CPHS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Clare Tighe

Interview Dates: February 4, 2019 and March 23, 2019

Interviewer: Fran Maclean

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First interview session, February 4, 2019

MACLEAN: Okay. All right.

TIGHE: I'm glad I'm not the only one.

MACLEAN: Oh no. And listen, I'm the one who is supposed to be experienced. Okay.

MACLEAN: Today begins the interview on February 4th, 2019, with Clare Tighe for the Cleveland Park Historical Society oral history program. I am Fran Maclean and we'll interview Ms. Tighe in my home at 3604 Porter Street NW. Clare, who lives two blocks away at 3405 Ordway Street NW, is a longtime resident of Cleveland Park and a highly respected professional gardener. Today she will reflect on, among other things, the changes both socially and physically

she's seen in the neighborhood over the years, changes perhaps even reflected in the residents' gardens.

MACLEAN: So, Clare, here we go. Tell me about you and your family coming to Cleveland Park.

TIGHE: We moved to Cleveland Park in 1960, the summer of 1960, in August. My parents had six children, but at that time only four were still living at home. My oldest sister Mary Catherine was married and gone. And my oldest brother Michael was in the Air Force at that point. So, it was my sister Cecily, my twin sister Connie, my brother Jimmy, and me.

TIGHE: And my mother and father who were—actually my mother was a native Washingtonian. My father was born in Scranton but he actually grew up on Porter Street. I'm not—I can't tell you the exact address. I know the house so I don't have the address in my head right now, but it's just a block down the street from here. He remembers as a child. He was born in 1910. He remembers as a child the house that we moved to here on Ordway being built in 1924.

TIGHE: Well let's see. So, we moved to Cleveland Park and I was seven. And going on eight that fall. And we were enrolled in the Catholic school, Annunciation, which was pretty brand new then on Massachusetts Avenue. My

oldest sister was at Notre Dame Academy over by Gonzaga over by Union Station and Capitol Hill. And my father worked for the CIA and my mother was a homemaker but she had been in the first graduating class of dental hygienists from Georgetown University. But she didn't pursue the career unfortunately. She decided to marry and have children, which women did in those days. Well, let's see, we moved here and that summer we spent—the children, my sister and Jimmy and—not Cecily who was in high school—we spent it carousing around the neighborhood trying to meet new friends. We had a dog, a Saint Bernard, who was humongous. And we had to walk him. A lot of people in those days didn't walk their dogs, they let them out of the house off leash. Majority of people did. They ran up and down the streets. The pick-up-the poop law was no longer—wasn't in effect yet, so you didn't have to do that.

TIGHE: And my recollections of my childhood in Cleveland Park are great. We were children who were pretty free. We got to roller skate in the streets, bicycle in the streets. We didn't have playdates. We walked to each other's houses to have sleepovers. My mother didn't drive. We walked to school at Massachusetts Avenue, and we walked home. And it was just a whole different atmosphere in this neighborhood then.

TIGHE: And Rosedale was a huge part of my childhood because Rosedale then was so much larger. All these houses weren't built on Rosedale yet, there was the

big mansion house, the old one, and the little cottage. And that was it. The Faulkner houses on 36 Street NW weren't there, those three solars; the other two, the big two; the whole line on Ordway wasn't there. It was just all grass and fields and boxwood and huge box elder trees, which you hardly ever see anymore. Concord grape arbor. And we played in there all the time. We would play hide and seek and just run around. That's the way kids were in those days. It wasn't a scary time and we didn't have to be hovered over and chauffeured everywhere. We just amused ourselves.

TIGHE: And the neighborhood was different, too. When you went to Connecticut Avenue, the shops were much more, you know, small and personal. There was a dress shop that our neighbors owned, the Smiths, this elderly woman and her daughter, had run for a long time on Connecticut Avenue. There was an appliance store. Not as many restaurants which back then, you know, you had a little...You did have a small grocery store. I think it was the Safeway then. Yeah. We used to call it the "Soviet Safeway" because it had long lines and little selection. And the Giant, of course, had already been built, which was a good thing because that was a popular spot. And People's Drugstore where the SunTrust Bank is now was a mainstay. It had a lunch counter like the old-fashioned lunch counter, with the black ladies behind with the little caps. You could sit there and get a milkshake, a hot dog, a Cherry Coke. And G. C. Murphy Company was there. That was always fun on Wisconsin Avenue. We would go

in there for little sundries and things that you needed all the time, sewing materials or underwear. It just was like a five and dime but it was very handy. Let me think of what else...Oh, and the Cathedral, too. We as children used to go up there and play.

MACLEAN: Was it built already by the time...?

TIGHE: It was still being built. But it was mostly the top level still being worked on and they didn't object to us running around there, either, like little hoodlums. I mean inside and out. It was fun.

MACLEAN: So, did it still have a country air to it, the neighborhood?

TIGHE: Oh, yes, I think especially with Rosedale there, that always struck me as so bucolic. The split rail fences and the white board fence, the big field, there was that big flat field that was bordering 36th Street NW where the Faulkner, the three white Faulkner solar houses are now that looked just like a pasture and should have had cows on. But it never did.

MACLEAN: Did it have ponies?

TIGHE: Oh, it did, because we discovered that Mrs. Peters and her husband at 36th and Macomb had an Icelandic pony hidden in their backyard in a corral. He was dun-colored, he was wild, his name was Candy Custard, and at the age of nine or ten my sister and my friends and I fell in love with horses. And we were up there every day pestering Mrs. Peters, who had three daughters who weren't interested in the pony at all, if we could play with the pony. Yes, she said we could play with the pony. He had brushes. He had a bridle. He did have a saddle but we never bothered with it. And she would let us brush him and feed him carrots. And then we would jump on him and ride him around the corral. And in order to get him to canter there was a little dip in the corral headed downhill you had to kick him and head him downhill, and then he'd break into a canter for maybe five steps and then he'd stop. And we were thrilled. So, we kept bothering her and she kept letting us and then pretty soon we started pestering her to let us take him over to Rosedale. Which was a lot of convincing but she finally let us do that, on rare occasions in the summer. We got to ride him in green fields over there which was truly exciting. And there he was crazy because he was so excited to get out. He was galloping and he got to eat grass. He was happy. And then they also had a carriage house there that...

MACLEAN: In Rosedale?

TIGHE: No.

MACLEAN: At the Smiths'?

TIGHE: At the Peters' house, in the back. It's now a residence, they converted it into a residence, but it used to be what they call the carriage house. It had a stage in it, a real stage with seats like the Uptown Theatre. It had a wooden stage with a trapdoor in the middle in case you wanted to do like a disappearing act. It had velvet curtains. Lights. And I'm not exactly, I don't know the story behind it. I know that her kids used to get up there and perform little things once in a while but I don't know. I'm not sure if the Peters were the ones who built it, but I don't think so. I think it was probably there before they owned the house.

MACLEAN: Now, are we talking about the northeast side of 36th and Newark?

TIGHE: No. 36th and Macomb, and it's the house that sits on the southwest side of that intersection, right one block down from Wisconsin Avenue.

MACLEAN: Oh, you mean the big white one?

TIGHE: No that's the north...no, you're right. It's the north. I'm sorry. It's northwest side, the northwest side.

MACLEAN: Yes. Yellow lined.

TIGHE: It's that little house. Now it's a residence.

MACLEAN: It's a residence now, but it looks like it was once a barn, a little barn.

TIGHE: That was what we called the carriage house.

MACLEAN: The carriage house.

TIGHE: And behind them now lives John Mott and his wife Cristina. He's a judge downtown. And the other lovely house is the one next to that that Mr. Shea used to live in with the garden and the copper roof that comes down a little.

MACLEAN: Yes.

TIGHE: It's that cottage.

MACLEAN: Yes.

TIGHE: I've always like that house, too. And old Mr. Shea lived there for years when I was a child. Then he moved and the Grangers bought it. The Grangers had lived in the big white house at Macomb with the round...

MACLEAN: With the tower.

TIGHE: Yeah. And one of my best friends Melanie Howell and her family lived in that house before Grangers bought it, and her mother was rather eccentric and she always had three or four dogs, but she also had monkeys in the basement in a big cage. And they were like chimpanzee monkeys. But she didn't keep them too long because I think it got a bit much with the cleanup. She also always had big cages with dozens of finches in them. She was the daughter of Dr. Herbst who was a well-known doctor who lived on Foxhall Road. I think he was a heart specialist. She married Dr. Howell who was also a heart specialist who worked at the—when we had the Washington Clinic at Friendship Heights. But I do remember those monkeys in the basement. What other questions can you guide me with?

