's a big trip from where I lived. I lived, in those days, at two-hundred and fourth street. You know, Northeast two-hundred and fourth, and you're going down to three-hundred and fiftieth, I mean, southwest.

DAN ROYLES: [00:55:24] Yeah.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: I truthfully cannot tell you the event, but I'm honored that I was honored by them.

DAN ROYLES: In 1984, you were named Outstanding Citizen by the citizens of Dade County.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Does it say who gave it?

DAN ROYLES: Citizens of Dade County, is all it said in the finding end.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:55:53] Well, it was probably then from the County Commission, which they would be able to speak for the citizens of Dade County. At that point, I was, I probably had gotten something accomplished for them as a lobbyist for the federations in the United Protestant Appeal because I was, as I said, trying to make sure that we got the funds for senior citizen programs for healthcare, for whatever good things were available. I saw I was able to apply pressure from a different point, than would those people who were, quote, "lobbying," unquote, on behalf of the county. So, that might've been where that one came from, but that's nice.

DAN ROYLES: [00:56:40] This is one of a number of plaques that was related to bonds for the State of Israel. There's one in 1987 and I think another one in 1994.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Well in 1987, I was honored. It was really an amazing event. I will never forget it. It happened to be on the holiday of Pern.

DAN ROYLES: [00:57:08] Mm-hm...

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:57:09] Which is, a young woman known to us as Queen Esther, was picked as an additional bride by the Persian King and her uncle was an advisor to the King, Mordecai, and Mordecai came to her and said that this terrible man, who was another advisor to the king, Haman, wanted to kill a whole lot of people, including all the Jews. He said to his niece, "Esther, you must go to the king and appeal on behalf of all the people. Tell him that would be terrible what this other man is plotting and planning to do and so forth." She was fearful, but he told her that this is something she must find the courage to do, and she did. The story is that Haman was then destroyed by the king, but all the other people were saved. This Israel Bonds event taking place on Purim, was a brunch and this was during a time that we were hoping and trying to help people who were trying to come out of the Soviet Union as prisoners of conscience. If somebody was Jewish and they did what they were entitled to do, which was

apply for an exit Visa to be able to go to Israel there, they supposedly were not treated as if they were indigenous, even though their families had been in the Soviet Union area for four-hundred years. They were still not entitled to everything that everybody else was. So, these people were asking for their appropriate right to leave and go to Israel. Once they made that declaration, they would lose their jobs, sometimes lose the right to their own apartment, if families would be moved in to share it with them. It was a very rough life for the people who were considered and called "refused." Of course, they had been refused. Among the people who were invited to this brunch was Congressman, Claude Pepper. He came and he spoke, and spoke beautifully, wonderfully about me and Senator Lawton Chiles. Well, Lawton Chiles came from having been with some people earlier in the morning and made calls to the Soviet Union to speak to refuse nix. He actually had some people he was talking to, encouraging them. We're trying in the United States Senate and the United States Congress to help things along, to require the Soviet Union to let you leave, and he came to this brunch. He got up and he began talking about me and he said, "I've known Elaine Bloom for many, many years and she is just like Queen Esther. She is never afraid to go to the King or to come to the Congress or to come to the United States Senate and ask us to do the right thing." He went on and on and on. Well, it was amazing and that's what I remember about that particular event. It was really a very exciting event. There's a picture some place, and I don't know where it is, whether you have a copy of it in the files, from that event, with Janet Reno, and with Lawton Chiles, and with Claude Pepper. I'll have to find it, because I think I know where I have some copies and maybe I'd be able to put that into your exhibit as well. That was one of the high points, which I will not forget. Then, in the 1990s, Israel Bonds chose to honor Philip and me together, and it was a lovely, beautiful event. I've been a big supporter of Israel Bonds, both of us have. I had done something else by making it possible. We had already made sure that the state of Florida had the right to make purchases of Israel bonds for its retirement system plan, and even though it was allowable in law, it hadn't happened. So, I was able to put together the people who came and spoke to the individuals in Tallahassee who would be most involved in making those decisions. So, this was another way of the Israel Bonds people thanking me for having gotten into the process in order to help them, and Israel Bonds has never defaulted, not one dollar. The legislation that affected it said that the State of Florida could purchase the bonds of a country that had voted at least ninety-seven percent in the United Nations with the United States, had never defaulted with any of its securities. It went through so many things only one country in the world could meet. Nobody else's bonds would cover it. So, that didn't say Israel Bonds in the law and I was very proud of helping that along too, so that's why.

