THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH: **JUNE NOBLE LARKIN (JL)**

INTERVIEWER: **SHARON ZANE (SZ)**

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SZ: I'll start the way I always do, and ask you to tell me where and when you were born, and just a little something about your family background.

JL: I was born in New York City, a thousand years ago. I grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut, and today I live on the same property where I grew up. My oldest son and his family live in a house on my property, so those grandchildren are the fourth generation on the place, which I know is quite rare. It's very woodsy and very beautiful, with a lake.

SZ: That's where you grew up?

JL: It's the same property where I grew up, although it was on the other side of the place. My family's house I sold many years ago, and kept all the rest of the property. So we do not see another house. We're on Lake Avenue, which runs through to Round Hill Road, which is where I grew up. I went to the Greenwich Academy. My father was in the Roosevelt administration for a couple of years, so the last two years of school I went to school in Washington, and had some wonderful experiences being there. This was 1938 through '40. My father was acting Secretary of Commerce; Harry Hopkins, who was the Secretary of Commerce, was very sick, so my father went into that position. I remember, as a young girl, being taken to the White House one time when my mother was sick to

a very formal dinner with only a dozen people there -- which was really quite a thrill, as you can imagine, at any age.

SZ: That's interesting. Do you remember the tenor of the times?

JL: I don't think, as a schoolgirl, you really did think that much about it. But later on -- I've been married twice. My first husband -- we went down to Washington. He was an assistant secretary of the Air Force, and we actually went down during the Eisenhower administration. We were all in our thirties, and it was a very thrilling time because, of course, we were associated with people at all levels of government, which was quite overwhelming. So I had a wonderful time there. It was a matter of meeting a lot of government officials, military officials; and, also having young children, obviously involved with the schools. Then we had a very active life, socially, with not only the government but with friends who lived in Washington as their home, who had nothing to do with the government. So it was kind of three different levels, and it was wonderful.

In fact, at the end of the Eisenhower administration, when his appointment was over, we very much debated about coming home. We were tempted to stay in Washington, because it had become such a home for us. But considering the place we lived on in Greenwich, I thought our children should have the opportunity to grow up there.

We had a lovely house in Georgetown, and behind us was a beautiful garden and an alley. Our children liked going out and kicking the garbage cans in the alley much more than anything else, even though we were right next to the park. I certainly enjoyed [living in Washington], even though I'm not a Republican today. But I certainly enjoyed it at that time.

SZ: Backing up a little bit, where did you go to high school?

JL: I ended up in Washington, graduating from Holton Arms, which was a day school.

SZ: Growing up, did you do a lot of traveling? Did you come into the city?

JL: No, rarely, as a matter of fact. And I find that true of my own grandchildren, who go to private schools in Greenwich. They rarely get into New York. They rarely have the advantage of the museums. I do remember coming with school groups and trudging through the Metropolitan Museum, but it really wasn't -- I think it's true today that the schools' schedules are so busy, and their sports programs are overwhelmingly busy, that they don't really have a chance to partake of the cultural activities as much as I wish they did.

SZ: So your major interests growing up were what?

JL: Writing. Tennis. I played a lot of tennis. Then I went to Sarah Lawrence College, and I think that opened up a great deal of my interest in the arts.

SZ: It was a pretty artsy place.

JL: Yes. I was very interested in art history and in art criticism, and I had a teacher there at the college almost invent a course for me, because they didn't have it. She was a very wonderful teacher, who was an art critic for, I think, the Springfield, Massachusetts paper. And, really, I was the only student. So she would take me around to all sorts of wonderful places. We went to Peggy Guggenheim's gallery, and things like that. You can imagine, in those days, how mind-boggling it all was. But it really did turn me on to the opportunity one could have, even if you were not actually an artist.

SZ: And you chose Sarah Lawrence for that reason?

JL: No, I don't know why I chose it, particularly, but there I was. I've kept up with the college. I was chairman of the board of the college, much, much later on.

SZ: One thinks of it as a slightly progressive place.

JL: Oh, it was. Very. And I think my parents were horrified, as I think a lot of parents were. I enjoyed it very much. I had some friends I've certainly kept up with.

SZ: And your interest in art history -- its genesis was what, do you think?