MACLEAN: No, well, let's dwell on this period for a while. Did she ever allow you to play with the monkeys?

TIGHE: No. They were rather rambunctious and not...

MACLEAN: Right.

TIGHE: We did walk the dogs a lot. She always had three. She would rescue the dogs from the Humane Society. They were usually poodle-terrier mixes, shaggy and unkempt but cute. But no, no playing with the monkeys. So, let's see what else did we do as children...

MACLEAN: I have a question. When you were growing up, was the stream, a little stream between Macomb and Newark, is that right? Was it above ground? Now it's below ground, but in your day, was it above ground?

TIGHE: I don't remember it being above ground. I remember it being pretty much what it is now.

MACLEAN: Okay.

TIGHE: The one that's behind the houses on Newark?

MACLEAN: Yes. And between Newark and Macomb. And in the backyards of certain houses on Macomb you can see where it was, you know, you can see the bed. But I just wondered if it was still above ground when you were growing up.

TIGHE: I don't remember that. I don't know why, but I don't remember too much about that area. I didn't have enough friends to play with over there. But I do remember being terrified during the Cold War and having—I remember one day walking to Macomb Street playground and the sirens went off, and I thought for sure because of all the murmuring I could hear in the background of my parents, I thought sure we were going to have an air raid and I ran home terrified and my father was sitting on the front porch in a perfectly relaxed manner and I said "What's happening?! And he said, "Don't worry, it's just a test." And I remember being very scared at that point in my life. And the nuns at Annunciation—we still had nuns with the entire habit and everything, which we were terrified of and we didn't mess around in class, I'll tell you that, we all sat there with our hands folded and paid attention. They used to take us into the auditorium and make us get under the desks there, like that was going to save us from an atomic bomb which, we had drills. That was very scary. When the Cuban Missile Crisis period, that's what it was. And then my parents were of course huge John F. Kennedy fans being Catholic and everything, but they were also huge Roosevelt fans, Democrats. So that was a scary period I think.

TIGHE: But Macomb Street playground also played kind of a big role, too, because we used to, they had a Sundial program I don't know if they still have that. Do you remember that? They called it Sundial, where it was a babysitting

program in the summer. And of course, when I got to be eleven or twelve I was anxious to make money so we were hired as onsite babysitters there. And you were paid I think it was three dollars an hour to watch all these kids make sure they didn't get into trouble at the playground. We would pick them up at their house and walk them down there, supervise them, bring them back home.

TIGHE: And that was before I started babysitting at night in the neighborhood everywhere, which I hated. Not big on babysitting. But that was a way to make some spending money. We were, my mother was always trying to get us to get summer jobs. And do you remember the University Pastry Shop?

MACLEAN: That's on my list of questions to you, my dear.

TIGHE: That was my first job. We went and got our work permits when we were 14. Because you were supposed to be 15 I think to be hired, but you could get a work permit at 14 and the Andrascek family who owned that bakery and had for years, Julius Andrascek was the proprietor and his two sons Tom and George helped him. And I'm not exactly sure but I think that bakery opened in the 1940s. He called it "University" because of the American University and—a small bakery, and I was just entering high school and we got a job there and came after school to work behind the counter and make ice cream cones and wait on people, put on our aprons. And they were the nicest men that hired us. They always

hired local kids, gave them their first jobs, and they were the sweetest people to work for. And it was a great job, because people came in there, you know people come into a bakery in a good mood, they're not going to be [laughs]...So. And that was a fun job in high school. We worked Saturdays and after school.

MACLEAN: And what high school did you go to?

TIGHE: Holy Trinity, in Georgetown, which is no longer in existence. It was the rival school of Georgetown Visitation. It was at 36th and O Street. And Trinity, I believe, I believe that's the oldest church in D.C., the oldest Catholic church. And it has a grade school still. It used to have a grade school and the high school, all girls. And of course, uniforms. And we also, when I was a senior at Trinity they sent us to Georgetown for language classes, which I thought was kind of nice.

MACLEAN: The university.

TIGHE: Yes. So, we got to go over there and take some—I took Spanish over there. But Trinity wasn't the best school. And then I went to Maryland University after that and my sister Conny went to GW and then transferred to Webster College in St. Louis. And my brother Jimmy went to Marquette University.

MACLEAN: In Milwaukee.

TIGHE: Yes.

TIGHE: But then, let's see, my brother Michael came home from the Air Force and lived with us for a while so we had one, two, five children in the house with my two parents. And nowadays people complain about not having enough space and we had three bedrooms, so we had two boys and three girls in the other bedroom and we thought it was fine. There was no such thing as privacy. But my sister Cecily got married in the early 1960s because she wanted to escape the house and my mother wouldn't let her get her own apartment. She had a job with the CIA already, my father had gotten her. So, she went ahead and got married young like a lot of girls did back then. So, she left. So, we were back to four for a while.

MACLEAN: So, you were talking about your schooling and everything. And I thought we'd just ask you a couple of questions about religious tolerance in Cleveland Park. Were you aware that as the houses were being built, you know, in the early days of the neighborhood, the deeds contained covenants restricting Jews from....

TIGHE: That really surprises me and shocks me. I never heard that before. Never.

MACLEAN: And you felt even though the Cathedral looks down on the neighborhood and the Cathedral schools are so are so visible and prominent, you felt no rivalry between Catholic schools and...

TIGHE: No. I had friends in the neighborhood who also went to school with me, Catholic friends, and our neighbor was Jewish at the time. And my brother was good friends with Emanuel and he would come and spend the night. And so, I didn't know there was anything like that. And I don't know how it petered out.

MACLEAN: Well as far as I can see and from what I hear from you it has always been a very tolerant neighborhood. Both of foreign nationals and all kinds and differences. Did you feel the differences were respected?

TIGHE: Yeah. Because we also—I remember having a Muslim family living next to us, right next door to us, and the little girl, I was fascinated with her and her talking about her Muslim heritage. And she would tell me about—her English was good—she told me about her hijab and all that stuff. And I just thought it was fascinating. So, it was a pretty eclectic neighborhood back then even. Although we were aware of a lot of, you know, the liberal Democrats in the neighborhood too, I think, a lot of Peace Corps alumni and like that. But I never felt out of place in this neighborhood at all. And like I said I had enough friends close by that were playmates, that you always had families that accepted you

and had you over. The house across the street from us has had famous people in. When we moved there the big yellow house—

MACLEAN: Yes.

TIGHE: Where David Ignatius lives now, who is rather famous on his own, had a Nobel Prize winner named Dr. Townes living in there. And it also had—Mo Udall lived there. The senator from Arizona. He lived there for years with his family. I was good friends with his kids. And then it had that guy Miller who was OMB [Office of Management and Budget] director for Reagan who also tried to run for Senate in Virginia but he didn't win. I forget his first name. So that house has some cachet. And of course, the I. M. Pei house. When we moved to our house the I. M. Pei house was being built and we played in the construction site of it all the time.

MACLEAN: This house is where?

TIGHE: It's the three-vaulted roof glass house at three four...

MACLEAN: Oh, I. M. Pei.

TIGHE: 3411.

MACLEAN: On Ordway.

TIGHE: Yes. Very famous house. Supposedly the only residence, I believe, that he ever designed. All his other buildings were public and he designed it for William Slayton who was a buddy of his. They I think had worked together in capacity with some other kind of architect-oriented thing. But they were good friends. They used to go to dinner together all the time. But you've heard that story about how Mr. Slayton got I. M. Pei to supposedly design his house for him? He kept pestering him and pestering him that he wanted him to give him a design for the house, and supposedly they were at dinner and Pei grabbed a paper napkin and drew it on the paper napkin and handed it to him and said, "Here, Bill, here's your design." [laughs] And the story goes that Mr. Slayton took it to an engineer and had him, I mean a builder and had him build it. I don't know if that's true. [laughs] But they were a nice family I was good friends with the Slaytons and their children and spent many days helping Mrs. Slayton in her elderly years with her garden, and her dog. And he was quite a character, Mr. Slayton. He always dressed in plaid suits. And every day he had to wear a boutonniere to work. So, one of my jobs when I started gardening for them was to always plant some type of flower in the garden that he could harvest for his boutonniere. And in the winter, he had to have a potted plant like a carnation or something so he could pluck a flower to put in this boutonniere.

