

PHYLLIS GIGLIO

An Interview Conducted by
Scott Decker

April 29, 2003

For The
Department of Human Services
of the
Township of North Brunswick
North Brunswick, New Jersey

INTERVIEW: Phyllis Giglio

INTERVIEWED BY: Scott Decker also Julia Nutter[??]

PLACE:

DATE: April 29, 2003

DECKER: What is your favorite memory about childhood?

GIGLIO: Going to Coney Island with my dad and riding the ferris wheel.

DECKER: How often did you go there?

GIGLIO: Oh, maybe four or five times during the summer.

DECKER: Did you play any sports _____?

GIGLIO: No, but I played baseball in high school, softball.

DECKER: Do you remember any teachers in particular from elementary school?

GIGLIO: Not too much because I lived in New York City. And we moved around so much _____ I was always afraid in a new school I wouldn't know where the bathroom was. The schools were huge, you know, and I was only like six, seven, eight years old.

DECKER: Did you have a particular friend that you remember from childhood, a best friend?

GIGLIO: No. _____. I had friend when I was _____.

DECKER: What elementary schools did you go to?

GIGLIO: P.S. 35--that's what they called them in the city. P.S. stands for Public School. I went to P.S.-90.

DECKER: What high school did you go to?

GIGLIO: Hightstown High School. By that time we'd moved to Hightstown.

DECKER: What activities were you involved in in Hightstown?

GIGLIO: Well, my dad was a farmer, so mostly I worked on the farm.

DECKER: Did your mom have a job?

GIGLIO: No, she stayed home.

DECKER: Did your dad work as a farmer his entire life?

GIGLIO: No, my dad was a city-bred, city-living guy. He manufactured ladies' clothing right in the heart of New York

City.

DECKER: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

GIGLIO: Four.

DECKER: What were their names?

GIGLIO: I was the oldest. I was the only child of my father's first marriage. My mom died when I was 11 months old. So he married another woman, and they had four children. There was Stan, Mel, Dave, and Cedric.

DECKER: What were your parents' names?

GIGLIO: My mother's name was Celia, my dad's name was Saul.

DECKER: What do you remember most about your brothers and sisters from childhood?

GIGLIO: Oh, gosh, when we lived on the farm, we used to go out to the field, break open watermelons, and just scoop the heart out. And there was a big gravelly place we called Magnificent Valley, and we used to play that we were conquering a new land.

DECKER: Did you play any pranks or jokes on anyone when you were

a kid?

GIGLIO: Well, here's a funny story. We had to clean out the chicken coop weekends, me and my brother. And we're shoveling, you know, what's in a chicken coop, chicken poop.

DECKER: Right.

GIGLIO: So we're shoveling and shoveling, and I said to my brother, "Boy, I wonder if this gives you muscles." And he said, "If you eat enough."

DECKER: So you had a lot of animals on the farm?

GIGLIO: We had goats and a cow that I milked every day before I went to school.

DECKER: Did you have any other like house pets, like a cat or a dog?

GIGLIO: Yes, we had a dog named Zero. On a farm you have a lot of cats because they're always going after the mice. And we had, you know, cows that were like family.

DECKER: What was your favorite subject in school?

GIGLIO: English.

DECKER: Why was English your favorite subject?

GIGLIO: Because I'm a writer, and I love words.

DECKER: Was that the subject you did best in in school?

GIGLIO: Yes.

WOMAN: When did you move to North Brunswick?

GIGLIO: Forty-five years ago.

WOMAN: Where did you live?

GIGLIO: Where we live now. The house was brand new, and we're still there.

DECKER: Where did you live before you lived in North Brunswick?

GIGLIO: Edison.

DECKER: Do you remember anything about Edison?

GIGLIO: Well, I was married raising a lot of kids. Had a lot of

kids. And that's what I was doing mostly. It was after the Second World War, and everybody got together. It was a happy time. There wasn't the tension there is today. The war was over, the time was peaceful. It was just a good time.

DECKER: Did you know any older people that had been involved in the war?

GIGLIO: My husband had been in the war.

DECKER: What was he in?

GIGLIO: Second World War.

DECKER: Was he with the Army?

GIGLIO: Master sergeant in the Army.

DECKER: How did you meet your husband?

GIGLIO: Well, in Hightstown. He had the first pizza restaurant. And, you know, there wasn't much to do in Hightstown. So my girlfriends and I, we'd take a bus to Trenton which was about 15 miles away. And after we got home, *[can't hear because of someone speaking over P.A. system]* the pizza place. We started talking. I met Sal, my husband, and we talked, and he said, "I'll take you

home." He took my other two girlfriends home first. He took me home last, and we talked for a couple of hours. And that's how we met.

DECKER: And how long have you been married?

GIGLIO: Fifty-four years.

