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Marcia Kingsley interview for a Wright State University History Course

Regina Guerriero

Marcia Kingsley

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MARCIA KINGSLEY

**Idea of the Good Life-
Housewife to Postal Worker**

**Interview by
Regina Guerriero
January 19, 2003**

Regina Guerriero
Summary of Interview
January 19th, 2003

Marcia Kingsley was born on October 8th, 1953 in Sandusky, OH. Sandusky is located north of Fairborn in between Toledo and Cleveland by Lake Erie. One of the main attractions in Sandusky is Cedar Point, an amusement park, which is situated right on the lake.

Marcia was born in Sandusky however she grew up in a small suburb of Ohio by the name of Vickery. She and her family, which consisted of her parents and her three siblings, lived in a small house on seven acres of land. They would lease their land out and also had a very huge garden on this land, but they did not live on a farm, although they only had one neighbor and their closest friend was about three miles away. Marcia's father was in construction and her mother was a secretary/bookkeeper. When Marcia was growing up her idea of the good life was to be a housewife, plan meals and let her husband take care of her. She admits now that that wasn't a very realistic idea back then. She also wanted to lay in the sun, read books, cook dinners and clean the house. She says that when she was growing up she never really wanted to have kids because she was one of about thirty grandkids and was forever babysitting. She says this changed though when she got older and became pregnant and knew at that moment that even though it was unplanned, she knew she wanted that child. To date Marcia has a total of two children.

Growing up in Vickery, Ohio, Marcia and her parents and three siblings lived in a two-bedroom house. Three people would have to be in each bedroom. They moved to Sandusky, Ohio right after her youngest sister was born. This made it easier on everyone

because from Vickery, school was about ten miles away and now it was much closer. Marcia and her siblings went to St. Mary's high school mostly because their parents were told they had to by the Catholic Church. The teachers were predominantly nuns when she went there and were very good at teaching because they believed this was their god-given job. This was different however, if you got a nun who was in her eighties and ready for retirement. Marcia had one in eighth grade, Sister Mary Helen and she admits that she did not learn very much that year because of the teacher. During high school Marcia wanted to take some classes geared more towards girls like home ec, but was not allowed to. She says, "They didn't want me to take home ec, they wanted me to take chemistry and physics because they said that my grades were a little bit higher and that's how they did it. Your ability and your grades." As a child, she resented this but there was nothing she could really do about it.

After high school Marcia did not go to college like her parents may have wanted her to do, instead she went with a couple of girlfriends to airline school. They went to Weaver Airline School in Kansas City, Missouri for approximately three months. They were offered jobs to work at the secretarial level for the CIA however Marcia and one of her friends were too in love with their local boyfriends at the time to make the trip. Her other friend did make the trip. Marcia was then offered a job in the airline industry in Toledo, Ohio but being only eighteen, she did not want to make the big move by herself. She at times to this day regrets this decision because it was a very good job offer.

Instead of the airline industry, Marcia worked her first job at an employment agency. There wasn't a lot of work at this job and she became very bored so she got another job at the Foster Grant Company. She worked in personnel and payroll for about

two to three years until she got married and became pregnant. Marcia decided that she wanted to stay home with her new arrival and did so for about two years. She had to get another full-time job when she and her husband divorced and became a single mom. She worked at a trucking company until she decided to take the post office exam and passed it and became a letter carrier. She has now been working there for 23 ½ years and will be able to retire in about six years. Marcia really enjoys working at the post office because it is also a chance to meet some really nice people along the way. She says, "I've met a lot of people along the way. A lot of people whom I've become friends with and see socially and that sort of thing. People that brighten up your day as you see them because I am kind of a people person." Even after retiring, Marcia believes she will still need to do work with the public in some way. She will need to work part-time because she has a daughter from her second marriage and she will still probably be in college by the time Marcia retires. She also hopes to be able to move back by the lake and get another small boat for fishing.