MACLEAN: That's wonderful.

TIGHE: We had some good neighbors. I mean, that's another thing about this neighborhood is that you get to know your neighbors and become friends with them. And I have sisters who live—well, I had one living in Reston and another one who was living in Williamsburg. They never got to know their neighbors. It was so strange. It was like people didn't walk on the streets there and didn't communicate very often. Was "hi" and "bye" and get in your car and go. And I guess that's the difference between an urban and a suburban neighborhood, that we're out on the streets, and maybe we get to know each other better that way.

MACLEAN: It certainly seems that way, doesn't it? And it's a wonderful characteristic of the neighborhood. To back up a little bit, now you came in 1960, your family, and you were seven years old. So, you would have been very young for the racial disturbances during the 1960s, and the late 1960s particularly. Do you remember that era?

TIGHE: Yes.

MACLEAN: Okay.

TIGHE: Sadly.

MACLEAN: All right.

TIGHE: I remember I was in high school and the—of course the turning, the real turning point was the assassination of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy. And we were then going to school and being terrified because you could see the smoke rising from the other side of the city, you know everything was across the Park. You know that was the border line, Rock Creek Park, and then...it was a frightening experience. We were kind of...and of course the curfew. Everybody had to be inside at a certain time. And just kind of keeping your fingers crossed. You hated to think that the National Guard would keep it all over there and it wouldn't enter our neighborhood. But we had quite a few black students at Trinity, so. And the neighborhood I had come from, at 3rd and Rittenhouse, was beginning to be all black and I never had...my parents were very unprejudiced people and I never learned any of that kind of racism at home, and I always got along with all the black kids at school. We all did. But on the way home on the bus one day I got thrown off the bus by a group of rowdy black girls from Western High School because they just felt like picking on me and I don't know, they just threw me off the bus. I was so scared. That was during the race things. And when my friend Wanda Clegg who was black at Trinity found out about it, oh boy she was going to go beat those girls up, but she never did.

But that was, it was a scary time. It was. And also, when I was growing up my mother used to take us on the bus downtown to do all our shopping. We shopped at Woodward & Lothrop downtown. And that was her favorite store, and we would go there to see the Christmas windows. And then there was Garfinkel's, and there was Hecht's, all the old standbys. And she didn't drive, so we took the bus and we came home. And then after the riots it was like a ghost town down there. You know, nobody wanted to go down that way anymore. What wasn't burned out and destroyed was not safe to go down to shop. So, it was...and you know how long it took to come back. Many, many, many years. So. And then there was the year that there was the Resurrection City at the Mall, when people camped out, the poor people and the black people. That was there all summer in that mud and heat, and the hard times. Then we morph into the 1970s with the blur of the hippie era. Which I was a member of. Going to all the protests downtown. You know the war protests, the big ones.

MACLEAN: Did you go to the protest at the Pentagon?

TIGHE: No. I didn't go to that one.

MACLEAN: Okay.

TIGHE: We thought we, well we were, we tried to be hippie. After all, we were in Georgetown and we were at school in Georgetown and we used to, of course in your uniform it wasn't good, but after school, and we'd buy all our clothes at secondhand shops. My sister had an old fur coat that my mother said smelled like a dead animal. But she allowed us to wear it. It was ratty. And we hung out at Emergency, which was the cool place to hang out on M Street, which was next to the old Cerberus movie theater. And it was a place for high school kids to hang out and just listen to different bands. You paid, like, three dollars to get in and you could sit there all day and night and smoke dope and watch these bands. Some of the bands were pretty good. Once in a while Nils Lofgren played there. He was the local guy who later on played with Neil Young and Asleep at the Wheel used to play there quite often. And then there was the Cellar Door and I got to see Richie Havens there, AND I got to see Jimi Hendrix at the Washington Hilton, believe it or not, in a small auditorium with maybe forty people in attendance, when he first started being a thing. So that's my claim to fame. And we also saw the Allman Brothers at American University in a basketball court and I think there might have been thirty people at that concert. So, in the beginning things weren't so Woodstock-y. You could find small venues. But we were all into the tie-dyed jeans, all that crap. And Georgetown was the happening place. You know you had Funky Leather Company. [laughs] My friend worked...actually my friend's sister's husband started that business and they were down there making jewelry and leather goods and selling them,

and sandals, and we thought that was like the coolest thing. And they sold it to Georgetown Leather Company when it started to get bigger and make more money. Those were some old memories. What else can you direct me to?

MACLEAN: Oh, well, let's explore another side of one of your other interests, other side of your personality. I was going to say you started out riding ponies.

TIGHE: Yes.

MACLEAN: A pony in Rosedale. Were you able to pursue your interest in horses?

TIGHE: Yes. When I graduated from high school at the age of seventeen and I still was working at the bakery, saving all my money, I told my mother I was going to buy a horse, and she said, "Well I will never give you a penny for it." I said, "Fine." And I went out and I bought a horse because a good friend of mine, my twin sister and I had rented a horse for a month that summer. That's why we didn't go to Woodstock. In that August. We rented a horse instead, each of us, for fifty dollars for the entire month. At the Bar J Stables in Merrifield, Virginia, which was an old-fashioned rent-a-horse-by-an-hour stable, and it also had boarding, and had forty acres and this is in Merrifield, Virginia before it was developed, and we rented the horses for a month. And of course, loved every

minute of it. So, after that ended the woman who ran the barn was always going to the horse sales in New Holland, Pennsylvania, Timonium, Marshall, bringing back loads of horses to use as hack horses, or, if they were a little bit better quality, to sell. So, she brought back a load of horses and I looked at one and said "I'm gonna buy that one." And I paid $250 for him. He was a chestnut Arabian quarter horse mix and I thought he was beautiful. I didn't know that much about horses. Well, I did; I used to read a lot about horses and I had taken ten whole riding lessons at Camp Furman once in Potomac, Maryland, for forty dollars. So that was my—I bought that horse the summer of my senior year, and I was going to Maryland University that fall and I was enrolled in animal science because I wanted to be a veterinarian. So, between the horse and Maryland, and then I decided I had to get a better-paying job so I went to work for Giant food as a cashier because that was a better-paying job, that time and you got, you actually got pretty good wages. Not anymore. But they had a good union contract back then and you got health insurance. And I was a cashier at night. I went to school in the day and a cashier at night and in between did the horse. And I started riding...I rode every day for eleven years. I never missed a day. And I used to show on the weekends and I bought a trailer. And my horse started doing very well. Locally, not big time, but locally. And I had tons of friends at the barn. I bought a pickup truck, bought a trailer. My sister Conny, my twin, she bought a horse, and we kept them at the Bar J in Merrifield, which is a long story.

MACLEAN: Let me stop you just a moment. How did you, before you bought your truck, how was it you were riding every day? How did you go back and forth to Merrifield?

TIGHE: In my Volkswagen Bug.

MACLEAN: Oh, I didn't I didn't realize you had a car, too.

TIGHE: Yep. My father actually bought Conny, my twin sister Conny and I, a car when we graduated from high school. A yellow Volkswagen Beetle, a 1970. All my sisters screamed bloody murder, "Dad, you never bought us a car! What? Spoiling these twins!" By that time, my parents had a little extra money, because all the kids had grown and moved out. And he said we could pick whatever car we wanted and that's what we picked. And we had a Volkswagen and so we drove to Merrifield every day in the morning or the afternoon to do the horses, and then Maryland, and she went to GW. So, it's very...

MACLEAN: You lived at home, but drove back and forth to the University of Maryland.

TIGHE: Yes. I did not live on campus.

MACLEAN: Okay.

TIGHE: And my sister wasn't living on campus at GW.

MACLEAN: No.

TIGHE: But then I made the mistake of thinking I was in love with this guy. Who was horsey and was at the Bar J, and he wanted to move to North Carolina and become a rodeo clown. This doesn't have anything to do with Cleveland Park. You want to hear all this?

MACLEAN: Of course, I do. [laughs]. I love the horses.

TIGHE: [Laughs] So he and a friend of his had bought a Black Angus calf. They put it in— oh, I also had a sheep that I named Eliza Lamb.

MACLEAN: And where did that sheep live?

TIGHE: In the stall with my horse.

MACLEAN: Oh.

