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Foreign Service Spouse Series

**JEANIE TEARE**

*Interviewed by: Jewell Fenzi*  
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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

4th of July. First post Barbados; Segregation  
Theater  
Luncheon w/Governor's wife, Barbados; Celebrities  
Farley Hill, Barbados Status as Americans View of 1972 Directive DC Public Schools  
Wellington, Xmas Party  
Entertaining New Zealanders  
Pre-1972 Spouse Expectations  
Fundraising, Canberra  
Relationships with Ambassador's Spouses  
1972 Directive, Spouse Introspection, Remembrances of Incidents  
Paid Positions in Washington  
Laos  
Safehaven, Manila  
Helping Servants find other Jobs  
View of Languages used in Service  
1972 Directive  
Pay Spouse IRA's  
Lack of Training and Adjustment to Posts  
Depending on Rank  
Vouchering Expenses  
Composition of Guest List

**INTERVIEW**

*Q: This is Jewell Fenzi on Tuesday, March 19, 1991, I am interviewing Jeanie Teare at her home on Oliver Street in the District.*

TEARE: I don't think our career, or what I've done, has been particularly interesting. I don't think we were incredibly representative or great ground-breakers. But I think what's been interesting is this span of 30 years in which so much has changed for women in the Foreign Service. I think that's what's interesting -- to sort of having been an observer in

all this.

*Q: I think the interesting thing is exactly what you said, to look into the change over 30 years. You came in four years after I did, and the change has been absolutely tremendous.*

TEARE: That's right. The things that I thought were important in 1959 I realize are (she breaks out into hearty laughter) I mean, really! And the things we didn't know then, or the things that we had trouble with. The things that we had trouble with in 1959, we didn't understand how to do certain things.

*Q: Such as?*

TEARE: We had to give the Fourth of July reception in Barbados, which was a Consulate then. It was our first post. The Consul had gone away. We didn't know even whom to invite, we didn't know anything, and we had to go to one of these sort of senior Bajian people on the Island with the guest list from previous years and ask him, "Is this the right person to invite?" On that tiny little island, apparently no one had much invited the planters, they were sort of not urban society, they were rural society. We thought it would be a good idea to invite some of the planters who grew all that sugarcane; we put them on the list. We really didn't know what we were doing.

*Q: Had you had any training at all at FSI?*

TEARE: I can't remember if we had, or not. I mean, I certainly knew which fork to use, we were all right about that, we grew up with that, but who were the proper people to invite -- oh, there are some wonderful stories from those days. We were newly married, we had no children and we kept a servant part-time Monday through Friday, she wasn't there on weekends. Just before the Fourth of July reception the Governor's mother, who lived on the island with her second husband, I think thought that she probably ought to be sure that she was invited so that she would come to call. It was a weekend and we weren't home. She had to throw her calling cards through the transom. (both break into laughter) Hilarious!

And that fateful Fourth of July: There was a Naval facility at the other end of the island and they carried fireworks, but by the time that we got around to deciding we should get some fireworks for this outdoors reception, the Navy had bought them all up and there were three roman candles left. So we bought those. We had a driver and at the appropriate time he was to shoot those off. We thought this was such a dandy idea. The first one was a dud, the second one burned his shirt and we had to replace it, and the third one went off. If was a non-event but we thought we had really done something quite spectacular for the American Consul.

*Q: What else did you think was important in 1959? Was it important to have your crystal and silver gleaming and your linen starchy white and all of that?*

TEARE: Yes, I think I knew that, and I always remember that the bathroom guest towels

were always very fresh; I think I knew that. But that was a funny society in those days, and if you could go back and do things again ... You know, there were certain white people on the island that you could not invite to dinner with black people. I remember that planning a dinner to which I invited both was a major event. We belonged to the Barbados Yacht Club and in those days it was segregated and I don't think we ever seriously considered making a statement by not joining the Barbados Yacht Club.

Not long after we left it became Consulate policy not to join the Yacht Club. So those changes were also taking place, and that was very interesting. But you know I grew up in Maryland and I suppose it seemed in a way not awful to belong to an all-white club. I grew up in a city where black people couldn't try on clothes. And whatever our black friends in Barbados said privately, they simply understood that we had one aspect of our life in which they did not participate. Although it was during our time that the Chief Justice, who was black, not very, was invited to become a member of the Yacht Club. There was a lot of controversy.

*Q: Was he admitted?*

TEARE: Yes, he was, and he came -- (she laughs) he didn't quibble either. His name was Sir Kenneth Stoby. His son was a young doctor married to a Canadian who worked at the local hospital. So there were those changes taking place, even then, but you would hear perfectly polite white Barbadians simply dismiss the black-run government. They made their accommodations with all of this but they did not participate socially. So it was a time of change there, too -- more interesting than I even really understood at the time, because I was so self-concerned, so fascinated with you know (laughing) my own progress through the system, you know.

*Q: When did Barbados achieve its independence?*

TEARE: After we left. We were there at a time when federation was a possibility. Then federation fell apart in our time or just shortly thereafter.

*Q: I had two lovely weekends on Barbados and I thought they were divine. How long were you there?*

TEARE: Two and a half years.

*Q: Did the island get a little small after a while?*

TEARE: No. Isn't that terrible, I don't think I even went through every part of it in two and a half years. It's funny, we were sort of sluggish, I think.

*Q: You found enough to do?*

TEARE: Yes. It's a wonder I don't have terrible skin cancer now, spent a lot of time sitting on the beach. Well, I had two miscarriages then, so those were sort of bad times

and I think I was rather distraught by the end -- I was medevac'd to return to the States, a miscarriage didn't seem to quit. But I acted in lots and lots of plays, I was still young enough (laughing) to play ingenue roles. We had a wonderful theater group, and wonderful friends there. It's funny, I think maybe one's first post is one in which friendships are never repeated in quite the same way.

*Q: And also, yours was English-speaking and you have that tradition of little theater which the British take with them around the world to help fill up the vacant hours in places like Sierra Leone [where interviewer was posted] or wherever.*

TEARE: That's right. And actually, when I say it was a place where we had wonderful close friends, in fact I never felt that would be repeated. More recently we've been to New Zealand and Australia and we've had, I think, friendships of that same depth.

*Q: The language makes such a difference.*

TEARE: That's right. And our Barbados friends we're still closely in touch with. So I guess we have not been much in touch with our black friends here. But our white friends, some of whom you know were ten-pound immigrants to Australia, we then took up with again when they moved to Sidney, and Perth, and London -- life goes on, there's a new chapter for all these things.

*Q: There was some tie between some of your posts. That happened to us in the Dutch context.*

TEARE: As we talk about it, I think, (she laughs) "Goodness, it was a full life!" I hadn't really thought about it. But Barbados was also filled with the most feckless, sort of British beach-livers. I mean, it was a very hard-drinking, very socializing crowd in one sense, there was that whole aspect to it. Celebrities came and went. In those days, I thought that the high point in our tour there was when the Governor's wife took me with her to lunch at Oliver Messel's. He was the great stage set-designer, Anthony Armstrong-Jones' uncle. And Colbert, who had a house on the island, was there. Anyway, I was dazzled. To this day I can tell you what we had for lunch! (laughter) I was so impressed. Messel was very interesting man. I guess I was invited because he had been the judge of a fancy headdress ball that the RSPCA won every year. I won "Funniest", mostly because I'm so very short and I wore a huge sombrero that had belonged the Governor's wife, so she thought as my reward for having made a complete fool of myself she'd take me to lunch.