In regards to her idea of the good life when she was younger and what she is doing with her life now, she says that she "had to get real." She knew that no man was going to support her and she felt the need to work to be independent so she would never have to rely on a man in that way. She realized that she could not just be a housewife like she had pictured and be able to cook and clean like she always wanted. She had to earn a living for the unexpected and she teaches her daughter this as well. Marcia tells her daughter, "Get a good job, get an education, be able to take care of yourself and your kids if need be, and never rely on a man for anything." That is some truly great advice.

Regina Guerriero
Interview with Marcia Kingsley
January 19th, 2003

REGINA GUERRIERO- My name is Regina Guerriero and I am here at my kitchen table [in Fairborn, Ohio], interviewing Marcia Kingsley on her life growing up here in Ohio.

REGINA GUERRIERO- When and where were you born?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- I was born in Sandusky Ohio, October 8th, 1953.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Ok, and what was it like in Sandusky, where you were born, when you were growing up?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- I was born in Sandusky, however, I lived in Vickery Ohio, which is a suburb in the middle of nowhere. We lived in a small little house on seven acres, had one neighbor and the closest friend was probably three miles away.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Did you have a farm there at that house?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- We leased our land out and we had a huge, huge garden. My parents weren't farmers, my father was in construction and my mother was a secretary/bookkeeper.

REGINA GUERRIERO- And do you have any siblings?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Yes, two sisters and one brother. My sisters, I'm the oldest. My sisters are two years younger than me and thirteen years younger than me and my brother is five years younger than me.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Ok, and did you guys get along back then when you were growing up?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- My sister who is two years apart from me, we fought a lot, sibling thing, but we are best of friends now. We played a lot though too because we had nobody else to play with out in the country like that.

REGINA GUERRIERO- At your age back then, what was your idea of the good life?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- All I wanted to do was be a housewife, plan meals, let my husband take care of me. I wasn't very realistic back then <laughs>. But, that's all I ever planned on doing back then. Laying out in the sun, reading books, cooking dinner and cleaning my house and taking care of the kids. That however, never happened.

REGINA GUERRIERO- No? <laughs>

MARCIA KINGSLEY- <laughs>

REGINA GUERRIERO- Ok, so that is what you wanted to do with your life then?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Actually, I shouldn't say taking care of the kids, I really didn't want to have kids. <laughs> I was the oldest of like 30 grandkids, so I was forever babysitting and thought 'I will never ever do this'. And I really did think that. I really did. But then once you get a little bit older you decide yeah.

REGINA GUERRIERO- So what changed your mind then?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Um, I guess getting pregnant. It was unplanned. But from the moment I knew I was pregnant, I knew I wanted that child.

REGINA GUERRIERO- And how many more children did you have after that?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- One, I only have two, I can't stretch it too far. <laughs>

REGINA GUERRIERO- Ok, so how many people lived in this house when you were growing up?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- We had six people in a two bedroom little house.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Oh my gosh, where did you guys sleep?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Three of us in one bedroom. Of course my youngest sister, she was born right before we moved. So, we were able to get out of that little house and my parents actually loved living out in the country but it was a pain because we went to school ten miles away. So it was hard for any events we were participating in or anything like that so they decided to move in to town to Sandusky Ohio where we all went to St. Mary's. And that did make it easier, however they waited until I graduated so I always had to bum the rides from nice friends. <laughs>

REGINA GUERRIERO- Would you say you were very close to your parents and your family in general?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Oh yes, very close. Yes, very, very close.

