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Interview no. 1613

Haleen F. Zweifel

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Haleen F. Zweifel

Interviewer: Cesar Villarreal

Project: Farah Oral History Project

Location: El Paso, TX.

Date of Interview: May 21, 2010

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Transcript No.: 1613

Transcriber / Summary: Alejandra Garcia

Haleen F. Zweifel was born in El Paso, Texas in 1955 to Willy and Betty Farah, who owned and ran Farah Manufacturing Company. As a little girl, she went to Mesita Elementary, she graduated from Coronado High School. Zweifel's high school summer breaks were spent working for Farah during the night shift. During her employment at Farah, she had heard that some of the union supporters starting setting workers' cars on fire and witnessed union supporters throwing dead chickens at workers as they walked out of work. As the strike became violent, her father constantly worried for her safety. Union supporters also threw fireworks at their home, and Zweifel moved to another room in the back of the house away from the attacks. When the media became involved with the strike, Zweifel felt that they were very dishonest about how the employees were treated. Zweifel also went to New York when the company was made public, and she was escorted away from the floor because women were not allowed to trade. After graduating high school, Zweifel attended Southern Methodist University and earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in Business Administration. In 1981, Zweifel return to work for Farah in the early eighties to start a woman's division. She considered this her first professional job and explained how she mostly worked with men. Most of the women were employed in clerical positions, and she experienced what she called "a man's world" and a competitive environment. As part of the Farah family, Zweifel had a very different experience looking back on Farah, however, she recalls Farah as a place that taught her many lessons about the apparel industry.

Length of interview 58 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a