The previous American Ambassador there, Bob Scotten, had been Ambassador to New Zealand, and he and his wife were extremely kind to the Consulate staff. He retired in Barbados. I always remember their thoughtfulness in including us in things. I think in a way it was a way of showing us (she laughs) how to behave as well.

*Q: Well, I think it was beneficial to them, too, to keep their ties with the American Consulate was probably very important to them.*

TEARE: They weren't the only ones who took us on, I remember that. The manager of Barclay's Bank, DCO, always made a point--as you did in those days -- of having black-tie dinners, they were very common. I think his wife thought we needed a little polishing up and that if she invited us for dinner enough times, we would figure out which way to pass the port and when to get up from the table, as women did, and leave and have coffee in another room, and so forth.

At the same time we were all dressing in black tie for dinner there, the Embassy doctor would have parties in which the men would leave after dinner and go outside and relieve themselves in the bushes because that was very common also.

*Q: That was called "seeing Africa" in Sierra Leone. Maybe that was an old British custom too?*

TEARE: I think it must have been. Pissing on the flowers. (both laugh uproariously)

*Q: What was the name of that wonderful old plantation house in the center of the island?*

TEARE: Farley Hill. It was the one where the movie "Island in the Sun" was filmed. They actually built sort of false pilasters on the facade but I guess it was restored. It was very near a beautiful place called Monkey Hill where there were actually monkeys that had been set loose in the woods. And there was a beautiful Anglican college, Codrington College, (pausing) I think that's what it was called .... It was kind of a contemplative place for Anglican clergy, sort of a study place. Although there was a school of the same name, I think. But I remember going out there for afternoon teas with a particularly wonderful Anglican priest who studied out there. Then, when we were in Australia recently and I was working on this history project about the Anglican clergy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in New York, I discovered enormous references to the SPG, Society for the Preservation of the Gospel, which also sent Anglican clergy to the U.S., to Barbados of course; and it was there that they gained this enormous sugar plantation. This whole thing was a complete line from the 18th century to the present, when we lived there. This huge plantation was still farmed, for benefit of the Gospel. So there's a lot of history to go around.

*Q: Barbados history is interesting, if I recall correctly, it has to do with the trade winds -- ships sailed right by, and it wasn't as "contaminated" by the Dutch and the Spanish, etc. because it was hard to maneuver sailing vessels into Barbados. So it remained more British and it is, sort of stuck out there.*

TEARE: That's right, it is, although it was the first port of call now for lots and lots of yachtsmen. Always one of the Consulate's problems were these people who were (she laughs) terribly responsible at sea and very irresponsible on land, leaving strings of yachts and other things.

*Q: We had those in Curacao, too. I think they came to us from Barbados!*

TEARE: Some of those were absolutely fascinating people. There was a very well-to-do French couple who actually had a piano in the cabin because she was very interested in music. He only had one arm and had lost it boar-hunting in the south of France; real characters.

Q: He must have had a crew. Could he do -- [voice overlap, response unclear]

TEARE: But they were really amazing people. I wish I had understood human nature as well then as I do now, because I think I swallowed a lot of people in Barbados absolutely whole that I now realize were frauds. (both laugh)

*Q: I always felt, virtually everywhere, that there's always one segment that wants to have this tie with the American Consulate or the American Embassy, and I think when we were younger we used to "swallow them whole" as you say.*

TEARE: We were just thrilled for the attention.

*Q: Yes. And I think you got much astute in your dealings with people like that as you went on in the Service further.*

TEARE: That's right. I think that at our last post Dick spent a lot of time trying to keep one well-known person off all national and (laughing) no matter what he did the man kept showing up.

*Q: (also laughing heartily) We know what we're talking about there. The thing that immediately pops up when I look at your career is that you entered in 1960; a little less than half of your career was before the '72 directive, and then of course there have been all these years as your husband has moved up and you were DCM spouse in Wellington and Canberra. Where did you stand on the '72 directive when it came out? Was there any radical change in your life as a result of that? And have you changed your opinion of it over the years?*

TEARE: (after pause) No, I never thought it was a bad thing, I mean I couldn't possibly see how anybody would object to it. Although for much older wives in a way it must have been an insult. In other words, they had played the game exactly the way everybody was told they had to play the game all those years. And then it turned out that this valuable occupation that they had attended to all those years was now considered really not so valuable, in the sense that you couldn't get any recognition for it. You couldn't even get somebody to say something about it in your husband's Efficiency Report. So, then, where was the psychic reward here? And certificates of appreciation, and pins, I think are (long pause) sad.

*Q: Well put, well put.*

TEARE: I don't know what I think. I think, first of all, at '72 we were still very junior in a very large Embassy and I was very busy taking care of children. So I don't remember

that I gave too much thought to this, except that I thought from that point I couldn't ruin Dick's career -- well, actually I probably could have but at least nobody was going to be able to say anything derogatory. If they weren't going to be able to say anything good, they couldn't say anything awful, either.

I think I stood with a foot in both camps, in a way. And I understood that there were these spousal activities that I thought were important to any community. I think they're important to the Washington community. I mean, they're not spousal, I think they're parental in a way, but you cannot keep a community together with no one to do it. And if everybody said, "Well, good, I don't have to do that anymore," then who was going to hold it all together? And people complain plenty overseas. They complain about things that you really know they shouldn't complain about. "Oh, no one's paying attention to me" "Oh, they're not doing this." People really do need a lot of attention overseas. They'll say they don't, but they do, and who was going to do that?

Well, the CLO has obviously now taken on many functions of the volunteer community. And that's all right, that's all right. I think those are changes and they're good changes. Or maybe they're just not even -- they're just changes. And I think women should be free to follow whatever interests they have. But I think probably younger women are not as mindful of the structure of a community overseas as we were in the older days. We sort of understood that you have to do these things. People at FSI tell me that there are young wives coming in who've never written thank you notes. I admit that these are ephemeral techniques but they do keep the world going, in a way.

I don't think I had any really bad feelings about the directive. You remember, Nancy was talking last week about the great meeting in Mexico at which the '72 directive was discussed, and I remember -- I think I said this during the interview with Nancy -- that older wives were absolutely stunned by Marilyn Smith who was quite distressed that after having worked so hard to obtain her Master's in linguistics, she couldn't find work in Mexico City. I think those older wives who had worked hard within the Embassy, probably, but had filled their lives with a lot of bridge-playing and a lot of women's socializing were quite stunned that by this woman's complaint. It would be interesting to know -- and you probably know this from interviewing older wives -- whether they had longed for these things or never wanted for these...

*Q: I don't think it occurred to them, the ones we've interviewed who are in the 80s and 90s.*

TEARE: Really? Because, after all, there are women in their 80s and 90s who've gotten medical degrees. There were women who wrote, there were women who had talents that they wanted to explore. Did Foreign Service officers only marry women who had (laughing) zero ambition except to be a Foreign Service wife? Was it considered enough? My mother thought it was enough. My mother never referred to Dick without adding that he was a diplomat. I mean, that was enough for her that I had married somebody with all that clout.

And I think it was enough for me. I think I thought I was absolutely the cat's pajamas, marrying a diplomat. It excused me from having to organize my own life, I think.

*Q: Did there ever come a time when you felt that being married to a diplomat wasn't (she laughs) all that you could envision as desire in life?*

TEARE: Yes, but there came a time when I was really heavily influenced, I think, by the new feminism, and by my own children. I began to see all the injustices but I also realized that much of it was of my own making, you know? That if I had wanted to write a book or plunge into research, nothing had really stopped me except my own (pause) excuses. "Well, we're moving soon."

