

Oral History Project College of Nursing & Health

March 1, 2017

Interview of Julia George (JG)

Interviewer: Donna Miles Curry (DC) & Carol Holdcraft (C)

DC: Today is March 1, 2017. This is Donna Miles-Curry and we are doing an interview with Dr. Julia George for the oral history project of the College of Nursing and Health at Wright State University in Dayton, OH. Hi Julia. Can we call you Julia? Is that okay?

JG: That's fine.

DC: Very good. I couldn't remember if you like to go by Julia or Julie.

JG. It depends on the day.

DC: Okay. Very good. For some reason, in my mind you are always Julie.

JG: Yes, I think that is what I was called primarily when I was there.

DC: When you were in Dayton? Okay. Would you like to start off and tell us a little bit about how you came to Wright State?

JG: Well I had a Bachelor's in Nursing when I came to Dayton and had heard a lot, when I was in Cincinnati, about Miami Valley Hospital and I worked there as a staff nurse for a brief time and then was recruited to the faculty of their School of Nursing. I clearly – I had worked full time, then had gone to a part-time kind of an on-call filling in when they needed somebody. I clearly remember having heard that Wright State was going to start a nursing program and I was standing in the hall of one of the clinics because I had students in the various rooms and thinking, you know, I'm getting frustrated with never knowing what happens with these students because I only see them for a brief while and I don't know whether I really helped them or not; but I can't go to the University without having at least a Master's Degree. At that time, the Master's was considered the terminal degree in Nursing.

DC: Okay

JG: So I decided that I would go back and get my Master's at Ohio State because at the time I got my Bachelor's program, the word was that it was not good to get all your degrees at the same place. So if you are going on for a Master's don't come here; but there wasn't really much choice at that time.

DC: Sure

JG: But to go to Ohio State and I needed statistics as a pre-req to get into the program there and I hadn't had Statistics so I ended up at what was the joint campus of Miami and Ohio State,

taking Statistics course, graduate level, from education so that I could meet the pre-req for Ohio State. I then went on and got my Master's from Ohio State and then after that applied to come to WSU.

DC: Do you remember if you had Glen Graham teach that class from WSU.

JG: Yes, Graham and his partner.

DC: Do you know that he is still there. He is retired, but he is still teaching the statistics class.

JG: They had that set up to be as least stressful as it is possible to do.

DC: Exactly

JG: And there were still people in my class that cheated.

DC: That is amazing. I call him the quintessential humanistic educator.

JG: Yes.

DC: Well, what a small world. Excellent. So after you finished your Master's you applied to WSU?

JG: Yes – the following spring.

DC: Okay, very good. So at that time, who was your Dean.

JG: That was Donna Dean and Andy

DC: Kuntzman

JG: Yes, Kuntzman. I wanted to say Kauffman but I knew that wasn't right. That was when they were holding things together, should we say.

DC: Okay, very good. So what were you hired to teach? What was your teaching assignment like.

JG: I was initially hired as a visiting instructor, as I recall, to work on curriculum in the summer.

DC: Wow.

JG: You know, quite frankly, I'm not really sure exactly what I was teaching that fall; because we weren't doing Nursing Theory yet and I doubt we had student far enough along to be taking Research, I don't think. So I was probably doing Child Development, Parent Child Care.

DC: Cool

JG: I don't remember for sure, it's been too many years.

DC: Yes. For sure. Very good. Okay – so were you an instructor in the Spring of 74 when the Xenia tornado happened?

JG: No.

DC: So you weren't an Instructor?

JG: I wasn't there yet.

DC: Okay, so you weren't there yet? But you were involved in the Xenia Tornado?

JG: Yes. Because my Master's was focused on dealing with families in crisis.

DC: Right

JG: I contacted the Red Cross and volunteered and ended up being hired by the Red Cross to do follow up tracking down people who had been injured to help forecast what their health care needs were going to be so that they could begin to budget for them.

DC: Very good. Any so, tell us if you can what you remember about how the tornado happened and what things were like.

JG: I remember standing, we lived in Forest Ridge, and I remember standing outside. Sounds terrible now that you know what was going on. We were watching this really black cloud but we were not getting a lot of wind or rain. But my in-laws had damage to their house in Beavercreek and that night we were at some school when they announced that it had been a tornado and every was going OH

DC: Oh yeah, yeah.