TIGHE: Because I just decided I wanted a lamb one day and she used to follow me everywhere. I named her Liza, Liza Lamb, and she lived with my horse. My horse didn't care for her too much, but he tolerated her. She ate his tail, because she didn't have anything else to chew on one night. [laughs] She was a sweetie and my horse was a lovely horse. He was very gentle and nice so he tolerated her. But my boyfriend decided he and his friend Tim were going to be rodeo clowns because this rodeo came to the Bar J every year from Cow Town, New Jersey, and in the summer. They would stage rodeos there. And they thought being a rodeo clown who's—they get in the arena and they lure the bull away from the person who's on the, gets thrown from the bull. They also wanted to be bull riders. And so, this was the whole deal. So, he said, "Let's go to North Carolina where we can really get into the rodeo scene."

TIGHE: So, we put my horse in a trailer with a Brahma bull who had horns probably four feet wide, my poor horse in a two-horse trailer next to the Brahma bull and they were going to have—they bought a Black Angus calf, who they were going to tame in to a tame bull for part of their act. His name was Simon Legree. He rode in the front seat on my lap and unfortunately, he had what we call the scours that week. So, I'm in the front of a pickup truck in between Tim and Terry with a black angus calf on my lap, who has the scours, which is another word for diarrhea. And he had to be fed from a bottle. Milk. The cutest thing, small little black. So, we had to stop every once in a while, let the animals

walk around. We didn't unload the bull. We stopped at McDonald's. Oh, yes, I forgot to mention that my dog Catherine came too. She went everywhere with me. A collie mix. She was in the front seat, too.

TIGHE: We went to Fayetteville, North Carolina and rented a house in a place called Benson, which was the end of nowhere. There was nothing there but an IGA and a Tastee Freeze. And my horse was in the shed with the Black Angus calf and the bull went over to the rodeo guys' place.

TIGHE: And we stayed down there. The first three weeks, we didn't have plumbing. I was not happy. It was winter. I said I don't know if I want to do this really. So. But it was nice because I had everywhere to ride my horse. But he—my horse was not—he was kind of upset the whole time because he wasn't with another horse and you know how horses are very herd animals. But he did have the calf. So, I was down there for a while. But I decided to come home because there wasn't a life for me. So, Terry and Tim stayed down there for a little while longer, and then they came back, too. So that was our foray into rodeo.

TIGHE: Then I moved my horse to Great Falls, Virginia. So that was a really nice barn, and a lot of nice trails out there. And then I bought another horse, a dun mare. You sure you want to listen to all this? You can edit this out of this because this isn't for the historical society stuff.

MACLEAN: Just go on.

TIGHE: Then I had this horse, this mare, who I was going to show big time because she was really pretty. I bought her at the Timonium sale and paid quite a bit of money for her. She was not, she was probably a year old when I bought her. But the first show I took her to somebody offered me a whole lot of money for because she was so good looking and had potential, that I said okay. So, I sold her. Which was all right because two horses was a bit more than I really wanted.

TIGHE: So, then I'm back home, I'm still going to Maryland, still working at Giant, and then I broke up with the guy. He turned into a racehorse trainer and still trains race horses. Oh no, that was—I forgot, I went to Dover, Delaware, with him and spent a winter up there fooling with race horses and ponying race horses on the track. But I didn't ride like a jockey, I just ponied them. That was my foray into racing.

TIGHE: Then back. Still riding, so I'm still in Cleveland Park at my parents' house but I'm really not in Cleveland Park that much because I'm going out to Virginia every day and back, and my parents are now home alone. Everybody else is gone but me. And, but they're holding on pretty well. My dad's retired

and my mom is doing her thing and I'm in and out all the time. I guess they're in their—my mom was born 1914, so in the 1960s, I guess 1970s, they are in their sixties, right? And dad has a dog that he walks all the time, so he likes that. And so, then I decided to quit Giant because I couldn't stand it anymore. And I went back to the University Pastry Shop, which George and the Andrasceks of course gave me a job right away because that's the kind of people they were, and they actually at that point which was almost the 1980s... I skipped a whole era of when I worked at Calverton Training Stables in Manassas, outside of Manassas, because I do not want to bore you with that. That was another horse thing. I went to...Oh, I moved my horse to Oakton, Virginia and started working at the bakery again. By then I had—my first horse had died—I had a retired racehorse who I liked a lot, a mare who was really nice. But Tom and George and Mr. Andrascek hired me back and then I started doing cake decorating at the bakery. And the bakery by then was a pretty big institution for birthday cakes for the neighborhood. Everybody used to go there and get their birthday—and the doughnuts were great, and the homemade ice cream, and the doughnut business in the morning was very popular. Doughnuts and coffee, everybody would stop from the neighborhood and get them. He made these delicious cake doughnuts which were so crispy with powdered sugar on them. Did you ever get one of those? Glazed. And he didn't make a whole lot of different kinds. They were made every morning fried fresh back there. He made a jelly doughnut with cinnamon sugar. He made a whole line of sweet rolls and danish. But the

homemade ice cream was their signature. And one year Colman McCarthy who wrote for *The Washington Post* had written an article in the magazine section of the *Post*, on a Sunday, with a big picture of an ice cream cone on the front of the magazine about the University Pastry Shop's fresh peach ice cream that Mr. Andrascek made from fresh peaches. And that article caused the biggest run on our ice cream ever. People were lined up out the door the very next day waiting to get their ice cream. We couldn't keep up with the ice cream. We couldn't make enough to—we were just floored. Colman McCarthy then lived on Highland Place, I believe. He was a local. But he launched us into fame. After that our business took off on everything because people discovered us. They had never noticed us there behind the—we were next to the Friendship Flower Shop. We didn't have a very large sign that caught your eye, and a lot of people came in and said, "I never even knew you were here." And Mr. Andrascek had a signature mocha cake which was very popular. He made mocha buttercream. He had four layers of cake, toasted almonds on the side. But my job was to decorate the birthday cakes and to draw anything on them that people wanted. And I also, unfortunately, have an artistic bent and I could draw, so I started drawing on the birthday cakes what they wanted for their children you know Smurfs and Snoopy and...freehand. We didn't do stencil or anything. And then that really took off because I was doing crazy stuff. I was doing Monopoly boards and recreating photographs people were bringing in which—I did the Dinah Shore

Cookbook introduction. [laughs] I should show you some pictures I have. Want to keep going?

MACLEAN: Yes, I want to keep going. Of course. We're doing fine.

TIGHE: But our birthday cake business was huge. And I think it's kind of a sad thing that we don't have something like that in the neighborhood anymore, especially with the amount of children we have now, where you can go get a homemade cake with a homemade picture on it, you know? Of anything your kid wanted?

MACLEAN: What caused the University Pastry to close?

TIGHE: Rising rents. The owners wouldn't negotiate. They just, I think they raised it like fourfold one year. And Mr. Andrascek the older man had retired and his nephew had taken over. And one of the other sons had left, and he just was worn out. He said he was working—he said, you know, he had come in all night, work all night long to get the stuff ready and then go home and crash and come back the next day and start again. And with that price he just didn't see how he could do it. They priced him out.

MACLEAN: What year was this?

TIGHE: 1989, I believe. That spring.

MACLEAN: While you were working there did you have any inclination to become a baker and a pastry chef?

TIGHE: I often—I was more interested in that then, as were all the people at the shop. There were several girls in the shop. We did talk a lot about cooking and baking and pastry and we had one woman there who actually did leave the bakery and try and be a pastry chef at, what's that really nice restaurant downtown on N Street? It's been there, the Iron Gate? No, not that one. It's been there for... Anyway, she had enough guts to apply to be the pastry chef at that restaurant and she was only there a week before they fired her. It's not easy to... They wanted her to bring enough expertise to make a whole array of desserts every night and change them. And I think she bit off more than she could chew. She was great at the bakery, what she did, but we had our own schedule and routine there, you know that, and it worked. And she was just—I think when she was dropped down into that environment she just didn't take hold. So, I was always tentative about whether I had the ability to do something like that. And then occasionally I had fantasized about going down to Uptown Bakers and getting a job there to see what that was like.