JL: I think it really start there. I was very interested in it. There were some marvelous teachers out there. You often read in the paper of some of the very well known poets and writers and so forth who have taught out there. E.L. Doctorow, for instance -- people like that are on the faculty. Even though it's entirely different today: it's co-ed. I was on the board and I would not have voted for its going co-ed, but I think it's obviously the way of the world. The prep schools have all gone that way. That would almost be a harder edge to cope with -- a boarding school.

SZ: Let me ask you a question. You didn't say anything about your parents, but I presume --

JL: Well, I can also talk to you a little bit about my sister, because that was the one thing that I had trouble with, continuing with my interests at Sarah Lawrence. Because she died when she was there. She was nineteen years old and had meningitis, and within three days she was dead. At the college they thought it was the flu, so she was taken to the hospital, but it was too late.

SZ: That's terrible.

JL: My mother never recovered from that. Never. And my father, of course, was a prominent businessman, so he could sink himself into the business life, which he'd always had anyway. So I was there, trying to help my mother, which was not

very successful. So, my life changed a lot then, because not only did I lose my only sister, but I lost my mother in a way, too.

SZ: And how old were you when that happened?

JL: I was a senior at the school. I was a day student at that point. I boarded for two years, and the last two years I was a day student. I went to her room that day and I didn't see her there, but that wasn't unusual. But I didn't know what had happened. Then that night they called us.

SZ: Of course, a thing like that always changes the way you look at your own life, too, doesn't it?

JL: Yes. Very much. Very much. After I graduated, I thought of going down to Washington, with a friend, and working there. We were all set to get a little apartment, but I couldn't leave my mother. I really felt a great responsibility to her. Then I got married within a couple of years, and had four wonderful boys.

SZ: So did you ever work?

JL: No. I've always done a great deal of volunteer work. But, no.

SZ: In a way it's the same thing, isn't it, having done all this volunteer work?

JL: Yes. And, of course, too, with this foundation [Edward John Noble Foundation], I've been incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity to do as many things as I have, which makes a huge difference.

SZ: Can you tell me the genesis of the foundation?

JL: Yes. It was founded in 1940. My father came from upstate New York, and when he had been successful in business he always stayed loyal to the North Country.

He came from a little town called Gouverneur, New York. He eventually went to Yale on scholarship, and from then on worked in New York City. But he always was loyal to the North Country, and he felt that there were many people in this area who could support programs here but very few from up there. So he established three hospitals in the area, and it was a wonderful thing to do. Now those hospitals upstate have all merged with others. They originally were small hospitals -- fifty-bed -- and that isn't viable today. Another one has been taken over by a larger hospital in the nearby town, and one of the three is going on its own. Then, in the area of education, he was very supportive of St. Lawrence University, where he did not go, but felt that that area should have as much help as he could give.

SZ: Because it was pretty raw and poor.

JL: Absolutely, and it still is. It still is. So the foundation supports some programs up there, because we feel it's so important. There are so many problems up there with the rural poor: joblessness; alcoholism; family abuse.

SZ: Sometimes, if you drive around on some of the back roads, it's really appalling.

JL: Rundown farms. There are no dairy farms left that I know of. It used to be dairy country, but now it is not. Fort Drum is up there, and I guess their economy sort of relies on Fort Drum. There's one town up there that we are involved with, Clayton, New York, which is nearby. We still have a little cabin up there; the big place has long since been gone. But they have an antique boat museum, and some of our old boats are in the museum. I feel very loyal to that museum because of its association with my childhood -- the old boats. We have a little cabin left; the farm and all the property is long since gone.

We'd go there very year, when I was young, every summer for long times. Because you were on an island, you didn't have other children to play with. So it was just my sister and myself, and we grew up with enormous imaginations --

imagining that we were at camp, imagining that we were drowning to scare my mother, imagining all sorts of things. I just loved it. I've taken each of my two husbands up there; they'd sit in the cabin, looking all around, and then say, "What is it you see in this place?" Well, what I see in that place -- It's not the same. Now it does not have the wooden boats, they have those horrible little plastic ones, and it is different. I see what they mean, but I'm not there. I'm back in the days of the wooden boats. I just imagine myself back there. We used to go up for months, as children. My mother would take us up there and open up the big house. But it was the days of the polio epidemics, so we weren't allowed to come back until the middle of October.

SZ: So you were just isolated.

JL: Really. I never recall happier times. We had horses. We rode. We rowed both the boats.

SZ: Did you learn to sail?