JG: I was out of school and I wasn't working yet, so I thought one of the ways that I could give back was to work with the Red Cross, which ended up being a long – as I said I worked for them that Spring, but then I ended up serving on the Red Cross Nursing and Health Committee for a number of years.

DC: Excellent. So was it fall of 74 that you came to WSU?

JG: No, July.

DC: July. So it was post that. Do you remember any of the students talking about the tornado and their clinical experiences and all?

JG: No, I don't and I suspect if they did, we were sharing our experiences.

DC: Yes

JG: So, it wasn't like I was learning from them, that much, because I had already spent the time talking with people who were being housed in Springfield because their houses were gone.

DC: Right

JG: Wherever they could find a place to put them up. I had heard a lot of personal experiences already.

DC: Right, right – you mean like some of the students directly involved?

JG: I don't know.

DC: You don't know.

C: Julie, this is Carol and I was interested in your Master's in Families in Crisis and my recollection was that crisis was a rather new concept or term sometime in that period of time. Was that a new Master's, a new field of study at that time?

JG: Well, the reality is that I had to put a label to it.

C: Okay

JG: Because at that time at Ohio State you didn't – you went in for a clinical specialist. The part I went in was as a Clinical Specialist and they really didn't have the labels and that may have been partly because of Imogene King.

C: Okay

JG: Actually she was the Dean when I was there for my Master's but I really don't remember meeting her.

DC: Oh my gosh.

JG: And I'm not sure if all the graduate students did meet her from that standpoint, but the courses that we took that was the best way I could describe the clinical I took. One clinical was visiting people in their homes who were on dialysis and talking to them about what their needs were beyond going for the dialysis and talking with the family, not just the person.

DC: Yes

JG: So my focus was really on families and it was usually in some sort of crisis situation and crisis was the concept. We were required to develop a concept

DC: Wow.

JG: In the program and crisis was the concept that I developed.

DC: So, then you got to watch the curriculum evolve at WSU? Did you work with both the undergraduates and graduates?

JG: Yes.

DC: Could you share with us what your observations were? I know you worked in Nursing Education your career so you have a lot that you could compare it to. What was it like - you can either pick the undergraduate first and then we will talk about the graduates.

JG: Because undergraduate certainly was there first, which is unusual from that standpoint. I really don't recall what we did that summer I was there, supposedly working on curriculum. We must have done some tweaking, I don't know because the program had gotten off to a bit of a rough start.

DC: Right

JG: But Gert came in and I really think we developed what was avant-garde at that time. We put together a curriculum that was ahead of its time. The fact that we introduced students to theories in their sophomore year, I think some people thought we were out of our minds. We had a rationale for it and I think we really developed the program from the ground up. I remember in curriculum meetings developing the philosophy and most of us hadn't thought that much about those major concepts being held and so on and that was the basis for the philosophy. I remember we got an assignment. We got 3 x 5 index cards and each one of us was to take 5 of those and write, not a great deal of detail, but write the phases that we thought were important about each of those ideas. We brought them back in and if I recall in groups, there were 5 groups, and each group took one of those concepts and developed a paragraph and then came back. It was a very mutual, bought into idea, because everybody contributed. It wasn't written by one person.

DC: Cool. And then you were involved in the development of the graduate program, so how did that get kick-started?

JG: I don't remember a lot of specifics on it getting kick started, I had some involvement but was teaching, at that point, primarily the undergraduates but there was clearly a need to have

that program. The reality was if a nurse wanted a Master's degree at that time and lived in Dayton, they drove an hour and a half to either Cincinnati or Columbus or went further afield and clinical nurse specialty was beginning to catch on.

DC: Right

JG: Research was beginning to like – it wasn't quite so much, Nurses don't do that. To some extent it was but not so much.

DC: Yes, yes. Interesting. So which classes did you teach in the graduate program?

JG: Probably theory and research but I don't recall.

DC: Yes

JG: I just don't recall. I've taught at the graduate level for so long since then

DC: So it's second nature

JG: Yes.

DC: Very good. Do you remember any particular challenges you faced when you were working at WSU?

JG: That's a loaded question.

DC: Yes, it was.

JG: Of course the challenge was the external challenge was to pull what was in the School of Nursing under the auspices of the School of Medicine.

