



Interview with Judith Stanley

Under the Auspices of the
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Judith Stanley, 1997

Ms. West: Mrs. Judith Hurley Stanley is the chairperson of many charitable organizations in Monmouth County. She is known for her expertise in community affairs, and her success on the boards of many institutions. Please comment on that, Mrs. Stanley.



Judith Hurley Stanley receiving a swimming trophy

Mrs. Stanley: I probably acquired from my mother and my grandmother the desire to do well. My mother worked in New York as an advertising executive with J. Walter Thompson, and she commuted daily. I lived in Asbury Park and West Allenhurst, and I went to Asbury Park High School. In high school I was a cheerleader and headed the yearbook. You know, I did as many things as I possibly could do because I was interested in being involved. I swam at the Allenhurst Beach Club; I was quite a swimmer in those days. I graduated as the valedictorian from Asbury Park High School and then went on to Smith College in Northhampton, Massachusetts, where I spent the next four years studying history and received my BA in history. I married, as it was the custom then to marry quite young and have children. It was for that reason that you were educated.

I did not go to work permanently, although I had a few part-time jobs. Actually, when I was in college, I worked at Steinbachs in the sports department. I was

married in 1955 to Hans Anthony Huber, who was a graduate of Amherst. Since at that time men had to go in the Army, we moved out to Colorado. I did have a job there part-time writing for a paper. Also, before I left for Colorado, I had worked for a little while in the Asbury Park school system as a substitute teacher. After the army stint, I proceeded to have four girls. My children's names are Lisa, Shelley, Andrea, and Catherine. One of them still lives near me with my two grandsons. We lived in Middletown first, on Brown's Dock Road, and now on Navesink River Road. During this time I became involved in different charities. My first was what was then called MCOSS, for Monmouth County Organization for Social Service, now called the Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey. I started serving on that board in 1964, and I became its chairman from 1977 to the present. When I took over it was about a two and a half million-dollar operation, and before Medicare cuts in 1998 its budget rose to about eighty-five million dollars. I then joined the Monmouth County Historical Association Board, and I now serve as its president. In 1977, with my husband Bob Stanley and others, I founded the Monmouth Conservation Foundation, and I still serve as its president. In 1976, I went on the Planning Board in Middletown and became its chairman in 1981. I still serve in that post.

After that period, I entered into many other areas. I've been on the Monmouth University Board, Stevens Institute of Technology Board, and then, probably because my second husband, Bob Stanley, was interested in politics, I branched into politics. I served as a County Committeewoman for a long time and as chairman of the Monmouth County Republican party and as delegate to five Republican conventions. I now also serve as the Republican National Committeewoman for the state of New Jersey.

One of my biggest interests is in trying to preserve what there is left of Monmouth County and New Jersey. Monmouth was the most beautiful county when I was growing up. I remember when there wasn't even a Parkway, you just drove up Route 35 or Route 34. Of course we had the shore, beautiful streams, and working farms. It was absolutely magnificent. At present, I also work hard for various healthcare organizations. I serve on the board of Monmouth Medical Center, where my husband served as the chairman for sixteen years. I am now connected with the Count Basie Theater. I serve on the State Council of the Arts, which gives money to the different arts organizations in the state of New Jersey. I can't remember all the things I have done, but these are some of the highlights. I do care a great deal about Monmouth County and New Jersey. I have been part of its history for a long time.

Ms. West: Such as...

Mrs. Stanley: Well, you know, just the growing up here. I remember Asbury Park when it was also beautiful. I have seen the growth of many good things, along with the not-so-good.

Ms. West: Were there any specific people in Monmouth County who had a great influence upon your life?

Mrs. Stanley: Well, my grandfather was an important part of the fabric of Asbury Park and my mother was connected with a lot of people. Supreme Court Justice Hayden Proctor was a part of my life, and his daughter was my best friend growing up. I have known many different people during the many years—governors, legislators, judges, and other well-known citizens. I hope that I'm known for the good, not for the bad.