JL: There was no sailing. It was motorboats. My father raced motorboats, and his boat, The Snail, was very famous. So we were very involved in that kind of thing, and as a child, that was a great experience.

SZ: How did it happen that you got involved in the foundation?

JL: Well, I was an only child, you see, after my sister died. So, as I recall, when my father died, his lawyer handled a lot. Then we had professional executive directors. One was Gene Duke, a nice man who had formerly been president of St. Lawrence, and we had, through the years, various executive directors. My oldest son is now the executive director, and we're much more family oriented as far as discussing things. Then my father had an island off the coast of Georgia called St. Catherine's Island. We didn't know what to do with the island. It was left

to the foundation. My mother had made it quite clear that she never would live on an island off the coast of Georgia, so my father left it to the foundation. At that time the state was very interested in it because it has many beaches, and they wanted it.

SZ: For recreational purposes?

JL: Sure. As a park or something. We had the state, we had Fish & Wildlife, Hilton Head -- I've forgotten all the organizations that wanted it, because it's quite big. So my husband, Yoke Larkin, thought of this unique idea of raising endangered species, which we've done now for thirty-odd years, and we do it in conjunction with the Wildlife Conservation Society, here in New York. It's been a very successful program. The old cotton fields are where the animals are, and it's quite a sight. They're enclosed in black, anchor fencing, but if you squint your eyes you don't see the fencing. What you're looking at is as if you're in Africa. We raise endangered birds, reptiles, and, of course, hoof stock. The point of the program, too, is that these animals are endangered and they would become extinct, because the habitats they come from have been destroyed. We would love to have more, but you can't get them out of Africa and places like that.

SZ: Because they've put restrictions on them?

JL: And they're so involved with their own political troubles.

SZ: I'm just curious. Is the ultimate aim to have them breed?

JL: Oh, yes, and they have been. We've had some herds that have been more successful than any zoo, anywhere. Then they're sold off to other zoos, you see.

SZ: I see. Not returned to their natural habitats.

JL: We couldn't return them. They'd be killed, immediately. Another thing that's going on down there -- because we really aim to education interests -- is archaeology. We had many years of archaeology done by David Hurst Thomas from The American Museum of Natural History -- I believe he's chairman of the Department of Anthropology. They found a Spanish mission, the furthest north of any mission, and it had the most incredible collection of Indian artifacts, bones and so forth. And, we were the first place, due to David Thomas, that actually reburied the Indians in a proper way. The Bishop from Savannah came over and consecrated the grave. It was a remarkable tribute. We had a whole group of people who came over for that. That was many years ago.

Most recently, the whole collection has been donated to the Fernbank Museum in Atlanta, which is a natural history museum. And just recently they had a tremendous celebration down there. Jimmy Carter came and spoke, and two of my sons were there. I obviously couldn't be there because my husband was so ill. So we have donated that to the Fernbank Museum. And they said it was the most important collection that Georgia has ever had, because it goes back to Indian days and then all the way through to the time of the American Revolution. Also, on the island, is the original house, which is still there and which we use. It was built by Button Gwinnett, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. There's quite a lot of history about him, even in Jimmy Carter's recent book. He was killed in a duel. After the Civil War, freed slaves took over the island. That didn't last very long. Eventually, a family, I think from Savannah, had the island for quite a while. My father bought it in about 1940. He enjoyed it a lot; my parents had house parties, etc., there. When he died, we started this program, and he would be so proud to know what's happened to it since. So it's been a very good use of the island. Now we're thinking about the future of the island, because I don't know how long the Wildlife Conservation Society will continue. The science of zoos has changed enormously. They're more interested now in herpetology. A lot of herds have been saved. So we're really not sure. We're really thinking of educational programs, maybe.

SZ: Does the public have access to the island?

JL: No. Absolutely not. It's the last privately-held island on the coast. Sea Island is one of the chain, you see. On some of the islands nearby, the family has an inn holding; all the rest belong to some state organization. It's the only island that's left, totally, under our ownership.

SZ: You said that the real thrust, the focus on education, really came from your father.

JL: Yes, and his interest in education, scholarships, and so forth. We've had, as you will see, some interesting programs in scholarship. One program that my former husband, David Smith, did up at Columbia University was an international fellows program. To be in that program, you had to take a course in international affairs, no matter whether you were a doctor, law student, or whatever, so that you had some exposure. As a matter of fact, which I didn't realize until quite recently, Nat Leventhal was one of the fellows. I never knew that. Interesting.