REGINA GUERRIERO- And did you get to see other relatives, grandparents, aunts and uncles?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Oh my god yeah, because our grandparents, everybody on my mother's side of the family lived out in the country and my mother's parents had a tavern. And my grandmother and grandfather had twelve children plus they had a tavern plus he was an operating engineer for a construction company. So my grandmother was quite

busy, she would, in the morning get up, I would say at 4 o'clock, cook full breakfast for her children and if any of us grandkids were around we ate there because she was the best cook in the world which is very true. And she would, when she got the kids off, go over to the tavern, get that ready to open and do all that. And I tell you what, her house was clean. I mean every morning I can remember her sweeping the floor, doing the dishes, there was no dishwasher, you know, before she would go over to the tavern. I mean she was a hardworking woman. It's amazing that she could do that much, to me. But yes, if it wasn't for our relatives to play with, who would we have to play with but each other. And my mother was the oldest of twelve so I had several. Oldest of twelve and she had only one sister so she had ten brothers and I had a couple of uncles that were my age who were like my very best friends, and like my brothers.

REGINA GUERRIERO- That's amazing. Were you and your siblings assigned chores and housework and everything?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Yeah, we were assigned some chores and that sort of thing. We hated the housework because my mother worked full time and so Wednesdays she was off so that was housework day. She was evil on those days. <laughs> It was like we had to do our chores and she had to do hers and nobody was in a good mood.

REGINA GUERRIERO- So, you said you went to St. Mary's high school?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Yes, I did.

REGINA GUERRIERO- And how was that like?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- St. Mary's high school back then was a whole lot different than it is now. It was more, at the risk of sounding presumptuous or whatever, it was considered more elite to go to a Catholic school back then. Our parents, however, sent us there because of the fact they were told they had to by the Catholic Church. That is the truth. But back then it was different than it is now. The teachers were predominantly nuns and the nuns, actually, that was their God-given job, to teach us, so they did a very, very good job. Unless you got a nun who was ready for retirement and ready for retirement for nuns is in their 80's, it's not their 50's or 60's. <laughs> So it was like, I did have one in eighth grade, Sister Mary Helen who was way too old to teach. I can't say I learned a whole lot that year because we didn't change classes back then, you know, that was in the 60's. So, we did not change classes until high school and eighth grade we had the same teacher and she really was too old to teach. She, you know, it was sad, it was sad but predominantly it was the nuns that we did have were excellent teachers because they thought God told them they had to teach us and by god we were going to learn. <laughs>

REGINA GUERRIERO- And did you do any extra curricular activities? Sports?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- You know, they didn't have a lot when I was young, I mean that was a long time ago, I graduated in '71. They didn't have to sports they have for

girls these days, everything was geared more towards boys. It was a very good time to be a boy, not a good time to be a girl in school, I mean, they just, you know, wanted us to do, I don't know...

REGINA GUERRIERO- Learn house stuff?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Yeah, well, I can't even say that because in high school they didn't want me to learn that, they didn't want me to take home ec, they wanted me to take chemistry and physics. <laughs> They said that my grades were a little bit higher and that's how they did it, your ability and your grades. They really wanted me to do it and I had no desire, I wanted to take home ec, I did, and they didn't let me. They made me take physics or chemistry, which I did terrible in. I always got in trouble in that class because I did not like it.

REGINA GUERRIERO- And did you go to college after high school?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- No, I did not. I went to airline school <laughs> with a couple of my girlfriends and my parents really wanted me to go to college if not to a full-time college just to part-time for awhile just to do it. They really wanted me to but I wanted to go with my girlfriends to airline school. And we did that, we went to Kansas City Missouri, it was called Weaver Airline School and we had a lot of fun, a lot of good memories we'll never forget to this day. And we could've gotten a job, as a matter of fact we were offered jobs to work for the CIA in Washington at secretary level and one of our girlfriends did take the job and she ended up marrying a veterinarian from Alexandria, VA. <laughs> I know, and us two were in love with our local boyfriends and so we stayed behind and did not go, but it was still an interesting experience I'll never forget or regret.

REGINA GUERRIERO- And how long was that school for?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- It was only for like three months.