*Q: But, you see, I think you're under-selling yourself there. I think the fact that we've moved all the time, every few years, has a tremendous effect on our lives.*

TEARE: Well, I think so. I must say I don't move easily but I certainly do it better than most people I know. (she laughs)

*Q: I see you were here in Washington from 1977 to 1983 and your daughters were teenagers?*

TEARE: Yes. Actually, it was from 1975 when I came back; Dick came back in 76.

*Q: Is that when you started having these thoughts about looking at your daughters, and the inequities, and the male-female?*

TEARE: It might have been a little earlier... No, that would be about right. We were home for a very long stretch, which nobody can do any more without special permission or some dire reason but we were the last people who didn't fall in that five-year rule. We got two children through high school and launched. I thought that was terrific, and I worked part-time in the office at the local elementary school and I was on the Wilson Home and School Association board for a number of those years. And I did lots of volunteer work then, almost all of it to do with the Wilson High School and Lafayette Elementary and Deal Junior High.

If there is anything I have felt truly strongly about all these years, that there is any one thing I would say is really absorbed me in all those years for any length of time, it's been the D.C. public schools and I feel very strongly about those. And our oldest child is a schoolteacher is because of her having gone through these schools. And I'm really pleased with that. I think those of us who put our kids through D.C. public schools probably have some sort of reverse snobbism, we're the tough street people.

*Q: "We did it!"*

TEARE: Yes. And it wasn't all that hard, either. They had some terrible teachers and some good teachers, and they did well, but they were very academic. The two older ones



went to Yale, the youngest one graduates this year from Wesleyan in Connecticut. Our two girls who went to Wilson were both valedictorians of their class and were really outstanding students.

*Q: Did you have this house all that time?*

TEARE: Yes, all the time, we never moved. We bought it in '67.

*Q: So you've been here a long time.*

TEARE: That's right, we've paid off the mortgage. The girls grew up in the house, this is their neighborhood.

*Q: That's unusual in the Foreign Service.*

TEARE: Yes. That's wonderful. This community is just -- I mean, there are lots of times when Dick and I think we're going to "flee to the suburbs" but I don't know, I just don't think I'd find (laughing) such like-minded people in the suburbs. Isn't that terrible?! (voices overlapping and laughter) There are lots of "modest Democrats" in this neighborhood. (further indistinct phrase)

*Q: So, when you got to Wellington, in your number two position -*

TEARE: Anyway, I thought I was terrific.

*Q: I'm sure you were. How big an Embassy?*

TEARE: There were about 35 Americans.

*Q: How did you deal with the wives? Did you ask them to assist? (Teare says no) Did you do things on your own?*

TEARE: I did a lot of stuff on my own.

*Q: How did you hold the community together, because that obviously fell on your shoulders?*

TEARE: I don't know that I did that so well. First of all, it was such a comfortable place to live that there were not a lot of demands on the Embassy as a community. People really found their own communities there, so the real problem was with single people, who did not find it quite as easy to get into the community as people who would meet other people through their children, school, and so forth. Another thing that's important about Australia and New Zealand is that only the DCM and the Ambassador would have help, so you wouldn't think about asking people to do things as you do in a society where everybody has servants, where there's no trick to asking somebody to bring food because they don't do it anyway.

The one big volunteer activity we had every year at the Embassy in Wellington was the Christmas party, which would be given at the Ambassador's residence for the entire Embassy staff. Then you'd have to sort of lean on people to bring salads. There was no way to raise money because we didn't have an Embassy women's group and every time that I would invite the Embassy to lunch, I would raise the issue: couldn't we all have some sort of a structure? There had been an Embassy women's group in the old days. We had dues so that we could go ahead on this Christmas party because it had become a tremendous expense for the Ambassador, who ended up buying all the meat and liquor and the DCM who was expected to provide all the soft drinks. Yet there was no setup to get the money.

After we left the next Ambassador decided to ask the local employees also to contribute and there was rebellion in the ranks, they wouldn't come. They said "this is a party that you give for us." It was a very interesting situation but we had no structure with which to get any money, and no one was very interested in doing it anyway.

*Q: This was a Christmas party for the American staff and the local staff, a thank you to the local staff for what they did during the year.*

TEARE: That's right.

*Q: Well, I can understand why there was rebellion. Oh absolutely.*

TEARE: That's right, but on the other hand we were getting into this expensive little project every year that I was beginning to dread. Our last year there we were between Ambassadors and the expense to Dick and me was enormous. Well, I thought, it's important to give this party and we will swallow this, but I think it cost us \$200 or \$300 in New Zealand dollars to do this party. I think everybody else brought salads and bread and everything, and it didn't seem important to me, I mean I didn't want to ask them to do more; and one or two people said "here's \$30 toward the expenses." I really didn't think you could ask, I thought that would be even less attractive... I didn't know how to do it.

*Q: Well, if you're giving a party for the people, you can hardly ask them to pay for it or contribute to it.*

TEARE: Yes but I thought we should ask for more from the Americans but I couldn't see how to do that in a polite way. I hoped fervently that they would kick in but didn't think I could ask them to do so, if they were already bringing salads and so on. And there were not that many senior people, it's a smallish post, and I don't think it was fair to ask the people at the lower end of the pay scale to throw in \$30 for a party; I didn't think that was right. I was already asking them to bring a salad, I thought that was enough. It was their time, and their money... So there were things that I thought I didn't do awfully well there.

*Q: Were the women working?*

TEARE: Some were. We have a reciprocal agreements in both countries, and some women were working.

*Q: Was there a language problem?*

TEARE: As I say, it was a post that was not very cohesive as a group of Americans but that was all right.

*Q: That was no problem, there was no hardship.*

TEARE: No, there wasn't. And another thing was that because people didn't have help, people did not entertain a great deal. Which, in another post is one way that Americans kind of stick together, they see each other a lot, and where you have no help you don't entertain all the time. I had a part-time cook who came in two or three times a week and I would arrange any entertaining I was doing to be on one of those days. And then of course we did not entertain Americans a great deal. We entertained lots of New Zealanders and diplomatic people and so forth. I think we kept up a fairly heavy schedule of that type, but unless you entertain on a very wide scale it's very hard to include gobs of Americans because if you seat 12 at dinner, one other married couple is enough Americans. So that was sort of hard, I think.

*Q: So you really went ahead and did exactly what you had always done?*

TEARE: That's right, it was just sort of a hop, skip and jump from here to there. I went back to working in Wellington schools. Our daughter Megan entered first in a private school, Samuel Marsden who was an Anglican missionary who hit New Zealand and Australia and the school named after him was right down the street. It was all right but after having been in DC public schools, Marsden was really 180 degrees in the opposite direction. But it was just a half-block from our house, so when our older kids came out to visit and Megan expressed some dissatisfaction in the schools, they just said, "You can't have her in that school, she'll have to go to public school" and they sort of swept her into the public school, and it was better, I think. I liked it better for her and I think she liked it better too, it was not quite so "finishing school." But even that after a while became too small a community for her and she came back and did her last two years in boarding school here. Which was very strange for us, after having been DC public school parents to suddenly be New England Prep school parents. My friends in this community were horrified, they thought I had sold out.

*Q: But under those circumstances, of course.*

TEARE: I also took courses at the university.