DAN ROYLES: [01:03:02] I saw it mentioned in a proclamation of Elaine Bloom Day. I did not see, it didn't say where, but-

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Well, I don't know either. From time to time, there would be gratitude expressed by a particular city or by the county, or by the school board, but say, a day would have had to be a city or a county. That, they are the only ones who are going to declare days and it was very nice. They were showing appreciation to me, but I am very appreciative of the fact that they did that.

DAN ROYLES: [01:03:47] In 1990, you were honored by the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders Association?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [00:03:55] I went out of my way to get involved in an issue that you probably would be surprised at. Hialeah Racetrack was always mistreated in the legislature. The people who were, and this is where the dates for horse racing were decided, and based on whatever dates you had would be whether you would stay alive or not, in the horse racing industry. I fought very hard for Hialeah Racetrack's ability to have appropriate dates and to have them shared on some basis with Calder or with Gulfstream. There were times, when I apparently did something that made the thoroughbred breeders happy, so that was what that was about. I know, it's far fetched, and it's not something that I put into my list of accomplishments, but I was very happy to be able to be there. There was one day when Steinbrenner, who was an owner, and he was in the governor's office. I went downstairs, and he was a horse owner, and he was very, very commendatory because I had been so helpful for something. There were times when I got myself involved in issues that you would be surprised at, that's all. As I've said, I was a generalist rather than a specialist, and if you can help, you help.

DAN ROYLES: [01:05:33] Why was Hialeah Race Track being kind of mistreated by the legislator?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Because this was a Dade County race track.

DAN ROYLES: Mm-hm.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: It was unfortunate. I also had another connection to Hialeah, actually. Pete Widener was a person, I think I mentioned him to you...

DAN ROYLES: In our conversation, yeah.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:05:59] From Philadelphia.

DAN ROYLES: Yeah.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:06:01] You know who he was. There was the Widener Handicap, so I actually went to see the horse race, but I always thought that Hialeah is a beautiful, beautiful place, at least it was, hope it still is. If they were not given a fair deal with respect to sharing of the dates, then they couldn't make money. In later years, I think they just do, they don't have actual horse racing there. They have TV connections and it's closer to TV with other race tracks, for people who I guess like to go to gamble on somebody else's race horse.

DAN ROYLES: [01:06:50] The next one is the Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from-

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: The International Fine Arts College.

DAN ROYLES: Yeah, tell me about that.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:06:58] International Fine Arts College is a private college which stresses art and design and things relating to the fashion world. I knew the people who owned and ran this school, and whenever necessary, I was helpful to them. They were part of the Florida postsecondary colleges and universities or something, organization like that. Even though they were a private and for a profit program, I thought that they provided something of value to the whole system in Florida. I'm very much a supporter of the public university system but I also think that there's a place for private colleges and universities. I am a product of a private university myself, Barnard College, in New York. So, these people have honored some wonderful individuals over the years and I was very honored when they chose me, so I got that as an honorary doctorate. Years later, I was honored by Bar Ilan University in Israel, I had worked for them for nine years. I resigned from working for them because once I ran for congress, I didn't want, I couldn't ask anybody that I worked with, who's a donor to the Israeli University, to support my congressional race. I didn't want there to be any conflict of interest. So, I had to raise money in order to run for congress. I raised a huge amount of money and a huge amount of money came from an organization, Emily's List, which put me on their roster and people send contributions from all over the country, but I wanted to make sure that I was not in any way taking advantage, of the people that I knew through the Israeli university. Then, very surprisingly, in 2002 I think, they awarded me an honorary doctorate for some of the things that I had done, which was very nice. So, I'm an honorary doctor- not once, but twice.

DAN ROYLES: [01:09:43] I'm excited about the next one, it is the Tugboat award from Florida's seaports in 1996.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:09:53] That was not easy. I, representing Dade County, representing the Port of Miami, we needed significant federal, state and local dollars in order to dredge out the Port of Miami for these giant ships, which are now coming in. In fact, we need to do some more dredging, as I understand it. I had to solve a lot of environmental issues and the way that I did this was that I worked with people all over the state, on the ports. I think we have thirteen ports in Florida, twelve or thirteen, I'm not sure. I made it so that they could get clearance for environmental concerns, in advance of having their money in hand, so that they wouldn't be blocked from starting their projects. That in itself, made life a whole lot easier for some of them. Suddenly, I had the Tugboat Annie award. I know. It's sort of funny.