DC: Yes.

JG: And we were adamantly opposed because that was not an appropriate structure. Of course when the School of Medicine was developed, the person that came in as Dean was not willing to accept just the title of Dean. He was either Assistant or Associate Provost.

DC: Interesting.

JG: Yes

DC: I didn't remember that. Alright.

JG: I remember the buzz about that. He wanted more. He was an empire builder. I ran into him in California after we both left Ohio.

C: Did you talk about it at that time?

JG: Not about that. He was Provost at the University where I interviewed for the lead position in Nursing and he avoided meeting me. I don't know if he really avoided meeting me, but I did not meet with him.

DC: Interesting.

C: So did you take that job?

JG: No. I was second choice.

DC: Oh, okay.

JG: I was already at one of the California State Universities campus. I was working under a dean who wanted to get rid of Nursing. Sound familiar?

DC: Oh my. That is amazing.

C: So Julie, back at WSU at the beginning, can you tell us a little bit about - this was your first time teaching in a University and really the first time to come up against some of those political poles and so forth. What was on your mind? What did you think about all those things?

JG: I thought it was totally inappropriate for Nursing to be under medicine. I fully believed that the umbrella is health care and nursing and medicine happened to be two spokes of that umbrella but were not one subservient to the other.

C: And what did you think of how the university as a whole reacted to the attentions that were going on between Nursing and Medicine?

JG: It didn't take too long to get to the Board of Trustees, which was kind of interesting. It didn't get settled in Academic Affairs where you think it should have been, or couldn't have been. The Board of Trustees did get involved and there were many of us who ended up meeting with the Board of Trustees and shared our view point and then we waited with baited breath and the first time around, we didn't get moved but that didn't stop it. The second time around, finally was the big upheaval and most of us resigned and the Board of Trustees did not move Nursing under Medicine so in the long run, we did get our point across. It was a bloody battle.

DC: Interesting.

C: So what went into your decision making at that time?

JG: I resigned. I had a firm job offer elsewhere and John Murray called me in while I was still on campus. The classes were over. We still felt obligated to the students.

DC: Right

JG: We couldn't just walk away from the students because they were enrolled in courses and that needed to be taken care of. John actually played on my sympathies because I was ABD (all but dissertation). I was working on my dissertation. Would I please come back and provide some continuity for the program. I was literally within days of signing the contract for the other position.

DC: Wow.

JG: I remember mulling it over. It wasn't an easy decision and thinking that I had young children in this community and if I wanted them to have the kind of health care I think they should have, I have some kind of obligation to keep this Bachelorette program going and so I bit the bullet and said that I would come back, but I only stayed for 2 years.

DC: Oh.

C: So what was that timeframe like for you? Does that stand out in your mind?

JG: It was a busy time. One of the things that was going on was that we were in the middle of a federal grant for the graduate program.

DC: Oh.

JG: and there was a report due and I really hadn't been that involved in the implementation, which was what it was for, but fortunately I believe it was Peggy Chin had left enough material in the way of committee minutes and so on that I was able to patch something together and they did not pull our funding.

DC: Interesting.

JG: That is what you call creative writing.

DC: I want to go look up – cause they do have all the grants in files at the campus.

JG: Yes they should have.

DC: That is very interesting. I remember during your doctorate – and your doctorate was focusing on educational ministrations, correct?

JG: Yes

DC: And you followed the Dean around for while.

JG: Yes. That was funny.

DC: Tell us what you observed. What do you remember from that. I do remember watching you but tell us what you remember about that experience.

JG: The first memory that pops in my mind is that I followed her into the bathroom and she just about cracked up laughing. She thought it was hilarious. But I knew that there were all kinds of conversations that go on in parking lots and bathrooms and so on and my assignment for the course was to describe how decisions were made and how things went on and I thought that – I didn't follow into the stall.

DC: Laughing. Okay

JG: But I thought overhearing any conversations was probably part of the assignment.

DC: Sure. Excellent.

JG: Of course I knew her fairly well by that time anyhow and I pretty well knew her style which was very democratic. I remember her saying when we were working on some set of procedures or policies and I don't remember the document or specific issue, but I can remember us saying to Gert that she wouldn't do that and she looked at us and said, don't write this for me, write this for the worse leader you can think of – protect yourselves.