Ms. West: Is there any particular area in the Monmouth County historically that has a great significance to you?

Mrs. Stanley: Well, probably Asbury Park. I think you're always attached to where you were born and where you grew up. As I said, I can remember when it was beautiful, when you went to the theaters and they were all lovely. You could walk downtown without fearing for anything. I would like to be a part of the renaissance if it ever happens. There were many other parts of the County that I remember. I remember the wonderful Farmer's Market that they used to have in Neptune. I used to go there with my grandparents, and it went on for miles and miles; you never saw so much fruit and vegetables in your entire life. And that is, of course, what Monmouth County was famous for.



Judith Hurley (Stanley) on the beach, August 1937

Ms. West: When you were going to high school, could you tell us a little about your high school days, what stands out in your mind?

Mrs. Stanley: Well, I guess I went up in the attic one day in my grammar school days, and pulled out my mother's report cards. Thus was born my determination to beat her. My grandfather had been president of the Board of Education of Asbury Park for twenty-five years and under his tenure the Asbury Park High School and the stadium were built. In high school, I tried out for everything. I was a cheerleader, and I did all the sports that I could. I edited the yearbook, and worked in the office, and was head of this club and that club. I thoroughly enjoyed my high school years.

Ms. West: What would you say is your greatest achievement at this point?

Mrs. Stanley: I suppose your greatest achievement is always your children and your family, but my other achievements have been being a leader in the community and making sure that good things happen for the community. That really is my drive. It may sound supercilious, but I derive a lot of pleasure from making things happen and being able to know the right people to call to make those things happen.

Ms. West: Is there anything unusual about yourself, would you say?

Mrs. Stanley: No, I'm just sort of a plain everyday sort of person. I think I did receive a good education at Smith College, and that has served me well. As a result, I like reading, particularly history. I also like traveling and my garden.

Ms. West: You say you like reading; do you have a favorite author?

Mrs. Stanley: Do I have a favorite author? Well, I love biographies, particularly history. I think the best book that I've read recently is by Edith Wharton, called *Summer*. So I don't usually pick up the latest book, but tend to read the books that I've heard about through the years and have even read as a child and as a young adult. I tend to read them again.

Ms. West: Were you a great reader as a child?

Mrs. Stanley: Yes. I was a good reader as a child. I had the example of my mother, and of course, my grandfather. My grandmother also, because she did take me on four trips to Europe, so through her, I saw and learned a great deal.

Ms. West: Give us your grandmother's name, so we'll know who the lady is.

Mrs. Stanley: Her name was Bessie Hurley. That name was popular back when she was born; I guess she was supposed to be Elizabeth, but somehow the minister talked her parents into Bessie.

Ms. West: Well, looking at your life today, and reflecting back as a child, has it turned out as you thought it was going to be? Did you have any aspirations in any particular direction when you were younger?

Mrs. Stanley: Well, when I was younger, I guess my big aspiration was to study a year in France and learn French, but then when the time came I stayed here and studied in the United States, although I have always been interested in conquering another language.

I had my disappointments; my divorce was one. But then I was fortunate enough to marry Bob Stanley, who was well known in the community, and who also helped me to raise my children. He taught me a lot, as I have said, about politics and working for charities. Unfortunately, he died at the age of sixty-five, and that was back in 1985. I really have continued to pursue most of the things that he was comfortable in doing. I still remain in our house, and I love this house. I do love to entertain, not only for my friends, but also for my charities. And for politics, yes I do like to help the right people win. I was a big Christie Whitman supporter, a big Tom Kean supporter. So I do have a lot of parties here. I actually had Newt Gingrich here at the house, and I've had many other Congressmen here.

Ms. West: Being a part of the Nurse Association, and looking at medicine, how was medicine when you first became involved and how is it today? What changes have taken place, and what things may you have been responsible for?