REGINA GUERRIERO- So you did not want to pursue a career in the airline?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Actually, when we came back to Sandusky, Ohio we did go to Toledo and we were checking into jobs there. And I did get a job there but my girlfriend couldn't find one and I didn't want to move to Toledo by myself, I was only 18. And so I came back here and just, you know, well decided to stay in Sandusky Ohio, which sometimes I do regret it. I wish I would have because it was a pretty good job, but I just didn't want to go there alone.

REGINA GUERRIERO- So where did you work instead?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- I worked my first job was an employment agency. I was a secretary there and it was interesting, they had lots of people come in for all different kinds of jobs and it was interesting meeting a lot of different people. There wasn't a lot

of work, I soon became very bored, the only rewarding benefit of that job was, I was on the 8th floor of a building that looked out over the bay and it was beautiful scenery so I found myself daydreaming looking over the bay out the window. I mean it was interesting seeing the people who came in there but it wasn't enough to keep me busy and I soon became bored and then I got another job working at the Foster Grant Company. It was in Sandusky Ohio and I worked in personnel and payroll in that job probably until two or three years until I got married and got pregnant.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Ok, so you got married and you got pregnant, and then what happened?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- I just couldn't handle working full-time. <laughs>

REGINA GUERRIERO- No? <laughs>

MARCIA KINGSLEY- I wanted to be home with my baby and so I did quit my job after going back. I went back after my maternity leave and I worked two weeks and I gave my notice and said I couldn't do it anymore, it was just too hard and I felt guilty and all that, and I stayed home with my son and I stayed home with him until probably a couple years and then I went back to work part-time.

REGINA GUERRIERO- So, it was you, your husband, and your son?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Yes, but that marriage wasn't made in heaven. <laughs> None are actually, however, it didn't last like so many marriages don't and then I found myself having to find another full-time job. And that was when my son was only two years old. So, I worked, I went to work for a trucking company in the office and that was a wonderful job. I had the best boss in the world and I loved the man, he still to this day as far as I am concerned was the best boss in the world, but the money wasn't enough for a single mother. So I took the post office exam and passed and I was called by the post office and became a letter carrier. And not that I loved it when I started that job, I hated it. I hated the job but I was used to working in an office so it was a big, big difference. But now that I have been there 23 ½ years <laughs> I am used to it finally.

REGINA GUERRIERO- And you enjoy it?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- I enjoy it, you know I think I'd be bored if I wasn't constantly busy. It's very, you never, you keep moving all the time. You really don't get a break, I mean, you know you got to get the mail delivered and if it takes you ten hours you got to get the mail delivered. So, it's just a very, very, very busy job and it's not boring because you are moving constantly.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Do you meet a lot of people along the way?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Oh yes, I've met a lot of people along the way. A lot of people whom I've become friends with and see socially and that sort of thing, people that

brighten up your day as you see them, because I am kind of a people person. So, I need this in my life. I couldn't, I don't think, after doing this job I couldn't work any place where there wasn't people involved. Working with the public somehow. I'd have to do that, even when I retire, I will have to do that.

REGINA GUERRIERO- So, are you going to be retiring soon then?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Six years, I am going to retire but I'll have to work part-time because my daughter, who came from my second marriage, will probably still be in college. So I'll have to supplement my retirement to make up the difference in money because I will of course help her through her college years.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Ok, and what do you want to do with your life now?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- I want to get through my last six years at the post office, in good health. And not, I don't know, I just want to get through it, I mean I have a lot easier route and all so it is not so hard on your body because believe it or not, it is. Nobody knows until you do it, that carrying a bag filled with 30 pounds of mail, walking all day up and down steps in all weather conditions whether it be you know, extremely hot or extremely cold, it produces a lot of wear and tear on your body. Ligaments, joints, it's like carrying all that extra weight and I did it when I was pregnant with my daughter and it was very, very hard to do that, I mean because it really throws you off kilter. But, I just want to retire healthy, but I know I'm going to have a lot of problems as almost all letter carriers do. A lot of health problems from you know, the constant wear and tear on your body, be it your joints or bones or whatever, everybody has problems once they're out of there. It's just the way it is, they haven't, the postal service hasn't come up with a good system, they have those carts, however, in Sandusky Ohio they don't allow you to use them. So, it's like they'd rather have you go out on disability then to keep you healthy through your working years for a good retirement.