DECKER: How many kids do you have?

GIGLIO: Twelve.

DECKER: What are their names?

GIGLIO: Carol, Diane, Rich, Tom, Pete, Rosemary, Twinkie, Monica, Joseph, Rafael, Debbie, and Elena.

DECKER: Do they get along well?

GIGLIO: Yes.

DECKER: So you got along well with your brothers and sisters?

GIGLIO: Yes. We have good times. They lived in Florida. We don't see each other that often, but we have a great time and laugh like crazy.

DECKER: What was your favorite thing that you ever did as a kid?

GIGLIO: Roller skating in the city.

WOMAN: Do you roller skate now?

GIGLIO: We couldn't have a bicycle because we lived on the third floor. I never did learn to ride a bike. That would mean you had to carry your bike up to the third floor. So we roller skated everywhere we went. It was always on sidewalks, you know, and there'd be that line on the sidewalk. You'd be going along, and you'd go zip, zip, zip. Even if you took your skate _____ on the concrete. After you got home, you could still feel it in your feet. Zip, zip.

DECKER: Were you very religious as a child?

GIGLIO: No. But my life changed.

DECKER: So you didn't attend church a lot?

GIGLIO: Synagogue occasionally, but mostly it was the boys that attended synagogue and Hebrew School.

DECKER: Were your parents very like hard on you about school?

Did they push you a lot?

GIGLIO: No. I got married when I was 15.

DECKER: How old was your husband?

GIGLIO: Twenty-two. He thought I was 18.

WOMAN: He did? What did he do when he found out you weren't?

GIGLIO: I didn't tell him until we were eloping to Maryland. I said, "I have something to tell you." And he said, "What is it?" And I said, "I'm not 18." He said, "Are you 17?" I said, "No." "Are you 16?" I said, "I will be next month." I thought he was going to take my home, but he didn't. We continued on.

WOMAN: What did your parents have to say about that?

GIGLIO: They did not like it at all. Because my father thought I was super intelligent and I was going to be a lawyer or something. He thought I was throwing my life away. And my husband's people, they were Italian; they didn't like Jewish people. But after a year we had our little girl, and then everything got peaceful.

DECKER: What did you want to be as a kid?

GIGLIO: A lawyer, but in government.

DECKER: Did you have any particular dreams that you remember?

GIGLIO: I dreamt about writing a book, and I did. I dreamt about being to-- You know, I felt, maybe because I was the oldest, I always felt I had the ability to help other people and guide them in the ways they should go. Like I was controlling, that's what I was.

DECKER: What book did you write?

GIGLIO: It's called *When You're At the End of Your Rope, There's Hope*.

DECKER: What's it about?

GIGLIO: It's my autobiography.

DECKER: So did you write anything at all about North Brunswick?

GIGLIO: Mmmm hmmm.

DECKER: What in North Brunswick has interested you?

GIGLIO: It's great. I love North Brunswick. I served on the school board for nine years. I was involved in several committees like drug prevention. A lot of stuff. A huge youth group--it was probably '79 or '80 it started. Eventually we came to the high school. It was a Christian youth group. And everybody _____ kids coming out.

DECKER: Where did you usually go on vacation?

GIGLIO: Well, when you have that many kids, you don't go many places. We did go to Florida once, and I love the Shore. I love the Shore. I was a sun-worshipper, and I've got the arms to prove it, all kinds of marks _____.

DECKER: Where did you go, to the Jersey Shore?

GIGLIO: Yes, of course.

WOMAN: What did your husband do?

GIGLIO: My husband always had his own business, the overhead garage-door business. I was a partner, and I worked with him. I did the office work.

WOMAN: When did he open up?

GIGLIO: 'Sixty, 1960 that is.

WOMAN: Was that when he was _____?

GIGLIO: Yes, just about. Yes.

WOMAN: What caused you to move into town?

GIGLIO: Well, my dad lived in Hightstown, and we lived in Edison. We had moved. We lived on the farm a while, and then we moved to Edison. We got a little house, and it was great. But every time we went down 130 and passed this area, I said, "Boy, I wish we could live here someday." And then there were homes going up in '56. And we looked at it, and we were able to buy a house right next to the park, right next to Eisenhower Park. We've been here ever since. We were going to sell, but we just like it around here too much. Instead of a smaller place, we decided we're going to stay put.

WOMAN: What caused you to become involved in _____?

GIGLIO: I told you I like to run things. No, I feel like--I don't know what it is in me. I want to help people. I think it's God-given. Some people--everyone has a gift to do something, and it's in you, and you've go to do it. And mine is to--I'm slowing down now, but it was always like to do things to make good

happen. You know, help try to better things.

DECKER: Did you notice any changes in yourself from elementary school to middle school to high school?