DAN ROYLES: [01:11:17] Yeah.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:11:18] But, listen, that's what legislatures need to be concerned about. It's not just the issues that you come up there knowing about. You learn about all these other things, and I had to be concerned about environmental issues. I had to be concerned about financial issues. I had to be concerned about safety issues in terms of, port workers and the equipment and all the other things.

DAN ROYLES: [01:11:44] How did the port come on to your radar as a Legislator?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:11:50] I was always involved in everything to do with transportation and I think that one of the people who lobbied on behalf of ports might have come to me and said, "are you interested?" That was how bills would come to my attention, and I would take them on. There are a number of bills where there were issues that were important to me, and I thought of them, and I would go to bill drafting and say, "help me write something about XYZ," but then, there were many, many issues that came to me from people who were lobbyists in different areas who would say, "would you be able to help us in so-and-so?," and I would pick and choose. So, I can tell you which way that came, but I obviously had to work with the associations, whether it was the port authorities, or the shipping companies, or the cruise lines. Cruise lines might have been one of the issues that came to my attention because I was the tourism person. I was Madam Tourism for many, many years. Once I went back to the legislature, representing the city of Miami Beach, and my district went probably from Lincoln Road all the way to the county line. So, I had all of Miami Beach, except for a very small part. Believe me, I took that very seriously, whether it was hotels or auto rentals, or ships, or whatever. So, that's how you get to be a generalist.

DAN ROYLES: [01:13:28] Right. You were named an honorary member of the South Florida Shomrim Society?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:13:36] Shomrim is a Hebrew word meaning "guardian, protector." That was the police officers who were Jewish in Dade County, have a special. It's like in other communities, they might have the Irish police officers or the Catholic police officers. They had a Jewish society, it was called the Shomrim Society. I always was involved with police officer issues. I put it into effect, laws that if a police officer was killed in the line of duty, his or her children are entitled to free college scholarships from state schools. I mean really, I did a lot in that arena as well. So, police officers, firefighters, very important to me, obviously. I have, one of the things that I think is in the exhibit, is a statue of a firefighter. I was an honorary fire chief with a big hat...yeah, really. When it came to police officers, in 1978, my final session of my first tour of duty, the teacher's union wanted to have all the teachers in Florida come under the state retirement system, but in order to do that and not damage the state retirement system financially, it was determined that the way it would be done would be to reduce the special risk retirement benefit that police officers and firefighters get. That was for danger, for risking their lives extra hard. So, instead of having the three percent a year benefit, they got a two percent for every year of service. When I came back to the legislature in 1986, the law enforcement people, the police and firefighters, came to me and said, "you're the only one who will take this on and not let go." Remember, Governor Askew had said, "you don't give up." So I said, "yes, I would take this on." It didn't happen in the first year that I handled it, but it did happen in the second year that we'd got back the special risk retirement for people who risk their lives every day. That was wonderful, but what happened to the people who had worked from 1978 to 1986? It took me about another nine years before I was able to get a back fill to replace that for those people. So, that was one of my very proudest accomplishments.

DAN ROYLES: [01:16:40] The last one I have is the Fairy Godmother of the Miami Children's Museum in 2001.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:16:50] I was there to help the Miami Children's Museum get started when it was a little project in the Sunset Shops, or whatever it was called, on the corner of Sunset and US-1. It used to be, before the big shopping mall that's there now, there was another one there. I don't know whether they tore one down, built a new one, but in that facility was a small Children's Museum, and they wanted to build a big Children's Museum. They had different plans, different places, possible for it. I got the money into the budget for their potential building. I got Gwen Margolis in the Senate to put it into the Senate side, so now we had the money, and the money was now in the pot, but they didn't build for a number of years. When the time came that they did build the beautiful facility that you see from the MacArthur Causeway, there was a question as to whether that original pot of money was still, if they were still entitled to anything from that. That's when I went to work and managed to get the funds, in effect, reallocated the entire pot that had been sitting there, that theoretically could have gone away. They were able to access and to use it. So, when they opened the facility, they were very grateful and Debbie Spiegelman, the head of the Miami Children's Museum, always referred to me as the Fairy Godmother. When I saw the list, I saw that's what she gave me, a special award which was very nice, very sweet. I'm a very strong supporter of the Miami Children's Museum, and in fact of all the museums. When I told you that I was involved, I chaired tourism and cultural affairs for a number of years. Dade County and my district in particular had so much going on. I think that Dade County has done a wonderful job. Michael Spring, as the Director of Dade County's Cultural Affairs Department, has done an excellent job. I was always very privileged to be part of making all those things happen. That's what being a Legislator gave me the opportunity to do, to help lots of great things happen. There were so many stories associated with all of the awards, but also of all of the bills that were passed, of all of the issues, I happened to be with a Legislator. She's still a Legislator right now, just a few hours ago today. She never had, a Republican woman, never had the opportunities that I had, to do so many different things. There's such a difference now The leadership of both parties. Well, the Democrats really have a very tough time. So, even the Republicans don't let their members do an awful lot of things. So, I was very fortunate that I served when I did. I was fortunate that I was energetic and able. I guess I was like the Energizer Bunny. I didn't stop. I lived and breathed it twenty-four/seven, and I had a wonderful time.