SZ: He shared that with you?

JL: Yes. I really didn't realize he was. Or maybe my son said, "Did you know that Nat was a former international fellow?" and I said no. Because I certainly see Nat a great deal.

SZ: Yes, you're everywhere.

JL: Well, I've had the opportunity of the foundation. Then, if I do help support something, or see that it gets support, I really do want to be involved. And with MoMA and Lincoln Center -- the new Jazz constituent and, of course, Julliard, of which I was chairman there for many years -- I really have gotten more than deeply involved with each institution.

SZ: Let's talk a little bit about MoMA. You majored in art history.

JL: Yes. Well, they didn't really have majors there, at Sarah Lawrence. I took just as much literature. But I remember that particularly, the experience of going around with my professor, to so many interesting places.

SZ: Does that mean that you had a particular interest in modern art?

JL: I think because of that, yes. I originally started my association with The Museum of Modern Art when I volunteered to work in the Education Department. Connie Constantine was there then, as head of the education effort. It was a very small department. Actually, it really wasn't a department -- they didn't have a department. That's when I think I got really involved, and tried to start one. Connie was leading the education effort, but she was really in design in the Architecture Department. I don't think that Education Department started until Bill Burback came.

SZ: What kinds of activities were you doing?

JL: What I was very interested in at that point, which does not exist anymore, was the higher education effort. I wish it were still there. Those fellows had study rooms down in the basement, I think, somewhere, and they were there on scholarships from the Museum. It had a title, maybe the International Scholars Program, and the participants' requirement was to write articles for the Museum, and be on hand, maybe, to take people around. I'm not quite sure. But it was a wonderful educational opportunity. The students were high level. John Elderfield was one of the original students. Another person who was very interested in that, as I was, was Eliza Cobb. We both kept really pushing to keep that program going, but there wasn't the money to do that.

But, I have to say, that's where I really wish the Education Department would do more, today. Debbie Schwartz is the most wonderful leader; she's terrific, really good. Funnily enough, I met her at the Brooklyn Museum. The Brooklyn Museum had asked me to come over because we were considering a grant there, which we made. What we supported was the Saturday Nights Program, once a month -- because it was a way of getting in the public free, and introducing them to art. So I felt that was a good educational activity. But I remembered Debbie Schwartz; she was at the meeting. So, years later, when her name came up, I said, "Oh. I've met her." And they said, "How on earth would you have known Debbie Schwartz?" I said, "I remember her because she was so bright at that meeting." You know, once in a while you meet somebody -- "There's a good girl" -- and, indeed, she is. She's done wonderful things for the Department of Education, right now, but I do wish they would have a higher level. It hasn't worked, but I keep hoping that Vartan Gregorian, with his seniority in the academic field, would do something to help us, considering his position. He could be enormously helpful in our establishing a higher education program. John Szarkowski had students -- again, graduate students, as I recall, because I remember listening in one time.

SZ: He did. He had photography fellows.

JL: That's right. He did. It's that kind of thing. I don't know that that goes on at all. They do great things for children, but I just wish it had a higher level. Debbie Schwartz told me that they have an excellent program at La Guardia Community College, but that's not quite what I mean. I really would like top-flight institutions to be involved. But, again, it takes money. The internships are a great program over there.

SZ: Those are for college kids, though, right?

JL: Yes. We supported the internship program, but were rather specific in saying the interns have got to work not in the Department of Painting & Sculpture, but rather in the Development Department. I feel that they should know what it is to try to raise money; to try to keep an institution going. Because institutions, really, I've always felt, are big business. They are big business and getting bigger all the time. You think of Lincoln Center, or MoMA -- any of these institutions -- they really do need that kind of expertise.

SZ: So these are young people who are interested in museum administration?

JL: Yes, and I think it's important to train good people in that field, because there aren't that many terrific people. There will be. I think we supported a similar program at Lincoln Center, as I recall. They were in the administration. I don't believe that program exists anymore at Lincoln Center. I don't think it does. We did have a very nice program, I thought, with MoMA and the Lincoln Center Institute. But that, again, doesn't exist anymore. It was a good idea -- introducing teachers to the performing arts.

SZ: The Lincoln Center Institute is just a great thing.