GIGLIO: Well, yes. I didn't have a good relationship with my stepmother, and I was very, very rebellious. There's nothing that my kids did that I didn't do first. That's why I got married so young. I just wanted to run away. So, yes, when I was a kid, I was very happy. But as I reached my early teens, I was very rebellious. I ran away for a summer and worked at Asbury Park. After a couple of days I told my parents where I was. But the house was so much quieter without me, they let me stay.

DECKER: Did you ever do anything else besides running away, anything else rebellious really?

GIGLIO: Rebellious, like drinking? Hanging out with the wrong people.

DECKER: Did you ever get into any major trouble with the police?

GIGLIO: No, no. I probably would have if I hadn't married so young. I think my husband saved me from a life of crime.

DECKER: Did you work really hard in high school?

GIGLIO: I was more interested in the boys. I attended college late in life. They still wanted my high school transcript. And the principal had written a note on it: "Phyllis would have done much better if she had concentrated on her schoolwork and not on the boys." Here I am over 60, and I had to live with that.

DECKER: What college did you go to?

GIGLIO: I attended _____ Christian College. I graduated in '99.

DECKER: Do you have a degree in anything?

GIGLIO: Political studies. Want to know about North Brunswick, about living here?

WOMAN: I just have one more question. When did you convert to Christianity?

GIGLIO: Okay. When I was 19, I had an experience. I had an emergency appendectomy. My appendix burst, and I almost died. And I felt like God was talking to me. He said, "You're indifferent, and that's not good." So my husband went to the Catholic Church, and we went there, and I was converted there. So I'm no longer Jewish; now I'm Catholic. Then in 1975 my Jewish dad became Christian. And I realized that there's more to it than what I was

experiencing. And so in 1975, I would say, I became born again. I consider myself a completed Jew because the Jews are looking for the Messiah, who, I believe with all my heart and soul, was Jesus Christ. So in 1975 I had a very real religious experience.

WOMAN: Is your husband as religious?

GIGLIO: No. We believe in God, and every night we pray for needs, you know, our family, other people.

DECKER: What church was it that you were converted at?

GIGLIO: When I was first early on? It was St. Paul's Catholic Church in Highland Park.

WOMAN: How did your family first _____?

GIGLIO: They thought I did it for my husband, you know. So it was okay. We tried to keep it secret. But there were so many Communion and baptisms that they really couldn't assume it was for my husband. And, you know, I used to have this recurring dream that I'd be in the church, and the church was on fire. And my father was waiting outside. Now, if I ran out of the church, he would know I was attending it, you know. I mean the thing never resolved; I used to dream it all the time. Then, of course, my dad became Christian, so _____ my dad.

DECKER: When did your dad convert?

GIGLIO: He was 64 at the time.

DECKER: So what was it like in North Brunswick?

GIGLIO: It was great. We were the only street where I lived; there were apple orchards. We were like in the middle of apple orchards. We watched farmers taking care of the trees, you know. I have this wonderful picture of my kids. I don't even know if it's a real picture or a picture in my mind. We're sitting out in the backyard, and all these apple blossoms are floating around. And, you know, we live right near the lake, you know Farrington Lake?

DECKER: Mmmm hmmm.

GIGLIO: Where do you live, Scott?

DECKER: I live on _____ Street by the _____.

GIGLIO: Well, _____ off 130. And in back of our house is Eisenhower Park. Beyond that is Farrington Lake. And my kids loved it, you know. You couldn't swim in the lake because it was water supply. But they used to go out on these Tarzan swings, you

know. _____. Then every local playground had its own counselors. Neighborhood parks, whatever you call them. So the kids would wait, you know, as soon as school let you, they'd be waiting for the parks to start up. First thing was when the Road Department would bring the big green box. Do you remember that?

WOMAN: No.

GIGLIO: Big green box. [Can't hear because of someone speaking over P.A. system] baseball bats and all that, you know. They would get on their bikes and go around the neighborhood saying, "The green box is here! The green box is here!" Everybody would go and wait for the counselors to come. It was great. They had all kinds of contests. It was great. There was no swimming in North Brunswick, no pool. Everybody used to have it where _____. That used to be the Swim and Splash Club; they had a pool. And counselors used to transport the kids over there for swimming.

WOMAN: That was _____?

GIGLIO: I think it's North Brunswick still. I'm not positive.

DECKER: I believe it's in New Brunswick.

GIGLIO: New Brunswick. It's on that side, yes. It's on that side. You're right.

DECKER: So what did you do during the summer like when you had free time?

GIGLIO: I had 12 kids. What are you talking, free time? I used to load the kids up, the playpens, the coolers, and everything and go to the beach. There used to be swimming in Jamesburg at Thompson Park. The only thing wrong with that was there was always _____. But, you know, we used to take a lot of hikes in the woods, and the kids would fish. It was great.