*Q: In Wellington you seemed to attribute the relationship of the Americans to the fact that there was no help, there was English, there was plenty to do on the outside, it was comfortable, is the lack of necessity on the part of the women to be drawn in as a part of*

*the community as it was pre-1972, how big a role did that aspect play in the makeup of the American community?*

TEARE: You know, I'm not sure that I believe that people consciously have that in mind. I guess what I think after all these years is that the cohesiveness or lack of it among females in an Embassy community has a lot to do with the tone that is set at the top. I don't even think that the DCM and the DCM wife can set it from that level. I must say, this is the part of me, the part of my feeling, that is pre-1972. I think that it is tremendously important for an Ambassador and his spouse to consciously, in addition to all their other duties, [speaking slowly with careful emphasis] set aside time and spaces in their entertaining for the American community. And I realize that it is not always easy to do, that there are events where you're not going to include the communicators, for example, because there wouldn't be similar interests with the visiting Congressmen or whomever. But there are plenty of nondescript events that are not specifically structured in which I think more people should be included, and unless you do that, no one feels as though they belong very much.

*Q: You've just pointed out the flip side of the coin, that some of that expense, not necessarily always but some of it may come from the Ambassador's stipend.*

TEARE: That's right, and I think it does. But I don't see another way of doing it. Before 72, when we were in the Philippines, we served under Ambassador and Mrs. Stevenson. He had been president of Oberlin, and Bumpie Stevenson, his wife, was the most marvelous woman. A huge Embassy now, it was very big even in those days, and I remember that they regularly, that she regularly rotated all the Foreign Service Staff right through their house. For example, Dick was the special Consular Services person in the Consular section, and I remember that every now and then our name came up and we were invited to sit below the salt at a lunch for some visiting American coming through. I think that's important. Or there would be a large reception and a certain number of Americans would be invited to kind of be on hand, to circulate and help the Ambassador.

Now, nobody much goes up to Americans now at big cocktail parties and says, "I want you to go and take care of that person over there." You're kind of edgy about asking people to do that anymore but it was a way, also, of feeling needed in a community. I remember that Mrs. Stevenson was just wonderful about that.

*Q: Did your ambassadors in New Zealand and Australia do that?*

TEARE: Not as easily, and I think this is a skill known better to career Foreign Service Officers. I think it's hard to come to...

*Q: Twenty years later! Or more than 20 years.*

TEARE: I think it is hard to come by outside the career service and find it easy to keep all the balls in the air at the same time -- your obligations to the foreign community, your obligations to the resident community and diplomatic community and the Embassy

community.

*Q: And the Administration at home?*

TEARE: Yes, that's right. And I think it's probably taught in the Ambassadors' Course but you know, people hear what they want to hear. I've always thought it's pretty heady stuff if you've not been in the career Foreign Service to go to an Ambassador's Course and hear "you are the President's personal representative." You probably never hear anything after that point. (both laugh)

*Q: They should save that for last.*

TEARE: ...because immediately you're sort of imbued with this persona. If you're in the career service, I think your reaction is, "Oh yeah... That and what else?" But it's so exciting, I think, to come into the Foreign Service as an ambassador that it may be very hard to take that with a grain of salt. Very hard indeed. And I have to say also that people have different capacities for this sort of thing, you know? Some people really find that all their energy is just expended in one direction, that they can't do it all. So I think that's hard. But I've often thought that if I were an ambassador's wife, I would take a very hard look at the community and structure my life so that I didn't forget about that.

Oh: you know another thing? In the old days, you remember we used to call. Well, that has completely gone out of style now. We never served in Europe, is that still going on?

*Q: can't remember if I made calls the last time I was in Rotterdam.*

TEARE: Well, hardly anybody does this anymore but it served a very useful purpose, which is that the Ambassador's wife got to know who the other people were, and in a large mission there are ambassador's wives who don't know anybody because they have not had the opportunity to meet them one on one and cement them into their minds. "Ah yes, that's the little card on the wife file."

*Q: That's right.*

TEARE: So, I must say of all the pre-1972 things I think I would bring back, it's probably the obligatory calls. They were terrible. I remember that nervousness of going around clutching my cards, remembering which corners to fold, and all that.

*Q: And the hat.*

TEARE: That's right, the whole thing. When I think about it, it was absolutely ludicrous. On the other hand, the Ambassador's wife -- had done the right thing and at least knew what my name was.

*Q: I wouldn't call it a call, I would call it your introductory meeting, or I would put it on a very businesslike...*

TEARE: Well, that's right. Thursday afternoon was my day and anybody new whose call was in the week would come and see me.

*Q: And that is my introduction, my orientation meeting -- call it what you like, it's my meeting. Don't call it a social call.*

TEARE: How hard would it be, except when you're traveling to set aside Thursday between four and five? Not very hard; no. That's what I think, and I think it's useful, I really do. In our last post, there were people in the Embassy who had never been to the Ambassador's residence. Americans.

*Q: Did those women at any time turn to you as an experienced Foreign Service wife for any kind of suggestions or direction? What did they use as a basis for their..*

TEARE: I think what their own natural inclinations were.

*Q: Had they come from public life?*

TEARE: One had not, one had been more so just in the nature of her life. No: and I don't know how -- (pause) it's an immensely secure person who asks for advice, I think.

*Q: It's an immensely wise person (she laughs) who asks for advice! Security and wisdom can go hand in hand.*

TEARE: Partly I think it really is a matter of how you use your time. I must say that my observation has been that so much of an ambassador's wife's time is taken up in really forgettable activities.

*Q: Ribbon-cuttings?*

TEARE: Well, a lot of that but there is almost no private time. And, therefore, where do you skimp? Do you skimp on the outside functions? How do you put it all together? I don't know how you do it, and it must be different for every single person depending on your capacity for being on your feet. I think that's very interesting. We had an Embassy women's club in Canberra, a very active one, a good club. We raised a certain amount of money. Some of the meetings were about Australian history or fauna, or makeup, a fashion show one year which raised a lot of money -- \$1,500, \$2,000. Then we had a committee that met at the end of the year that divided up all this money and gave it to charity. And that was sort of fun, because I thought it was important to put it where it counted. I'm just bloody-minded enough, I guess, so I didn't want to (laughing) give it to the Save-the-Children Foundation. That foundation is very popular among all Embassy communities, you know, it's an "easy one." I thought, we'll leave that for the Brazilians, that's isn't where I want to put money.

So we actually underwrote a large part of the publication of the Council on Ageing guide

for services to the aged, and then we got our name in the foreword saying “We thank the following, etc.” I thought that was a good place for Americans to put their money. And we gave money to a homeless shelter.

*Q: That gives you more local recognition, which is what you might as well get if you're doing this sort of thing in Australia. Why give it to a Britain-based organization?*

TEARE: Yes, we tried to do that. In the end we didn't have all that much money and you just dribbled and dragged it here and there but we tried to give it where we thought -- also, we tried to give it where it was specific, we didn't want to give anybody any money for administrative expenses. We had one big fund-raiser, I think it was for UNICEF, I can't remember, it was one of those awful things where everybody has booths and all the Asians have this great food and we bake brownies, which nobody wanted anyway because it was just so warm; and we would sit out in the hot sun selling our brownies. I must say, I would lean on a lot of people for that but then there were always a few people who wanted to make brownies and it was a big enough community that you could get enough brownies out of the aggregate so that you could put on a booth. You know, there are always the seven same people who would bake brownies and things like that.