TIGHE: But I never did because immediately upon the bakery closing, I wasn't home a week before Fitzy Carter, who lived at 34th Place and Ordway, asked me to come help her in her garden, because I had gardened at my house and had a little display out front and people knew I liked to garden, but I'd only done my own yard and she always liked what I did and she asked me if I would like—she knew I was out of a job, so she said, "Would you like to come up here and do some and earn some money?" and I said, "Yeah, sure, I'll try it." She did it, then Mrs. Slayton who lived at the I. M. Pei house immediately asked me if I would help her, and from there it just kind of steamrolled, because I don't know if people took pity on me and said, "Oh, this girl needs a job." But that's the kind of neighborhood it is. So, everybody kept saying, "Clare, would you like to come work for me?" And I said, "Okay." And so pretty soon I had a full plate, and it just kind of steamrolled into that.

MACLEAN: This is wonderful. But I want to go back just to tie up a couple of loose ends. Did you graduate from the University of Maryland?

TIGHE: No, I did not.

MACLEAN: In animal science, right?

TIGHE: Yeah, I know, I did three years and then I made the mistake of going to North Carolina.

MACLEAN: I see.

TIGHE: And said I would come back and do it, start again, and I never did.

MACLEAN: And you never did.

TIGHE: I should have.

MACLEAN: Aww. And when your interest in gardening started, did your mother teach you? Did you read books? How—?

TIGHE: I, no, my mother hated gardening.

MACLEAN: Oh, okay.

TIGHE: My aunt who raised my mother was a big-time gardener. So, my mother always said genetically I inherited it from her. She was an artist, too. She had a glorious garden in Chevy Chase, which I remember from my childhood. Of course, it was, back in those days, it was a different type of—azaleas were all the

rage. She had a side yard banked up with different azaleas. She had a shade garden with lily of the valley. But she knew her plants. And she and her husband tended to it. It was quite a showpiece. Back then people didn't have landscapers come do the yard. I had started out actually just purchasing house plants and getting interested in house plants, and then somehow, I started planting a few bulbs and working in our yard, because my dad no longer could cut the grass or do any of that. And then I started reading, and got every garden book I could get my hands on. And then I took the course, Master Gardening course, at UDC, which was very instructive and that was more botany horticulture. I mean it really, it's pretty extensive, the information they gave to you, it was all free. You took it and in exchange you had to do fifty hours of community service. It was a lecture series. And my community service I chose was working at the Zoo garden. And that was fun because we planted vegetables that we fed to the animals and we grew things that they would like to eat like peanuts, okra, sunflower, and everything was eaten, because even the thick, tough stalks of the sunflowers are fed to the elephants and they were able to eat them. So that's where I did my service.

TIGHE: But like I said I think the neighborhood was sort of like my backup. They just said, "Clare, you should do this." So that's how it happened. And now I have probably...I only have—I did have some in Georgetown but I only have a

couple outside of this neighborhood. Everything is right here so my commute is half a block, which is lovely.

MACLEAN: But I have the impression you're very selective. Are you?

TIGHE: Well, I only.

MACLEAN: About your customers.

TIGHE: I would love to work for everybody, but I don't have the time. And I can only do so much physically and I don't want to get too big because it's a headache. So, I have my helper Delvine Allwood Jones, who is the best, and is my loyal sidekick, and we manage and we do what we do to our best ability. I mean everything we do we try and do as best as we can, but we can only do so much. Because we are sixty-year-old women. People sometimes seem to expect us to do Herculean things.

MACLEAN: Oh, you're neighborhood icons.

TIGHE: I know. She always says to me, "Clare, I never climbed on a rooftop before but since I've worked for you I've done all kinds of stuff." She's gotten...she also has background—I'm getting choked up. She's from Jamaica,

but she did a lot of farming in Jamaica. She was in the poor, poor sections of Jamaica. She didn't have running water or any of that. So, she grew up planting carrots and weeding and carrying water and she knows a lot about plants and she if anybody won't let anything die. I mean she's gonna water it, she's gonna—nobody's gonna throw anything away that she isn't gonna grab and try and nurture back to health. She's wonderful. She loves her plants.

MACLEAN: I'd love to hear your perspective on the plant life of Cleveland Park when you were young and then how it changed over the decades. For instance, were there more trees in the 1960s then than now? Definitely?

TIGHE: Yes. The big trees, a lot of them have gone now. In the 1960s, of course, as a child, I didn't really pay attention to yards but the whole atmosphere was much more relaxed and loose and nobody had blowers and edgers and Hispanic teams coming to make everything perfect, and we didn't have that fixation with mulch, piling it on and piling it on, season after season to choke everything to death. But yes, I think.... Well as you know we've lost many trees in storms and our hot droughty summers. The big trees that are even as far up as Warren Street are going, the ones that are the street trees, and the city is replacing them now with the smaller trees, which to me, I don't see the point. I mean, I know they don't want to interfere with power lines but those trees are never going to be shade trees. They're gonna—the cherries, the stewartias, the red buds—they're

gonna be short stubby trees that poke branches into your eyes as you walk down the sidewalk. But I guess they're trying to plant—and they're also not that long lived. You don't see them planting big oaks anymore or tulip trees or sycamores. It's sad.

TIGHE: But our climate's changing radically, too, because things that used to thrive in this neighborhood don't thrive anymore: lilacs, the long hot humid summers, they're not as lovely and vigorous as they used to be. We used to have cold winters that were evenly cold, all throughout, with a lot of snow, and you didn't get the fluctuations like we're having this year, you have zero one week sixty the next week, which is hard on plants. And even the bulbs, tulips in this area because of our hot humid summers aren't happy. Daffodils aren't happy as much as they used to be because we don't have the long hard freezes. Sometimes they'll come up and not bloom at all. After a cold winter, you'll see them come up and rebloom. And things like crape myrtles used to be rare up this way. It used to be a rare thing to see a crape myrtle big like the one in front of the Freunds', but now they're ubiquitous, they're everywhere. That used to be a Southern plant. And they used to die. In fact, I lost one or two in my yard in the cold winters that died back to the ground and butterfly bushes were something that were not—of course, that's a new fixation, the butterfly bush, because it's supposed to attract butterflies, but they weren't available for here. And euonymus used to get, ligustrum used to get beaten up bad in the winter. Most

people who had euonymus or ligustrum hedges were just resigned to having them be leafless in the spring, and have to wait for them to regenerate. But that doesn't happen very often anymore either. So, you can really see climate change if you pay attention to gardens. But also in the 1960s nobody had landscapers come in. Everybody, if they didn't have a little push mower, they might have a gas mower but there wasn't the tendency to try and make everything so neat and tidy and perfect, like there is now.

MACLEAN: I like to garden as well, as you know, and do you notice a change in the whole sociology around gardens, that the people would garden—the owners, homeowners—would garden on the weekends and chat and get together?

TIGHE: Yeah. Now it's more just like something to spend your money on. Instead of do it yourself. There was a man on Ordway Street who used to be out puttering in his front rose garden all the time. Mr. Truesdell. He had a fancy front rose garden that he kept. But he was pretty gruff. And on all my direct street, I don't know, I honestly don't remember anybody being much of an avid gardener. I think that's sort of more recent thing with people having more leisure time and more expendable income for it. And the proliferation of garden centers. And plants. There's a lot more interest. Of course, now with the movement of organic and all that stuff there's more interest. And maybe trying to grow your own vegetables and herbs. But back then I don't recall anybody being out in their

yards. I honestly don't. I know my father would get out there and mow the yard occasionally with his push mower and that was about it. We'd sweep up the clippings. You didn't edge, you didn't—He would plant a few tulip bulbs in the fall, for the spring.

MACLEAN: Even though before air conditioning people spent a lot of time outdoors on their porches, screened in or otherwise, and eating and socializing on the porches and patios.

TIGHE: Our front porch, my parents spent a lot of time out there just watching the world go by. That's true. And my neighbors had the porch right next door. But they weren't gardeners, as far as I can remember. But we did—because the children played together and had to be, with the sleepovers and stuff, that too was a big connection, you know. PTA meetings. Mothers and fathers would come to the school to pitch in, to manage the lunchrooms and a lot of volunteers at my school were parents. So, we had a lot of interconnectivity in the neighborhood but I wouldn't say it was gardening.

MACLEAN: You wouldn't.

TIGHE: No.

MACLEAN: All right. Does the astronomical rise in the prices of the houses in the neighborhood have an influence on the gardens, do you think?

TIGHE: Oh, definitely.

MACLEAN: Tell me your view of that whole process.