DECKER: Did your kids really like stick together, or were they kind of by themselves?

GIGLIO: If there's an emergency, they come together. And they're close. Some of them are closer than others. You know, my youngest child and my oldest child are hairdressers, so they have a lot in common. And then my youngest daughter and her sister Rosemary-- Do you know my kids? Probably not. How old are you?

WOMAN: Twenty-four.

GIGLIO: Yes, they'd be older than you.

DECKER: I think my mother knows them.

WOMAN: Yes, I think my mother would, too. _____ Mom, I know.;

DECKER: My mom's a substitute teacher. So she talks to her all the time.

GIGLIO: Okay. Yes. So she and my youngest daughter are very close. They're both live in North Brunswick. My son Joe, "Jigs," lives in North Brunswick.

WOMAN: Are they all in this general area?

GIGLIO: No, one went to Coronado, California. Another one is in Maryland. One is in Nashville, and one is in London. All the rest are in New Jersey.

DECKER: When did the one move to London?

GIGLIO: That's Monica _____ girl. She married there. She's in a band. The band was in tour in London, and she met a guy and fell in love. He followed here, they got married, and then they went back to London.

DECKER: Do they have any kids?

GIGLIO: She's expecting. They don't have any yet. I have 26 grandchildren.

WOMAN: I was going to ask how many.

GIGLIO: And two great-grandchildren.

DECKER: Wow!

WOMAN: Can you tell me all their names?

GIGLIO: Yes. Do you want to hear them?

DECKER: Sure.

GIGLIO: Okay. The oldest, Carol, has-- I'll just tell you the grandkids right now, not their spouses or anything. So Carol has two children, Timothy and Gina. Diane has three children, Jacob, Luke, and Sunday. Rich has three children, Jennifer, Chris, and Lisa. Tommy has five boys: Jesse, Daniel, Thomas, Timothy, and Jonathan. Peter has three children; they're Carrie, Peter, Jr., and Cici. Rosemary has three children, Bo, Darla, and Sally. Twinkie has one daughter, Rachel. Monica has three kids, Anthony, Andrew, and Sarah. Joseph has two, Noah and Grace. Rafael doesn't have any children. Debbie doesn't have any children. And Elena has a little girl, Olivia. I can't believe I mentioned 26 people.

WOMAN: That's great.

DECKER: Have you ever had any big family reunions?

WOMAN: Oh, yes. Yes. It's hard because they have in-laws and that. To be perfectly honest, it's too much when they all get together. It's just like a madhouse. The last time that the whole family was together was when Elena got married in 19--five years ago, whenever that was. And the whole family got together. It's great. She got married on the beach with all of her nieces and nephews. The little ones were flower girls. They all wore white, and, oh, it was great.

DECKER: How has the government changed in North Brunswick over the years?

GIGLIO: Not very much. Whoever's in power, if it's only one party, it's no good. If it lasts too long, it's no good. You know, power corrupts, and total power corrupts totally. So, you know, there's a weakness in people to want to be-- I almost ran for mayor. My husband said, "No!" It hasn't changed that much, you know. It used to be set up where the mayor was elected by the council. Now we have a different form where the mayor is elected by the people. I think everything's good. You know, there's always going to be problems. As long as there's people, there's going to be problems. But I think the town's well run.

DECKER: Do you have a certain politician that you remember the most _____?

GIGLIO: George Luke. He's a politician. He was a Rutgers professor, and he really had the good of the town in mind.

DECKER: Was he the mayor?

GIGLIO: He was mayor, mmmm hmmm.

DECKER: Around what time was he mayor?

GIGLIO: That would probably have been in the seventies.

DECKER: Do you keep in contact with anyone that you knew from a while ago in North Brunswick?

GIGLIO: There's two people that I went to high school with in Hightstown that live in North Brunswick, and we see each other occasionally.

DECKER: What were some of _____ activities you had in North Brunswick? Was there much to do here in North Brunswick?

GIGLIO: Not a whole lot, not like there is now. My favorite activities were just having fun with my kids, picnics and stuff,

walking, and just keeping up _____.

WOMAN: Did you talk to them about the North Brunswick Township schools with them? How you feel about _____ education?

GIGLIO: Yes, I did. Well, you know, some of them went first to parochial school, Our Lady of Lourdes in Milltown. And there they were much, much stricter, and the kids learned more. The classes were bigger. But hey had more freedom, the teachers had more freedom to discipline and call the mothers in, you know, and stuff. There were nuns and things like that. People change, society changes. I think the schools are good here. I wish there was a way to enforce more--expect more from the kids than what is expected, you know, in the way of behavior. I was so impressed with the high school. I haven't been there in a long time. And there was a good spirit among the kids, the place looked clean. I can _____.