I remember querying how the money was going to be spent for one activity and got back an absolute blast from this woman who had run it the way she wanted to run it for about a hundred years. was really shocked, I didn't know how to react because I thought “I'm in deep international trouble here!” (both laughing) But I blooming well didn't think that I was going to give her \$500 to do with what she wanted to do, I didn't think she was spending it very well.

*Q: And you had no periodic meetings with these two ambassador's wives to discuss with each what directions...*

TEARE: No. I wonder if I should have thought that? I don't think it was my place to seek it.

*Q: I agree, I don't think it is, I think it's their place to seek you. Well, maybe you're lucky, maybe you're fortunate that they didn't.*

TEARE: In Wellington I didn't know our ambassador's wife very well. She was often gone too because they had business interests in the States. But our ambassador's wife in Canberra I knew better and we both were very interested in flora and fauna. She was an expert gardener and I really loved gardening in Australia and New Zealand. She and I would spend time occasionally on a wildflower walk or going to look at possums on night tours, go spotlighting. So I knew her better and we really were on very cordial, warm terms. And they actually are still very kind -- they live in California and every now and then they call one of my children in San Francisco and invite her to do something.

*Q: Oh, perhaps there's some connection, I forget their name.*

TEARE: Lane. So that friendship with her was a very nice for me and I really appreciated it. She was, also, an expert pianist and played in a trio that she'd got together for herself. I was thinking of her when I commented on the need for private time, because she found that that was what kept her alive, because there was so much of this other stuff. Her husband, the ambassador, had infinite energy for going out and meeting people, but she needed more "down time" and she took it with her music. That was important to her. But they were on the go so much that her relationship with the Embassy women's club was slight, really.

We met at the Residence but she was often not there. She would come through and say good morning and leave.

*Q: That's interesting. I'm not attempting to deal in personalities here, I'm really interested in...*

TEARE: I don't know. The balances are really difficult. I don't think you'd want to end up being the sort of person to whom the public life is everything.

*Q: Is that because you no longer get any recognition for it? Or is it bigger than that?*

TEARE: No, I think it is possible to have the public form and function completely take up all your...

*Q: Perspective? The importance to you is to...*

TEARE: But you do it so well, pretty soon it is everything, that your whole life is taken up by the public function. I think that would be easy to do, and particularly because before 72, the better you did all this stuff, the greater success you were. So from that point of view, and in terms of just sort of psychic health, the 72 Directive has, I think, made spouses perhaps understand their own needs better. Maybe... I hadn't thought about that before.

*Q: That's interesting. I don't think anybody has thought about that. I'm looking for new angles on this.*

TEARE: Well, I wonder if that is so? That would be interesting to ask some people. "Well, if I am not going to receive recognition for my well-set table and my scintillating cocktail parties, then I'm going to go and read!" (she laughs)

*Q: "I'm going to go out and do something that will give me that recognition or give me the satisfaction" -- one woman we interviewed whose husband was Consul General in Hong Kong during the Vietnam War, said, hordes of exciting Americans came through and she met everybody who was anybody -- two-thirds of Congress came -- but, she said, those years were like "a meal all of hors d'oeuvres, there was no substance to it."*

TEARE: That's right. That's what I mean about letting it actually consume your life and



then in the end someone says as you're lying on your deathbed, "What have you done?" And you say, "I set a beautiful table" or "dinner at my house was wonderful" and then you think, "How about a gravestone that says, [speaking solemnly] 'She entertained'." (Fenzi laughing heartily) She entertained.

*Q: Is that the epitaph you aspire to?*

TEARE: But I mean that's what they're going to be able to say, that's all anybody's going to be able to remember.

*Q: Well, of course, this is nothing new, we all know this, but the '72 Directive -- which the Department rushed through in record time, I could give you the history of it but we won't go into it now -- really was detrimental to the Department. I mean, it was beneficial to us but it was a detriment to the Department, really.*

TEARE: But I don't really know, you would know this from more interviews, I had never had anyone tell me that they wouldn't do something because the '72 Directive told them that they didn't have to.

*Q: I was at a meeting where I heard a woman say that to the Ambassador's wife.*

TEARE: That she wouldn't do it.

*Q: She said, "No, this is not in our job description any more."*

TEARE: Well then, that person probably felt as though the Ambassador was demanding it and, therefore, her response was commensurate with that.

*Q: I don't remember, now, what the request was for. She absolutely...*

TEARE: The only time that I never -- maybe it's because I learned better -- I remember when we got to Laos and Dick was Political Counselor, which I somehow thought was Big Cheese, right?

*Q: It is, in the Embassy*

TEARE: But in Laos, this is wartime, the place was crawling with CIA and Air America and military coming out of our kazoo, and (laughing) I remember of course that the Station Chief was nominally part of the Political section. I recall that I was doing something and calling up the Station Chief's wife to ask if she would prepare some little sandwiches and meeting with a rather cool response. Only later, when I thought about it, I realized that of course they ran us and (laughing again) who did I think I was calling up this woman who was the head of an empire out there? You know, we have four "real" people in the section. "This is the wife of the Political Counsellor, I wonder if I could bother you for a few sandwiches?" I think she did do it but I realized that I must have been in some never-never land, (laughing) I mean, I must have been crazy.

*Q: That was two or three years after the directive.*

TEARE: That's right. That was the last time, I think, I ever organized things in such a way as to ask someone to do something for me or for a function I was running. I think ever after that and all these other things -- Christmas parties and Fourth of July, et cetera - - it's always been an Embassy women's project for which I was the person who was in charge, it was a more general sort of demand. But I can't honestly tell you -- maybe there's been something wrong with the way I've done this but I can't honestly tell you any occasion -- I can't think of any offhand -- in which I would go out and ask someone to do something that I was going to get the credit for, if you know what I mean.

*Q: Since that time in Laos.*

TEARE: Well, I think not even then. I can't think of any sort of thing in which I would call a junior person in a section and say, "I'm having the Queen of England for lunch and I wonder if you'd mind bringing the dessert?"

*Q: She would have said "YES!"*

TEARE: Yes, but I don't think I ever did that. Occasionally people called and I'd say, "Would you like to come?" And they'd say, "Can I bring something?" "Sure, oh I wish you would, that's really nice of you." We've done that when we had those massive Thanksgiving dinners, I mean, if I never see another Embassy Thanksgiving dinner it'll be too soon, you have 40, you have 40, I mean somebody has to have the single people, that's proper it seems to me, you wouldn't just leave people out on Thanksgiving. We had some mighty big Thanksgiving dinners. (both laugh) And that day lots of people would bring things, you wouldn't do it all yourself.

*Q: What did you do here in Washington from '76 to '83?*

TEARE: That was when I worked part time at Lafayette Elementary School, for which I was paid. For eight years I was paid for part of my work as a volunteer at the Zoo, where I was a guide. Also, I was paid for part of the work I did taking programs to nursing homes and juvenile detention centers. I was better at the nursing home. I confess I was sort of intimidated by those thugs. And I was paid for the part where I took programs to nursing homes and detention centers, and for the part where I was developing curriculum for an outreach program where we put together material that could be lent to nursing homes and detention centers, for volunteers to use in teaching there -- feathers, rocks, et cetera. That program never got off the ground. We had a grant to work on it. It was a great idea. In Australia they do this all the time, with long-distance education. They have these great boxes at the museums of Australia that they send out to schools, by rail. Our curators couldn't stand the thought that valuable things might leave and never come back. Doing it with imitations wasn't so good and they worried about fumigating things coming back in, to protect their own resident collections. So it didn't work very well, although the idea was really good.