Mrs. Stanley: I've mostly been responsible for the growth of the agency, because the medicinal part is done by the staff in conjunction with doctors. Nurses can't do anything unless doctor's orders are signed. I think what I'm proudest of there is the fact that we are totally a community organization; our hospice program is famous because it's so hands-on, and because we go into the homes. Because we go into the homes, we're not maybe as well known as a hospital. We do have two buildings here in Red Bank, and four other locations. We try to reach out always to serve more people. We receive grant money, and have been the forerunner of many things, such as serving residents in boarding houses and motels. We've always been on the cutting edge of things that have happened in health care.

Ms. West: Well, you've done so much, you are doing so much, is there anything else that you would like to add?

Mrs. Stanley: Well, there's always more to do. I'm known to be very energetic and work hard to help people. So I never know what new door is going to open. I will continue to do the things that I'm doing now, although I always want to see my children and grandchildren. I have five grandchildren, two grandsons here. My three granddaughters are in Charlotte and I'm extremely proud of them and the fact that they are all so bright and well rounded.

Ms. West: How old are your grandchildren?

Mrs. Stanley: Our first, of course you never forget your first, Anna, is twelve years old now. Then we have Merrill, who is nine, and she's a beautiful girl and a great runner. And then we have Bobby, my first boy ever, who is the grandson here. He will be seven. And then I have two who are just about the same age, and they are my granddaughter Ellie and my grandson, named Tad.

Ms. West: And now, here again, thinking about all the things that you have done and are doing, if you had to pick something that would symbolize your life, what symbol would you pick?

Mrs. Stanley: Somebody said, "You're always in the newspapers," although not always happily, particularly during my days with the Garden State Parkway. I believe I was a good Chairman who championed the arts, a clean road, and happy employees, and I have a great dedication to New Jersey. So those were five very busy years of my life. There's always a lot more I can do, I suppose. The jewel in my crown would be to see Asbury Park revitalized.

Ms. West: With the county as a whole, disregarding the shore area, what other changes would you like to see?

Mrs. Stanley: Less traffic and more open space, which is hard to achieve considering the law of the land. I despise that everybody is chasing ratables, because the ratable chase really leads to a rat race that causes more traffic and asphalt, higher taxes and the loss of state aid. I would like to see regional planning take place. I'd like to see a state plan become effective, and I'd like people to be aware that they can have an impact in helping to save our county and state.

Ms. West: What are your greatest values?

Mrs. Stanley: Honesty. In fact, I'm probably too honest, people tell me. I also guess the fact that I'm energetic. I am moral. I am not terribly religious, but I do believe in God, and I am a Christian. I tried to raise my children that way, too.

Ms. West: Considering the state of the world today, how do you feel about things?

Mrs. Stanley: Well, politics unfortunately is in everything; it's in every single walk of life - and that's why you have to get to know people if you want to get things accomplished. Politics, per se, no, it doesn't excite me, but I know that you have to be there in order to make things happen. I've seen the change in politics, and not for the better. I certainly was not very proud of our past president. I think that he did great damage to the United States. And I think that our congressmen and people should uphold more tradition and values. I also am pro choice, and very pro women. I think it's a woman's right to have control over her body. Because I have four daughters, I feel adamantly about that.

Ms. West: What would you say will be your legacy to your children and your grandchildren?

Mrs. Stanley: I hope that some of them will try to give back to the community the kind of things that I have given back to the community. And the ones who live in Monmouth County will carry on and try to keep Monmouth County beautiful. I hope they will also try to respect tradition.

Ms. West: What if your grandchildren or their friends came to you and asked you for some advice, what advice would you give them? What words of wisdom?

Mrs. Stanley: I don't know about words of wisdom. I would tell them to study hard, to make the best of their schooling because that is what you lean on when you get older. If you have that education, you're a very, very fortunate person. So I think study and learning is important, and I think being honest and honorable is important. I think giving back to your community is important. And helping others

is important. People do come to me for personal advice, and I'm always glad when I can help them, whether it is through the hospital, or through the VNA, or whatever it may be, I like to help people.