REGINA GUERRIERO- So, you carry the mail around most of the day because you are not allowed to use a cart?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- I used to, oh yeah, we aren't allowed to use the carts at all. I used to have a route that was walking all day and then well, when I first started out, you're a sub and you sub for anybody for whatever reason. Whether they are taking a vacation, sick, whatever, you never know day to day what you're going to do, what your hours are going to be and that sort of thing. And you got to wait as people retire to get a regular position and generally that is something like, ok you're gonna sub for five guys on their days off, so everyday you'll have a different route but every week it's going to be the same routes. So that's ok too, that's not bad, I did that for a couple years until a route opened up that I liked because I wasn't about to do a route that I hated instead of doing five routes. So I did that for a couple years and subbed for really great guys, my regular guys were great and then a route opened up that I liked and I took that and did that for about ten years until another route that I liked a little bit better because of my body was dying <laughs>. I mean my hip was gone and my neck and shoulder, everything on my left side because I carried the bag, because I was never able to switch sides was becoming

debilitated. So I found a route that was more or less business area that I would get in and out with the mail, deliver it to the say like Walmart stores like that and I didn't have the bag on my shoulder, climbing on icy steps, that sort of thing. So, that's what I call a retirement route <laughs> so I am going to have that for the next six years. And, it still bothers you, but I'm gonna say, I'm lucky I had the seniority to get a route like that because I truly thought I would not be able to keep doing my job with the bag on my shoulder had I not been able to get another job I would've had, another route I should say, I would've had to go out on disability as so many carriers do.

REGINA GUERRIERO- For people who do not know where Sandusky Ohio is, where you grew up, can you please tell me where Sandusky is and how would you describe Sandusky as a town in general.

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Ok, Sandusky is north of Fairborn of course, up by Lake Erie, situated in between Toledo and Cleveland Ohio across from the Lake Erie Islands. And actually it is a very nice town, you have Cedar Point, everybody knows Cedar Point and I'm sure everybody down here has been to Cedar Point well you probably go to King's Island more maybe. I prefer Cedar Point because it is on the lake and I love the lake. The lake is wonderful, it's a small town, I don't know the exact population, the downtown area isn't doing that well I guess. But when I was growing up, that's where everything was, downtown, there was no mall in Sandusky Ohio and the downtown was all stores and down at the end of the town of course was the ferry boat going over to Cedar Point which you could buy a pass really cheap, you could go to Cedar Point on that ferry boat and it was like a twenty minute ride and it was just so nice, the Cedar Point ferry's and they had a boat going to Kelly's and it was just, Sandusky I really, once you live by the lake you want to live by water. I'm not saying just the lake, I mean maybe on the east coast, west coast, but once you live by water you really don't want to live not by the water.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Being near all that water did you have a boat or anything that you could take out on the water?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- No, but sometimes we had, ok besides Cedar Point beach my aunt would take us when we were kids there all the time it was a gorgeous beach, it still is a very, very nice beach, they keep it up very nicely. There was East Harbor State Park, which was a beautiful beach that our mother took us to all the time because like I said, we lived out in Vickery Ohio and East Harbor actually wasn't that far from out there in the country. Probably about fifteen minutes, twenty minutes and we would go there too, just, just beautiful. We didn't have a boat, however, when I got married, not my first time but my second time we had a boat and it was wonderful, wonderful. We took our boat out, we would fish for Lake Erie perch and they're delicious as far as I'm concerned. I love fishing, I could stay out eight hours a day.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Do you still have this boat?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- No, no. Too busy, just got a little too involved. But once I retire I would like to, you know move back by the lake and get another small boat for fishing and also in between Cedar Point and Sandusky there is something called the Sand Bar which is a place that boaters go, it's a big, huge sand bar. You just dock your boat and it's a beautiful like beach there and only boaters can get there because it is in the middle of the bay. And it is so much fun, it is, everybody brings their coolers of beer, and food and you just have a great time, it's a lot of fun. Going to the Lake Erie Islands is of course, I would rather take a ferry or something like that. I like, now they have the rocket from downtown Sandusky, you can take over to Put-In-Bay, Kelly's Island, doesn't take long at all. It's one of those really fast boats. That's the way to go because you don't want, I mean if you're gonna drink, you don't want whoever you're with operating a boat and drinking. It's too, too unsafe. People crash into the Cedar Point brick wall way too many times for that, so you got to be, you got to, you know, be smart about going like that. And plus in Sandusky there is, you can get a taxi for \$5 to take you home so that's well worth it, better than getting a DUI, go down to the boat, get on the boat, go over, have your fun and come back and take a \$5 taxi home. But yes, I'm going to have a boat again someday and fish <laughs>.