DECKER: It sometimes _____. Was there a lot of violence or anything?

GIGLIO: There was-- At first there was no high school in North Brunswick, so our kids went to high school in New Brunswick, and that was about 24 years ago. And there was a lot of violence. There was racial violence. I don't know that anyone was killed, but I know they came close to it.

DECKER: Were there gangs?

GIGLIO: I don't know so much like organized gangs like you here about now. But it was just the blacks against the whites.

DECKER: So there was segregation?

GIGLIO: Segregation, no. They were not separated. But they were separated in their minds.

DECKER: Was there a lot of drug use?

GIGLIO: Yes. _____ drugs.

DECKER: Did anyone in the high school ever get into real trouble? I mean was there any like real situations in high school that the police had to be involved in.

GIGLIO: All the time in New Brunswick. All the time.

DECKER: That's too bad.

GIGLIO: And it was split sessions, too.

WOMAN: Yes, I was just going to ask about split sessions. I know

they had split sessions when my mother went.

GIGLIO: Right. So the kids didn't even know some of the other kids, you know. But my kids were pretty well known because there were so many.

DECKER: If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you live?

GIGLIO: You know, we used to say "home is where your heart is," and my heart's here. If I could take everyone I know here in the neighborhood and all that and maybe them move to Coronado, California. But, no, I like just where I am. There's no other place except for heaven; I'm looking forward to that.

DECKER: Have you ever traveled anywhere out of the United States?

GIGLIO: I've been to London, Paris, the Bahamas, Canada.

DECKER: Have you been to Canada lately?

GIGLIO: No. No, _____. That's when we went to Niagara Falls. Rosie's husband, Rosemary's husband _____ made a concert, but they canceled it because it was like this weekend.

DECKER: He came to out class one time, and he played for us.

GIGLIO: Did he?

DECKER: Yes.

GIGLIO: A nice guy.

DECKER: Yes, he's really nice. Do you know how they met?

GIGLIO: Yes. They met in high school, at New Brunswick High School.

DECKER: And they continued to see each other?

GIGLIO: Yes. They both worked at J&J after school. Then he took off with his music, and he didn't want to get married for a long time. And she finally got tired, she's about your age, and she met someone else. When he heard about it, he was in California, and he came out here, and he said, "If you're marrying anyone, it's going to be me." So they get married and left the next day for tours.

DECKER: Did you plan on having that many kids?

GIGLIO: No. I didn't plan on it, but there were two conditions:

One, my early years were not happy. My stepmother and father fought all the time, my father drank. When I would see a happy family, my heart would say, oh, that's so nice, a big happy family. And I remember there were shows like *I Remember Mama* and *The Waltons*. Anyway, it just seemed like the ideal life. And then there was a book called and a movie called *Cheaper by the Dozen*. Well, that became my role model. And then because I was a convert to the Church, the Catholic Church, I wanted to do everything right, and the Catholic Church didn't believe in birth control. It was God's will that I had these kids. If they weren't supposed to be here, they wouldn't have been born.

DECKER: What's your favorite holiday?

GIGLIO: My favorite holiday is Mother's Day.

WOMAN: What else can you tell us about North Brunswick?

GIGLIO: Well, let me tell you about like the stores. At first there were no stores in North Brunswick. We used to have to go to New Brunswick to shop. That was before the malls. And we would get groceries--I can't remember. After a while, North Brunswick shopping center got to be, and there was an A&P where the _____ Bank is now, where McDonald's was. Then that became Stop & Shop. Then Stop & Shop _____ builds up where Canary's[sp?] is now, that area, Barnes & Noble. And there was an A&P there and _____. What

store was that there?

DECKER: Bradlees.

GIGLIO: Bradlees, okay.

DECKER: Caldor was over by where the old McDonald's was.

GIGLIO: Okay. Before Caldor's, there was a W.T. Grant's Store. Do you remember that, Grant's? And everybody who worked at Grant's, they were like cloned. They were all chubby older ladies, you know. Then we had Grant's, then we had Woolworth's, now that's gone. And then Korvette's. We had a department store, up- and downstairs. That was great. You could get anything at Korvette's. And that was about it. There was no McDonald's, no Burger King, no nothing. The only Dunkin' Donuts was on Route 18. Now we have three. And what else can I tell you? It was a very sad situation when the A&P pulled out and Bradlees closed.

DECKER: I was sad. They always had the best stuff at the A&P I remember.

GIGLIO: Well, the sad part about it was I travel a lot--I speak to women's groups. I've been to Upstate New York, I've been to Pennsylvania, into these desolate places that were once booming. And characteristic of them is like empty stores, parking lots

with broken asphalt, weeds growing up, and that's what we had. So I thank the Lord that Barnes & Noble and Bed, Bath & Beyond and Canary's, the whole bunch of them, they gave new life to North Brunswick. I'm real happy with that.