JL: It was a great idea. Philip Yenawine and I worked on that. But, again, I just don't think there was the money to support that. I think that that has gone by the boards, but I think that should be started again. The Museum does have a program now which is very good, of international scholars and museum directors, from South America, working at MoMA temporarily. When they're putting on a show at MoMA, they might have somebody from Latin America come up; there's a nice sharing there.

SZ: When you first started there, with Connie Constantine, was René d'Harnoncourt the director? I know you became a trustee, I think in 1969?

JL: That sounds right.

SZ: But he died in '68.

JL: There was a temporary directorate. There was Walter Bareiss. I think it was Walter Bareiss who spoke to me about being a trustee. I think that's right. Anne Coffin, who ran the International Council, was the one who was instrumental in starting that program with the international scholars. There were quite a few changes in a great hurry, at that point.

SZ: Well, what happened was, René d'Harnoncount died, then Bates Lowry was appointed. He was relieved, then they had this triumvirate of Bareiss, Richard Koch and Wilder Green. Then John Hightower was named director. That was an interesting time. Then Dick Oldenburg was appointed, first as acting director, and then finally as director.

JL: A wonderful person. Wonderful. Yes. Yes.

SZ: You came in right in the middle of this turmoil.

JL: Right. Indeed.

SZ: What was your impression of that?

JL: Well, actually, being a new trustee, I don't recall, really, being all that involved with them. But I do remember, definitely, Anne Coffin, and that program.

SZ: The International Study Center is what you're talking about.

JL: That's what it was called, and she was very involved, obviously. She ran that. As I say, John Elderfield was one of the students at that time.

SZ: Your interest in putting together and seeing the Noble Center for Education established?

JL: Oh, yes. Well, that was really because education is the primary interest here at the foundation. I don't think it was until Philip Yenawine was there that, really, there were any children allowed in the Museum younger than twelve, I believe -- and I'm not so sure that wasn't a pretty good rule. I'm not sure how much these little children get out of it. But the Visual Thinking Program really does present works of art in a very imaginative way. Young children can enjoy it. But before that, I don't know how much.

SZ: So that's something that you really contributed to.

JL: Well, we contributed to the department as a whole. But that was and is a very innovative program. Patty Cisneros started that down in Latin America. So all that inter-disciplinary television -- computer and television and so forth -- it's really marvelous, the way it has spread.

SZ: So what have been some of the things you've done at the museum that have had particular significance to you? I know you've served on so many committees.

JL: Yes, I'm been chairman of quite a few, like the Nominating Committee, and the Drawings Committee. That was a very interesting experience, because I'm really not, by any remote chance, that knowledgeable, but it was very interesting working with it. I worked with Margit Rowell, a very bright person. I liked her a lot, but she had no concept of private museums -- non-profits -- because in France, where she came from (she didn't really; she was an American, but she'd worked at the Pompidou for many years), that was government supported. So she didn't understand fundraising, and that made it very difficult, because she really tried but she didn't understand it.

TAPE 1, SIDE 2

JL: But she certainly is a bright person, very, and I think the people in the department were wonderful -- Bernice Rose (who works here in this building now, at Pace) and Magdalena Dubrowski. Charming. I had a wonderful time on the drawings committee. I enjoyed that a lot, yes. And I think Gary Garrels is simply marvelous. He is a great educator. He really brings people along and is caring, and the way he can describe or talk about some of the very contemporary pieces is really remarkable.

SZ: Architecture and Design.

JL: I really had very little to do with that department. I think it's wonderful, and I certainly think Terry Riley does a great job. But I really have had very little to do with that.

SZ: You were on the Expansion Committee, for the last [1984] expansion?

JL: Probably, yes. Anything to go out and raise money. And, actually, I enjoy doing that. I enjoy raising money. When I was young and thought of taking a job, I really thought I'd love to work in an advertising agency, which, funnily enough, was what my father first started with. He saw a little failing company as one of the things to be advertised; he and a friend bought it for $3,000, and turned it into Lifesavers. That's how he started. Isn't that remarkable?

SZ: Did they give it the name, "Lifesavers?"

JL: Yes, as I've been told. After that he made a great deal there, then bought the Blue Network. There was the Blue Network and the Red Network, in those days. The Blue Network was ABC, and the red network was WJZ. So he was really in on the very, very early days of television. But he bought the networks, and, of course, my mother was quite horrified to suddenly find herself in the

entertainment industry. She was a very quiet, shy, adorable person, but not into -- but he had great fun with that. Great fun. Bill Paley was a friend of his, and that's why I agreed to go on Bill Paley's Radio and Television museum board. I said, "Bill, I really don't know anything about this field," and he said, "Well, please do it because of your father."