REGINA GUERRIERO- That sounds good <laughs>.

MARCIA KINGSLEY- My retirement.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Did you and your family get to take any family trips or what did you do for fun family-wise when you were growing up?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Our parents took a lot of trips, not vacation per say, my dad was an operating engineer and they never got paid vacations which I think is so wrong, they still don't to this day. So he would have to take just a couple of days here and there and we would go places. We had no memorable long vacations but I mean out parents always tried to take us places and when I was real young, about five years old my dad was in a very bad accident and he never got anything out of it and it was the construction company's fault, they told him he would never walk and he was laid up for a few years so that kind of put my parents behind a financial eight ball. But we, you know, they tried to take us places a lot, most of the best times though actually were down at my grandparents with all the family members and having the parties and us kids playing outside, be it hide and seek, tag, you know, just having a great time we really had a lot of fun all of us together, so we had picnics, my grandparents had a huge, huge place that had a woods and like a pond and we would take, my grandmother would pack us picnic lunches, we'd take walks back in the woods. We had a lot of fun growing with the kids all of us kids, you know. Seeing how my grandmother and mother were pregnant together. <laughs>

REGINA GUERRIERO- That's funny.

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Yes, it is.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Do you still have a lot of family gatherings now?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Oh yes, there was one just the other night, last night that I missed, because we were spending time with you guys. And my one uncle, they are, my family's notorious for playing cards until all night, they will play cards all night until 4 or 5 in the morning. Yeah, they'll start at 3 in the afternoon and play all night. I don't, I don't partake too much, I used to play a lot of pinnacle but they play more poker and what else to they play?....

REGINA GUERRIERO- Spades?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- They don't play spades too much they play, euchre, something else, I can't remember what it is. But I used to play pinnacle when we were brought up you know on pinnacle, all of us. But they play all night long. All night long, it's not unusual. My grandfather passed away two years ago, he was 92, he used to stay up 'til 4 o'clock in the morning playing cards. <laughs>

REGINA GUERRIERO- And finally, you're idea with what you wanted to do with your life when you were younger, how does that relate to what you are doing now?

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Well, I had to get real <laughs>. No man was going to support me I guess <laughs>. No, I just knew I had to work and actually once you start working, as a woman I think you feel you never want to be, well of course being divorced once too, you never want to be dependent on a man. You always want to know if something's not going to work out you could take care of yourself and your kids if you have to. So, you know, back then the days of being a housewife or whatever you know, that wasn't realistic for me and of course I was young. And now I just feel, I teach my daughter, get a good job, get an education, be able to take care of yourself and your kids if need be and never rely on a man for anything.

REGINA GUERRIERO- That's some great advice.

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Yeah <laughs>.

REGINA GUERRIERO- Well, I thank you for your time and this is the end of the interview with Marcia Kingsley. Thank you.

MARCIA KINGSLEY- Thank you.