TIGHE: Well, like I said a lot of these new houses that have gone up that are so fancy, they again have professional landscape architects come in and install the garden and then they have a crew of landscapers come and take care of it. And I don't see much input from the owners at all. Which is fine if that's the way they want to do it. But my clients, I'm happy to say, that I work for do still have a lot of input in what they have in their gardens and what's going on in their gardens. They like to come out and discuss it. And their gardens can evolve. It doesn't have to be this grand plan, you know. We can try things. See if it works. How does it look? Change it if it doesn't do well. But that's my idea of gardening to kind of just go with the flow.

TIGHE: But the new houses that have gone up especially on Ordway, they're...

MACLEAN: The border of Rosedale.

TIGHE: Yeah, they're not to my taste although I do like, I mean I do like the people who live there. I mean I've met them. But it's not really to my taste. I think they don't really fit into the neighborhood, myself.

MACLEAN: Describe your taste.

TIGHE: I just like the...that's what I like about Cleveland Park. It's always been an eclectic mix of architecture, and some people like their house to be messy and some people like it to be tidier and it's all okay, you know? That's the way Cleveland Park is, we accept one another. We don't have to call in the police if you don't keep your front yard spick and span, or have some commissioner who is gonna say paint your mailbox this color or that. And I'm glad that they allow some of these more risqué houses to be built, like the copper house on Newark Street. Who...the Lenzners?

MACLEAN: Oh, the Lenzners.

TIGHE: Yeah. I love that house. And yet you know if the Historical Society wasn't smart like they are, they might not have allowed that house to be built, but they did and I think it's great. So that's a good thing.

MACLEAN: What is your opinion of the philosophy of the Historical Society that does try to regulate to a limited extent, of course, and preserves the historic nature of the neighborhood.

TIGHE: I think it's wonderful. I loved it. I'm so glad we have it because if they didn't have it I'd hate to think what might happen. They could bulldoze anything they wanted, couldn't they, and rebuild? Instead of trying to work with what's there? Because that's what happened across from the cathedral there, that one house that they were starting to renovate it, and then supposedly the builder made a mistake and compromised the foundation and so they did have to bulldoze it and put something new up. But that could be happening everywhere and maybe not good things going up.

MACLEAN: So, you are living in the house you grew up in. Does it feel good to live there?

TIGHE: Yes, it does. I love my house. I think it's just the right size. I think it's quite elegant and I've never seen your house. You look like you used the same paint on your house that I did. I'll have to ask you later what color. No, the houses are—my house is just right for me. I love it. It's just the right size. I wouldn't want to live in any other neighborhood. I wouldn't want to live in any other area because I like having four seasons, and I plan on living there until the

day I die. And everybody keeps—all my nieces and nephews are panting waiting for Clare to will it to them. And I'm trying to keep it up as best I can, and I hope I can stay there. Because it's the only place I've really ever felt at home.

MACLEAN: I think that's a good way to wind this up for today.

TIGHE: Good.

MACLEAN: Okay. Thank you so much.

TIGHE: You're welcome. I hope it doesn't sound too...

Second interview session, March 23, 2019

MACLEAN: So, this is the second to interview session with Clare Tighe. I am Fran Maclean interviewing Clare at my home at 3604 Porter Street, and today we're going to talk about how Cleveland Park has changed, our beloved neighborhood, since the price of houses have gone up and the number of billionaires in the world has increased. So, Clare, what do you see? What kind of changes do you see?

TIGHE: Well, I see that the neighborhood is flourishing because we have a lot of young families moving in with young children, and we have a lot of changes in the retail sector because of that, too, because the fancier the neighborhood, the fancier the stores, I think. We really changed on Wisconsin Avenue, the stretch that goes from Macomb up to Porter, and I wanted to maybe start there with discussing the stores that line Wisconsin Avenue and Macomb, because back in the 1970s, when I was working at University Pastry Shop, most of those stores if not all were family owned, small mom-and-pop businesses, starting with Charles of Capitol Hill, which was a sort of a fancy grocery store that delivered, which was unusual in those days and was very welcome in the neighborhood, and had a lot of steady customers because of that and had a lot of gourmet items. That was run by Morty who had inherited it from his father. We had Hollander's cleaners that was run by Mr. Hollander, who lived actually in the Kensington-Wheaton area but drove in every morning to operate his little cleaners. He wasn't Korean, which is not trying to say anything racist but you don't find too many dry cleaners anymore that aren't owned by immigrants. Then we had the Friendship Flower Shop, which was right next door to University Pastry. Victor Abdow ran that with his son and his son-in-law.

And of course, the iconic Zebra Room which was THE spot. Half price pizza night packed them in. They opened in the morning and had their regulars at the bar at breakfast, already serving drinks. And—but it was a—I mean, people, if I

wanted to tell people where I lived in D.C., if they were coming to visit I'd say, "Well, you know where the Zebra Room is," and they go, "Yeah." And I'd direct them to my house from there. And then we had G.C. Murphy Company which was five-and-dime, where you got your little sundries and whatnots. And Modern Shoe Shop where you actually got your shoes repaired, instead of just tossing them and buying a new pair. And Modern Shoe Shop actually had its heyday, because it was in a small location on Macomb on the south side, and then it moved to a larger location right across the street and started selling shoes, also, in addition to repairing. We had Burka's Liquor, which was run by the Danneman family. They bought it from Mr. Burka and they had their son working there.

And of course, Giant. The Old People's Drug Store. Sullivan's which is family owned. I went to school with the Sullivan kids at Annunciation. Their mother was in the store. Ellen's Gift Shop, which was run by a husband-and-wife team. But now we have the run-of-the-mill homogenized. If it's not a restaurant, it's a chain—Starbucks, Blue Mercury. People who can afford the rising rents. And I think we've lost something there. And then Connecticut Avenue, which to me was always a little less vibrant than Wisconsin as far as retail goes. Because I know Morty of Charles of Capitol Hill had considered renting a spot down there at one point. But he declined. He thought it wouldn't be as lucrative as his spot here on Wisconsin. But of course, there was the Uptown Theater, which has

many good memories for the kids who grew up Cleveland Park, because you went there to see the big Disney extravaganza like Snow White, and then the awful Cecil B. DeMille epics. We'd go there to see those on the big screen. This was before Star Wars and all that came out. And then the Roma, which was another Italian old-style restaurant that—we used to go there quite a bit in high school after a prom or a dance, go there for pizza. It was one of the few pizza places. Pizza wasn't bad. And it was run by the Abdo family who actually lived on Macomb Street. The mother and son ran it and they had a wine garden in the back with a grape arbor, and it was very nice to sit out there in the nice weather. So that's changed.

But as far as the money goes and Cleveland Park, I think we notice now that the neighborhood, I think it seems less open and you don't see people on the street as much as you used to and that's...they get in their SUV and they're off. And of course, nobody does their own garden anymore. So, they're not out there doing anything in the yard, so you don't talk to them there. I think maybe owning a dog is the way to go, to meet people as you walk your dog, because we have plenty of those in the neighborhood.

Yet Cleveland Park does seem friendlier than the suburbs due to sidewalks. I have sisters who live in the suburbs like Reston. They don't live there anymore, but they did, they never did meet their neighbors. It was, it was awful. It was

very different than living here in the city where you do get out on the street and walk to the Metro and have a sidewalk. And you can walk to your store or your library. So that's a good way to meet and greet.

MACLEAN: Well I wonder if...well, first of all, you know the very obvious thing is the price of real estate. I mean for instance the house we're sitting in we bought in 1972 for $50,000 and we pay taxes on it for a house valued at $1.3 million, which is probably still a bit low, you know, looking at it commercially. So that's a huge change and I find right here on our block at 36 Street, that the houses cost so much that in order for ordinary families to buy them you have to have both parents working, you know, and having salaries. I wondered if you noticed that.

TIGHE: Oh yeah, I've noticed, I am astounded every time I get my property tax in the mail and I know this house is worth THIS now? Because my parents bought it for, I think, for $24,000.

MACLEAN: In what year?

TIGHE: I'd have to look. I thought it was 1968. They rented it initially when they moved, for years, and then finally decided to buy it. But I think most married couples now, I think the women prefer to work. I think they prefer to have a job and not be a stay-at-home mother anymore, the majority. But we do have our

share of nannies in the neighborhood now. And we also have a lot of little children. So, I like that.

MACLEAN: Do you find the nannies provide a fond happy atmosphere to the...?