SZ: Is it something you enjoyed?

JL: You know, today is television. Radio is entirely different. I don't know those Hollywood people. Finally, my son took my place, and he didn't stay on it. But I was a great admirer of Bill Paley, and I remember him saying to me one time that my father's handshake was all he needed, and he always relied on that. He said he was such a wonderful person. But, you know, today, it's another world.

SZ: What about some of the large issues that have confronted the Museum over the years that you've been associated with it? Such as the latest need to expand?

JL: Well, I can understand the need to expand. In the first place, I think that, aside from needing the wall space for these tremendously large pieces, the offices for the curators -- all of that was terrible. There they were in little cubbyholes up there. I think it was essential to have decent office spaces for those highly talented people. I love the position of the new Education Center, which is right opposite the library, across the garden. I think that's so perfect, because research is being done there, and you look right at it. So it's a wonderful design.

I remember meeting Yoshio Taniguchi one time and he said, "I think education is the most important part of any museum," so I've always liked him enormously. Well, it is, because without knowledge those shows couldn't be put on. I always enjoyed working with Bill Burback and, also, Philip Yenawine. He caused some problems, but I think he did because he tried to get, with reason, the wall labels and catalogues to be more reader friendly. He was right.

SZ: He had a different take on what the Museum's role should be, vis á vis the visitor.

JL: And he's really been quite successful, as I understand, with his books, his children's books.

SZ: He's an interesting thinker.

JL: Really. Absolutely. But I haven't seen him at all.

SZ: This is the second big expansion that you have experienced.

JL: Yes. I think it was absolutely essential, and I think it's really going to be beautiful. As I say, I think the whole concept is great. It was so important to stay where they were, because, you remember, there was all sorts of talk at the time about moving somewhere else. It really was important to stay, because being downtown, on 53rd Street, is a very important area to be in. It's near the shops; it's near where tourists go.

SZ: It has a whole history.

JL: Exactly. Actually, museums and cultural institutions everywhere have become big business, and it's so important that they sell their product, in a way, isn't it?

SZ: Do you feel that your role as a trustee has changed over the years? And I don't just mean at the Modern. What it means to be a trustee of a large, non-profit institution?

JL: I think a few of us are still there from the old days (not many), and I think a great number of new trustees have come on, as you well know. I think at the time of a capital campaign that's very important, because we do have to have the support.

I'm not sure I know quite a few of the new trustees. I've been on the Membership Committee and, as you know, at one point I was chairman, but the Museum board was much smaller. The board has been increased, and the fabulous leader is David Rockefeller, Jr. He is the fairest, most thoughtful leader. He's really been wonderful. He gives each candidate that's suggested fair consideration. I think he's doing a terrific job. He was also chairman of the Education Committee, so we've overlapped quite a lot.

SZ: That's right. Did increasing the size of the board --

JL: I think originally, when it was smaller, it was much more *gemütlichkeit*, and there was much more sharing. I think now it has a totally different feeling, but I understand that it has to be that way. I have no criticism with it, really. It's just that you kind of wish things were the way they were, but the world isn't. With this huge project it's essential, and I think Glenn Lowry and Mike Margitich, both, have been absolutely fantastic in what they've been able to accomplish. And, of course, David Rockefeller. He's been remarkable. He never says no to making a call. He's amazing.

SZ: I read in that interview that was done with you that you, in fact, don't mind making those kinds of calls.

JL: No, I don't. Because, as I said to you earlier, I think if you can convince somebody (it's like selling advertising), if you can convince them that this is a good idea, it's really fun. You can tell them that this is something that's terribly important, and why.

SZ: Because you have that feeling yourself.

JL: That's right. For instance, Wynton Marsalis, at Jazz at Lincoln Center, is remarkably knowledgeable about -- He's knowledgeable about everything. He's

just brilliant. Brilliant. He is a great person. I asked him to play at my husband's memorial service, and it was the most moving thing you ever heard. But he is very involved -- he's been very helpful, very involved with MoMA. At the time of the opening -- and Jazz will open about the same time in the Time Warner Center -- Wynton will be over at MoMA, playing, and there will be a lot of coordinated programs.