But our detention center program labored under certain problems. When we would show hypodermics used in injecting animals with drugs, they certainly perked up. (laughter) “What’s in there?” And we had a hard time hanging on to our sealskins because kids would pocket them, thinking they’d be worth money to sell. I mean, there were some really bizarre occasions. Elephant hooks: after we took this little show to detention centers, we realized belatedly that they were lethal weapons.

*Q: Did you do anything with AAFSW during those years? Or did you just decide you wanted a break from the Foreign Service?*

TEARE: I’ve forgotten, I’ve been in and out of Forum -- what was the year when we had the International Year of the Child? I worked that year. (neither is sure) I was on the Education committee that did the education report. That would have been ‘82, wasn’t it? If it was the year of the Child, I did a program and a presentation for a big meeting we had at the Department. After that there was a big execution subcommittee of Forum, we did a worldwide survey of education; I was on that committee.

*Q: That was probably after 76.*

TEARE: Yes. I think it was ‘82. I left that committee to go overseas and then I saw the fruits of it, so I think it was ‘82. Sue Parsons would remember because we used to meet at her house. Looking back on it, that’s where my efforts have really been, in education, one way or another.

I don’t think all this is very helpful to you?

*Q: It certainly is. What about the evacuations? You had an evacuation from Laos, two family separations, and Vietnam.*

TEARE: I was never there. Families couldn’t go to Vietnam, so went home to Dick’s family in Ohio and had our second child there, then went to Manila when she was three months old. As to the evacuation from Laos, when you think about it we were really lucky. Laos was actually a very trying time. My mother had died in March; I came home for her funeral, and already the clouds were gathering over Vietnam. I got back to the Laos in April, when Saigon fell (wasn’t it?).

In any event, from there on it was all downhill. At night, on our road, truckloads of Pathet Lao coming into town. We already had a coalition government, so the Pathet Lao were already there, it wasn’t like in Vietnam where the North Vietnamese marched and you could measure the miles between you and safety. The Pathet Lao were already in town. Had it been a different sort of revolution or takeover, they could have lined us all up against the wall. They were there, in our neighborhood, they were our guards -- they had heavily infiltrated the guard service -- and I remember one night something woke me and I got up and went outside and saw our guard and another man also in guard uniform clearly gesturing at the upstairs windows and doors . They were making plans for the

future. When I said to them, “What are you doing?” he said, “Oh, this is my superior.” It was very ominous, I thought. And I felt that my husband and most of the men in the Embassy probably did not know how ominous it was because they went every day and sat in the Embassy. They weren’t on the street soaking up this atmosphere.

Then, perhaps it was in April, at a house down the street from us a guard was murdered. Again this terrible feeling of uneasiness, of things not being cemented into place. So, I actually left with the children on the last commercial flight before the official evacuation. I suppose in many ways that was panicking but I was ver-r-ry glad to leave. It was a very upsetting time for our oldest child, who was then in 6th grade who to this day thinks that I lied to her, telling her everything was all right and then suddenly in a matter of hours I had taken her out of the country.

We mailed 15 cartons out via APO before we left, mostly photos and things that I couldn’t bear to lose -- I didn’t care a fig about the silver. In fact, when all our household goods came home and all our silver was there, I was sort of disappointed! I had kind of gotten used to the idea of life without material goods and there they all were. (both laugh) There was something sort of restful about the thought I was not going to have all this stuff. We even evacuated our dog, who we’d shared ownership of with our friends Bob and Gery Myers over the years. When we were overseas they would have him here at home. They had actually taken him to Laos, so he was their dog when he went to Laos and ours when he came home. He ultimately died, and I’ve often thought we should write a photo-essay called “the dog who owned two families.” We all loved him, he was the most wonderful dog. These were two very different families that he belonged to. The Myers family is very relaxed and the reaction, I think, was (she whispers) he was happier with them. I brushed him every day. A whole story to himself, our Willie.

Anyway, we came home and I remember that we stopped with friends for a few days in Bangkok, then were with my husband’s family and stayed with them all summer before moving back into our house. But Dick stayed in Laos for another year. It was, particularly for our oldest child, a very traumatizing event. In fact, we had had the best of everything - - everything was returned, we were not physically harmed, we were not physically threatened. Most people were not physically threatened in the evacuation. Our dog Willie was shot at when Bob tried to send his car across the river at Nhong Kai and the Pathet Lao fired a few rounds, so Bob decided maybe he wouldn’t do that but the dog got scared -- he was the only American dog ever to be shot at by the Pathet Lao.

*Q: Let me ask you what you did in Manila on Safehaven.*

TEARE: I taught 7th grade history at the American school -- very poorly, but I did teach.

*Q: That must have been a very strange never-never land.*

TEARE: It was all right, we had lived there before. In fact we went back to the same house, the little house where we’d lived before in this little compound was available and we moved back in. So we knew the house and I was the only State wife safe havened in

Manila. The Ambassador then was Bill Blair and the Blairs were very kind to me. They often included me in things, and of course knew quite a few people among the Philippine community.

*Q: That would have helped, I should think, because you'd been in the Department for a year but you'd been in Manila for a long time before that. That must have made a tremendous difference.*

TEARE: So I really knew what I was doing.

*Q: You knew what you were getting into.*

TEARE: And there were a lot of wives then who came to be safe havened in Manila and they all sort of formed a cliquy little bunch of their own. They were housed in what was then an outlying area, now surrounded by Manila. I think it was a lot harder for them and they were a lot lonelier than I was. I wasn't particularly lonely.

*Q: I talked to one of those women a number of years ago and she said that their impression was that they were sort of pariahs, because the other women didn't want these single women around their husbands.*

TEARE: That's interesting... I'm sure that was so. I was oblivious to that. I guess (laughing heartily) because I've never been considered a threat!

*Q: But you had two children, you were there with them, you weren't left there all by yourself with no commitment or vocation.*

TEARE: That reminds me of probably the nicest scene of our Foreign Service is when we first went to Manila, in '62, our close friends then were Frank and Marian Tate and they had a wonderful cook-amah for their (you really should talk to her, she's had a most interesting life) family, whose name was Flora Aide. When I went back in '66 to be safe havened, Flora was available; Taitus had just left, I guess, so she came and worked and took care of us, cooked for me and mostly took care of the baby, Catherine, whose good temperament is due, I'm sure, to those early years with Flora. And Flora had her fourth baby when she worked for me then.

As I was leaving, I wanted desperately to find her a good position. It happened that just before I left, I met Mary Appling, who was just arriving with her husband Hugh, the new Political Counselor. I said, "Oh, do you need a wonderful cook?" And she said, "Yes." So Flora went to work for the Applings. They were later transferred to Canberra where he was DCM and they took Flora with them. And there she remained all those years until Dick became DCM in Canberra and we were reunited.

*Q: Cheers! What a lovely Foreign Service story!*

TEARE: It was wonderful. And the story has not ended, happily. The Australian

government suddenly got tough on Diplomatic servants and decided they would make an example of this couple who had lived as Diplomatic servants for 17 years and sent them away. I got them a job in Wellington at the Clevelands who had just gone to be Ambassador. When they left, I got them to come back again as the Ambassador's cook in Australia.

*Q: You could bring them back in then?*

TEARE: I managed to have some time limits waived and they could come back and work for the new Ambassador. What I hoped was that a) either they would be protected in that position, or that b) after that many years we could now begin to get them permanent residence on the grounds that they had already lived 19 years in Australia.