WOMAN: Lots more traffic.

GIGLIO: Well, I have to say this: Everything was farms here in North Brunswick. And when we moved in with our kids and our cars, that's probably what everybody said, "Oh, there's a lot more traffic now." And room was made for me, and I feel we have to make room for everyone else. These are the good old days. Today is the good old days that we'll remember.

DECKER: What's your favorite thing about North Brunswick? What do you enjoy most?

GIGLIO: That I know people. You know, when I go into the bank, I know people. I go to the store, I'm bound to see people. We have a mixture. We have a bit of suburbia. Then out where I live we have the lake which is really kind of wild like. I think we have the best of two worlds here. We're convenient to the Turnpike, convenient to Route 1. If you like New York City, you're only 40 minutes away. New Brunswick has gotten to be quite the place for restaurants and theater. So I do think we live in a better place, really. I just wish they would clean up 130. They're really

letting it get neglected. There's cars-- Everybody's got a car for sale, but it's the same guy. He puts his cars on people's-- And there are a couple of bad things: That gas station that's got a gaping hole. I wish they'd take care of that.

DECKER: Which gas station?

GIGLIO: It's the corner of Washington Street and Route 130.

DECKER: Oh, yes, near East Brunswick? Near the Sir John's.

GIGLIO: Near the Sir John's. I remember before Sir John's, it was a rustic cabin. Then it became Sir John's, and it was still kind of rustic. And now it's totally different.

WOMAN: _____. It has changed.

GIGLIO: Oh, it has changed.

DECKER: Do you take like any kind of _____ out on the lake? Do you do that?

GIGLIO: If somebody would take me out there. I'm not too brave.

DECKER: Did your kids do a lot of fishing and stuff out on the lake?

GIGLIO: They played a lot of basketball. We had a basketball court. It needs to be redone. It's in bad shape. It hasn't been done for 30 years. Yes, I live next to a park, you know, and I love when I see people come with their kids. I love when the teenagers pull up in their cars and play basketball. I love life.

DECKER: What park is it that you live near?

GIGLIO: Eisenhower. It's off 130.

WOMAN: If you could change one thing about North Brunswick, what would it be?

GIGLIO: Well, politically, I would like to do away with the party system on the local level. If we could just really vote for people that we think would do a good job and not to have allegiance to any one political party. I would change that. I would like to see a real town square. We've talked about it. We have no town square. And we have two shopping centers that are even more divided. I would like to see like a street with stores on it and no traffic.

WOMAN: Like Cobblestown area?

GIGLIO: Yes. Maybe where that-- I still call it the Boy Scouts.

DECKER: So do my parents.

GIGLIO: I think I'll go up to the Boy Scouts. What Boy Scouts? Yes, that would make a great-- They used to have a nature trail when it was the Boy Scouts. That's a perfect area. It would be a tourist attraction, too, like we need more people. But, you know, like antique stores, _____ stores. Then we'd have everything.

DECKER: Did you ever get your kids involved in like organized sports like football?

GIGLIO: My grandkids are in it now, cheerleading and stuff like that.

WOMAN: What kinds of things did you accomplish on the school board?

GIGLIO: A lot. We were here--I was on the board when the high school was built. And I was in charge of buildings and grounds. So I'm responsible for the fields out there because they were a mess. They were a mess. They had a big drainage problem. They were always sopping wet. I accomplished that. I was very good in the area of negotiations with the teachers and the board. And also there was a lady who wanted to teach witchcraft in adult school, and that was a big brouhaha. I was on the radio,

interviews, and all kinds of stuff. I got to speak at Rutgers on censorship.

WOMAN: Did you allow it?

GIGLIO: No, I was against it, totally against it. Even though it wasn't for the kids, it was the adult school. It was like everything you wanted to know about witchcraft or the occult and you were afraid to ask. We don't need that. We don't need to open that door.

DECKER: What other memorable places have you spoken at?

GIGLIO: I was out in Colorado at the big conference center there. Different places I speak out on the importance of _____. Speaking to women and telling them what God did in my life and offer them the opportunity to come to know God. I'm an ordained minister. And, you know, I don't make big waves, but little ripples. [Change to Side B of Tape] ...community. And Martin Luther King, that was terrible, and we had commemorations. We need to remember those things, like the Holocaust. We need that Holocaust education.

The Holocaust was the main reason why we needed to go to Iraq. They talked about weapons of mass destruction, and they're still saying they're there, you know, people on both sides of the aisle in politics, though we haven't discovered them. But the

best thing of all, we stopped a dictator who was cruel and ruthless. And if that's not stopped-- But no one thought Hitler was going to do what he did. And I don't know how many millions of Jews were exterminated. First it was the Jews, then it was the crippled people, mentally ill people. Anyone who wasn't perfect was eliminated. So we have to be aware that evil is in the world and that can happen. So Holocaust education is very important.