SZ: You've obviously played a part in that.

JL: I certainly hope -- I've mentioned it to Glenn and others -- and I think they definitely will have coordinated programs, which I think will be great for both institutions. I think that Jazz building is terrific. Don't you?

SZ: We should talk about the International Council, of which you've been a member.

JL: I think the idea is wonderful. It's a huge group. I've been on several of their trips. They were wonderful. I think the idea of the Council is terrific. It's a wonderful spread of shows and influential people in these various countries. It promotes MoMA superbly, and I think it does a great job.

SZ: You've served at the Museum under several directors, but the one --

JL: The one I knew the best by far was Dick Oldenburg, who is fair, honest, charming -- I can't say enough about Dick, and he's a close, personal friend. I think he was a marvelous, leveling director, and I think he was able to get the various departments more together, rather than remain as separate little or big departments. But I think his attitude and personality -- everybody loved him. My experience at the Museum was largely with him. I was on the search committee that found Glenn Lowry, and I think he's doing a superb job, superb. He's a quite different personality from Dick, but just marvelous. Marvelous. I don't see how he does everything he does -- traveling to Japan; traveling to Europe; opening

shows; dealing with the various trustees; dealing with donors. He's absolutely incredible. Incredible.

SZ: He has a different set of circumstances to deal with.

JL: Yes. Well, Dick was there for the last expansion. He was very, very close to Blanchette Rockefeller. Really, he was like a son to Blanchette. They were a wonderful team.

SZ: At this point in its history, what do you think the nature of the challenge is for the Museum?

JL: Well, I think raising money. I think it has done fantastically well so far, as I say, because of the leaders who have handled this. I really am not as helpful in that as I wish I could be. We can certainly donate from here, which we have, but I don't know a lot of the big corporate people today. I just don't know them. Obviously, David Rockefeller is the most effective, and I think corporate leaders are the ones that can do this.

SZ: And in terms of the educational thrust -- you've already addressed that.

JL: Right. And funnily enough, I think the educational thrust is very appealing to foundations -- and also the corporations, really. That big David Rockefeller lunch, that annual lunch -- they say on the program that the money is for education. Well, a percentage of it is, but it's really for the annual fund, for the annual support of the Museum. But a lot of it does go to the education program, and I think it's so successful not only because David is obviously there and being honored, but also because education is an appealing ring for people.

SZ: So from a little, nothing department to --

JL: -- then it became a department, and it certainly has grown tremendously. I don't know how big, how many staff members they have, but Debbie Schwartz has brought in some very impressive young people with advanced degrees. Really wonderful. And the Drawings Department has a wonderful staff. They've got some really superb people. And I'm delighted that Queens, which I was very leery about, has worked out so well. It's really remarkably successful, and it's a surprise. I didn't think people would get over there.

SZ: Well, there is a taste for what the Museum presents and has, and it doesn't really matter where it is.

JL: That's right. And I think that Queens building, architecturally, is very interesting. That will become be a big storage area for the Museum. It's sort of too bad, because it's really such an attractive museum. It really is. But we can't support two places.

SZ: I think maybe that's it.

JL: Well, I think this is fun.

SZ: Have you addressed everything that you wanted to?

JL: No. This wonderful series that John Elderfield did, Studies in Modern Art: the Mellon Foundation put up the original sum, then it was a challenge grant, and we and the NEH continued it, you see. It's in there. I'm very proud of that grant. I think it's a terrific series of books. Again, that involves higher education, you see.

SZ: You feel that that's especially important.

JL: I do, and I wish there were more of that. I personally am more interested in that than I am very young children. I'm sorry there's not more of that kind of activity at

the Museum. Maybe some schools do it, but I haven't noticed that the schools in Greenwich bring their children in much. There's a very good program, that I think Jo Carole Lauder was involved with, and Sidney Lansing -- Saturdays for Parents and Children. It sort of exposes the parents to modern art and contemporary art, as well as their children. That's a very interesting program.

SZ: That's been going on for quite a while now, I think.

JL: Yes, it has.

SZ: I guess the point is that, with its magnificent holdings and its wonderful staff, the Museum could be operating, in terms of education, on many levels.

JL: That's exactly right, and I think it should. Maybe, in time, it will, but I understand that now they've got all they can handle.

END INTERVIEW