*Q: Well, you have to be careful in trying to bring people in, as you've just said.*

TEARE: So up until recently this was just a wonderful story.

*Q: With a not-so-happy ending.*

TEARE: Not so far. But anyway...

*Q: We will have to record on the tape that the unhappy ending was omitted at request of the narrator. Otherwise people reading this are going to be wondering what happened.*

TEARE: To clarify that, they came back and then returned to the Philippines. I think we can simply say "they came back to work for the American Ambassador and subsequently returned to the Philippines." I don't know why. But anyway, that is the nicest thing and the year before we moved to Australia, our daughter Catherine, who was then the baby whom Flora had raised, went on a trip to Australia and she said that reunion with Flora who had not seen her since she was 10 months old, was simply magical. Those are the really wonderful things.

*Q: That are very special to our existence.*

TEARE: That's right. But there are a lot of these relationships that are so shallow. And in the enthusiasm of the post, at the moment in the post you sort of plunge into those friendships but they leave just as quickly. You cannot keep up with that many enthusiasms in a lifetime.

*Q: Well, there's a lack of emotional involvement, because I think we can only be emotional about so much.*

TEARE: That's right.

*Q: You can't embrace everybody like that, and that's one of the down sides of Diplomatic life.*

TEARE: One of the pluses of the English-speaking countries, and I guess Dick and I have had more than our share when you think about it, we've had a lot...

*Q: All you had to learn was learn French for Vientiane and that was it.*

TEARE: I already spoke French. I had to learn Spanish for Mexico.

*Q: And you could use Spanish in Manila but you didn't even need it.*

TEARE: No. I used English there. So really, French in Laos. Dick speaks much better French than I do, and he speaks Vietnamese, and Spanish.

*Q: It would be interesting to know: Out of your entire career, four years you had to speak French and Spanish and that was it, the other times you could use English.*

TEARE: A tailormade career for me, I'm very lazy and I will walk around a French conversation if I can, I hate getting involved in a French conversation. So, when you think about it, mine has been a very facile life. But the plus side of being able to work in my own language is that I have been able to make -- I don't want to say "inroads" -- I have been able to know communities in much greater depth than I would if I were working in a language that was not my own. And there are these occasional things, these are small straws to grasp at but I remember once in Wellington going to a party at some newspaperman's house and someone coming up and saying, "You know, I see you in places I never expect to see you." (she laughs) And I thought, "Oh, I'm so pleased! What a compliment!" That we have had these friendships that had nothing whatever to do with Dick's job.

*Q: But you're absolutely right: to be able to function in your own language gave you so much easier access and easier building blocks in your relationships with these people.*

TEARE: That's right.

*Q: ...than struggling in Portuguese, like I did.*

TEARE: That's right, because I didn't know the vocabulary, and was saying to Nancy the other day about being involved in a conversation at her house where I could have sworn that I was discussing great philosophical theory and discovering the whole conversation had been about orchid-raising and I don't know what they thought about what I was talking about! (hearty laughter) So I really did not know what'd been talking about. That I didn't know what the conversation was about is terrible.

*Q: Do you know anyone else contemporary with you I could talk to who has spanned the 72 Directive with part of their career on one side and their later more high-ranking years on the other side?*

TEARE: I think I should talk to Gery Myers and I'll tell you why: She is a doctor. They entered the Service a little bit later after we, and I think she is a most interesting person because in the course of Bob's career, she has done a medical degree, very part-time, she has had a medical career that clearly which Bob's moving has had, I think, a significant impact on.

*Q: Pro or con?*

TEARE: Con, I would think, because she had to pick it up and put it down, and not all his posts have been great for her to work, because there is this question of accreditation. His last post was as Consul General at Belfast and she did not go there full-time; her parents were ill, and she'd stay six months here, six months there. I just think hers is a very specific and interesting problem of the Foreign Service.

*Q: Could you talk to her about that? (Teare says yes) Because it's best to do your first interview with somebody you know just to get the feel of it. (Teare says she'd love to) If you could do that interview, it would be especially interesting because in a way she's more representative of the "new" Foreign Service, with her own career and the commuting to Belfast. Maybe it makes you sound pre-1972 but you're interested in the health of the community.*

TEARE: Yes, why not?

*Q: Because that's the way you run your neighborhood at home.*

TEARE: You know, I really love a neighborhood. When we came back here after evacuation from Laos, do you know what really brought tears to my eyes? I mean, this is so sappy -- the kids who act as school crossing guards. I thought, "it's just wonderful that someone has organized all these kids to stand at street corners for the elementary school." In my mind it became synonymous with this wonderful community -- here were these kids (laughing) standing on street corners twice a day. I thought, "Just wonderful." It's a very simple thing, but I do think that it is interesting, what makes an Embassy work.

*Q: And you think "the sense of community."*

TEARE: Yes, I do. And how do you arrive at that? Maybe I've had too much leisure to think about this.

*Q: But this is my question again: Have events since '72 broken down that community? Or is it a societal change?*

TEARE: I think it has more to do with that, I honestly do. I think that people who didn't want to front up with their cucumber sandwiches pre-1972 probably didn't do it then either.

*Q: I have on record that they didn't.*



TEARE: I'm pretty sure that they didn't. There weren't many, because we all thought that was our job, but I think that the problems in the Foreign Service community are the same in this community. It's the same three people in this community who make the brownies for the bake sale. I know, because I ran the Wilson High School bake sales for years. People don't bake any more. You can go to any public school teacher and ask, "Who comes to parent teacher night?" and it's the same parents, it's not the parents you need to see, it's the same parents you don't need to see. So these are societal, I think.

And even in the military, the last bastion of conventional behavior, they're also finding problems like that. So I think we've won some things. I think we've won a greater variety of people, or greater freedom to be varied. I think we see that now. People allow themselves to not be in a single mold, I think.

*Q: Well, if we're volunteers, which we were and are, a volunteer does what they want to do.*

TEARE: That's right.

*Q: And they do best what they want to do.*

TEARE: And maybe we have not found the proper challenges. That may be it. We have not actually as a community sought out, except for the CLO positions, activities for the community that properly challenge. In other words, we're still asking people to make cucumber sandwiches in 1991. We ought to be thinking about other challenges.

*Q: Well, in a way that's what the Foreign Service Associate proposal was all about. But I thought it's impossible to administer because the Foreign Service Associate proposal did not have -- the interests and the needs of the Embassy were not paramount. It was putting the desires, if you will, of the spouse paramount. Nobody is going to buy that -- Congress is not going to buy that, the Department won't, you have to somehow structure the Foreign Associate proposal so that it meets the needs of the Service.*

*And it seems to me that what we've been talking about this morning has indicated somewhat of a breakdown in the American community abroad. Now, whether it's societal, whether it's the '72 Directive, whether it is all of the above, it seems to me that if you could upgrade the position of the Foreign Service spouse, give her a title, give her a job description, albeit that job description has to be pegged to her husband's position in the Embassy because there is no way that a Communicator's wife and an Ambassador's wife do the same thing, and we might as well be honest about that even though we are a democracy. There is a hierarchy at the Embassy and it functions that way. Give the spouse a title, a rank, a job, a job description, write job descriptions for work that's available for spouses to do at the Mission, in the community that is directly related to the Ambassador present -- they've got to come up with something like that to bring the spouse back in. If you could give her a salary, marvelous. If you can't, for God's sake find some kind of way to compensate her, financially.*

TEARE: My idea is that at the very least -- and this would cost nothing, nothing -- the Government should pay into our IRA's \$2,000 a year, and that goes for Communicators' wives and DCM's wives and Ambassadors' wives. We've been in this business over 30 years, so that would be \$60,000 -- peanuts! -- earning interest for me. It is a very uncertain world out there. Divorces, deaths, all kinds of real emergencies come up. We've all seen wives who were late-onset divorcees, who were left with very little. And even knowing that you would have very little money that you could count on would be minor.