DC: Interesting.

JG: Yes, I thought that was – that stuck out in my mind because that is the way to think of things as you are developing them.

DC: Very good. That was one of my questions – how would you label her administrative style? So you labeled it democratic, which I think was fascinating.

JG: Yes, because she involved us in all of the curriculum development. She didn't just come in and say this is what we are going to do.

DC: Oh.

JG: I know we were certainly influenced by her ideas and her knowledge base – there is no question. I think we probably ended up developing a curriculum that was what she would have liked to have done, but she lead us in doing this rather than laying it on us.

DC: Excellent. Do you have any other interactions that you would like to share with us that you had with faculty at the time you were there? Did you hang out with someone, did you share an office with someone?

JG: You know that I don't think that I ever shared an office there.

DC: Okay

JG: I'm trying to remember – for at least some reason or another, I moved every year.

DC: Where did you start?

JG: I'm not sure how that happened.

DC: Did you start in the PE building? Or did you start in

JG: I think so.

DC: in Fawcett Hall.

JG: Yeah, and Allyn.

DC: Okay, you finished in Allyn when you left.

JG: On the top floor.

DC: Correct. That is where they were when you left.

JG: And it got so cold that winter. I remember – it was the standard heating and air conditioning that was designed for the way the building was originally built, but it wasn't working real well for the way it was configured.

DC: Yes.

JG: The office I was in was back on a corner and was very nice to have 2 windows to look out of in different directions, except the heat did not get too it. One day, I remember saying "look it is so cold that the electric typewriter doesn't work so I am going home to work."

DC: Do you remember if you faced to the West?

JG: I don't remember.

DC: You don't remember if you had that afternoon sun? You don't remember.

JG: No. I don't remember.

DC: I remember that room, they turned it into a conference room and it was cold in there. That was probably the room you had. Isn't that amazing.

JG: Yes.

DC: Do you remember stories about faculty that you worked with other than crazy baby faculty that you worked with like me?

JG: Well, this isn't exactly the faculty themselves, but I remember being on a University Committee where we were supposed to have people who could substitute for us if we couldn't come to a meeting.

DC: Right.

JG: and we were sitting around a table, probably down in the administrative area and they wanted to know who are backups would be and my two backups were Elaine Bedalia and ? .

DC: Wow

C: Those are some names

JG: Yes and the looks on their faces was – you know it wasn't like John Allen or simple names, but those were the two people who – I don't even remember what committee it was.

DC: Isn't that amazing. Very good. So while you were faculty and you were an interim dean for while, like a summer dean? How did that come to be?

JG: beg your pardon

DC: How did that – how did – did they ask you? Were you like between an interim and the new dean.

JG: I'm not sure - you know Marilyn Jacobson came in.

DC: Correct

JG: for a short period of time and apparently they did not wish to invite her to stay.

DC: Interesting.

JG: I really don't know the details on that and that is when John Murray asked me to come in.

DC: Okay

JG: Because – of course he knew that my doctorate was in higher ed administration even though I was working on my dissertation. I do remember talking to her and her warning me and telling me to really think about it.

DC: Right

JG: Because it would slow down completing my dissertation. Well, the whole hullabaloo slowed down my dissertation and it probably did make it a few months longer.

DC: Right, right.

JG: But you would still get done.

DC: And then was Dean Maloney hired after you were interim - is that who came in next.

JG: Yes,

DC: OK

JG: The most interesting thing I remember about her is her saying at one point she didn't want to deal with curriculum and she didn't want to deal with budget – she wanted to deal with the big picture.

DC: Okay

JG: So Andy came to her rescue again and dealt with budget. Have you interviewed him – is he still around?

DC: Yes we did interview him. It was a long time ago, didn't we Carol?

C: Yes. We will have to go back and look.

DC: At our notes. He was wonderful because he had saved all of these minutes and papers. He gave us quite a lot of his papers. It was quite nice.

JG: I'm not surprised.

DC: He was very – a good supplier of information. Okay – so

C: Julia, you started your doctorate while you were teaching full time? Is that correct?

JG: No. I tried but at the time I enrolled in the doctoral program in the College of Education at Ohio State University, they required you to be full time. So I took a year's leave of absence.

C: I see, Okay

JG: And did my course work full time.