Ms. West: You've been so busy, and you've said so much. Now this new millennium is in its infancy, so we have to look ahead, not backwards. How would you like to see things become, what would you like to see happen?

Mrs. Stanley: I would like to see respect and tradition restored. We can't give up on what was the past because it is from the past you learn about how to conduct yourself in the future. I would like to see a focus on better values. I think there's too much emphasis on the big house, the fast money, and the crassness of the power of money. I do not see that as a good thing for the future.



**Judith Hurley
Stanley,
Christmas, 1940**

Ms. West: Speaking of fads and dress codes, what was the dress code in your day?

Mrs. Stanley: The dress code in my day was bobby socks and saddle shoes, or the loafers with the penny in it; then you had the longer skirts and the sweater buttoned backwards and the dickey with your name on it. The code in college was pretty much the same. Since, I've lived through the real short skirt and the mini skirt. I am a little old for the mini skirt these days. I have to say that I do like slacks because they are very comfortable. But there are certain times when you just simply cannot wear slacks, so I do believe in a dress code. Even though we did have our own sort of uniform growing up, it was a very neat uniform.

Ms. West: Well, your mentioning bobby socks made me think of Frank Sinatra. What type of music did you like?

Mrs. Stanley: Well, my best friend liked Frank Sinatra, and I liked Bing Crosby. I love the way he sings and I still watch his movies today, and I guess he was my very favorite movie star. Certainly I loved the stars and loved the movies. We had these wonderful movie theaters in Asbury Park so I remember them well.

Ms. West: Do you remember the first movie that you ever saw?

Mrs. Stanley: You know I really don't remember the first movie, I just remember that I would go to the movies with my grandparents, and then with my friend on Saturdays, for thirty-five cents. We would have to watch the "Eyes and Ears of the World" where they showed our soldiers washing up on the beaches. Maybe the first movie I saw was *Snow White* or *Bambi*, because I do remember crying like mad all during *Bambi*.

Ms. West: Mentioning the War, and I assume you are speaking of World War II, is there any particular headline that stood out in your life?

Mrs. Stanley: Well, Asbury Park was a great part of the War because of the submarines that were off the coast. We had to have shades at night, and we had air raid wardens, so Asbury Park was quite a part of the War. Also, the British Navy was at the Berkeley Carteret during the War. We had Fort Monmouth here, we had Fort Dix. I remember going down there and seeing the prisoners, I believe they were the Italian prisoners then. And, yes, during the War, rubber shoes were rationed, and you had to eat oleo instead of butter. I maybe had a Coca Cola once a week or cookies once a week. We just didn't have the choice of food that children have today. Gasoline was rationed, so you could only drive your car a certain number of miles. I also remember the Yankees being here, at the Asbury Park High School Stadium.

Ms. West: Did you have a favorite radio program?

Mrs. Stanley: I listened to all those soaps growing up, "Young Widow Brown," "Front Page Farrow," "Stella Dallas," I mean all of them. I loved them and I liked nothing better than being sick and staying home and listening from eleven to twelve and three to six p.m. But then I grew out of that, and went on to the General Electric Theater on Monday nights. My grandfather loved Jack Benny, so I remember listening to that. On Sunday night there was also "Inner Sanctum."

Ms. West: Is there anything else you'd like to say to us?

Mrs. Stanley: No, I'm just very proud of this area, I'm proud of being born here because it is so beautiful. I've had and have so many wonderful friends from here. I hope to continue to make friends, across the state and throughout the country, because as national committeewoman I do go and meet other people from other states.

Ms. West: Well, I appreciate you talking with us this morning.

Mrs. Stanley: Thank you.

Ms. West: It was a pleasure meeting you and speaking with you.

Mrs. Stanley: Thank you very much.



**Judith Hurley Stanley
(right), 1942**