TIGHE: I am—actually, because I'm out on the street all the time working I'll be in somebody's front yard. I'm beginning to meet these nannies and talk to them and they're all friendly and they're all nice. We discuss—sometimes they'll ask me plant questions, and I've also met a lot of the children that way because they go by and they see two women working in the garden and they're "What are you doing?" And "I'm weeding." "Oh, well is that a weed?" But you meet them, especially the ones who are going down to NCRC [National Child Research Center] maybe in the morning and coming back at noon, and so that's a good way to meet people, too. But it is so...being out on the street exposed. Also, I ride a bike everywhere and people constantly tell me, "Oh, I saw you here, I saw you there." I don't see you because you're in your vehicle, and all your vehicles are so nondescript that I don't know it's you, and I know you don't honk at me because you don't want to distract me so you pass me, but I never see you. And then get back to nondescript vehicles, I have a very stand-out vehicle, an orange truck, my signature. I guess it's my one claim to fame. But every day—last night I was getting out of it and some man or some young man pulled up in his car and said, "That is an awesome truck." And then he says...Once a month I get a sign

on my windshield underneath the windshield wiper offering to buy that truck but they never tell me how much they want to pay for it but they give me their name and number to call in case I want to sell it. But I don't.

But the story on the truck is I inherited it from my brother-in-law, who had a messy divorce with my sister, who lives in Loudoun County. And he left it parked in the front field and it sat there—she has a little horse farm in Loudon County—and it sat in the front field for a good two three years, never moving, rusting away. So, when I started this gardening, my sister said, "Hey Clare, don't you want this truck?" I said, "Sure, I'll take it." By then it was it was pretty raggedy. I mean you could put your fist through the fenders and it had had three different colors on it with red, orange, and the back tailgate was like brown. So, I took it and then I had it painted and the body worked. And now I have my orange truck. So, I figure...may it live forever! Until I retire.

MACLEAN: And this is, as you said, your signature. But it's also your so-called office. You know, it's very, very useful.

TIGHE: Oh yes. Yeah. With mulch. And also, because I drive less than six hundred miles a year in it. That and the engine is pretty solid and simple. My commute is a half a block, stop, get out, do some work, go another half a block, stop. So, it's perfect for that.

MACLEAN: Tell me, when you went out to the field to bring it to its new home, did it start right up?

TIGHE: We jumpstarted it.

MACLEAN: It did? After not being driven for three years?

TIGHE: Yep. And then I took it to the gas station like a week later. There was no oil in it, no transmission fluid, and no water in the radiator. But we put that in and it's been great ever since. I haven't had to do anything major to the engine. The body is the big thing because...

MACLEAN: It lives outdoors.

TIGHE: Yeah. But those old engines are so much easier to work on than the new ones because everything's exposed and it's not all electronic, it's not all computer hooked up. So, if you can find a mechanic who still knows how to work on the old ones, you can get things done. So that's my hope.

And then, Fran, we wanted to talk a little bit about the street trees.

MACLEAN: We did. But I would like to...yes, I definitely do. But I want to back up a bit about the wonderful sole proprietor shops that we had. Did you ever walk into a shop without any money, say without your purse with you, and when you'd needed something, say from Charles of Capitol Hill, and they said "Oh, just take and drop by"?

TIGHE: Yeah!

MACLEAN: That's happened to me. At Brookville. But it's happened in a lot of places, because I walk for exercise, like at Vace's on Connecticut Avenue. I have done that. Several places have done that. I so appreciated that ethic, that trust.

TIGHE: The recognizing of a customer and the trust, yes. I wonder if that would work in any of these places now like [inaudible]...I don't know about Giant. I guess Giant wouldn't. This Giant that opened. The new one which is bigger. I'm not impressed with it. I think Giant's changed too since the Cohens, you know, Izzy Cohen and Danzansky, they don't own it anymore. The Dutch conglomerate owns it. So that's changed its work ethic. When I worked for Giant back in the early 1970s. I think it was run as a much tighter ship. This one already seems sloppy and messy and not stocked well. And when I worked for Giant that was a no-no. We had supervisors coming to the store all the time to make sure that everything was properly displayed and properly functioning. The manager was

always on top of everything and it was a well-run operation. But from what I see of this one it's pretty sloppy and not as impressive as I thought it was going to be, the new Giant.

MACLEAN: Did you at the earlier, smaller Giant find that staff was say hired for their entire career?

TIGHE: Oh, yeah, those union jobs were sought after back then. They had a good, good union contract at Giant. You started out above minimum wage, and you earned, you know, your health insurance, they had a very good health insurance package. And the longer you worked for them and graduated from part time to full time, the more benefits you got. And it was a good job. It really was. But then the union, every year they tried to knock them down and take away more and more. The ones who had been there a long time were grandfathered in and they kept their benefits, but new people coming in started to lose those kinds of perks. The new contract, every time it came up they would cave, the union, and say okay, well, we'll give you this, but we want to keep this for the older people. And they started buying out the older people to try and—Because they didn't have to give the new ones, you know, all the extras. So, it's changed a lot. Because we used to have the same people there, the same cashiers for years. You got on a first name basis with them, same grocery crew. And they

would switch managers and assistant managers pretty often but. Pretty much the staff on the floor was the same. But no more.

MACLEAN: I had the feeling, but you would know better that it was sort of a haven—that's too strong a word—but a pleasant place for people who were not employed or past employment age or something to go, you know, greet people in a friendly way and so on. Sort of hang out a little bit.

TIGHE: You mean customers?

MACLEAN: Well, just neighborhood people whose life had lacked direction at that point I would say.

TIGHE: Would come in as customers and...?

MACLEAN: I don't know, just to visit and greet, you know, the staff, the customers.

TIGHE I think so too, yeah. You have a lot of retirees who probably wanted to go in there and spend some time, maybe buy one or two things, but it was part of their social life. I don't know if Starbucks fits that, now. Does it?

MACLEAN: I don't go to Starbucks. I don't go to Starbucks, but my husband does. And he says that with the creation of the Cathedral Commons on Wisconsin, that has that has destroyed the strong social group that met in the morning that he was very fond of, which means he also reads more of the newspaper because he's not talking to people. But he very much misses this group.

TIGHE: It's a busy Starbucks, I think. I always see it crowded and people pulling up, jumping out, going in. At the bakery, we had our regulars in the morning. We opened at 7:00. As soon as we opened they were coming in to get their donuts and coffee.

MACLEAN: Oh, I don't I don't remember the bakery serving coffee.

TIGHE: Oh yes.

MACLEAN: Okay.

TIGHE: I made a sidewalk sign. One year back in the 1970s. I painted it. Because I consider myself sort of an artist. But I painted a big sign. And it was one of those teepee-looking signs. I made it out of thin pieces of tin and painted it and it said hot coffee and donuts, and fresh donuts. And I painted a cup of coffee and a

donut. And we stuck it out by the street. And overnight our sale of donuts and coffee like tripled, because people were driving by and said I never even knew you here! We were set—the bakery was set back. We had one little sign on the window that was painted a lot of people didn't even know we were there. They thought it was all the florist shop because the florist shop used to spread their flowers in front of us. And after that, we really sold a lot more donuts. They went and they were delicious donuts. They were fried fresh every morning. Glazed, jelly, the cake. And we had coffee, a very strong coffee. This is before Starbucks. So, we did sell quite a bit. He had a whole display case of danish pastries and sweet rolls. And that was another good seller in the morning.

Mr. Andrascek was quite a baker. I thought he was a real professional. He was Hungarian and he really knew his stuff. He could roll that dough and he could take his finger and stick it in a batter and taste the batter and he could tell you if the baking soda had been forgotten in it. Or the salt. Or the flavoring. He was he was amazing. He really had a good touch with things. He could roll puff dough from scratch, you know. They made everything from real ingredients. They didn't use powdered eggs, they used real eggs. They used real cream, they used real butter. They didn't use all the fake shortcut stuff which I'm sure now all these bakeries do that too, but they charge a lot more than we ever did. He should have raised his prices and they would have still been in business. But they didn't.

MACLEAN: So, as our wonderful Cleveland Park gardener, tell me how the gardens have changed with all this money that has moved here.