And what do you do in return for that? Practically everybody does \$2,000 worth of work a year. I don't really think that is an issue, and I don't think, then, we should try to quantify -- that whether the wife is out there doing \$2,000 worth of community service or not, I mean just being at post and fixing the meals and making sure the children get to school and moving, without compensation, giving up her job at home is \$2,000 worth just there. We used to get that in clothing allowance. I mean, it's nothing, but I do think it would be more palatable to Congress if it were paid into IRA's than as a cash advance.

*Q: You can always cash in an IRA, involving a penalty but you could do it.*

TEARE: That's right. Now, these other services, of course they don't pay it to the wives but to the husbands. The British and the New Zealander wives get \$15 an hour for fixing meals. That is so little! To entertain? I think that's a fair compensation for the hours that you spend marketing and fixing meals; it's hard work.

That might be one way to go, but that's only representational and there are lots of people in the Service who do no representational work at all, and that would put them at a disadvantage because they can't share in that. So maybe you could have a combination of some kind of compensation for the representational activity, which for many people is very difficult. It's psychologically difficult to do.

I was talking about briefing senior wives and the necessity of their briefing other -- I was in the DCMs' wives course once but in those days we were invited for only one day -- is that still true? We talked about whether you could voucher for toilet paper.

*Q: (laughing) Well, that's one course. I think they have a longer course now.*

TEARE: In '83, you just came in for a short afternoon. There was nothing else.

*Q: Yes. This was to inform you of what you could and could not charge to ORE.*

TEARE: Well, I now know that. What I was saying to you earlier was that a senior wife's life is very structured. You come to a post, a General Services Officer is looking out for you, your position is very secure and your social life is built in. I mean, you never miss a thing, you are immediately invited. First of all the Embassy entertains you, then people are curious about you and you begin to make the rounds, and so on. But a junior wife entering the Embassy, particularly one in a non-representational position, has no assured

life.

*Q: Right.*

TEARE: In our last post we began to work with neighborhood coffees for new wives. Dick and I had all new people in the Embassy, both military and civilian, for lunch once. Then the Embassy women's clubs, in addition to the neighborhood coffees, had a newcomers' coffee too. But it's not easy, and it must be very difficult for people going into a country where they don't speak the language. You are really isolated in that case. You forget, you forget.... You get to be a senior wife and you forget that not everybody lives the way you do. Your children are grown, so you don't have to worry about them.

*Q: If you are a political Ambassador's senior wife, and you've never been a junior wife, you really don't know where the young people are coming from.*

TEARE: That's right. It's almost like -- where was it that there was a project where the people involved went out and lived in the slums to see what it was like? It would be very [inaudible word, both having erupted in hearty laughter] to go and live in a very junior family for a week and see what their life is like, which is absolutely nothing like being a senior wife.

*Q: You're absolutely right.*

TEARE: Actually, Ambassadors' wives don't need to know, in bigger posts, much about things like what you can charge off for representation and what you can't because you're in a functioning household and somebody else is doing all those vouchers. I used to hate doing vouchers. I would save all those little slips of paper in a big kitchen jar, and then at the end of the month I would have to do those dinner parties; and by then you've lost half of them, right? Mercifully in our last post we didn't have to voucher for every stick of butter. I've had that happen, where you had to write "quarter of a pound of butter; half a jar of mayonnaise; three potato chips." You put it all down, add all the bottles of liquor and so forth and "Well, that was about it, I guess!" (both laughing) Figuring you'd just lost about \$40 on the transaction. I just hated doing that. I found it very...

*Q: Demeaning.*

TEARE: Yes, very demeaning.

*Q: "They don't trust me."*

TEARE: Yes. And then, having put on this very spontaneous evening full of good conversation and everything, I realized it hadn't been spontaneous at all and I was going to have to hammer it out stick of butter by stick of butter. I thought it ruined my image.

*Q: The thing I found rather amazing, we always, in the early days, had to have a guest list that was more than 50 percent.*

TEARE: You still do.

*Q: But you don't have to have more than 50 percent of people in attendance, you can have 98 percent Americans and still claim it all even though...*

TEARE: Because the others didn't show up. (Fenzi confirms) Well, that's fair enough.

*Q: But you know in some places, such as an Embassy I won't mention, that they're not going to show up. You know that, and you know what you're giving is essentially an American party. I've seen it happen time and time again.*

TEARE: That's never happened to me.

*Q: Well, here was a matter of language, also that there were too few host country officials and too many Embassy officials.*

TEARE: Yes, that's always a problem. You meet people who haven't bought a meal for themselves in 30 years. (both laugh)

*Q: In the host country.*

TEARE: Yes, because they show up with the caterers.

*Q: (laughing heartily) You're absolutely right.*

TEARE: I have some sympathy for those people. Why shouldn't they go to everything?

*Q: But .my point is, the host knows that this is going to happen and still will put in the full request.*

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## BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Spouse: Richard W. Teare

Spouse Entered Service: 1960                      Left Service:

You Entered Service: Same    Left Service:

Status: Spouse of FSO

Posts:

1960-1962 Georgetown, Barbados  
1962-1964 Manila, Philippines  
1964-1965 Washington, DC  
1965-1967 RWT Saigon, Vietnam  
1966-1967 JT (Safehaven) Manila, Philippines  
1967-1971 Washington, DC  
1971-1974 Mexico City, DF, Mexico  
1974-1976 RT Vientiane, Laos  
1975 JT Evacuated  
1975-1983 Washington, DC  
1983-1986 Wellington, New Zealand  
1986-1989 Canberra, Australia  
1990-1993 Washington, DC  
1993-1996 Papua, New Guinea  
1996-xxxx Honolulu 1996

Spouse's Position: Political Counselor, DCM, Ambassador

Place/Date of birth: Baltimore, Md., 1936

Maiden Name: Walter

Parents (Name, Profession):

Raphael Walter, Attorney  
Nancy Baker Walter, Actress

Schools (Prep, University):

Roland Park Country School for Girls and Small Boys, Inc.  
Wellesley College, BA 1958

Date/Place of Marriage: Baltimore, Md., September 19, 1959

Children:

Elizabeth 27 (Yale)  
Catherine 25 (Yale)  
Margaret 21 (Wesleyan, Wesleyan, Conn.)

Profession: Promotion Assistant, Cheshire Cat Book Store  
(current, part time)

Volunteer

Volunteer and Paid Positions held:

A. At Post: Paid- Research Asst., Canberra, for Professor of American History, Australian National University, part time, on contract. Volunteer- taught etiquette at Girl's Industrial School, Barbados; lending library, Mexico City; Council on Aging, Canberra; PTA

President, Wellington (NZ) Girls College (free school); American Women's Clubs,  
Boards and offices forever!!

B. In Washington, DC: Vol.- Zoo guide; Paid- Lafayette Elementary School; Smithsonian  
outreach at juvenile detention centers; Nursing homes- paid. Volunteer- work at Wilson  
High School and Deal Jr. High School.

Honors:

Volunteer award, Wellington, as PTA President

*End of Interview*