DAN ROYLES: [01:20:42] I'm sure that Miami Beach and Miami-Dade County have changed tremendously in the time that you have been here.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: Mm-hm.

DAN ROYLES: Could you reflect on some of those changes?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:20:58] Well, I remember the early sixties, mid-sixties, when we passed one million residents. I remember that day. Now, we're what, two and a half million? It's been an incredible opportunity to be part of helping to build something. I moved here at the age

of about twenty-five or so, twenty-four, and it was a very, very different place than what it is today. It was a sleepy Southern town. Thanks to the influx of people from all parts of the world, it's the most exciting place to live now. So, as I look back, I'm thrilled with the changes that I've been able to see. I'm thrilled with the changes I was able to help take place and I hope that we can solve our sea level rise problems, so that we have hundreds of years in the future. You look at communities in Europe that were hundreds of years old now, so I'm hopeful that we can make it through, if we can solve those environmental issue problems. That's a serious problem. I'm, in a sense, a little sorry that I'm at the end of my career, really and truly, but this time, for sure. I'm heartened by the fact that there are so many young people ready to pick up and give the leadership that needs to be given. So, I'm optimistic.

DAN ROYLES: [01:23:18] Is there anything you wanna add, or-?

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:23:22] If people take the time to go through, I don't know, those boxes, **Bloom points at some boxes with archived documents** I don't know how they're gonna be sorted, how they're gonna be cataloged, but I think that it's an interesting track record. My husband's contributions to the law, I remember a piece that he wrote that was reprinted a number of times in the Miami Law Review. The title was, "Ten Sure Ways to Irritate a Judge." Over the years, many people have written, "is it okay if I..." quote that, "is it okay if I read that? If I print it up?"

I hope they do attribute it to him, because really it was a very well written piece. If people paid attention to it, they wouldn't irritate the judges the way they might have. So, Phillip's contributions were enormous to the practice of law and to the study of law, and to the court system. I hope my contributions were of equal value. I think they were, to the legislative process. I just thank the Lord Almighty for having given me the opportunity. First, to be born in a time when it was possible for women to make this leap of faith, and jump into the pool, and do all of these kinds of things. I'm amazed that I was able to do the things I did, as I look back now. I thank the people who made it possible, whether it was Roxy Bolton who got out there in the early 1970's and said women can do all of these things if the men would just give us a chance. So, the people who fought to help women emerge played a very vital role. The organizations, some of which we've talked about, played a very vital role, to get to the point right now, where women are more than fifty percent of the students at law schools, more than fifty percent of the students at medical schools. Just shows you how much talent we lost over the years. When I was growing up, all of my female cousins were teachers, several of my aunts were teachers. I knew that the one thing I didn't wanna do was be a teacher. I had nothing against teachers, but they're just too many in the family. I didn't know what I would turn out to be. I did think, from teenage years on, that I would be a lawyer. So, I never got to be a lawyer, but I sure feel that I impacted the law. That's wonderful and I hope that as people from law school look through some of these, or read about them, **Bloom points to her list of legislative accomplishments** that they will realize that as lawyers they have an incredible opportunity to affect the community for good, and that they use their skills for the greatest part possible to do good. I support people making money and support people having good businesses, but I also feel very strongly about the importance of everybody contributing to making life better for everybody. So, that's where I stand.

DAN ROYLES: Thank you.

HON. ELAINE BLOOM: [01:27:22] Thank you.

END OF TRANSCRIPT