C: Okay – that was good --so that was a point in time when things sort of shifted because first you got your Master's Degree because that was to be the terminal degree in Nursing and to allow you to do what you wanted to do. Tell us a little bit about how you came to decide to go on and do the doctorate.

JG: I got tired of apologizing. I taught university level activities for the nursing faculty primarily having master's degrees and so my attitude was I was going back for the union card. To have the qualifications and how could I encourage others to go on if I didn't do it myself.

DC: Sure.

JG: and I looked at Indiana. They were just getting started and one of the faculty – was her name Margaret Chowdry?

DC: Sure

JG: I think she was the one who had gone over and talked to them and I think interestingly enough the person she talked to was Margaret Maloney; but the word she came back with was, "Yes they are starting their doctoral program, and yes they had a curriculum planned but the statement she had was that these were the courses they were going to start with, but they didn't know if they were going to keep them."

DC: Oh boy

JG: And I thought no, I'm not driving all that distance with grade school-age children at home to get into something that could be shifting sands under my feet. The only other nursing doctorate in the area was Michigan was starting their program and that was just too far to go.

DC: Right

JG: That would mean being there during the week and trying to get home on the weekends and that was not family acceptable for me. While I was mulling all this over and looking into it, a letter came to the department from Ohio State saying that the Educational Administration Program was looking for candidates. Gert told us in faculty meeting so after the meeting, at some point, I don't know if it was immediately after or later, I told Gert that I was interested. Typical Gert said, "You write your letter of recommendation and I will sign it."

DC: How nice.

JG: Probably the hardest letter I've ever written in my life. You got to toot your own horn and I wasn't used to tooting my own horn that much.

DC: So tell us about how you came to leave WSU. Did your husband get different position or did you choose to

JG: That is really kind of an interesting confluence of things. One of the things I had done while I was there, not that long after I went there, was the SUNY Buffalo was offering a post master's course, they wanted people only with Master's in Nursing, for basically Nurse Practitioner preparation.

DC: Right.

JG: They really focused on the physical assessment and the level of care above the staff nurse and I went to that in January, February, and maybe March of 1975 with the expectation that I would come back then and help the faculty gain physical assessment skills. Where were we going with that?

DC: What you did after WSU and how you got there and how you decided to leave

JG: One of the people who was in that course with me then came to the University of Cincinnati and I don't know for sure off hand, if she started the Parent Child graduate program; but she was there in the lead in the Parent Child program and got the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner program going which had originated at Good Sam in Cincinnati and had moved over as the movement was coming along that Nurse Practitioners really should have graduate degrees.

DC: Right

JG: So they were able to work it out that that got moved over to UC. Well, she wanted to go elsewhere. She was a single parent and it may have had something to do with that. Because we had been in the other program together, she contacted me and said, "I'm going to be leaving Cincinnati and I remember you from Buffalo would you be interested because I know it is your clinical area"? And it did look interesting so I applied, got accepted, and that is why I left WSU.

DC: So did you commute then, did your family stay in Dayton?

JG: Yes.

DC: So you became a commuter then?

JG: Yes. Most of the time. I do remember one wintery evening I was about the only person out on that snowy, blowy, road because there was a really bad storm.

DC: Oh my gosh.

JG: I was able to pretty much flex my hours so I could go in after the morning traffic rush because it was graduate students and most of them didn't ever have morning classes.

DC: Right.

JG: And I could stay and go home after the evening rush hour.

DC: Right.

C: That was good.

DC: So one of the things that I remember was the development of the Nursing Theory textbook – we would call it a textbook.

C: Yes it is a textbook.

DC: Were you an editor from the beginning – were you the editor?

JG: No.

DC: Who was the first editor?

JG: If you could find a copy of the first edition – it was the Nursing Theory Conference group

DC: I did not know that.

JG: I was listed as the chair person.

DC: Okay.

JG: But the contract with the publisher was signed by Chiyoko Furukawa, Agnes Bennett and I.

DC: Okay

JG: We were so naïve – we figured that was it, just one book. I can remember sitting and talking about it saying well if it sells and there is room, what are we going to do with them. Now we are in 6th edition and we are getting royalties.

DC: Wow.

JG: But by the time it was time for the second edition the original contributors had scattered. The first edition was pure Wright State.