NUTTER: Do you remember things like during World War II, like rationing? Do you remember that affecting your life, fondly? Do you remember--?

GIGLIO: I'll tell you all about it.

NUTTER: Perfect.

GIGLIO: The war years. Here we go. Where are we? Page 19. "We eagerly looked forward to receiving V-mail from our uncles. These letters were written on regulation parchment thin blue paper that was letter and envelope all in one. Each letter was censored before it reached us, lest a military secret would be disclosed. A popular slogan was 'a slip of the lip can sink a ship.' It was the era of Rosie the Riveter when women replaced the able-bodied men in factories. Older men were air-raid wardens, and there were air-raid shelters all over." You know, you'd see this yellow thing, sign, I forget exactly what it looked like.

"During the war everything from gasoline to candy bars was in short supply. We learned to conserve and save. When I left food on my plate at dinner, I was admonished that children were starving in Europe, so how could I dare leave food on my plate? Somehow that never made sense to me. First, how could what I ate affect starving children? Second, if they were indeed starving, why didn't we send them the leftovers? We saved newspapers, tin cans, foil wrappings, cooking grease, all of which was collected and recycled.

"The government said that butter and sugar were needed for the war effort. I guessed they were some kind of secret weapon. In order to insure that everyone got a fair share of necessary items, each family member was issued a book of ration stamps by the government. These stamps were needed in order to purchase everything, including shoes. Families would often barter gas stamps for food stamps as needs arose. People didn't mind the hardship of doing without because it was for the war effort and the boys fighting on the battlefield. It was a time of patriotism and cooperation, everyone working towards the same goals."

NUTTER: When you went shopping like for food and items like that, do you remember going to specialty shops like a butcher shop for meat and then a general store for your regular goods?

GIGLIO: Yes.

NUTTER: Or was it more like an A&P where you went in for everything?

GIGLIO: Yes. To me it seems recent. We used to go to Hardy's Meat Store on _____ Avenue. They cut the meat just the way you wanted it. And the vegetables, we used to go to the vegetable stands. There was Proxmire's on Ryders Lane, and we used to get our vegetables there.

NUTTER: Did you grow things in your gardens?

GIGLIO: Yes, yes. We'd grow tomatoes. And you would buy baskets of peaches and stuff and can stuff.

NUTTER: I'm trying to think of what _____.

GIGLIO: Yes, the specialty-- You know, little by little, the mom-and-pop stores went out of business. There used to be a little store on 130 called Oliberi's where you could go and get everything, you know. And then they went out of business. There was Brown's Hardware, Brown's from North Brunswick. The store was on Commercial Avenue. The big stores, the Home Depots and the big stores, they would put them out of business. But I still look for small stores. I love doing business with the drugstore on 130 because it's one guy who owns the store. I do Meals-on-Wheels, too. That was interesting. It's something how--I learned how

people don't want to give up their homes. You'd see one old person in a big house, and the worst part was when they smoked because they always keep their windows shut tight. And you'd go in there, and you'd be coughing from the smoke. But anyway, you know, they have their pride. You have to respect people's pride and their need to have something of their own.

NUTTER: Are you an active member in the senior center in North Brunswick.

GIGLIO: No, I'm in denial. Maybe when I grow up I'll do that. No, I think it's great. I just wish I had more time. I think it's wonderful. It's kind of like a cycle, seeing when you're a young kid before you go to school, you go to _____ classes and get to do a lot of fun things. You go to kindergarten, _____ all the way to the other end of the spectrum. When you're over 65, you get to do the same thing: do crafts, make things.

NUTTER: And look at _____. I'm trying to think of a few more questions to ask.

GIGLIO: I'll tell you about 130.

NUTTER: Okay.

GIGLIO: One thirty was the only road. There was Route 1. Was

there Route 1? There had to be Route 1. But 130 was the main road to Philadelphia. There was no Turnpike. When they built the Turnpike, they said they were going to charge tolls. It was very little. Then within ten years the Turnpike was going to pay for itself. And that never happened. But there wasn't much traffic on 130. I know I speak of 130, but that's where I live. To me that's North Brunswick. And I think the new highway system's going to be good. But they need more of an access to 130. You know what I have to do? Let's I'm going to the A&P. I have to go out to Georges Road. I have to make a left and go north on 1. Go up over the overpass, come down, take the overpass to 130. So that's a pain.

DECKER & NUTTER: Yes.

DECKER: That's how I have to get to school in the morning?

NUTTER: Yes. It shouldn't be for too many more weeks, they said. Hopefully.