TIGHE: Well, I think a lot of people definitely have professional help now. And it's almost—I don't know if it's a status symbol—but you're supposed to have your place perfecto. You know, all these hard edges and mulch and blowing until every speck of dirt and leaf is off your property, which is to me horrifying. Because the more you blow the more you get rid of all the little bit of leaf and topsoil and things that are nourishing your yard. You don't need to blow every leaf out of every bed. Those things break down and feed your soil. I can see it on your pavement. But I just think that's the way it's going all over the nation. It's not just Cleveland Park. Especially if you go out to places like McLean, you know everything is so picture perfect, with sculpting of bushes. I like a more organic look like a more relaxed look. I don't believe in hard edges and I don't believe in ten tons of mulch every year which is also detrimental for your garden because it changes the pH in your soil and it helps to lock up nutrients and if you put too much on you're causing the roots of those plants to rise up and try and get air and water and light. They're being suffocated. And you're also creating such a mat that moisture can get down through it. So, there is a limit to the mulch you need to put on your yard.

MACLEAN: I'm surprised to hear that I am grateful for you pointing it out.

TIGHE: Mulch to a certain depth serves a purpose and it's a good thing but not piled on every year, every season, twice a year, thick. So that's one of my pet peeves.

MACLEAN: I'm surprised that Cleveland Park allows blowers.

TIGHE: I know. I don't know what they can really do about it. I mean these big companies, they don't have the time to sweep. They wouldn't you know. They are trying, the companies that produce a blower, they're trying to come out with quieter ones. We'll see, but I just don't know how these companies could keep up with their schedules if they don't use blower's. And I don't know if they'd have satisfied customers if they don't use blower's. Maybe wouldn't be as clean as they like.

MACLEAN: I say that I ask that because of my husband's job. We lived in Chicago for seven years. We left in 1988 came back in 1995. And every weekend we drove through the northern suburbs to go ride horses— beyond the suburbs—and those suburbs as early as that, banned these blowers. And I've never heard in a Cleveland Park meeting of any type at wherever, at the library or wherever, of even suggesting to ban them.

TIGHE: Is that right?

MACLEAN: Yes.

TIGHE: I thought there was a little bit of movement going on. Barbara Goff was trying to instigate one, and her neighbor Ruth was on board with it but I don't know how far it got.

MACLEAN: You would know better than I. I'm glad to hear this.

TIGHE: Yeah, but that was a year or so ago, I had heard rumors of that, and Mary Cheh had been approached about what to do about the blowers. Barbara—I'm not even sure she's still in her house, because she and her husband had moved out to an assisted living place, and then her daughter came, and she may be back in the house now. But she'd objected because she was trying to play her cello at home and every time she started the blowers were on the street and she couldn't even hear herself, you know, think to do her music, so she was outraged. And it's true, especially in the fall when you have so many leaves. It goes on and on for hours.

MACLEAN: Well, these Chicago suburbs I was describing banned them just for plain quality of life, you know.

TIGHE: I wonder how that's working out. I think it's an interesting idea.

MACLEAN: Yes, yes, yes.

TIGHE: I confess I have a blower. But I confess that I only use it at the end of what we've raked and tidied up. Then we take the blower on low and blow off the sidewalk in the front. I don't stand in the bed and blow and I don't stand on the grass and blow. So, they do come in handy. But it doesn't have to go and go and go for hours and it doesn't have to be a whole pack of them with their backpack blowers.

MACLEAN: Well, and the trees of Cleveland Park, have they changed in your time?

TIGHE: Oh, greatly, unfortunately. I think the tree canopy in D.C. is changing. We're losing so many of the big old trees and they're replacing them with smaller trees now because of the idea that big trees interfere with the power lines and big trees aren't happy in the small tree boxes along the streets. So, all the pretty willow oaks, and of course the elms. They're going slowly and surely. And these cherry trees and redbuds and star magnolias and all, they're nice and ornamental but they don't do what a big shade street tree can do. Even for

cooling in the summer. And they're not long-lived trees. They're, you know, the average age isn't going to match an oak or even a sweet gum or something.

MACLEAN: Or birch.

TIGHE: Yeah. I'm not sure I agree with their choices of plantings, but I guess they have that endowment from the Casey Tree organization and that is I think what is directing the removal and the replacement program. And I think they have to follow those guidelines. But you can see that these big trees as they grow in the tree box along the street they do get, I mean their roots do start to overflow the box and hang on the curb. But yet you have these huge oaks that have survived all this time. So maybe it's worthwhile planting some more. Oaks and let them grow for many, many years until they outgrow their box.

MACLEAN: Are there any American chestnuts in Cleveland Park?

TIGHE: I know of one, in front of, I think it's 3451 Newark.

MACLEAN: Kay and Will Kohl's house?

TIGHE Yeah. It drops many chestnuts in the fall.

MACLEAN: Well, that's a real treasure.

TIGHE: And there used to be one at 36th and Macomb which was a big one, but that's gone now. Yeah, that's a rarity. The chestnut trees all over America are pretty much finished, as are the elms although they're breeding new varieties of them, trying to replace them.

MACLEAN: And American chestnut.

TIGHE: Yeah, yeah. They want to put in underground power lines which they're doing in parts of D.C. now. On 14th Street, which is all dug up, they are trying to put the underground lines in. So, if that is really accomplished, that'll be a bonus for the trees, because not only are the trees being planted smaller, but they're coming along and pruning the ones that are interfering with power lines pretty radically. I've seen them take out the whole middle crown of a tree, which is really bad for a tree, just to allow that power line to be unobstructed.

MACLEAN: Well, do you plan to live forever in your house?

TIGHE: I do. I hope. I do. I have plans to liver to at least a hundred.

MACLEAN: Oh, at least.

TIGHE: Yes.

MACLEAN: At least.

TIGHE: And, I'm going to be mobile until the last. This is my fantasy. But I try. I try. I stay as active as I can. Every day I get up and I say I'm going to stretch, I'm going to do my exercise, and I'm going to eat right, and hopefully...But this Cleveland Park Village is a very nice thing that they've started in the neighborhood. I think that's helping a lot of the elderly people stay in their houses and get the help they need. So that's a good thing. So, yeah. I don't really dwell much on the future. I'm an everyday kind of person. So, when it's time for me to die I better have something in place, I guess. Or my nieces and nephews will kill me.

MACLEAN: [Laughs].

TIGHE: I have too many of those. Countless. Countless. I know my nephew wants the orange truck. He's got his dibs on that, and other than that, I don't know. How about yourself? Are you planning on staying in your house to the bitter end?

MACLEAN: Yes, but it's a four-story house. What I was going to say is that I had hoped at one point that when Rosedale was sold and you know, has a new design, I was hoping for a pet cemetery and I thought oh well...

TIGHE: My goodness, was that ever an option?

MACLEAN: No.

TIGHE: [Laughs].

MACLEAN: I never brought it up at the meetings.

TIGHE: All the pets I had buried in my yard are...I mean I can't...There's a lot of them.

MACLEAN: We too, we too. So anyway, I'm so glad to have done this history, oral history with you.

TIGHE: I was happy to do it. I hope it's of some value to somebody.

MACLEAN: Oh, I think it will be.

TIGHE: But no, Cleveland Park is a wonderful neighborhood. I'm very happy here. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else that I can think of.

MACLEAN: It is special.

TIGHE: Yeah.

MACLEAN: Now I will ask one last professional question. Cleveland Park was created because of the elevation of the land, that it was anywhere I hear from ten to fifteen to twenty degrees cooler up here compared to say Georgetown. Parts of Georgetown are sea level. With the change in the tree cover do you think it's still kept cooler than other parts of the city? And is the air cleaner because of the trees?

TIGHE: Oh, our air is much cleaner not only when I think about how the air was in the 1970s, early 1980s, our summers, most of the summer was like a gray, white smoggy....This was before all the EPA stuff was put on the cars and the factories. And it's hugely different now. Now in the summer you can see blue sky. Now there's a big difference there. I think Cleveland Park's definitely cooler than when I ride my bike down to K Street or Dupont Circle area, where you have the heat island and the concrete and less trees. Yeah, definitely because you can go down there and that thermometer on that historic bank at Dupont Circle

always registers five or six degrees hotter than it does up in Cleveland Park. But our summers every summer, as you know from statistics, every year is getting warmer, every single year.

MACLEAN: Well, the loss of the tall old trees, I would think, that can be part of it.

TIGHE: And Rock Creek Park is also looking kind of weakened. Especially in the winter when you walk through and the trees are bare and you can see the amount of dead wood and invasive vines and stuff. And it's also—well, Rock Creek Park is a huge, huge wonderful thing to have in this city. But.

MACLEAN: It is indeed. Well I think we've covered it, and it's been an absolute pleasure.

TIGHE: Oh, thank you.

MACLEAN: You're welcome.