DC: Yes

JG: We literally sat around the table and critiqued each others chapters. We were each others editors.

DC: How neat.

JG: Yes, It was a really neat experience. We had trouble finding a publisher in the first place. It was kind of early, people weren't looking for it. They did sign with Prentis-Hall at that time; now of course that has changed and it is now Pearson but they did say there was a market for that and signed a contract. Five years later they asked us to go a second edition and we were so scattered. They did contact me, and I'm not sure why, and I contacted June and Agnes and said how are we going to handle this and they said kind of not too sure – can't see how we can do this as a group.

DC: When you are not physically all together,

JG: I was the primary person with the publisher on that and it has just evolved along the way but I think I mentioned in my email a rather unusual royalty.

DC: Right.

JG: The royalty comes to me and I divide them up among the contractors and what our contract would say.

DC: So you send them a personal check?

JG: Yep –

DC: Isn't that amazing.

JG: Yep for 30 some years.

DC: You were saying that is how you knew that Sue Falco had died because her mother had contacted you.

JG: The lawyer for her estate contacted me.

DC: Isn't that amazing?

JG: yes.

C: So when did she pass away? I didn't hear about that.

JG: 2014 I think.

C: Not that long ago.

JG: Well she was very young, I think

DC: I don't see her as being more than 4 or 5 years older than me.

JG: Breast cancer, I think.

C: Yes she probably wasn't.

DC: Yes, exactly. So, here is my summative question for you. How do you think your experiences at Wright State affected your career?

JG: Oh, it made a major contribution. I learned so much when I was there. Even the process of – just the process of developing a curriculum and the value of getting everybody involved in it. Yes, in my doctorate, we talked about change and you know how if you can co-op people it could be better. I could give you that theoretical basis for it, but having been through it and seeing how well that worked.

DC: Sure

JG: And the knowledge of nursing theory has stood me in excellent stead every place I went. When I went to Cincinnati, I took over the graduate course in Nursing Theory that Rosemary Parse had been teaching and she came to Wright State to teach the course I had been teaching.

DC: That is so funny.

JG: I thought it was too.

DC: Do you feel like you replicated some of those strategies (administrative strategies) when you were in your other positions?

JG: Yes I think so, to some extent. When I went to Cincinnati I was working under Jenny Spiro and of course she was, at least from my view point, a very highly respected leader. So I'm sure that I learned from her too and incorporated those things as you go along.

DC: Right, right

JG: And when I was in California, I was in almost a unique position. At the time I was at Cal State, I think all of the programs, there might have been one or two were schools, but we were all departments reporting to a Dean but responsibilities so far as a national view point was concerned was equivalent to being a Dean of Nursing.

DC: Right

JG: So it was kind of playing two roles. Sue died 09-01-14 – I just found the letter.

C: Thank you

JG: The thing I thought was weird was that they send me the letter and sent me a copy of her death certificate.

DC: Wow – maybe they

JG: I think they needed or was still concerned because there are royalties because I had sent one in November for all of \$6.80.

DC: Right, right.

JG: Which was the last we got on the edition she had contributed to.

DC: Was she in Chicago at the time?

JG: No, she was in Wisconsin.

DC: Oh, Wisconsin.

JG: She may have gone to the University of Wisconsin directly from Wright State unless I am misremembering.

DC: I think maybe she came to Wright State from Chicago.

JG: She may have and she had been at NYU with Dr. Rodgers.

DC: Okay.

C: That is where she got her doctorate.

DC: That is where she got her doctorate. Good, good.

JG: I don't know if she taught there, I don't remember her curriculum being that much. I do know that she was very knowledgeable about Rodgers.

DC: Okay, anything else you would like to have us – would like to share about your experiences at Wright State?

JG: I don't know of anything specific. It was a good growth experience. It was kind of like the Tale of Two Cities like It was the Best of Times and the Worst of Times, depending on what time you are looking at. But it was a good learning experience about Nursing Education and Education in general. I felt that the nursing faculty was pretty well respected on Campus which was a little bit of a concern, knowing that most of the other departments required a doctorate and we didn't even have access to a doctorate at the time I went; but I thought they were pretty supportive.

DC: Great.

JG: And I'm very happy that the program is continuing.

DC: Well, I will stop recording now for the interview.