GIGLIO: And you know what? I think they have done a magnificent job of working quickly, efficiently, and also neatly. My God, if I make a cake, I make more of a mess than they have.

NUTTER: It will definitely be better in the end.

GIGLIO: One of the things I'm proud of that I've been able to initiate in North Brunswick is the National Day of Prayer. That's a national event, and each town commemorates in their own way. Nine years ago we started it in North Brunswick, Chris Krauss and I, and we've been doing it ever since. This year it's in the evening. First time we're having an evening event. It's going to be at the Municipal Building Thursday, the day after tomorrow at seven thirty-five. And it brings together people from all different faiths, you know, who express their dependence on God, need for God's protection.

NUTTER: And it's just an event that revolves around prayer?

GIGLIO: Yes. And commemorating different like--we have about six different topics, you know. We're going to commemorate the schools. Some will pray for the schools, some will pray for families, some will pray for the _____, some will pray for the fire fighters, police, and rescue workers. And I hope to get some representatives there from that to pray. We try to get clergy involved. This is the first time we have an active member on our committee. Clergy, they're funny sometimes about interfaith things. We try to get a rabbi, an imam from the Muslim faith.

NUTTER: They don't really want to participate. Do you belong to any other committees besides that particular committee?

GIGLIO: That's about it right now.

WOMAN: Would you consider running for mayor again?

GIGLIO: I would love to run for mayor, but my husband doesn't want me to. I figure I'd have a hard enough time beating the opposing party without beating my husband.

NUTTER: Yes, that might be a little more difficult.

GIGLIO: Yes. No, I couldn't do it if he's not for it. I've done so many things that he didn't encourage me to do that I really felt that I was supposed to. Like the school board. And it's such a battle when you're married and your spouse is not part of what you're doing.

WOMAN: If you ever did become mayor, what would you do?

GIGLIO: I'd eliminate the parties, as much as I could have the power to do that. I would get young people involved, I would get old people involved. You know, I'd really want to know what the people want. I wouldn't be talking down to them, this is what you want. I would want to know what they wanted.

NUTTER: You would do it more like a town meeting style?

GIGLIO: Yes. I'd have a lot of town meetings. Yes. Spending more like neighborhoods, and then coming together as representatives.

NUTTER: That sounds like a good idea.

GIGLIO: It is.

NUTTER: I think we should go talk to your husband.

GIGLIO: I'd definitely have a town center and a park, fountains in it, you know, flowers. And no traffic on the street. You know, you could park around it. But kids could hang out. There'd be a place just for kids.

NUTTER: Sounds good.

GIGLIO: I'd really try to meet the needs of the young people, especially the disadvantaged ones. There's a lot of kids that are being lost because of their family lives. Well, you know. They seem like troublemakers, but they're so troubled inside. Okay. Anything else? Let's see if I have any chapters that might be relevant. One time I was speaking-- No, I wasn't. I was running for school board for the first time, and I was getting my hair cut. It was before my daughters became hairdressers. The lady in the next chair didn't know me, but she was reading in the *Sentinel* about me, that I was running for school board. And she

said to her hairdresser, "Can you believe it? She has 12 kids!" And her hairdresser went, "Aaahh! You'd have to be crazy to have 12 kids." So I didn't acknowledge that, but I thought to myself, you don't have to be crazy, but it helps.

NUTTER: Yes. Really. It's a small world. She was talking about you, you were right next to her, and she didn't know it.

GIGLIO: I would like, you know, I think North Brunswick does a really good job of encouraging family participation. Like I think the Judd School Family Night and bingo, you know, and kids are running around having a good time. Yes, I'd have more of that. I think the families are really trying, you know, the soccer people and the Little League people, the football people.

NUTTER: I agree.

GIGLIO: The family is the basic--it's the basic foundation of society. Everything else comes from that. How you treat one another, you learn that in the family. Am I boring you?

WOMAN: No, not at all.

GIGLIO: It's that time of day, right?

WOMAN: I had a very late, late night last night.

NUTTER: Do you have anything else you'd like to say? Do you have anymore questions or anything?

GIGLIO: My philosophy is it ain't over 'til it's over. In other words, don't start thinking of yourself as an old person, you know, I've been there, done that. But keep going. Keep going. You know when you have to stop. I've been physically ill at certain times in my life, and I thought it was over. But it wasn't. I got better and got back out there again. Got to stay active. My dad was like that.

NUTTER: Sounds like a great philosophy to me.

GIGLIO: Yes. That's why I haven't allowed myself to participate _____ senior citizens, because you talk to people there, and they're older, and I just don't want to be classified. I want to be who I am in my community. But I think it's wonderful. I'm not speaking down on it. And I hope someday to be able to have more time to partake more.

[End of Interview]